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## EUROPEAN UNION

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#### **EU Statement in response to the Address by the Under Secretary General of the United Nations Office of Counter Terrorism, Ambassador Vladimir Voronkov**

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The European Union and its Member States thank the Italian Chairmanship of the OSCE and welcome Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Office, Ambassador Vladimir Voronkov to the OSCE Permanent Council. Ambassador Voronkov, we note your four priorities on countering terrorism namely: (i) Foreign Terrorist Fighters, (ii) the prevention of violent radicalization leading to terrorism, (iii) the fight against financing of terrorism and (iv) the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes. You propose inter alia to further develop cooperation on countering terrorism around the world, to elaborate global and local strategies, develop capacity building, provide legal assistance and performing training. The EU shares these priorities and welcomes your efforts to strengthen international cooperation as the UN plays a central role.

Time and again, Ministers of the participating States of the OSCE have expressed their common resolve to prevent and counter terrorism, in line with international standards and guidelines, including respect for human rights. We are particularly committed to strengthening international cooperation in this field with the United Nations, and with UNOCT in particular, playing a leading role. The OSCE helps build crucial capacity to implement our UN commitments based on adding value to global efforts to prevent and counter terrorism.

This year's annual OSCE CT Conference in May focused on the challenges relating to the possible return of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF) and their

families to their countries of origin. The conference highlighted the crucial role of rehabilitation and reintegration, especially in cases where prosecution is not possible or not appropriate. The collection and processing of battlefield evidence is vital to support successful criminal justice outcomes, and should remain a global priority as highlighted by UNSCR 2396. The complex gender dimension of returning FTFs, as well as terrorist recruitment, was an important topic that came up and that deserves more attention; we must acknowledge that women can be both victims and perpetrators of terrorism as well as key actors in solutions to address the challenges of returning FTFs.

During the Annual Security Review Conference and the Security Committee, we also had exchanges on the links between organised crime and terrorism, and on how to enhance border security and management, including when countering trafficking. Countering trafficking in cultural property, as a source of financing for international terrorist networks, has been in particular focus this year during the Italian Chairmanship of the OSCE. Such valuable discussions and exchanges took place in the context also of evolving commitments agreed at the level of the United Nations Security Council on using Advance Passenger Information (API), Passenger Name Records (PNR), biometrics and enhancing information sharing in order to identify FTFs and to counter trafficking activities.

The European Union has stepped up its resolve to reinforce the security of the European space following several terrorist attacks in Member States, particularly since 2015. A number of counter-terrorism measures have been carried out, for instance in the fields of strengthening border management, information sharing, legislation on fire arms, and anti-money laundering was tightened. Our Justice and Home Affairs Agencies, notably EUROPOL, play an important role in this. Activities are also being carried out – in close cooperation with civil society organisations – to prevent and counter violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism. A range of additional security and judicial measures are currently under discussion within the EU, including preventing the internet from being used to disseminate terrorist content. These measures are complemented by the EU's extensive external engagement on Counter Terrorism and Prevention and Countering of Violent Extremism, including our steady and proactive engagement with multilateral

fora and our ever growing network of dedicated Counter Terrorism Political Dialogues and capacity building programmes with key priority countries and regions.

Clearly, strengthening borders and police co-operation is vital to address terrorism and its nexus between transnational organised crime, international money laundering, financing of terrorism and trafficking. But in doing so, we must equally adopt a holistic approach, ensuring the protection of human rights, the promotion of fundamental freedoms, the involvement of civil society as well as the empowerment of women and youth – on line as well as off line. Overall, we should aim to address the root causes of terrorism and VERTLT and other transnational threats by also helping to tackle conflict, marginalisation, discrimination and human rights abuses.

The choice between a so-called "hard" or a "soft" approach to countering terrorism is a false one. A comprehensive response offers the best anti-dote against violent extremism and requires a whole-of-society approach. In our collective efforts, we must avoid addressing threats in silos – at international, regional and national levels. Developing effective State institutions and administration, rule of law mechanisms, functioning police, customs and intelligence services as well as fair judiciaries will lead to multiple benefits in countering terrorism and other threats.

We expect these topics will be further discussed in the run up to and during the upcoming OSCE Ministerial Council in Milan. Mr. Chairperson, we are grateful for the opportunity to exchange views on this important topic and we look forward to continuing our cooperation with our international partners.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA\*, MONTENEGRO\*, SERBIA and ALBANIA\*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA, GEORGIA, ANDORRA and SAN MARINO align themselves with this statement.

\* The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.