



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

Office of the Secretary General

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**Expert Workshop on Public-Private Partnerships:
Engaging with the Media in Countering Terrorism**

***19-20 October 2009
Hofburg (Neuer Saal), Vienna, Austria***

**WELCOME REMARKS BY MR. PAUL FRITCH
DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL**

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Colleagues,

On behalf of the Secretary General, I would like to welcome you to today's 'Expert Workshop on Public-Private Partnerships: Engaging with the Media in Countering Terrorism'.

I wish to thank the Russian Federation and the Moscow City Government, whose political initiative and financial support helped make this event possible. Let me also thank also the Action against Terrorism Unit (ATU) of the Office of the Secretary General for its hard work in preparing the workshop, and the Office of the Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFoM) and the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) for providing valuable contributions to its conceptual development.

I am honoured to welcome today representatives from a wide range of OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation. It is a pleasure also to welcome

officials from the United Nations and other key international and regional organizations, as well as journalists and representatives from an impressive number of non-governmental organizations.

This meeting provides an excellent opportunity to explore how the OSCE, with its comprehensive and multi-dimensional approach to security, can contribute to the fight against terrorism -- as a platform for exchanging ideas, sharing national and international experience, facilitating networking, and discussing policy options. For me, this is the OSCE at its best.

The workshop follows a decision of OSCE Helsinki Ministerial Council (2008) on 'Further Promoting the OSCE's Action in Countering Terrorism', which calls upon the OSCE participating States to continue promoting public-private partnerships with civil society, media, the business community and industry in countering terrorism. This includes the dissemination of lessons learned and the exchange of relevant information and national best practices at the national, sub-regional and regional levels, where appropriate.

There is good reason for such Ministerial attention. Although states bear primary responsibility for preventing and countering terrorism and for managing the the consequences of terrorist attacks, they rely on the support of the private sector, including the media, for their success in countering such threats. This simple fact has been acknowledged repeatedly by OSCE foreign ministers.

To succeed in building stronger and more resilient societies can not only survive but thrive in the face of an evolving terrorist threat, we must collaborate in ensuring that our shared values of human rights, fundamental freedoms and democracy are firmly embedded.

Free and independent media are a key foundation of a functioning and pluralistic democracy. Respect for basic human rights commitments such as freedom of expression and freedom of the media is essential to any long-term governmental strategy to address terrorism. It should not be perceived as contradicting efforts to increase security, but as complementing them. Indeed, the media have immense potential as a counter-terrorism

resource. The key is to find ways in which public and private actors can co-operate effectively while retaining their own unique and independent roles.

The OSCE, through its Secretariat, Institutions and the Field Offices, plays an active role in promoting such public-private partnership initiatives, and in promoting greater respect for freedom of expression. Let me say a few words about the instruments available in the OSCE toolbox in these particular areas.

The OSCE Action against Terrorism Unit serves as the focal point for anti-terrorism co-ordination and liaison throughout the Organization. At the 2003 Maastricht Ministerial Council, the ATU was mandated to ‘[...] co-ordinate and facilitate OSCE counter-terrorism activities, including capacity-building assistance programmes, training and contingency-preparedness workshops, with a view to effectively utilizing resources and averting duplication.’ The ATU also acts as a hub for disseminating best practices and as a source of lessons learned.

The ATU is already working to build mutual trust and confidence among stakeholders from the public and private sectors at the local, national, sub-regional and regional level, focusing on engaging and networking with civil society and private sector organizations, as well as the media, in countering terrorism.

For example, options for public-private partnerships in the context of the media and the Internet were explored at the 2007 High-level OSCE PPP Conference and the 2008 Follow-up OSCE PPP Conference organized by the ATU. With a view to the development of a continuous public-private dialogue, public-private partnerships with the media were also discussed during the 2008 Sub-Regional PPP Conference for Central Asia as well as the 2009 National PPP Conference for the Southern Provinces of Kyrgyzstan.

In addition, a number of OSCE events have focused on issues of freedom of expression and the role of the media in the fight against terrorism, notably the joint OSCE-CoE ‘Expert Workshop on Preventing Terrorism: Fighting Incitement and Related Terrorist Activities’, held in Vienna in 2006, which provided an overview of existing legal regimes

and relevant national policies and practices. I am pleased to note that representatives of the Council of Europe are with us here today to continue this dialogue.

A second key institutional actor in this area within the OSCE family is the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media. The OSCE RFoM promotes the development and enhancement of self-regulation mechanisms to uphold ethical standards to address, among others, the issue of terrorism. In the first working session of the workshop, we shall be hearing more about these issues from the Director of the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media.

Finally, through their 'Human Rights and Anti-Terrorism Programme', The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) offers participating States a package of activities designed to prevent and combat terrorism through strengthening democratic institutions, the rule of law and respect for human rights. Measures undertaken by OSCE participating States with respect to combating terrorism have raised concerns with regard to human rights and fundamental freedoms. The overall goal of this programme is therefore to promote compliance with international human rights and to ensure respect for OSCE commitments.

Let me take this opportunity to also mention ODIHR's manual entitled 'Countering Terrorism, Protecting Human Rights', which was launched early last year as a stand-alone tool and a complement to the ODIHR training for public officials in respecting human rights while countering terrorism. This manual, available in both English and Russian, is an excellent resource for practitioners and decision-makers alike.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

What options exist for engaging with the media to ensure the dissemination of accurate and timely information to the public on issues pertaining to terrorism and counter-terrorism? How can this be done without eroding constitutional freedoms such as media independence? What best practices have been developed by national and international agencies, by media associations and civil society organizations? What can be done to ensure that good lessons are learned and, just as importantly, shared?

These are important questions, and this workshop provides a vital forum for the dialogue required to address them. This is essential in order to foster better understanding, and to learn from each other's experience – at both the national and international levels.

I look forward, therefore, to fruitful discussions today and tomorrow on good practices and lessons learned, and to fresh ideas on how the OSCE may work more effectively to address the needs of its participating States.

Thank you.