ICAO - ELEVENTH SYMPOSIUM AND EXHIBITION ON MACHINE READABLE TRAVEL DOCUMENTS
ICAO TRIP: BUILDING TRUST IN TRAVEL DOCUMENT SECURITY

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Improving Co-operation to Prevent the
Movement of Foreign Terrorist Fighters

Remarks: Thomas Wuchte, Head on Anti-terrorism Issues

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear colleagues

It is indeed a pleasure to be here in Montreal today and I thank our hosts for providing us with this stunning venue and for all the preparations that went into bringing this Symposium to life.

Before I start talking about Preventing the Movement of Foreign Terrorist Fighters and the work of the OSCE, allow me to stress that the OSCE deeply appreciates its strong and fruitful co-operation with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). I'd also like to thank Secretary General Fang Liu and congratulate her on her recent appointment.

We look forward to continue co-ordinating our efforts with you. After all, the effective co-ordination of regional capacity-building assistance is a significant element of successfully implementing the ICAO TRIP Strategy.

For those unfamiliar with the OSCE, it is a regional organization which works for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation. The Organization comprises 57 participating States that span the globe (from Vancouver to Vladivostock), encompassing three continents – North America, Europe and Asia – and more than a billion people.

As an implementer of UN instruments including ICAO standards, one of the OSCE's focus areas is preventing the cross-border movement of terrorists including the use of forged or fraudulent travel documents.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A major issue, if not THE major issue, for international and national security at the moment is the threat posed by so-called "Foreign Terrorist Fighters". These are defined as individuals who travel abroad to a State other than their States of residence or nationality to engage in, undertake, plan, prepare, carry out or otherwise support terrorist activity or to provide or receive training to do so.

Our regional organization continues to grapple with how to address the complex set of challenges posed by this threat. Many countries are concerned about the rising number of people radicalized to violence and traveling to fight or train alongside terrorist groups in conflict and non-conflict areas. These can in turn become further radicalized and pose a new terrorist threat to their home or third countries, including transit countries.

We in the OSCE believe, as we are sure you do, that all those involved in civil aviation, whether you work in the airline industry, as a governmental official in foreign affairs or immigration, as a front-line officer, in an international organization, or for a private company supplying security equipment – we all have a role to play in preventing the movement of foreign terrorist fighters.

Regionally we support initiatives from the Global Counterterrorism Forum, and the UN Security Council [including the Counter Terrorism Committee and the Counter Terrorism Executive Directorate]. Those of particular relevance to this audience, which continuously arise are along three streams:

- *The need to prevent the misuse of travel documents for FTF travel*
- *The requirement to increase the sharing of information*
- *The necessity of appropriate screening measures at the borders*

Turning firstly to Travel Documents themselves

Key to the international mobility of a terrorist group is being able to circumvent immigration laws and "watch lists" of national authorities as well as international organizations. For many practitioners we see that travel documents are as important as weapons.

This point was underscored in UN Security Council Resolution 2178, which was subsequently endorsed by the 57 Ministers of Foreign Affairs of OSCE participating States.

For the last decade many of our regional participating States have invested time, money and great expectations in enhanced travel document programmes, especially in machine readable e-Passports employing biometrics. By all accounts, the current generation of ICAO-compliant chip based travel documents are the best and most secure the world has ever known.

However, and ICAO TRIP makes this clear, travel document security is about more than the document itself. We need secure and reliable civil registry systems through to integrated border security solutions. Most importantly these components must not be viewed in isolation but as an upward and downward chain of events taking into account all those potential weaknesses we know terrorists have sought to exploit in the past.

For that reason, besides the assistance we offer to States in upgrading the technological security features of travel documents, the OSCE is increasingly focusing on national identity management by strengthening evidence of identity - so called breeder documents, civil registry systems and other media used to verify and/or validate a travel document applicant's identity.

In addition, the OSCE is placing a particular emphasis on participation in the ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD) which as many of you know affords border control authorities with an assurance that electronic passports are genuine and unaltered. We have conducted a large number of awareness raising seminars and are now developing workshops to further facilitate participation.

Regarding the Exchange of information

A report in May to the UN Security Council identified an urgent need to establish effective flows of information at the national and international levels on foreign terrorist fighters. Clearly, front-line officers require regularly updated information to conduct effective evidence-based travel risk assessment and screenings.

The good news is we do not need to reinvent the wheel to create dedicated channels for sharing information on FTFs. There are existing international information exchange mechanisms that can be deployed. The challenge is to use them more effectively.

In addition to sharing their Public Keys via the PKD, States could also make better use of existing multilateral information systems, such as INTERPOL's diffusion notices and databases, as well as the EU's second generation Schengen Information system (SIS II) and EUROPOL's Focal Point Travelers,. States are also encouraged to share advanced passenger information (API) and passenger name records (PNR) in time for other transit states to take action against suspected FTFs.

For that reason, the OSCE promotes real-time access to INTERPOL databases, including for Stolen/Lost Travel Documents (SLTD), to enhance integrated border management solutions. The OSCE and INTERPOL could cooperate even further so more states in the OSCE region have access to these databases and have the capacity to use them.

We are also now working with IATA regarding the use of advanced passenger information, to engage with Governments to promote awareness of existing international standards and agreed best practices, as well as potential capacity building opportunities.

Turning finally to appropriate Screening Procedures

Unfortunately, a proportion of FTFs are not known to authorities before they travel, making it difficult to detect when they enter the international travel system or to provide other States sufficient warning to interdict them en route. FTFs may travel to destination countries directly or try to disguise their travel by first transiting through third countries.

So all of these high-tech passports and automatic borders, might have gaps, unless we have border guards with the skills and capacity to analyse and assess whether a traveller is suspicious or not.

The OSCE offers training for border police and customs officials to strengthen operational and analytical capacities of border management officials to detect forged travel documents. This is done by organizing train-the-trainer courses and donating basic inspection equipment, with a view to enhancing travel document forensic capabilities and building a network of experts to improve international co-operation on the latest forgery methods.

In fact, we have a dedicated Border Management Staff College in Dushanbe Tajikistan which holds both annual and monthly staff courses for present and prospective senior managers from border guards, border police, customs, drug control and transnational crime agencies, primarily from Central Asian states and Afghanistan.

Why is this important for the ICAO TRIP Strategy?

As you can see, countering terrorism requires strengthening the security of not only travel documents. But also related issuance processes, their inter-linkages to modernized civil registries, as well as the use of travel documents as part of comprehensive and integrated border solutions. And I believe this is the OSCE comparative advantage to partnering with the ICAO Traveller Identification Programme (TRIP) strategy.

As a small example, in recent months we have actively lobbied and encouraged the 57 participating States and 11 Partners for Co-operation in the OSCE region to respond to the ICAO State Letter regarding the deadline for non-machine readable passports. As a result of our actions, we have helped to reduce the number of non-responses from almost thirty to only four.

The OSCE's 'comprehensive' approach to security fits into the holistic ICAO TRIP strategy. We have a strong level of cooperation at present and we wish to further enhance it by working to promote ICAO standards in the OSCE region, and by using our field presences to develop joint capacity building.

Conclusion

The task of bringing all States up to the required level of the ICAO TRIP means much work and apart from the OSCE there are a number of organizations involved in this going forward. The key for efficiency of this work is co-ordination, and I believe ICAO has an important role to play identifying and co-ordinating pertinent capacity building needs with our constituents and partners.

The end-goal being to provide tailored collaboration at the most local level by capitalizing on our extensive OSCE assets on the ground/in the region.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me stop here. If you have any questions related to our work please do not hesitate to approach me or my colleague Simon Deignan, who manages the Travel Document Security Programme and who will be making a more detailed presentation on Friday.