

10th Anniversary of Women without Borders, SAVE Panel Presentation
10 December 2013, Vienna

Opening Remarks by Thomas Wuchte
Head on Anti-Terrorism Issues, OSCE Transnational Threats Department

Your Excellency's,

Dear Dr Schlaffer,

Dear Colleagues,

It is a great pleasure and honor for me to address this gathering of women leaders and movers under the banner of *Sisters Against Violent Extremism*, celebrating the 10 year anniversary of Women Without Borders. Thank you very much, Edit, for this kind invitation.

It is always refreshing for us, diplomats and policy-makers involved in counter-terrorism, to meet with civil society advocates and mobilizers: committed people who work hard to turn aspirations and big ideas into reality – who work on the ground, in their communities, with very little resources, to make a positive and lasting difference in the fight against terrorism.

And that these advocates and mobilizers be women is especially remarkable. We have come a long way and SAVE, under the steadfast leadership of Edit, has been in my opinion instrumental in bringing about this change.

In the security arena, non-state actors have traditionally been considered in negative terms: as a threat we need to fight – terrorists, criminals; or as something vulnerable and helpless we need to protect and assist – civilians, victims.

Likewise, in the anti-terrorism context women have for long been considered only as victims or occasionally as perpetrators of attacks. We should be careful not to let these images limit our comprehension of the many ways in which women can be, and are involved in both terrorism and efforts to counter terrorism.

Fortunately, dear Colleagues, the International Community is moving in the right direction.

The UN Security Council has stressed the important role of civil society in “fostering an environment which is not conducive to incitement of terrorism”.¹

The UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy also calls on efforts to promote “the involvement of civil society in a global campaign against terrorism and for its condemnation”.²

In the OSCE, engaging civil society has been a trademark of our contribution to the global efforts against terrorism since 2001.³ We have been actively promoting dialogue, bridge-

¹ UN Security Council Resolution 1624 (2005),
<[http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1624\(2005\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1624(2005))>

² UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, 2006, <<http://www.un.org/en/terrorism/strategy-counter-terrorism.shtml>>

building and the development of partnerships between state authorities and non-governmental organizations, including human rights organizations, religious institutions, youth organizations, women's organizations.⁴

And over the past 2 years the OSCE has pioneered multi-lateral efforts to highlight gender aspects in countering violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism.

We have organized two expert roundtables to discuss both the prevention of women terrorist radicalization, and the role and empowerment of women in countering terrorist radicalization. We have published a report online summarizing findings and recommendations.⁵

This year in June we organized a national seminar in Tajikistan to explore these issues with the state authorities and civil society. And just last week, we engaged police and counter-terrorism practitioners in a discussion of women's roles in countering terrorist radicalization during a special OSCE panel within the framework of the annual international counter-terrorism symposium of the Turkish National Police.⁶

Dear Edit, dear Colleagues,

The collaboration between SAVE and the OSCE goes back a long way.

You have contributed greatly and in many occasions to our efforts to raise awareness of the need to empower women to counter VERLT, in different capacities – as mothers, human rights advocates, decision makers, law enforcement officers – and the need to partner with women organizations to reach and impact on the grassroots community level.

I am pleased in particular that we were able to introduce SAVE to Tajikistan through a country visit in 2011 and I wish a lot of success to the nationwide expansion of your Mother's School pilot project there.

Looking ahead, I am confident that we will stay involved with you and the SAVE network. Next year, the OSCE and the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum will implement a joint initiative with two international workshops leading to the elaboration of a good practice document for adoption by the GCTF.

The first workshop will be held in Istanbul in spring, with a focus on good practices in supporting civil society initiative to empower women participation in countering terrorist radicalization.

The second workshop will be held here in Vienna in the fall, with a focus on good practices in mainstreaming gender in policies and strategies to counter terrorist radicalization.

We count on your active participation and on this note I would like to conclude and say thank you – Edit, thank you – to all the SAVE mobilizers, for your dedication. Thank you for turning our aspirations into reality, for putting our words into action.

³ OSCE 2001 Bucharest Plan of Action for Preventing and Combating Terrorism, <<http://www.osce.org/atu/42524>>; OSCE 2012 Consolidated Framework for the Fight Against Terrorism, <<http://www.osce.org/pc/98008>>.

⁴ OSCE Ministerial Council Decision 5/07 on Public-Private Partnerships in Countering Terrorism, <<http://www.osce.org/mc/29569>>

⁵ Joint OSCE Secretariat-OSCE ODIHR Expert Roundtable on Preventing Women Terrorist Radicalization (11 December 2011, Vienna) and The Role and Empowerment of Women in Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism (12-13 March 2012, Vienna). Report available online at <<http://www.osce.org/atu/99919>>

⁶ 5th International Symposium on Transnational Crime and Terrorism, 6-8 December 2013, Antalya