



**Coordinating Committee Meeting of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF)
Remarks by Thomas Wuchte, OSCE Transnational Threats Department
Head on Anti-Terrorism Issues
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Zurich**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Colleagues,

Thank you for inviting the OSCE to this high-level meeting of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) and for giving me the floor in this session. In my remarks, I will provide you with an update regarding the OSCE's activities since the last GCTF Coordinating Committee Meeting that we attended in April 2016 in The Hague, and ways to further strengthen our already existing OSCE-GCTF co-operation.

Let me start by mentioning that during the last three months alone, staff from the OSCE Transnational Threats Department participated in 6 meetings organized either by the various GCTF Working Groups or GCTF-inspired institutions. We were particularly pleased to have been invited to the meeting that focused on the Protection of Soft Targets in a Counterterrorism Context, to the Dialogue on Countering Foreign Terrorist Fighters and Radicalization to Violence in Central Asia - as you know Central Asia is an important region of the OSCE -, the expert meeting on Strategic Communications and Social Media Aspects in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism, the International Workshop on Criminal Justice Actors' Role in Countering Violent Extremism, and to the Criminal Justice Sector and Rule of Law Working Group Plenary Meeting. I hope that by enumerating these meetings, the topics that are of interest to the OSCE and the 57 participating States become evident. For several years now, the OSCE has been active in the GCTF Criminal Justice and Rule of Law (CJ-ROL), the Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) and the Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTF) working groups.

With regard to CJ-ROL, the OSCE is involved in the efforts to implement and raise awareness on the GCTF Rabat Memorandum. This endeavour is mainly targeted at raising awareness through national seminars at the expert level. I have previously briefed the GCTF about the different locations where we have conducted such workshops and we stand ready to continue our efforts upon the request of any OSCE participating State. For 2017, we plan national seminars to this effect in South Eastern Europe, Mongolia, Kazakhstan and potentially one other Central Asian OSCE participating State. As far as events in Central Asia are concerned, these will at the same time form part of a joint OSCE-UNODC initiative on rule of law, criminal justice and the FTF phenomenon.

With regard to CVE, or Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism (VERLT) in OSCE speak, you might have heard about our Leaders against Intolerance and Violent Extremism (LIVE) initiative that seeks to build the capacity of civil society leaders to speak out, mobilize others, and take action against intolerance and violent extremism leading to terrorism. We have developed a broad partnership framework in support of LIVE, including, for example, the EU Radicalization Awareness Network and the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF). LIVE is fully aligned with the UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism and relevant UN Security Council resolutions. The project focuses on youth leaders, women leaders, and religious and traditional leaders, and currently we are developing and piloting a training course for youth.

In the OSCE, one of the initiatives to counter the rhetoric and arguments of violent extremist elements across the whole ideological spectrum is the “OSCE United in Countering Violent Extremism” (#UnitedCVE) campaign. The #UnitedCVE communications campaign was launched in July 2015 to underscore that the Organization stands as one against violent extremism and terrorism. Since then the campaign has managed to reach over 20 million people online, in particular, youth. The campaign helps to raise awareness on the OSCE’s extensive work to promote comprehensive efforts against VERLT across all three dimensions. It also offers a space to engage as the campaign provides a platform for testimonials and contributions from civil society.

With regards to FTFs, the OSCE has also a mandate to facilitate the implementation of commitments related to this topic. TNTD has introduced table top exercises as an effective way of engaging multiple stakeholders to enhance collaboration in addressing the FTF phenomenon and VERLT. TNTD with OSCE field operations and the Partnership for Peace Consortium (PfPC) already held two table top exercises in Bosnia and Herzegovina (Jahorina, March 2016) and in Albania (Durrës, Sep 2016). Some of the resulting recommendations have been included in national action plans focused on FTFs. This year we plan at least two table top exercises in two participating States.

We equally have a Countering the Use of the Internet for Terrorist Purposes programme that has been active for several years. Some organizations that are present in the room have been providing experts for the workshops conducted under this programme. The newest product that we have been developing is our OSCE E-learning module that will provide online education and awareness about basic and most relevant aspects of how terrorists use the internet for their purposes and ways to counter it. We have printed out copies of the project that will give you a more concrete idea of this endeavour. Here again, we have worked with several stakeholders who were given the possibility to comment on the substance of the module. The E-learning module will be accessible for everyone 24/7 and free of charge on polis.osce.org.

Concerning the GCTF’s new Initiative on the Protection of Soft Targets in a Counterterrorism Context, the OSCE was proud to share its experience on the protection of critical (energy) infrastructure during the kick-off meeting in Turkey last December. Via the format of table top exercises, engaging both the public and private sector, the OSCE has been

a driving force behind the promotion of public-private partnerships to protect critical energy infrastructure from terrorist attacks. I am convinced that this experience is of value to the work on the protection of soft targets and believe that the OSCE, as a regional security organization, is an essential partner in the future promotion of a set of internationally recognized good practices.

As you can see, the OSCE alone is partnering in numerous activities in the field of counter-terrorism. We thus value very much the GCTF International Calendar, which we consider a welcomed tool that provides information about upcoming activities and as a consequence allows us to de-conflict dates – something that I view as being very important. Often, time is in our way to be present at all the important activities that are undertaken, especially for the OSCE with its broad mandate in counter-terrorism. More so, when events are scheduled on the same dates. Thus, you will see that we have made use of this Calendar for the last two years, from when the idea was first launched at the GCTF Coordinating Committee Meeting in Qatar. On the current version of the Calendar, you will notice the save-the-date note for our forthcoming 2017 OSCE-wide Counter-Terrorism Conference on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism that will be held in Vienna from 23 to 24 May 2017. It will focus on three main topics: national experiences and international co-operation in countering terrorism, engaging and empowering youth in preventing and countering VERLT, and rehabilitation, reintegration and prevention of radicalization to terrorism.

Not only is time of essence in the sphere of counter-terrorism, but so are funds – or the lack of them. Just recently several units of the OSCE Secretariat met with GCERF's Khalid Koser at the OSCE headquarters in Vienna. The group brainstormed on how to build resilient communities especially in preventing and countering violent extremism; explored OSCE-GCERF co-operation and also talked about how to unlock donor funding, including co-operation between private stakeholders and international organizations. Building on this very positive meeting, as well as on today's Coordinating Committee Meeting and on previous occasions where the former GCTF co-chairs were provided with the opportunity to brief the OSCE participating States, I would like to extend the invitation to the current GCTF co-chairs and GCTF-inspired institutions to meet with our organization anytime in Vienna and to talk about how our organizations could join forces in future endeavours while taking into account the already existing co-operation and mandates.

Ladies and gentlemen, the OSCE is a reliable partner in supporting the work of the GCTF: this has previously included the GCTF-OSCE work on women and VERLT, the well-received RoL events on the Rabat Memorandum as mentioned earlier, as well as the translation of GCTF memoranda into Russian, Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian and Bulgarian, and the GCTF attendance and presentation at previous OSCE Counter-Terrorism conferences.

I believe that the benefits of further collaboration would be plentiful as we would maximize synergies globally, regionally and locally, and at the same time we would use resources more effectively by capitalizing on existing capacities on the ground such as those of OSCE field operations and our own team. We thus strongly believe that the OSCE and

GCTF can mutually reinforce each other's efforts to implement the global counter-terrorism framework and that there can be no argument against an even closer collaboration.

Thank you.