

NOTE TO THE FILE

VISIT OF THE OSCE PA AD HOC COMMITTEE ON COUNTERING TERRORISM TO THE OSCE AND UNODC

Vienna, 12-14 November 2017

INTRODUCTION

On 12-14 November 2017 a delegation of 8 members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism (CCT) visited the Headquarters of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in Vienna, Austria. During the visit the CCT met with relevant stakeholders in the field of countering terrorism.

The objective of this first visit was to refine the Committee's understanding of the challenges posed by terrorism at the international level as well as forge strategic partnerships with the OSCE Executive Structures and UNODC. Ultimately, the Committee's goal is to complement the extensive work already conducted by the OSCE and other relevant actors through the integration of a stronger parliamentary perspective. The findings gleaned from this visit are intended to shape the direction of future CCT efforts in this field.



During the visit, the CCT delegation met with the OSCE Secretary General as well as exchanged notes with the OSCE Transnational Threats Department, the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre and the OSCE Representative for the Freedom of the Media. Moreover, the Committee explored existing opportunities for enhanced co-operation with the current and incoming OSCE Chairmanships – Austria, Italy and Slovakia. In addition, two civil society organizations – DERAD and the Centre for Extremist Information – shared insights about their deradicalization efforts and approaches. Finally, the Chairman of the CCT, Makis Voridis, delivered a presentation at the OSCE Security Committee.

PROGRAMME

Meeting with the OSCE Secretary General, Amb. Thomas Greminger

Amb. Greminger, alongside the Director of the OSCE Transnational Threat Department (TNTD) Ms. Rasa Ostrauskaite, welcomed the CCT to the OSCE Secretariat and praised the OSCE PA for striving to add value in this key field of the international security agenda. After introducing some key terrorism-related challenges faced by participating States in the OSCE region, he called on delegates to see the



situation as an opportunity, rather than a crisis. He also stressed the importance of adopting a truly cross-dimensional approach. The Secretary General underlined the need to provide greater financial support for the OSCE – and, specifically, for the TNTD and the OSCE Field Operations - to more adequately support its participating States in addressing the threats posed by terrorism and violent extremism. **CCT Chair Voridis** thanked Amb. Greminger for his warm welcome

and explained that the strength of the committee rests in the wealth and breadth of each member's expertise. He also underlined the capacity of parliamentarians to promote innovative counter-terrorism legislation, influence the public opinion and reach out to local communities. Subsequently, participants exchanged views on the likely focus of the OSCE PA contribution and reiterated the importance of forging a strong partnership between the governmental and parliamentary sides of the OSCE.

Participation in the OSCE Security Committee

After having had the opportunity to observe a round of negotiations on a new Ministerial Draft Decision on Countering and Preventing Terrorism and Violent Extremism, the **CCT Chair, Mr. Makis Voridis**, gave a presentation on the committee's approach towards countering terrorism. The speech underlined the challenges that our societies face from the evolving nature of terrorism. Mr. Voridis emphasized the contribution that Parliamentarians can make in response to this challenge, reiterating that the OSCE PA has focused on this issue since 2001. In fact, the OSCE PA has adopted many related resolutions and has supported the work of the OSCE PA Special Representative on Anti-Terrorism. He then provided an overview of the Committee's objectives and future work plan, and encouraged participating States to consider joint initiatives in this field.

Meeting with the Director of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre, Amb. Marcel Peško and the Chief of the OSCE Situation/Communication Centre, Mr. Luca Damiano Govi

Amb. Peško briefed the CCT on the work of the OSCE to prevent conflicts from arising as well as to facilitate the attainment of lasting and comprehensive political settlements of existing conflicts. He noted that the OSCE also promotes peacebuilding and post-conflict rehabilitation. Against this backdrop, he explained that the OSCE currently deploys 15 Field Operations, each designing its

counter-terrorism initiatives to meet their host countries specific needs, for instance through capacity-building and legislative reform. Moreover, he underlined the challenges of operating such a large mission as the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine within such a fragile security environment. In



conclusion, Ambassador Peško encouraged CCT members to visit relevant OSCE Field Operations in the Balkans and Central Asia, pledging to support the organization with such visits. **Mr. Govi** explained that the OSCE Situation/Communications Room continuously monitors developments in the OSCE area that affect security and stability. In the context of countering terrorism, he noted that his department compiles relevant open sources and distributes them to interested stakeholders

in a daily Update of Radicalization and Terrorism Threats as well as spot media blasts. The **members of the CCT** welcomed the proposal to undertake assessment visits to selected OSCE Field Operations - both to learn more about the situation on the ground and better profile the important work being conducted there - and thanked the Conflict Prevention Centre for its readiness to support them in this effort.

Meeting with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, Mr. Harlem Désir

Mr. Désir underlined the need to respect human rights and, particularly, the freedom of expression in the pursuit of maintaining security of the state and its citizens. He explained that excessive restrictions on hate speech and terrorist propaganda may have negative repercussions on counter-terrorism efforts. He also noted that there is a fine, but real line between reporting on terrorist groups and spreading terrorist propaganda. The **Committee members** thanked Mr. Désir for his interesting insights, underscore their strong commitment to uphold human rights and fundamental freedoms in their work as well as indicated their readiness to join targeted media campaigns.

Meeting with the OSCE Transnational Threats Department (TNTD)

The Head of the OSCE Action against Terrorism Unit, **Amb. Avakov**, briefly introduced the work of the TNTD, noting that it is the principle focal point, informational resource, and implementation partner of OSCE counter-terrorism activities. He went on to explain that by combining cross-dimensional threats such as terrorism and organized crime under one roof, they can operate more effectively across the region. Amb. Avakov stressed the importance of their partnership with various stakeholders (e.g. UNODC) and their presence in the field. In subsequent presentations, TNTD experts explained that direct evidence has not been established that links the drug trade - or other organized crime – to terrorism and insurgency. However, while lone-terrorist actors do not need massive financial support, groups which aspire to control large amounts of terrorists need such great financial resources that they have often relied on organized crime. In terms of the terrorism recruitment process and logistics, it was noted that criminals and terrorist groups often recruit from the same pool of people. In response, the TNTD provides policy development guidance, capacity-building training and

technical advice in areas such as VERLT, cyber-crime and border management. For instance, the ATU is diligently working to assist participating States in implementing Advance Passenger Information systems as well as OSCE cyber/ICT security confidence building measures. The *Committee members* welcomed the experts' presentations and took note of proposals to review the implementation of relevant the OSCE counter-terrorism commitments.

Meeting with the United National Office on Drugs and Crime Executive Director

In welcoming the Committee members, *Mr. Fedotov* immediately stressed the important role that Parliamentarians play in their capacity as law-makers. He briefly outlined UNODC's counter-terrorism efforts and underlined the need to strengthen mechanisms for promoting the ratification and implementation of the international counter-terrorism conventions. He also highlighted that they enjoy a very solid co-operation with the OSCE, duly completing each other's work. The *CCT Chair, Mr. Voridis* thanked the Executive Director and



praised UNODC's efforts to strengthen the international counter-terrorism legal framework. He explained that the CCT is currently assessing the needs on the ground and exploring how it can best add value in this field. For instance, it could take actions in promoting the ratification and implementation of relevant international treaties as well as in pressuring governments to conduct regular assessments of the implemented provisions.

Meeting with the Chief of the Terrorism Prevention Branch of the UNODC, Mr. Mauro Miedico and Officer-in-Charge of the Implementation Support Section, Ms. Dolgor Solongo

The CCT also met with the Chief of the Terrorism Prevention Branch (TPB) and the Officer-in-Charge of the Implementation Support Section of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).



Mr. Miedico presented the work carried out by the UNODC TPB, focusing on the legal and technical assistance that they provide to Member States. He noted that their legal framework consists of 19 conventions and protocols, which they are actively working to have ratified and implemented by all Member States. He also briefed the CCT on their capacity-building activities with criminal justice actors, which includes trainings and programs aimed at sharing best practices. He stressed the critical need to develop a

system of rules-based responses with full respect of human rights as well as support the engagement of policymakers and legislators. Mr. Miedico pointed out that MPs can assist UNODC in the following areas: (1) ratification of conventions and protocols; (2) adoption of legislation and criminalization of certain acts; (3) empowerment of state institutions, i.e. with budgetary elements; (4) oversight of security agencies and law-enforcement; and (5) development of a broader vision of security. *Ms. Solongo* outlined their existing partnerships with other inter-parliamentary institutions and emphasized their eagerness to expand their co-operation to include regional platforms such as the OSCE PA. *CCT members* used this opportunity to seek clarification on several topics, including on the phenomena of FTFs.

Meeting with the Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council, Amb. Clemens Koja, Deputy Permanent Representative of Italy to the OSCE, Mr. Luca Fratini and Third Secretary of the Slovak Delegation to the OSCE, Mr. Michal Vančo

Amb. Koja presented the approach of the Austrian Chairmanship towards countering terrorism and preventing VERLT, calling on the CCT to contribute to the on-going OSCE efforts in this context. *Mr. Luca Fratini* explained that the incoming Italian Chairmanship will continue to prioritize cross-dimensional challenges, such as terrorism and migration, in 2018. He emphasized that the CCT should build upon the expertise of the OSCE Field Operations and work in synergy with all 57 participating States and 11 Partners for Co-operation. All interlocutors welcomed the OSCE PA initiative, expressing their willingness to build a strong partnership with the CCT in the coming years. The *Committee members* congratulated the Austrian Chairmanship for its strong focus on countering terrorism and violent terrorism throughout 2017 and manifested eagerness to strengthen their co-operation with the incoming Chairmanships in 2018-2019, including by regularly informing the OSCE decision-making bodies on their work.



Meeting with the Co-Founder of DERAD, Mr. Moussa Al-Hassan Diaw and Deputy Director of the Extremism Information Center

Mr. Moussa Al-Hassan Diaw explained that DERAD is an Austrian initiative which works in prisons and supports persons who have been convicted of terrorism-related offences in order to foster a sense of fact-based understanding that could lead to deradicalize. DERAD provides individual counselling and mentoring and, when former terrorists are released from prison, facilitate their re-integration into the society. *Ms. Myassa Kraitt* provided an overview of the Extremism Information Centre, which is a nationwide contact point for questions about extremism. She pointed out that they offer a free helpline, personal counselling sessions and further education. Mr. Kraitt also provided a visual explanation of how an individual can be progressively radicalized. The *CCT members* asked several questions to both interlocutors, thanked them for their hands-on efforts in this critical field, and stressed the importance of regularly exchanging notes with civil society.

WAY FORWARD

Possible actions to reinforce governmental-parliamentary complementarity:

- CCT to regularly inform the OSCE decision-making bodies (Permanent Council, or its subsidiary bodies) about its efforts and contribute to the OSCE Counter-Terrorism Conference.
- CCT to invite representatives of the OSCE Executive Structures and/or Chairmanship-in-Office to contribute to its meetings and participate in its field visits.
- CCT to liaise with the OSCE Secretariat in view of organizing field visits to relevant OSCE Field Operations (e.g. in South East Europe and Central Asia).
- CCT to liaise with UNODC in the framework of their work with inter-parliamentary fora (e.g. IPU).

Possible future CCT contributions:

- Raise awareness in capitals about the need to (1) politically and financially support OSCE's work, (2) increase international co-operation and (3) promote the full implementation of relevant counter-terrorism conventions.
- Assess the needs on the ground and better understand the latest terrorism trends.
- Assess existing policy recommendations (i.e. OSCE PA Resolutions on Countering-Terrorism and/or OSCE Ministerial Council Decisions on Countering-Terrorism) and consider new ones.
- Consider engaging in targeted joint initiatives with the OSCE and UNODC, including media campaigns (e.g. OSCE #CVE youth campaign) and other technical assistance activities (e.g. legal reform, education, capacity building and international co-operation).

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

Mr. VORIDIS, Makis (Greece) – Chair of the CCT

Mr. CRUSNIÈRE, Stéphane (Belgium) – Vice-Chair of the CCT

Ms. KATSARAVA, Sofio (Georgia) – Vice-Chair of the CCT

Ms. BIRCHALL, Ana (Romania) – Member of the CCT

Ms. CHAMBERS, Lisa (Ireland) – Member of the CCT

Mr. COSIDO, Ignacio (Spain) – Member of the CCT

Mr. MEDIU, Fatmir (Albania) – Member of the CCT

Mr. POPOV, Igor (Ukraine) – Member of the CCT

Mr. TIERSKY, Alex (USA) – Staff of the US delegation to the OSCE PA

Mr. MONTELLA, Roberto – Secretary General of the OSCE PA

Amb. NOTHELLE, Andreas – Special Representative of the OSCE PA

Mr. BONABELLO, Marco – Staff of the OSCE PA

Ms. NODVIN, Leah – Staff of the OSCE PA

Ms. PAVLOVA, Mariia – Staff of the OSCE PA