

**ADDRESS TO THE SECURITY COMMITTEE OF THE  
OSCE PERMANENT COUNCIL**

**By the Chair of the OSCE PA's Ad Hoc  
Committee on Countering Terrorism**

**Makis Voridis (MP, Greece)**

Vienna, 13 November 2017

*Check against delivery.*

Dear Chairman of the Security Committee,  
Your Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,

Thank you for inviting me to address this distinguished forum in my capacity as Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly.

As the threat of terrorism evolves and lone-wolf attacks become more frequent, it is imperative that we strengthen our efforts to design holistic, comprehensive and creative mechanisms to prevent and respond to radicalization and extremism of all kinds. I was particularly glad to witness your dedicated efforts to negotiate an OSCE Ministerial Decision on Violent Extremism and Radicalization Leading to Terrorism (VERLT), and I am convinced that the OSCE PA could also contribute to this noble exercise.

As parliamentarians, we have a commitment to our constituencies to be at the very forefront of all counter-terrorism initiatives and efforts to prevent extremism and radicalization. This is what voters in our respective OSCE countries demand from us. To be vigilant, to be active and to be innovative in the ways we protect our societies from the scourge of terrorism.

To meet this commitment, as parliamentarians we are called to shape innovative legislation and policies that strike a delicate balance between security and privacy; between effective counter-terrorism efforts and the respect for fundamental freedoms that underpin our democratic way of life. In addition, we usually provide oversight of the security sector and actively promote dialogue between national governments, local communities and civil society on the ground. Finally, we engage in parliamentary diplomacy and often act as “champions” of the OSCE principles throughout the region.

In view of this, the OSCE PA at its 26th Annual Session in Minsk established the Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism (CCT). The idea behind the Committee is rooted in a longstanding ambition of the PA to increase our contribution in this field. Through this Committee we hope to provide a more defined parliamentary perspective to the OSCE work, which is already quite remarkable thanks to its numerous projects in the field and here in its Vienna headquarters.

The CCT currently consists of 11 parliamentarians from 11 different OSCE participating States. As such, we are a community of parliamentarians who can play a crucial role in countering terrorism. In particular, we will strive to:

- advocate for advancement and harmonization of relevant legislative and policy frameworks,
- promote the exchange of best practices and lessons learned,
- bolster global efforts to prevent violent extremism & radicalization, and;

- enhance public awareness in the OSCE region.

To meet these objectives, our Committee has developed an ambitious work plan, beginning with the visit currently underway. Continuing on this momentum, over the next few months we also plan to participate in the Parliamentary Forum of the Parliamentarians for Global Action on "*Prevention Violent Extremism and Mass Atrocities: The Role of Parliamentarians*" in Italy in late November. At the same time, we are already considering several field visits with the aim of improving our understanding of threat perceptions on the ground and forging stronger partnerships with key stakeholders. The findings of such important visits shall definitely inform and shape our future efforts in this field.

Ultimately, we would like to complement the work already conducted by the OSCE and possibly add some value – which we believe lies precisely in our role as parliamentarians – through concrete initiatives. This is why we decided to start our work from here, in Vienna, where we can learn more in detail about ongoing OSCE efforts.

Earlier this morning we met with the OSCE Secretary General and later on we will exchange notes with the Transnational Threat Department and the Conflict Prevention Center. Tomorrow we shall pay visit to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and meet with its Executive Director, as well as explore opportunities for co-operation with the current and incoming OSCE Chairmanships. Finally, local civil society representatives will share insights into their efforts and challenges.

I am confident that this two-day visit should pave the way to more concerted action, based on our mutual objective to counter terrorism in all its forms, as well as on our comparative strengths. If we work together, we can achieve a lot.

For instance, we could consider the development of innovative model legislation – or policy guidelines – in critical areas of counter-terrorism, such as the proportional use of police powers, or the prevention of radicalization through the web. We could also assess innovative ways to enhance co-operation among security services or design far-reaching media and awareness raising campaigns. Through such initiatives we could advocate for the rights and interests of the victims and their families and give a voice to those who have been de-radicalized, thereby transforming these persons into “beacons of hope.”

Finally, we could promote a better understanding of new terrorism-related trends. In fact, we have already begun such efforts. During our recent visit to Morocco we learnt about the outstanding efforts of local authorities to prevent violent extremism and radicalization, for instance by promoting a moderate and balanced version of Islam. On that occasion, we also learned about the alleged progressive relocation of defeated Daesh militia from the Syrian-Iraqi context to Libya. A worrisome development, if confirmed.

Colleagues and friends, I am eager to share with you this initiative, not only because I am truly passionate about the subject matter, but also due to the potential co-operation stemming from this forum. If you have any proposal as to how this co-operation can be strengthened, I welcome you to share your thoughts with us now, or approach the OSCE PA International Secretariat or Liaison Office at a later stage.

Again, I would like to thank the Norwegian delegation for graciously allowing me to address this distinguished committee and I am eager to continue with the remainder of what I am sure will be a very fruitful visit.

Thank you very much for your attention.