

**7th REPORT BY THE CO-CHAIR OF THE OSCE PA AD HOC
COMMITTEE ON COUNTERING TERRORISM,**

**Delivered by Mr. Reinhold Lopatka
Member of the CCT**

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Mr. President,

Mr. Secretary General,

Distinguished Colleagues,

It is my honour to address you today as truly committed member of the OSCE PA Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism and briefly update you about our recent efforts and activities planned for this year.

Before doing so, I would like to pay tribute to the former Chair of our Committee, Mr. Abid Raja, who was appointed as Minister of Culture and Equality in the new Norwegian government last month. I congratulate him for this important success, and I wish him the best of luck in his future endeavours.

Since our last meeting in Marrakesh in October, the CCT has continued actively engaging in **numerous international events** and **deepening partnerships with key**

stakeholders to support and profile our Assembly's counter-terrorism efforts. Please allow me to tell you more about our latest accomplishments.

Notably, earlier this month we signed a dedicated **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the United Nations Office for Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT)** in New York. This is a particularly important achievement, as we are effectively the first regional parliamentary forum to sign such a technical co-operation agreement with the United Nations, which leads global counter-terrorism efforts. Based on this MoU, we will work more closely and regularly consult with the UN on matters related to terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism, of course building on the specific role of parliamentarians. This agreement has, in fact, considerably raised the stakes of our engagement and will prove instrumental to expand significantly the reach of our action.

Moreover, we have actively contributed to a **Counter-Terrorism Conference of the Parliamentary Assembly for the Mediterranean** at the Italian Parliament in Rome last November and to the **3rd OSCE-wide Seminar on Passenger Data Exchange**, organized in co-operation with UNOCT in Vienna in October.

We have also officially briefed the OSCE participating States about the OSCE PA *Resolution on Challenges Related to the Return and Relocation of Foreign Terrorist Fighters* and our ground-breaking *Parliamentary Oversight Initiative on Border Security and Information Sharing* at the **OSCE Security Committee** last November in Vienna.

Similarly, I have personally contributed to the **OSCE-UNOCT Regional High-level Conference on Foreign Terrorist Fighters**, which took place in Vienna last week and brought together over 300 leading world experts and policy makers. During my address on behalf of the Committee, I encouraged participants to actively

engage with their national parliaments on preventing and disrupting Foreign Terrorist Fighters' travels. Once again, the outcomes of our parliamentary *Oversight Initiative on Strengthening Border Security and Information Sharing in the OSCE region* were very pertinent.

I am proud to inform you that this practical example of our oversight potential incited great interest among the participants of the above-cited international conferences. More in general, active participation in all these events is crucial to develop and maintain a trustworthy network of partnerships, starting from the OSCE executive structures and continuing with relevant external counterparts.

Lastly, I would like to mention that, in January, our Committee conducted an **official visit to Norway** which served as an excellent opportunity to learn more about how the Norwegian society responded to the terrorist attacks of 22 July 2011, which resulted in the death of 77 individuals. The visit, initiated by our former Chair and hosted by the Norwegian Parliament, was a particularly moving yet highly educational experience for our members. In addressing the consequences of such tragic events, Norway demonstrated outstanding resilience and strong commitment to its democratic values. Improving overall security without jeopardizing citizens' fundamental freedoms remains a key challenge in this context. The important lessons learned in Norway will inform future policy efforts of the CCT.

Before concluding, I would like to say a few words on the **way forward**. I am confident that the signing of the previously mentioned MoU with UNOCT will not remain simply a formal agreement between two organizations. On the contrary, I believe that it will result in several concrete follow-up actions, which will build on our *aquis* and the special role of parliamentarians.

For example, we will hold the **first ever coordination meeting of all parliamentary assemblies under UN aegis** in New York on 27 March 2020. Moreover, we are planning to contribute to UN-led efforts to develop much needed **model legislation** in the field of preventing and disrupting Foreign Terrorist Fighters' travels.

In addition, the OSCE Albanian Chairmanship expects us to traditionally contribute to the **OSCE-wide Counter-Terrorism Conference**, which will take place in Tirana on 4-5 May 2020.

Finally, we will carefully ponder how to best follow-up on our own recent efforts through a **new resolution** to be presented and debated during our Annual Session in Vancouver.

To conclude, I would like to thank both to our President and Secretary General, whose steady support has been essential in achieving everything I have pointed out.

Thank you!