

OSCE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY, 13 FEBRUARY 2014:

**PRESENTATION BY AMBASSADOR DOMINIC SCHROEDER,
CHAIR OF THE SECURITY COMMITTEE OF THE OSCE PC**

Thank you, Mr Chairman, for giving me the opportunity of welcoming our distinguished Parliamentary colleagues here today and being able to share with them our plans and priorities for the Security Committee this year.

When the incoming Swiss Chairmanship approached me last year to offer the chairmanship of the Security Committee, I rapidly did some research to find out more about what I might be letting myself in for. Not just the modalities of committee organisation, but also the substance of the issues we discuss. It was not difficult to find material. Everywhere I looked in our globally-connected world, there was evidence of transnational threats counter-balancing every opportunity. It is a relatively new but increasingly relevant and growing area for the OSCE.

In 2009 the Ministerial Council mandated the Security Committee, an informal committee that meets on a monthly basis and reports to the Permanent Council to expand its discussions on non-military and political aspects of security to encompass the ever-evolving risks stemming from transnational threats such as terrorism and organised crime,. The Committee's deliberations and findings guide and support the work of the Transnational Threats Department, created in 2011 through the merger of the units dealing with transnational threats – the Action against Terrorism Unit, the Special Police Matters Unit and the Borders Unit.

The Security Committee's priorities for 2014 stem in part from those of the Chair-in-Office. They also take into account the various, and sometimes conflicting priorities of participating States. I have just published our draft Work Programme for 2014, which will be presented and discussed at next Monday's Security Committee meeting, and am delighted to be able to share some of the details with you:

Our first priority relates to the ever-growing and pervasive threat of terrorism. We intend to devote at least two sessions to this issue, focusing on countering terrorist financing including kidnap for ransom, and secondly on countering radicalisation leading to terrorism, including the return of foreign fighters from

theatres of war such as Syria – all highly topical issues, which will also feature in the Counter-Terrorism conference hosted by the CiO in Interlaken in April. Kidnap for ransom has also attracted the attention of the UN, and UNSCR 2133, agreed unanimously on 27 January, the first standalone resolution tackling the issue, calls on all Member States to prevent terrorists from benefiting directly or indirectly from ransom payments. Radicalisation and the return of foreign fighters is as much a concern in Central Asia as it is in Western Europe, and how best to tackle and prevent this relatively new phenomenon is a topic of great interest to us all – not least as evidenced by the subject matter of your own special debate tomorrow.

The increasing weight given to the subject of counter-terrorism in the OSCE in Vienna, both as a self-standing issue and as a complicating factor in other facets of our work – whether conflict prevention, the rights of minorities, freedom of religion, belief or speech – is mirrored by your own debates and discussions in the Parliamentary Assembly. In this context I would like to warmly welcome your recent decision to create a Special Representative on Anti-Terrorism and look forward to fruitful discussions with Nikolay Kovalev on how our two OSCE bodies, and the Secretariat's Transnational Threats Department can best collaborate to advance our common objectives.

Although terrorism may steal the spotlight, it is not the only transnational threat we face, nor the only one where the OSCE is equipped to offer support and guidance. At least one meeting will be devoted to policing issues, with a likely focus on community policing and gender-related issues such as preventing sexual violence against women – I have taken the liberty as chair of the Security Committee this year to introduce a subject dear to the UK's own foreign policy priorities, and which is supported by a number of participating States.

Border security and management is an area in which the OSCE has developed a particular reputation and expertise and our discussions on this topic will be focused on Central Asia given the particular importance of that region in view of the 2014 transitions in neighbouring Afghanistan. I look forward to working with your Special Representative on Border Co-operation, Ignacio Sanchez Amor, on this topic. Counter-narcotics is another area where OSCE activity in this region is particularly relevant and will be the subject of a Swiss-organised conference in October. There will also be, of course, the annual meetings of police and borders experts, both of which will be held in Vienna this year which should help facilitate attendance by delegations from the participating States.

A particular strength of the OSCE approach to security is its ability to harness a cross-dimensional and inclusive approach and we intend to make better use of this expertise in discussions in the Committee. We will be inviting speakers who can offer a human or economic/environmental dimension perspective on classic first dimension issues, as well as inviting speakers from relevant OSCE institutions in order to obtain a more rounded view of the problem and potential integrated ways forward for OSCE activity. This approach is in line with the recently published mapping study by the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF) which calls for a more coherent and holistic approach to the OSCE's role in security sector governance and reform. As the Parliamentary Assembly is the main awareness-raising OSCE body on Parliamentary oversight of armed, police and security forces, we would encourage you to support and encourage the OSCE's efforts in this direction.

Although the OSCE may be the world's largest regional organisation, it is not the only one conducting activities on countering transnational threats in the area. It is therefore crucial that the OSCE does not duplicate the work of other organisations but rather complements and adds to them. I will therefore be continuing the tradition of inviting external experts from the likes of UNODC and other international or regional agencies to share their experience and work with us to help foster synergies and potential cooperation.

But I do not only want to focus on external co-ordination. We should also be considering implementation of our existing commitments within the OSCE and I will therefore also be inviting more representatives from the OSCE Secretariat and Field Offices to share their experience with us, and to invite representatives from the participating States to talk about best practice from their perspective. In this way we might see better what is working well and might be expanded, and what is less successful and might be dropped or changed.

Finally, but certainly not least, I want to touch on one, perhaps the most significant achievement at the Ministerial Council at Kyiv - endorsement of the first ever set of regional Confidence Building Measures in the area of cyber/ICT security. These initial CBMs are voluntary and are designed to start the process of building contacts, trust and mutual comprehension between national experts. This is an area where the OSCE is spearheading best practice and my US colleague, Ambassador Dan Baer, will, I am pleased to say, continue chairing the Informal Working Group on cyber in order to take forward implementation

of the CBMs we have already agreed and to start work on formulating a second set. The Security Committee will be working closely in support of his efforts.

Transnational threats should engender a spirit of cooperation and consensus amongst participating States and OSCE bodies that is not always so easy to find in other areas. I hope that the Parliamentary Assembly will be able to support our work and highlight its successes so that together we can advance the OSCE's work on transnational threats in a relevant and beneficial direction. I look forward to working with you all, and in particular with the recently elected Chair of the General Committee on Political Affairs and Security, Makis Voridis, and the Special Representatives on Anti-Terrorism and Border Cooperation, Nikolay Kovalev and Ignacio Sanchez Amor.