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**Presentation by Ambassador Cristian Istrate,
the Chairperson of the Security Committee,
to the Political Affairs and Security General Committee of the OSCE
Parliamentary Assembly**

19 February 2015

Mr. Chairperson,

Honorable Members of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly,

High Commissioner,

Mr. Coordinator,

It is a special honor for me to address the Political Affairs and Security General Committee of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, in my capacity as Chairperson of the Security Committee. I am mostly honored to present the priorities of our Work Program before a body which not only provides an effective platform for the parliamentarians to exchange views on OSCE political and security affairs, but also plays an important role in ensuring that the expectations of the citizens from Vancouver to Vladivostok are well reflected on our respective agendas.

2015 started with the heinous terrorist attacks in France and continued with barbaric executions by ISIL and more recently with another terrorist attack in Copenhagen. While we deplore victims we cannot but emphasize the ever evolving pattern of the terrorist threat. Expectations are high for OSCE to bring relevant contribution to counter terrorism in its multiple, cross-dimensional aspects, mindful at the same time of the need to defend the Organization values and fundamental principles.

The Security Committee has a special role in bringing up the OSCE contribution in that regard, and I believe we shall succeed only if we take a

meaningful, balanced and constructive approach in our work. When I presented the priorities of the Security Committee this year at the Permanent Council meeting on 12 February the reaction of participating States was of overwhelming support for the need to redouble efforts in order to further consolidate OSCE framework and relevance in countering terrorism.

Let me welcome the ongoing White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism and where the OSCE was represented by its Secretary General. The Summit addressed concrete steps to develop community-oriented approaches to counter hateful extremist ideologies that radicalize, recruit or incite to violence. Also, it focused on identifying ways to build upon ongoing initiatives aimed at countering extremist narratives as well as finding new and innovative solutions to the challenges posed by violent extremists, especially online. Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Leads to Terrorism (VERLT) is an important niche of action for the OSCE and I will seek to integrate the outcomes of such initiatives into the Security Committee's activity in order to ensure that OSCE's efforts to counter terrorism are in sync with global demarches.

We have to build upon what has been achieved at the Basel Ministerial Council, namely the Declaration on the OSCE role in countering the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters and the Declaration on the kidnapping for ransom and hostage taking by terrorist groups. The Security Committee will discuss in two meetings the latest trends of the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters, with a special focus on violent extremism that leads to terrorism (VERLT) and on countering the financing of terrorism in connection with the kidnapping for ransom. A couple of days ago, I circulated under my responsibility an inventory of main commitments featuring in the Basel Declarations, substantiated by undertakings assumed previously by participating States, which together constitute what may be called the OSCE acquis in that regard. The purpose of the inventory is to stimulate voluntary national reporting on the implementation of existing commitments. Sharing individual perspectives and best practices has indeed the potential to highlight topics of common concern which can be reflected in new decisions at the Belgrade Ministerial meeting.

Given the cross-dimensional aspects of terrorism, together with the Serbian CiO and the other two Chairs of the Human Dimension Committee and the Economic and Environment Committee, we will promote an integrated approach and call for a tri-Committee meeting to countering terrorism on 16 June 2015. Interaction between the three committees will continue in the course of the year, since other topics are also of cross-dimensional nature.

In this regard, I would like to welcome the focus on transnational threats put by the Parliamentary Assembly at its last annual session in Baku, in the special debate on "The Rise of Extremism, Radicalism and Xenophobia: Challenges for the OSCE Region". The outcome of the debate constituted a

valuable contribution by the PA to combating these threats across the OSCE area. In the same vein, it is worthwhile mentioning the adoption of the Resolution on the OSCE's Further Engagement with Afghanistan.

Alongside inputs that our distinguished parliamentarians may contribute, it is very important to involve the autonomous institutions and the field presences of the OSCE in our debate. They are among the main assets of our Organization and can help formulating OSCE responses to various transnational threats in a comprehensive and action-oriented manner.

Due attention will be given to the interaction with other regional and international organizations, starting from the premise that OSCE, as a regional arrangement under Chapter 8 of the UN Charter, should deliver on the niche in which it can bring real added value, creating synergies and enhancing cooperation without duplicating the efforts of other international institutions.

At the first thematic meeting this year of the Security Committee, we discussed about the outcome of the cooperation between the OSCE and UNODC in fighting transnational threats and its follow up. It came out of the meeting that VERLT and foreign fighters are among areas which both organizations deem as having potential for enhanced cooperation. The same holds true for tackling transnational organized crime by involving more the judiciary and improving access to justice. An important conference, to be organized jointly by Monaco, UNODC, OSCE and INTERPOL in June this year, will provide the platform for deeper engagement with OSCE partners from across the Mediterranean in tackling TNTs.

At future meetings of the Security Committee we will focus on preventing youth radicalization, and on the situation in Afghanistan. Or we will highlight the cooperation among international actors in fighting transnational threats, with an emphasis on border management in connection with gender perspective in Central Asia, bearing in mind the UNSCR 1325 on women, peace and security.

Beside the overriding issue of terrorism, cyber capacity building, multiethnic policing, trafficking in human beings and its connections with illegal migration and organized crime, illicit drugs, security sector reform and governance, with a focus on anti-corruption programmes and guidelines developed by the OSCE, will be given particular attention this year in the activity of the Security Committee, in line with the Serbian Chairmanship's priorities. We shall also engage in preparations of important events that the Chairmanship will organize in 2015, including the Annual Security Review Conference and OSCE-wide Conferences on Security Sector Reform or Counter Terrorism.

Distinguished audience,

Against the backdrop of an extremely serious crisis of European security, reflected in the developments taking place in and around Ukraine and the lack of

progress in the resolution of protracted conflicts, we must take a broader perspective and at the same time strengthen our resolve to work towards creating a free, democratic and indivisible security community, rooted in common goals, shared commitments, free of conflicts and dividing lines, no matter how far this objective looks like at present.

Heading towards the annual meeting of the OSCE PA in Helsinki, the place where 40 years ago the Final Act was adopted, I wish you every success in your debates and express the hope that all participating States will be able to once again unite around the reaffirmation and implementation of the OSCE fundamental principles and values. The invaluable input that parliamentarians could bring in that regard will definitely reinforce ownership of the process of building the 21st century security architecture by the people and for the people.