



**ADDRESS BY MAKIS VORIDIS, CHAIR OF THE OSCE
PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY AD HOC COMMITTEE ON
COUNTERING TERRORISM, TO THE JOINT SESSION OF THE
THREE COMMITTEES**

To be checked against delivery!

Vienna, 23 February 2018

Dear President,

Esteemed Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a privilege for me to address this Joint Session of the Three General Committees in my capacity as Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism. At the outset, I would like to thank President Tsereteli for his trust and support, and all of you for showing interest in our work, which underscores the relevance of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's engagement in this field.

Terrorism poses a major threat to international security and regional stability. As such, we have a shared responsibility towards the people of our nations to prevent and respond to radicalization and extremism of all kinds. To meet this commitment, we are called to develop effective counter-terrorism responses in line with those fundamental freedoms that underpin our democratic way of living.

During its 2017 Annual Session held in Minsk the OSCE PA has established the Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism (CCT), which today consists of 11 parliamentarians from 11 different OSCE participating States. The idea behind this initiative was to build on the previous work of the Assembly and further OSCE's parliamentary perspective in this field. In the first stage of our work we have been focused on shaping a better **understanding of the latest trends and needs**, as well as on **promoting strategic partnerships** with internal and external stakeholders. Later, we will strive to **develop forward-looking policy recommendations** building on identified best practices and innovative approaches. Ultimately, our objective is to focus on those areas where we may add more value.

Dear Colleagues,

I will now briefly update you on the **work conducted by the CCT thus far**, which I have clustered around our key mandated tasks for your convenience.

First, we have been asked to consider the trends of terrorism and explore innovative approaches towards countering terrorism in the OSCE region.

During these first seven months, the Committee took part in the OSCE PA visit to Morocco and conducted an official visit to Belgium. Both visits, which included meetings with high-level stakeholders in the governmental and non-governmental sectors, have proven extremely useful. We have gained a better understanding of the current trends of terrorism as well as of specific security threats that states and local entities face when addressing violent extremism and radicalization. Moreover, these activities have highlighted some key challenges lying ahead - such as the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters, the proportional use of investigative powers as well as radicalization on the web – and fostered a reflection on how parliamentarians can best contribute in these areas.

Second, we have been mandated to promote inter-parliamentary dialogue and the exchange of best practices and lessons learned on issues related to countering terrorism.

Several CCT members contributed to an Inter-Parliamentary Seminar in Rabat, Morocco, on “the spread of violent extremism in the OSCE region and the suitable strategy to impede the attraction and recruitment of youth by terrorist organization.” The seminar underscored the critical role that religious communities play in preventing the radicalization of youth and extremism of all kinds. The Committee also participated in the Annual Meeting of the Milan Forum for Parliamentary Action in “Preventing Violent Extremism and Mass Atrocities.” The

Forum aimed at mobilizing parliamentarians to design and implement effective, yet human-rights-oriented policies to respond to marginalizing ideologies. Both initiatives were well attended and offered a unique opportunity to exchange key lessons learned while presenting the OSCE PA's approach in this context.

Finally, we have been called upon to work closely with the OSCE executive structures and relevant external partners on issues related to countering terrorism to improve the visibility and impact of the OSCE action. In November 2017 the CCT convened in Vienna to consolidate its partnerships with the governmental side of the OSCE and UNODC. The visit allowed Committee members to learn more about the work already conducted by these organizations in view of promoting better coordination and greater synergy while avoiding duplication. During the visit to the OSCE Headquarters, the Committee held meetings with Secretary General Greminger, the Security Committee, the Transnational Threats Department, the Conflict Prevention Center and the Representative on Freedom of the Media. At UNODC, our members met with Executive Director Fedotov and his experts to underline the centrality of the UN global counter-terrorism framework, and particularly of its 16 legally-binding conventions currently in force. The recent visit to Belgium also provided a good opportunity to learn more about the EU counter-terrorism approach.

Mr. President,

Despite being at the very outset of our work, these first initiatives have enabled us to discern some **recurring themes** that should be further explored in the future. In the long run, these may represent areas where the OSCE PA could add some value.

First: **coordination and information-sharing** between different counter-terrorism stakeholders at all levels is proving to be increasingly complex, in part also due to the growing number of actors in this field. The development of shared databases and effective coordination mechanisms is therefore critical.

Second: **striking a “functional balance” between counter-terrorism security measures**, including restrictive/administrative ones, **and the respect for human rights and the rule of law** is among the biggest challenges our participating States are currently facing. While there is no “one size fits all solution”, it is important not to compromise on fundamental freedoms in the pursuit of security.

Third: there is a widespread need for a better understanding of the **underlying causes of radicalization**, along with its processes and channels, including among selected categories of society such as youth and detainees. Similarly, it is important to assess the effectiveness of our integration, de-radicalization and rehabilitation policies. While a more individualized approach is often advisable, measuring the “success” of these policies remains a challenge.

Fourth: the OSCE participating and partner States have already been called to increasingly address security threats related to **foreign terrorist fighters**, including their return and rehabilitation, often without a coherent/consistent legal framework.

Fifth: the risks stemming from the **improper use of new digital technologies** and devices are quite concerning, including the role of social media platforms in fostering radical and violent ideologies, as well as terrorism recruitment.

Sixth: **victims of terrorism** and their families deserve more attention and should be at the very core of targeted support policies in the OSCE region.

Turning briefly to **our future activities**, the CCT will continue to focus on the identification and better conceptualization of these challenges, as well as on the consolidation of strategic partnerships with key stakeholders, for instance the UN Office for Counter-Terrorism. The Committee plans to conduct additional field visits, notably to selected OSCE Field Operations in South-East Europe and Central Asia, and contribute to several international experts' events, both inside and outside the OSCE framework. Finally, the CCT will consider proposing a draft resolution on the fight against terrorism and violent extremism in view of our 2018 Annual Session.

In **conclusion**, let me emphasize that we must stay united to consolidate our efforts in the fight against terrorism. As parliamentarians, we play an important role by developing effective legislation, ensuring oversight of security services and promoting coordination and mutual trust at all levels. Despite the long way ahead of us, I firmly believe that the CCT has the potential to fulfill its ambitious mandate and I am proud to lead this noble effort. Thank you!