



AD HOC COMMITTEE ON COUNTERING TERRORISM

**SPEECH OF THE VICE-CHAIR OF THE OSCE PA AD HOC
COMMITTEE ON COUNTERING TERRORISM,**

Aude Bono-Vandorme

at the

Closing Session

of the

**2021 OSCE-wide Counter-Terrorism Conference on “Reinforcing
a Comprehensive Approach to Preventing and Countering
Terrorism and VERLT in a Changing Landscape”**

Wednesday, 21 April 2021, 17:30– 18:00 (CEST)

(Online)

Distinguished Chairperson,

Your Excellencies,

Dear Experts,

I am truly honoured to represent the 323 members of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE PA) before such an important audience.

To begin with, I would like to join previous speakers in **congratulating the Swedish Chairmanship and the OSCE Secretariat** on successfully pulling together this timely event. And thank you for inviting the **OSCE PA to contribute for the 4th consecutive year!**

Speaking at the end of such a distinguished conference is never easy: everything critical was already mentioned during the previous sessions. Hence, I will try to be brief and forward looking in my remarks.

My main point is the following: **countering terrorism is a very complex issue. At the same time, it is a widely shared priority that we should tackle together!**

In this regard, the COVID-19 pandemic has reminded us how interconnected and fragile the world is. In the context of our debate, **the COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated already existing vulnerabilities and laid the conditions through which terrorists and violent extremists can more easily spread their destructive ideologies** and promote further divisions and radicalization.

Over the years, the **OSCE PA has worked hard to enhance international counter-terrorism co-operation** through greater parliamentary engagement and a strong network of partnerships.

We are, for instance, working closely with the **OSCE Executive Structures** - and

with the **Transnational Threats Department and ODIHR** - on a project intended to better leverage the role of our parliamentarians in responding to violent extremism and terrorism. Similarly, we are co-ordinating with our **Field Operation in Nur-Sultan** to learn from the Kazakh authorities about their experience in repatriating FTFs next week (i.e. 28 April 2021).

In addition, we actively **co-operate with the United Nations Office for Counter Terrorism (UNOCT)**. For instance, we have recently contributed to their *Parliamentary Guide on Facilitating the Implementation of the UN Global CT Strategy*, and took active part in their expert consultations on the *Model Legislative Provisions on the Victims of Terrorism*.

Finally, just last week, we co-hosted a **High-Level International Parliamentary Conference** together with the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean (PAM), Interparliamentary Assembly of CIS Member Nations (IPA CIS), Parliamentary Assembly of Council of Europe (PACE) and UNOCT. Building on similar events held in 2017 and 2019, this year we brought together over 200 policymakers from a very vast region to discuss issues that resonate with the focus of the 2021 OSCE-wide Conference.

Your Excellencies,

these are just a few examples of how we - parliamentarians from across the OSCE region - strive to complement global counter-terrorism efforts. In doing so, we leverage on our assets and actively collaborate with governments, civil society, academia, community leaders and the private sector.

Looking ahead, there five key fields to keep in mind:

1. Firstly – **preventing terrorism**, especially online and in the context of crises. We have witnessed during the pandemic how Internet has been used by terrorist and extremists to call for new attacks, glorify terrorist acts,

increase recruitment operations, stigmatize minorities, polarize our societies and spread false and discriminatory information. Along with more “traditional” networks - such as jihadism - new right-wing violent extremist movements are on the rise. Hence, we should **develop coherent and effective strategies to address harmful and illegal content online**, in full compliance with the principles of international human rights law. While everyone agrees that more should be done to prevent the use of the internet for terrorist purposes, lack of international consensus on Internet governance hampers coherent progress. In this regard, the OSCE PA can help shaping such consensus and foster new legislation in this field.

2. Secondly - we should better **explore the intersection of terrorism with other serious threats**. As experts keep telling us, terrorism seldom appears as an isolated phenomenon. By tracking down terrorist financing and better understanding the functioning of organized criminal networks, we can also expose their connections to terrorism. On the other hand, emerging threats such as **nuclear and bioterrorism**, as well as so-called **hybrid threats**, remain still widely unexplored. Thus, it is crucial to keep abreast of new trends to affectively adjust our counter-terrorism strategies and legislation.
3. Thirdly - **prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of terrorists and violent extremists** remains a top priority across the region. As reiterated by several speakers earlier today, well-tailored and comprehensive rehabilitation and reintegration programmes are key for breaking the dangerous cycle of violent extremism. By doing so, we punish the perpetrators and bring justice to the victims. Moreover, we prevent further crimes, build more resilient societies, and facilitate reconciliation in our societies. Against this backdrop, **it is crucial that our responses are proportionate and human rights-compliant, at all times.**

4. Fourth - **border security and timely information sharing** remain paramount for tracking the movement of radicalized individuals and preventing new attacks. In this regard, national parliaments should contribute to the full implementation of relevant international standards (such as UNSCR 2396) by adopting effective legislation and monitoring governmental efforts in this domain.

5. Finally, we should never neglect those who suffer the most from terrorism: **the victims**. Participating States should enhance relevant policies and laws to provide adequate medical, psychological, economic and legal support to the victims, making sure that their needs are addressed and rights respected.

To conclude, it is essential that **we keep counter-terrorism high on the agenda of our countries and continue our policy dialogue in good faith**, particularly at times of crises.

Our divisions will only make our enemies stronger. We must overcome disagreements and find a common language in this regard.

If we do so, we stand a good chance to mitigate the terrorism threat and better **protect our citizens**. At the end of the day, **this is our top responsibility**.

Thank you again for the kind invitation and for your attention!