

11th REPORT BY THE CHAIR OF THE OSCE PA AD HOC

COMMITTEE ON COUNTERING TERRORISM,

Mr. Reinhold Lopatka

at the

**2021 OSCE PA Autumn Meeting (Standing Committee),
Agenda Item 5: Review of OSCE PA activities and current
international political issues**

Wednesday, 3 November 2021 (14:00 CET)

INTRODUCTION

Madam President,

Mr. Secretary General,

Distinguished Colleagues,

I am honored to address you on behalf of our Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism (CCT). Before I begin, I am glad to announce that CCT has recently gained three new members. Please allow me to warmly welcome **Ms. Vilija Aleknaitė-Abramikienė** from Lithuania, **Ms. Ida Glanzmann-Hunkeler** from Switzerland and **Mr. Predrag Rajić** from Serbia. I am truly looking forward to working with our new members and I am sure that the CCT will benefit greatly from your engagement and experience.

Dear Colleagues,

As mentioned in my previous report at the 2021 Annual Session¹, CCT's work is tailored around five major thematic priorities, thus striving to address various issues related to 1) Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs), 2) border security and information sharing, 3) radicalization prevention, 4) supporting victims of terrorism, and 5) exploring interlinkages of terrorism with other modern threats.

In line with these priorities, in May this year we held a dedicated **Parliamentary Hearing to explore the experience of Kazakhstan in repatriating, prosecuting, rehabilitating and reintegrating FTFs**², together with the OSCE

¹ The report is available here: <https://www.oscepa.org/en/documents/annual-sessions/2021-remote-session/reports-and-speeches-4/4233-report-by-the-chair-of-the-osce-pa-ad-hoc-committee-on-countering-terrorism-reinhold-lopatka/file>

² Informal Readout from the Hearing on „Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (FTFs) - the Kazakh Experience“ is available here: <https://www.oscepa.org/en/documents/ad-hoc-committees-and-working-groups/ad-hoc-committee-on-countering-terrorism/4218-informal-readout-hearing-on-prosecution-rehabilitation-and-reintegration-of-foreign-terrorist-fighters-the-kazakh-experience-18-may-2021/file>.

Programme Office in Nur-Sultan. Motivated by the discussion and important points raised during this event - and having in mind our 2019 *Resolution on the Challenges Related to Returning and Relocating Foreign Terrorist Fighters*³, on 14 and 15 October, we organized a **“Regional Policy Dialogue with Legislators from South-Eastern Europe - and selected neighbouring countries - on the Prosecution, Rehabilitation and Reintegration of FTFs”**⁴. The event, organized together with the OSCE Transnational Threats Department (TNTD) in Vienna, was a major success – it gathered more than 50 parliamentarians and representatives from relevant legislative committees from around South-Eastern Europe, as well as experts and representatives from the relevant UN agencies, the OSCE and OSCE PA.

These are a few key findings I am eager to share with the Standing Committee:

1. **The return & repatriation of FTFs and their families are complex issues** - bearing political, security, legal, human rights, social and operational implications - which **require carefully balanced and individual-centered approaches.**
- The diversity of background of each FTF implies for national authorities to **develop whole-of-society responses to meet the needs of these individuals**, including accompanying women and children, while **ensuring compliance with international and national laws, as well as the safety of local communities and citizens.**

³ Resolution on the Challenges Related to Returning and Relocating Foreign Terrorist Fighters of the Luxembourg Declaration and Resolutions, adopted by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly at the 28th Annual Session, Luxembourg, 4-8 July 2019. Available at: <https://www.oscepa.org/en/documents/ad-hoc-committee-on-migration/3884-resolution-on-the-challenges-related-to-returning-and-relocating-foreign-terrorist-fighters-adopted-at-the-28th-annual-session-luxembourg-4-8-july-2018/file>.

⁴ OSCE PA Press Release on „Legislators, experts work on human rights-compliant policies for prosecution, rehabilitation and reintegration of 3TF in South East Europe“ is available here: <https://www.oscepa.org/en/news-a-media/press-releases/press-2021/legislators-and-experts-work-together>.

- The **important role of parliamentarians in this context was duly emphasized**. For instance, in building critical political support, reassuring the public opinion & creating favorable social conditions, shaping the appropriate legislative and penal frameworks, allocating adequate funding, and overseeing the work of national authorities.
- Several participants stressed how critical it is to **raise more awareness among politicians** about these issues, **enhance regional co-operation among legislators, promote legislative approximation** at international level, **regularly share experience and lessons learned**.
- Against this backdrop, the work by the OSCE PA and the OSCE to **increase the engagement of parliamentarians on counter-terrorism matters** was greatly welcomed.

Dear President,

At the CCT, we believe that to bring any ambitious plan forward, we should have a **clear long-term vision** and continue to build on **selected partnerships**. Having said that, I am glad to report that our **co-operation with the OSCE** remains outstanding, and that the event I mentioned was **only the first of a series of such regional policy dialogues** that we plan to jointly organize in the coming years to promote greater parliamentary engagement and enhance co-ordination with ongoing intergovernmental efforts.

Our **partnership with the United Nations Office of Counter-terrorism** is equally key. In December 2021, I plan to attend UNOCT's event on "**The role of Parliamentarians in the implementation of National Action Plans for addressing terrorism and violent extremism conducive to terrorism**",

followed by the 1st ever **co-ordination meeting among parliamentary assemblies on counter-terrorism matters** in Doha.

Dear Colleagues,

In conclusion, I would like to **thank our President and Secretary General** for the great political support, **as well as all my dear CCT members**, whose commitment proved exemplary also during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you!