

**REPORT OF THE CHAIR OF THE OSCE PA AD HOC COMMITTEE
ON COUNTERING TERRORISM, MR. MAKIS VORIDIS, TO THE
OSCE PA STANDING COMMITTEE**

Berlin, 7 July 2018

Mister President,
Mister Secretary General,
Esteemed Colleagues,

Exactly one year ago, during our 2017 Annual Session in Minsk, we created the **OSCE PA Ad Hoc Committee on Countering Terrorism** (CCT) with the aim of giving more focus and coherence to our efforts in this crucial field of the international security agenda, full of multifaceted and rapidly evolving challenges.

I am extremely proud of chairing this Committee, today **composed of 11 very active parliamentarians**, and of what we managed to achieve in just 12 months. All committee members took their role very seriously and constructively engaged for the benefit of the entire Assembly. I am looking forward to continuing our important work and, possibly, even step up our efforts with new initiatives.

Since July 2017, **the CCT has met officially three times** in its plenary format, including earlier today. It has also **conducted three official field visits** (to the OSCE and UNODC headquarters in Vienna, to the Kingdom of Belgium and to Bosnia and Herzegovina) and actively took part in the OSCE PA visit to the Kingdom of Morocco. When it comes to our most recent visit to Bosnia &

Herzegovina (5-8 June 2018), some of the **key findings** include the need to (a) fully implement existing norms and strategies and allocate adequate resources to countering terrorism and VERLT, (b) urgently develop deradicalization and reintegration programmes for former terrorists, especially in prisons, and (c) further enhance internal coordination and information sharing among all relevant stakeholders. More information on all these visits can be found in the detailed reports prepared by the International Secretariat and regularly posted on the OSCE PA website¹.

The Committee has also **contributed to international conferences and expert seminars on terrorism** and related matters, both within and outside the OSCE framework. These include the *Parliamentary Seminar on the Spread of Violent Extremism in the OSCE Region* (Rabat, Morocco), the *Parliamentarians for Global Action Annual Forum* (Milan, Italy), the *OSCE PA Conference on Digital Resilience of a Democratic State* (Lisbon, Portugal), the *OSCE-wide Counter-Terrorism Conference on the Challenges Posed by the Reverse Flows of FTFs* (Rome, Italy), and the *International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law Workshop on the Nexus of Parliamentarians and Criminal Justice Actors in Countering Terrorism* (Attard, Malta).

On the margins of such events, we often held **useful bilateral meetings** with a number of key parliamentary, governmental and inter-governmental interlocutors. The International Secretariat has kindly distributed a **Comprehensive Overview of Activities Implemented by the CCT** for your convenience.

Through this broad engagement, we managed to (a) significantly **strengthen our coordination within the OSCE** and with other relevant global stakeholders, such

¹ www.oscepa.org/parliamentary-diplomacy/countering-terrorism-parliamentarians-address-violent-extremism

as the United Nations, (b) **raise awareness about the role of parliamentarians in countering terrorism** and (c) **gain a greater understanding of modern terrorism-related challenges**, as well as on how the OSCE PA could help addressing them.

In particular, **the CCT identified several recurring themes** that deserve a special attention, such as information sharing and coordination mechanisms, protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in countering terrorism, prevention of radicalization & de-radicalization, challenges stemming from the phenomenon of FTFs, including their return, links between terrorist networks and serious crime, support to the victims of terrorism, and challenges stemming from the improper use of new technologies.

In line with our mandate, we also aim at developing comprehensive policy guidance through documents such as the **Draft Resolution on Preventing and Countering Terrorism and VERLT**, which received broad support from our members. While the draft builds upon the 2017 Austrian OSCE Chairmanship Declaration on the very same topic, it also reflects the vision and work of our Assembly, with a strong emphasis on safeguarding human rights and endorsing a whole-of-society approach in our counter-terrorism efforts. As such, it represents **a careful balance of interests and a solid example of strategic convergence between our parliamentary and executive structures**.

In addition, we propose to bring an increased parliamentary perspective in the OSCE counter-terrorism work by **launching a targeted initiative in the context of strengthening border security and information sharing**. Conceptualized in consultation with the OSCE Transnational Threats Department, this project aims at boosting the contribution of national Parliaments in the implementation of relevant international obligations, in particular of those contained in **UNSC Resolution 2396 on returning and relocating FTFs**.

In conclusion, allow me to reiterate my personal gratitude for your trust and genuine support. I stand ready to discuss further any issue related to the work of the Ad Hoc Committee, with the ultimate goal of advancing the contribution of the PA in this critical field.

Thank you!