

# Opening of Foreign Minister Sebastian Kurz at the OSCE Mediterranean Conference 6 October 2016

Dear Colleagues,  
Secretary-General,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to welcome you all to today's OSCE Mediterranean Conference.

I am also very pleased to welcome our special guests: Foreign Minister Mohammed Taher Siala of Libya as well as Martin Kobler, the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Libya.

As I have said already previously, we are currently faced with three central threats to security and stability in the OSCE area:

1. A further intensification of military confrontations.
2. The increasing threat to internal security through growing radicalization, particularly of young persons, and terrorism.
3. And the increasing loss of confidence between States and also by citizens towards State institutions and organizations.

This is not only true for the OSCE area but also for the wider region south of the Mediterranean.

Uncertainties and fears are growing within our societies, because threats to stability and security are increasing.

Besides the persistence of violent conflicts, the massive refugee and migration crisis as well as the growth of radicalisation and extremism, particularly amongst young persons, are the biggest challenges.

We have to realize that acts of violent extremism do not only happen in areas of conflict, but that there are extremists who radicalise our youth even in the heart of our societies.

Tens of thousands of foreign terrorist fighters have joined Da'esh and other terrorist groups in order to rape, kill and try to exterminate religious minorities in other parts of the world. They include more than 10000 people from the OSCE area, among them 300 from Austria.

We cannot accept that our citizens commit such crimes in other parts of the world and we have to be clear that when they return they pose a massive threat to our society.

We therefore have to increase our efforts within our communities to prevent young people from being misled by those who abuse religion. As was said at the Conference yesterday: "Terrorism has no religion" and "Nobody is born a terrorist".

This is why the fight against radicalisation is one of our priorities for the OSCE chairmanship in 2017.

This is why we wanted to discuss these challenges already at today's conference, putting a special focus on our young people.

I am very happy therefore to welcome amongst us youth experts and representatives from Europe and the Southern Mediterranean countries who have shared their ideas during the last two days.

As a young person myself I know how important it is to engage across generations.

During our chairmanship we will continue to involve other young people to exchange directly with government representatives throughout the OSCE region.

Therefore, I truly hope that this conference will contribute

- to increasing the exchange of best practices and lessons learnt in how to prevent radicalization and how to effectively de-radicalize persons;
- to enhancing engagement with youth, and by youth, across all activities of our organization;
- and to further strengthening of networks of cooperation between OSCE participating states and Mediterranean Partners

In conclusion, let me thank also Secretary-General Zannier and his team for all their support.