



**WELCOMING REMARKS BY
AMBASSADOR JANEZ LENARČIČ,
CHAIRMAN OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL,
TO THE EXPERTS WORKSHOP ON ENHANCING LEGAL
CO-OPERATION IN CRIMINAL MATTERS RELATED TO TERRORISM,
VIENNA, 15 APRIL 2005**

Ladies and Gentlemen, Distinguished Participants,

It is my privilege to welcome you on behalf of the Chairman in Office at this important workshop, the second OSCE-wide counter-terrorist event, organised by Action against Terrorism Unit under the leadership of Brian Woo.

It is worth stressing once again that preventing and combating terrorism is high on the agenda of our organization and of the Chairmanship. This activity enjoys broad consensus and firm support among the participating States, who are united in their desire to effectively deal with the terrorist threat that we all face in the entire OSCE area.

I'm glad that international acknowledgement of the usefulness and added value of the OSCE contribution to the global fight against terrorism is growing. Continued and improved interaction and enhanced synergy with other international organisations is also demonstrated by the number of their representatives gathered here today. I would like to mention the UNCTC and the UNODC in particular. It was at the suggestion of these UN bodies that the OSCE organised this workshop and we will continue to promote co-operation in criminal matters related to terrorism.

One of the major OSCE counter-terrorism commitments is for the participating States to become party to the 12 universal anti-terrorism conventions and protocols. They are instrumental in creating a universal legal regime against terrorist crimes. We have been able to achieve quite an impressive result in this regard with 90% ratification/accession rate of those 12 legal instruments. 37 participating States are party to all 12 of them. It is clear that we still have to do more in harmonising our national legislation with those conventions and protocols.

It is equally important to better use the existing legal framework for successful investigation and prosecution of terrorist acts. Most of them are trans-national by nature, and therefore require international co-operation. This workshop is specifically aimed at: (i) enhancing such judicial co-operation between countries in criminal matters related to terrorism, (ii) exchanging best practices, (iii) discussing bi-lateral and multilateral mechanisms pertinent to mutual legal assistance and extradition in terrorist cases, and (iv) looking for possible solutions to existing problems. I am confident that the presence in this hall of prominent prosecutors and judges, other experts in this field, will make today's deliberations a useful exercise and OSCE is happy to provide a platform for it.

In our view we should all enhance, as much as possible, direct co-operation between police and judicial authorities. Direct police and judicial co-operation is not always easy to achieve. At the same time it is efficient in terms of speeding up the procedures and could facilitate extradition cases and cases where mutual legal assistance is needed. It is very important not only to condemn the terrorism, terrorists and terrorist acts, but also do everything we can to prosecute and try them in our courts. Only with that we contribute to the essential principles, shared by our societies, such as a rule of law. This principle is usually a victim of terrorist attacks. In this regard we strongly advocate the principle "aut dedere, aut judicare," - "extradite or prosecute," which we see as a corner stone of modern international judicial co-operation in terrorist cases.

In this regard I would also like to stress the value of the police co-operation. The role of authorised investigative bodies is essential. A lot has been achieved in the field of international police co-operation in recent years. The role of Interpol has been invaluable in this regard. I am happy that a representative from INTERPOL will be moderating the first session of this workshop.

The OSCE has already clearly demonstrated with its counter-terrorism activities, that it can deliver, substantially contribute and assist the participating States in the implementation of their commitments and legal obligations, including in the framework of the UN and other relevant international organisations. The OSCE raises awareness and serves as a platform for exchange of information and best practices. It has been successfully doing this in a number of areas and there is no reason, why we should not build upon it and promote legal co-operation in criminal matters related to terrorism.

The OSCE could and should also do more regarding information exchange and networking between prosecutors and judges from different participating States. It should do more in raising awareness among them about different additional channels for judicial co-operation. That should speed up co-operation among different participating States with different legal traditions in concrete cases. That is why we see this workshop so important, since it gathers so many different experts together.

Last but not least, the involvement of our Partners for Cooperation is another important building block in our comprehensive, indivisible and cooperative approach to security and stability. We see their interest to do so, and it is most welcome, since nobody can work on its own.

Let me conclude by wishing you every success and a productive meeting, and I look forward to the discussion which will certainly give us the impetus and substance to carry on this important work.

Thank you.