2008 Follow-up OSCE Conference on Public-Private Partnerships in Countering Terrorism: Partnership of State Authorities, Civil Society and the Business Community in Combating Terrorism
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Security Education for the Prevention of Terrorism

I. Introduction

The large spectrum of current threats – terrorism, trans-border organized crime, proliferation of WMDs, cyber- and information-warfare, economic instability, regional tensions, corruption and power abuse – determines the characteristics of the new strategic and security environment. The geopolitical map of the Euro-Atlantic area imposes profound modifications of the activities and preoccupations of the security domain. In these conditions, the security structures have the tasks to identify, analyze, predict, and counter the threats to national security of every state and, therefore, of the international community.

This new security environment – that imposed moving the accent on the individual - does not limit itself to a strictly technical vision, including a rigid organization of institutions and competences, but attracts within the national security system civic structures, nongovernmental, academic, and economic, detaining technologies and information connected to national security and that may contribute to maintaining the balance of the internal environment – economic, social, civilian and military.

Still, the achievement of the tasks for insuring the state of security at the national, regional and global levels would be difficult without a real and constructive communication with the citizens, making available the information on the role and functions of the specialized structures in a democracy. The Romanian Security Strategy, adapted to the geopolitical and geostrategical context of the new millennium, stipulates the means of encouraging national solidarity and civic responsibility.

As a component of the European and Euro-Atlantic system, participating to the international effort for prevention and countering of terrorism, with its military in international missions in Iraq and Afghanistan, Romania represents a possible target for terrorist acts, even if the Supreme Council for National Defence currently estimates that "the risk for a terrorist attack to occur is low", blue level, according to the National System for Terrorist Alert.[1]

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[1] The National System for Terrorist Alert has been approved by the Supreme Council for National Defence on the 15th of April 2004. It is designed on five levels of alert, marked by distinct colours, function of the degree of manifestation of the terrorist threat:
- CRITICAL / RED – The available information and recent events show that there is an imminent risk for a terrorist attack to occur.
- HIGH / ORANGE – The available information and recent events show that there is a significant risk for a terrorist attack to occur and an attack is probable.
- MODERATE / YELLOW – The available information and recent events show that there is a general risk for a terrorist attack to occur and an attack is possible.
- CAUTIOUS / BLUE – The available information and recent events show that there is a low risk for a terrorist attack to occur.
- LOW / GREEN – The available information and recent events show that an attack is less probable.
Currently, the alert level is set to cautious / blue - www.sri.ro.

II. *The role of the Romanian Intelligence Service (SRI)*

As an integral part of the national security system and an important contributor to the realization of the attributions in this area (since 19th of October 2001, the Service is the national authority in the field of prevention and countering of terrorism), the SRI has included in the agenda of institutional reform steps in view of involving the citizens in the act of realization of national security.

With this imperative in mind, and also that the state of security of the citizens induces the state of security of the society, the programs of the SRI target the permanent development of the partnership with the civic environment, based on the certitude that society manifests strong self-defence reactions determined by the need of individual and collective security.

When Romania was making the necessary steps for joining NATO, SRI has been responsible/coordinator of Chapter IV – „Security Problems": achieving with the other institutions with attributions in the field of national security, according to legal provisions, the security education within the area of civil society, for a better knowledge of the new security environment.

In order to put this objective in place, in November 2001, the SRI inaugurated the **Department for Liaison with Public Authorities and Nongovernmental Organizations (DLAPON)**, a specialized structure in the area of promoting dialogue with the Romanian civic and associative environment. The Department has the role to initiate and develop relations with the main players of the Romanian civil society in order to develop a framework for dialogue and debate of the processes of education of civil society. As an inter-institutional communicator, it designs and supports programs and projects whose goal is convergent to national security objectives, as stated by law. At the same time, *via* this component, the SRI intends to develop efficient mechanisms of communication and consultation with the Romanian civil society.

The experience in inter-institutional relations accumulated by the SRI, through DLAPON – after contacts with civil society prominent figures, with Romanian and foreign specialists, with representatives of intelligence agencies from other countries – stressed the need for creating, in the context of a restrictive system of regulation of the relations with civil society, of an organized framework for debate of security issues, offering the possibility for developing the links with the dialogue partners and establishing working patterns compatible at European and Euro-Atlantic levels.

This initiative bears the name of **Centre for Information on Security Culture (CICS),** within the framework of the Romanian Intelligence Service (SRI), a unique initiative in the region, inaugurated on the 30th of September 2003. It represents an interactive and multidisciplinary system of information, of mobilizing the interests of Romanian civil society, in order to build a correct attitude toward the participation of specialized institutions and citizens to the evolution of the new security environment.

CICS intends to identify the mechanisms for institutional relations and an appropriate framework for closing cooperation agreements with NGOs and public authorities in view of insuring the transfer of expertise, as well as achieving security education at the level of civil society in Romania.

III. *Flagship events:*

1. *The Young Atlanticist Summit (April 2008)*

This spring, in parallel with the NATO Summit in Bucharest, the Romanian Intelligence Service hosted *The Young Atlanticist Summit*, a dialogue forum of the future leaders from NATO member and partner States, attended by over 150 participants from 38 countries, having on its agenda the main issues on the formal agenda of the Alliance Summit and regional and global security issues. The Summit was supported by the NATO Secretary General, and the meetings were attended by heads of state and government. The YAS represents a major reunion, as an event aiming at the civil society, and as a forum of training the future specialists in the field of international security.

2. The "Terrorism ... near us" Campaign

One of the most important and successful projects of the Centre for Information on Security Culture is the *Campaign for the promotion of security culture among the youth "Terrorism ... near us"*. It is a type of project put into place by the SRI, through CICS, in partnership with the EURISC Foundation, NATO House and the All@ Student Team.

The campaign was initiated because it proved to be a viable project answering the new security context and because it corresponds to the mission of the Centre for Information on Security Culture – realization of security education and culture. Starting with 2007, the project aimed public (mainly high-school, but also university students, and their teachers, but also local authorities from 11 departments in Romania.

A. Fundamenting the campaign

The number of false bomb-threats, aiming various public institutions in Romania, increased in a significant manner in the last years. The antiterrorist technical check-ups proved that the anonymous phone call threats were false: in none of these cases was established a link to the terrorist phenomenon.

B. The objectives of the campaign, as established by the authors of the project:

1. general objectives
- Making the young aware of the danger represented by terrorism, as well as of the specific of the institutions with responsibilities in the prevention and countering of terrorism;
- Encouraging the involvement of the young in all of the activities of prevention of terrorism;
- The activity of the young as message carriers for other age groups.

2. specific objectives
- Attracting main NGOs specialized in this area as partners for this project;
- Increasing the degree of information of the young regarding SRI and CICS;
- Drawing together a larger number of students to the information sessions held by SRI and CICS.

C. Identifying the target public
- Segment 1. students, press, officials participating in the information sessions;
- Segment 2. the other students, parents, teachers;
- Segment 3. other NGOs, opinion leaders, other governmental institutions.

D. Main messages used in the campaign

- *To know means TO PREVENT.*

- *Terrorism ... is no myth. It is the reality near you. Get involved!*

- *TO WATCH is not a solution. Get involved!*

- *Terrorists know everything about you. What do you know about them?*

E. Communication channels used in the implementing of the campaign

- Segment 1. Direct communication between the initiators, on one side, and students, teachers, and the representatives of the Ministry of Education, on the other;

- Segment 2. Informal communication ("*two step flow communication*") between the participating and non-participating students;

- Segment 3. Media communication. The means of communication used are written press, TV and radio stations.

F. Means of transmitting the messages toward the media
- press releases;
- promotion materials;
- interviews;
- participation to other events on the same topic;
- appearances in the news bulletins.

G. Media and the campaign "Terrorism... near us"

As a general trend, we could observe the favourable reflection by the favourable reflection by the media of the campaign. Also, from a thematic point of view, the press materials dedicated to the events were appreciative regarding:

- the importance and necessity of promoting security education;

- the contribution of the campaign in promoting the institutional message;

- the relevance of this step in making the public aware of the dangers represented by terrorism;

- tackling the difficulties generated by the false bomb-threats;

- the interest of the participating local authorities, and of the participating students for the topic.

The analysis of the information released by the media on the occasion of the campaign sessions in 2008 shows the positive impact of the public communication activities of the institution. The interest shown by the participating students, the support granted by the representatives of the Ministry of Education, the post-event appreciation from the participating public authorities, the mostly positive media represent indicators of a high level of public support on the level of the target public for the institutional communication activities of the Service, through the CICS campaigns of promoting security culture and increasing the degree of understanding the degree of understanding of the role and missions of the Service.

H. Strong points - weak points

For a more consistent impact of such projects, one must put in balance the strong and the weak points. An internal evaluation shows the necessity of intensifying the campaign for reaching a larger number of persons receiving the message (in the first semester of 2008, the campaign reunited under 1000 participants), as well as diversifying the means of presentation of the message. We must bear in mind several facts regarding this campaign:

a. It targeted the *qualitative part*, and not necessarily the quantitative one.

b. *For the first time,* it makes the public aware regarding the terrorist phenomenon, attributions and activities of the intelligence services, means to prevent events of terrorist nature;

c. It is now *training the trainers*, knowing that many teachers have attended the sessions and that one way to enlarge and deepen the messages of the campaign is under debate with the Ministry of Education. The goal is to include courses of security education within the "Civic education" class.

3. Future projects

This summer has been launched the partnership with the Regional Centre for Higher Studies for the Prevention of Terrorism, an NGO active in the field of awareness building on the bioterrorist danger. The first common project of the two centres is a simulation exercise of a bioterrorist attack, taking place next spring in the Danube Delta.

IV. Conclusion

The dynamics of the security environment of the last decade has proved the fact that in order to achieve the state of security, the classic national defence is not sufficient anymore. The state is not anymore the only one habilitated to act through its specialized institutions. Thus appears the necessity of making the citizen aware of the risk factors generated by the new security environment. The events taking place in London last July prove that a well informed public can contribute decisively to the prevention of events of terrorist nature and equally to reducing the negative consequences.

We have tried to demonstrate in this paper that the partnership between state institutions and private organizations can work.