

**2012 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
24 September – 5 October 2012**

**Working Session 5 – Rule of Law II
*Protection of Human Rights and Fighting Against Terrorism***

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Thank you Chairperson,

It's a great pleasure to be here for my first HDIM. For those of you – most of you I suspect – who don't know me, I joined the OSCE Secretariat's Transnational Threats Department in March this year as Head on Anti-Terrorism Issues.

As I have up to now primarily worked and interacted with delegates and colleagues in the first dimension, I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce myself to this group. I see many new faces and I look forward to meeting with you and working with you.

Our unit, the Action against Terrorism Unit, is mandated to serve as focal point for the coordination and facilitation of OSCE counter-terrorism activities. We assist OSCE participating States in fulfilling their OSCE commitments and international obligations in the field of counter-terrorism – commitments which are many and cut across the three OSCE dimensions of security.

As we all know around this room, human rights and counter-terrorism are fundamentally intertwined. There is no effective counter-terrorism in the long term without upholding human rights. But equally, human rights, and first and foremost the right to live, cannot be enjoyed where terrorism threatens and strikes.

This is the premise upon which is based the work of our Unit in the Transnational Threats Department. We strive to ensure that in our programmes and activities all human rights implications are identified, understood and appropriately addressed, whilst promoting effective measures, effective action against terrorism.

Terrorism is no longer exceptional or extra-ordinary. It has unfortunately become part of a sort of new normality. Counter-terrorism therefore can no longer be envisaged as something exceptional or extra-ordinary. Permanent, proportionate arrangements need to be put in place. Terrorism is a serious crime, and it must be dealt with as a serious crime, with determination and effectiveness, within a framework based on the rule of law and human rights.

Let me briefly highlight four areas of work in our Unit which have particular relevance to human rights. First, we have a comprehensive travel document security programme, which is cross-cutting to terrorism, policing and border management. We provide technical assistance to help ensure that the handling and issuance of travel documents, the

documents themselves, as well as their control at borders meet international standards and best practices. Travel document security obviously has strong implications in terms of freedom of movement and privacy. But it also interplays with the broader issue of identity management and effective civil registration, which impacts on access to public services and voter registration.

Second, we promote the international legal framework against terrorism as well as legal co-operation in criminal matters related to terrorism. This programme is central to anchoring counter-terrorism in a rule of law based and human right compliant, effective criminal justice response. I take this opportunity to inform you that we will hold in Vienna on 12-13 November an OSCE-wide conference on *Strengthening Regional Co-operation, Criminal Justice Institutions and Rule of Law Capacities to Prevent and Combat Terrorism and Radicalization that leads to Terrorism*.

Third, we have a programme on countering violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism – VERLT. We promote a multi-dimensional and multi-stakeholder approach to countering VERLT and facilitate the exchange of good practices and lessons learnt, including in terms of the role of civil society, upholding freedom of expression and the media, freedom of beliefs, and non-discrimination.

We are pleased to be developing a very close collaboration with ODIHR in this area, including our first ever joint activities focused on women and terrorism prevention as well as community policing and terrorism prevention. We will also organize jointly on 23-24 October in Vienna an *Expert Roundtable on Youth Engagement to Counter VERLT* and let me make a call for the participation of civil society organizations active in the field of tolerance and non-discrimination, human rights education, prevention of violence among youth, youth inclusion and participation.

Fourth, we run a programme on countering the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes. Terrorists go online to identify, recruit and train new members, collect and transfer funds, organize attacks, and incite violence. We support the identification of emerging trends and potential counter measures, mindful of freedom of expression and the media, by facilitating the exchange of information and good practices between participating States, the private and public sector as well as civil society.

To conclude, I would like to stress that counter-terrorism does not make exception to but strongly reinforces the point that protecting and promoting human rights is integral to security. This provides the rationale for cross-dimensional work in the OSCE and close collaboration between the Transnational Threats Department and ODIHR.

This also calls for a broader involvement of civil society and human rights organizations in counter-terrorism, not only in holding state authorities to account, but to actively challenge the dehumanization and denial of human rights that terrorism amounts to – to actively challenge ideas that violence is a legitimate course of action – to actively challenge the intolerance and hatred that nurture terrorism as they fuel other forms of violence.

Thank you!