



Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

ENGLISH only



2016 OSCE Mediterranean Conference

Youth north and south of the Mediterranean:
facing security challenges and enhancing opportunities

Vienna, Austria, 5 - 6 October 2016

Consolidated Summary

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1. Annotated Agenda

Introduction

Recent and current developments demonstrate the inextricable link between comprehensive security in the OSCE area and in the Mediterranean region. Violent extremism, radicalisation and terrorism as well as current migration trends are amongst the most pressing challenges as on-going OSCE discussions have highlighted. Youth is the population group most widely affected by these trends, be it north or south of the Mediterranean. Youth represents the present and the future of our societies and thus needs the continued attention of policy makers.

The 2016 OSCE Mediterranean Conference will therefore focus on the topic of challenges for comprehensive security and youth north and south of the Mediterranean, adopting a cross-dimensional approach.

The two sessions on the first day will delve into this issue in search for lessons learned and best practices as well as ways to shape constructive future perspectives. The high-level segment on the second day of the Conference will allow a broader, political discussion on the challenges related to comprehensive security and youth in the Mediterranean region and beyond.

The Conference will provide a platform to exchange views from north and south of the Mediterranean. OSCE participating States and Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation will have the opportunity to share perspectives and experiences as well as formulate forward-looking recommendations in order to strengthen dialogue and enhance practical co-operation for the sake of common security with a special focus on youth.

Wednesday, 5 October 2016

Neuer Saal, 2nd Floor, Hofburg (entrance from Heldenplatz)

9.00-9.30 a.m. Registration of participants

9.30– 10.00 a.m. **Opening Remarks** (*open to the media*)

H.E. Amb. Lamberto Zannier, Secretary General of the OSCE

H.E. Michael Linhart, Deputy Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, Austria

10.00 – 10.30 a.m. Coffee Break

10.30-12.30 p.m. **Session I: Lessons Learned and Best Practices in Dealing with Challenges for Youth North and South of the Mediterranean: Violent Extremism, Radicalization and Terrorism** (*open to the media*)

Violent extremism, radicalization, and terrorism represent a common challenge to our societies. Strategies to prevent and counter these phenomena may offer the basis for a cooperative security agenda to be jointly developed by countries from the OSCE area and the Mediterranean region to the benefit of all. Success will invariably hinge on involving and empowering youth, the population group which is at higher risk of disenfranchisement and is statistically more prone to fall prey to violent radical ideologies and messages. This session will showcase successful examples of prevention and de-radicalization and will highlight positive stories of youth engagement in the spirit of drawing lessons learnt and exchanging best practices between OSCE participating States and Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation. Youth representatives will share their personal views and experiences and offer specific recommendations on how to tackle the challenge.

Moderator: **Henrik Villadsen**, Director, Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities

Keynote Speakers:

Muriel Domenach, Secretary General of the Interministerial Committee for the Prevention of Juvenile Crime, France

Stefan Fercher, youth coach, Viennese Youth Centres, Austria
Nor-eddine Benfreha, Responsible for Regional Security, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Algeria

Mohamed Anas Touati, young leader, Debater in Young Arab Voices, Tunisia

Rapporteur: Ignacio Talegon Campoamor, Youth and Security Focal Point, OSCE Secretariat

12.30 – 2.30 p.m. Lunch hosted by the OSCE Secretariat for all participants

1.30 – 2.25 p.m. **Side Event: EU Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN): Bringing together practitioners working on the prevention of radicalisation**

2.30 – 3.45 p.m.

Session II: Lessons Learnt and Best Practices in Dealing with Challenges for Youth North and South of the Mediterranean: Current Migration Trends (*open to the media*)

As a global phenomenon on the rise, international migration has a prominent Mediterranean element. Of all age groups, youth, including a growing number of under-aged, is the most affected. Indeed, youth north and south of the Mediterranean is increasingly on the move in search for a better future. This movement is mostly driven by lack of opportunity, conflict, or other adverse conditions that make the decision to leave a non-voluntary one. On the other hand, transit and receiving countries are often unprepared to effectively manage migrants and refugees in a way that protects human rights and provides a clear pathway to integration to those who qualify to stay. This session will delve into challenges as well as opportunities of migration across the Mediterranean region. Discussion will aim at sharing lessons learnt and best practices conducive to an effective and sustainable approach to migration management, especially in light of the current migration trends.

Moderator: **H.E. Amb. Claude Wild**, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the OSCE and Chair of the Informal Working Group Focusing on the Issue of Migration and Refugee Flows

Keynote speakers:

Hassan Abdel Moneim Mostafa, Senior Regional Adviser for Senior Regional Adviser for North Africa, the Middle East and the Gulf States, International Organization for Migration

Johanna Nyman, President of the European Youth Forum

Ghanem Al Shmer, Austrian Integration Ambassador and Refugee from Syria

Rapporteur: Andrea De Bono Sant Cassia, Policy Officer, EU Delegation to the OSCE

3.45-4.15 p.m.

Coffee break

4.15 – 5.45 p.m.

Session III: The Way Forward: Enhancing Opportunities (*open to the media*)

Youth represents both the present and the future of our societies. This is particularly true for the Mediterranean and neighboring regions in light of respective demographic outlooks. These countries and their youths face similar challenges in the economic, social, and political realms. This session will allow for a forward-looking exchange of perspectives and experiences with a view to turning challenges related to youth into opportunities for increased prosperity, stronger cooperation, and enhanced security. The discussion will specifically focus on the nexus between security challenges, empowerment and youth, in a cross-dimensional way, providing concrete examples of how the aspirations and needs of youth north and south of the Mediterranean can be met by adequate responses strengthening the cohesion of societies as a whole.

Moderator: **H.E. Amb. Alessandro Azzoni**, Permanent Representative of Italy to the OSCE Keynote speakers:

Fathallah Sijilmassi, Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean

Samia Hathroubi, European Director, Foundation for Ethnic Understanding, France

Itay Weiss, social activist and entrepreneur, Israel

Rapporteur: Johanna Bischof, Delegation of Germany to the OSCE

6:15 p.m.

Evening Reception and Panel Discussion, following Session III, Dachfoyer Hofburg – entrance from Josefsplatz

6:30 p.m.

Opening by H.E. **Michael Linhart**, Deputy Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, Austria

6:35 p.m.

Panel Discussion on Youth Radicalisation:

Moderator: **Gudrun Harrer**, Senior Editor, Der Standard, Austria

Discussants: youth representatives from Western Europe and North Africa

Thursday, 6 October 2016

Großer Redoutensaal, Hofburg (entrance from Josefsplatz)

9.00-10.00 Registration of participants

10.00-10.30am **Opening Remarks** (*open to the media*)

H.E. Sebastian Kurz, Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, Austria

H.E. Vincenzo Amendola, Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Italy

H.E. Mohammed Taher Siala, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Government of National Accord, Libya

H.E. Martin Kobler, UN Secretary General's Special Representative and Head of the UN Support Mission in Libya

Rapporteur: Raphaël Bez, Political Advisor, Delegation of Switzerland to the OSCE

10:30 -11.00am Coffee Break

11.00 -12.30 a.m. **High-level Segment on Youth North and South of the Mediterranean: Facing Security Challenges and Enhancing Co-operation** (*open to the media*)

This high-level segment will aim to frame youth-relevant observations and recommendations within the larger context of a fast-evolving Mediterranean security agenda. The discussion will allow a range of national and regional perspectives on enhancing the dialogue and co-operation between OSCE participating States and Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation, regarding security-related concerns and youth. The session will provide an opportunity to re-affirm the relevance of the OSCE Mediterranean Partnership as a platform for forward-looking and action-oriented dialogue between countries from around the Mediterranean region and beyond.

Moderator: **H.E. Amb. Lamberto Zannier**, Secretary General of the OSCE

Rapporteur: Ms. Nevena Jovanovic, Second Secretary, Delegation of Serbia to the OSCE

12.30 – 1.00 p.m. **Closing Session** (*open to the media*)

H.E. Amb. Lamberto Zannier, Secretary General of the OSCE

H.E. Sebastian Kurz, Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, Austria

2. Opening Remarks – Summary

Report by Ignacio Talegon Campoamor, Youth and Security Focal Point, OSCE Secretariat

H.E. Lamberto Zannier, Secretary General of the OSCE

H.E. Michael Linhart, Deputy Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, Austria

The Special Adviser for the incoming Austrian Chairmanship of the OSCE, **H.E. Christian Strohal**, welcomed the participants and invited the Secretary General of the OSCE, H.E. Lamberto Zannier, and the Austrian Deputy Foreign Minister, H.E. Michael Linhart, to take the floor.

Deputy Minister Linhart stated that countries on both the northern and the southern shores of the Mediterranean were faced with increasing challenges from radicalization, terrorism, conflicts and uncontrolled migration.

Mr. Linhart welcomed the participants of the workshop on youth radicalization held on 4 October in Vienna and encouraged everyone to listen carefully to what they had to say. As youth was amongst the population groups most affected by the challenging trends, only a discussion with and between young people would shed light on these matters.

The fight against radicalization, violent extremism and terrorism was amongst the top priorities of the incoming Austrian OSCE Chairmanship. In all OSCE dimensions, measures to combat radicalization should be addressed and implemented together with the Partners for Co-operation.

Mr. Linhart concluded by expressing hope that the Conference would contribute to the joint fight against the phenomenon in question and by encouraging all participants to present positive examples of work in that regard.

Secretary General Zannier commended the Austrian Chairmanship of the Mediterranean Contact Group for raising the profile of the OSCE Mediterranean Partnership throughout 2016, with undertakings ranging from the first-ever Mediterranean Retreat in Madrid in May through to the many initiatives in fields including civil society mediation, countering radicalization, and the promotion of intercultural dialogue and integration.

It was very important, he emphasized, that refugees and migrants should be at the centre of the current agenda. The international community had a responsibility to come together to provide protection to refugees fleeing persecution and war. In this regard the OSCE could and should do its part; the adoption of a Ministerial Council Decision on migration at the forthcoming meeting in Hamburg would be a key step.

The Secretary General underlined that the views and ideas of the younger generations were of fundamental importance when facing the challenges affecting the Mediterranean region such as radicalization, violent extremism and terrorism. Youth was not only the age group most affected by phenomena such as radicalization, migration, lack of economic opportunities and disenfranchisement, but also a diverse constituency that could bring forth new leaders and innovative solutions. Conflict and insecurity, he added, originated in the failure of our

societies and our governments to fulfil the dreams and aspirations rightly held by every new generation in its turn.

The Secretary General recalled that the OSCE commitment to youth dated back over forty years to the 1975 Helsinki Final Act. Several Ministerial Decisions and Declarations in recent years had reaffirmed the commitment, as had a number of initiatives taken both by the Organization and by participating States in order to mainstream youth perspectives across the OSCE's various areas of action. In particular, the Secretary General mentioned – and praised – the initiatives of the Swiss Chairmanship in 2014 (launching the Youth Ambassadors network), the Serbian Chairmanship in 2015 (appointing the first-ever Special Representatives on Youth and Security), and the German Chairmanship (appointing the third Special Representative on Youth and Security). He also announced the establishment of the first-ever Youth and Security Focal Point at the level of the OSCE Secretariat and thanked Spain for its contribution to this undertaking.

The Secretary General concluded by expressing his hope that the Mediterranean Conference would renew the commitment to the indivisibility of European and Mediterranean security.

3. Reports by Session Rapporteurs

3.1 Session I: Lessons Learned and Best Practices in Dealing with Challenges for Youth North and South of the Mediterranean: Violent Extremism, Radicalization and Terrorism

Report by Ignacio Talegon Campoamor, Youth and Security Focal Point, OSCE Secretariat

Moderator: **Henrik Villadsen**, Director, Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities

Keynote Speakers:

Muriel Domenach, Secretary General of the Interministerial Committee for the Prevention of Juvenile Crime, France

Stefan Fercher, youth coach, Viennese Youth Centres, Austria

Nor-eddine Benfreha, Responsible for Regional Security, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Algeria

Mohamed Anas Touati, young leader, Debater in Young Arab Voices, Tunisia

Ms. Domenach started by defining radicalization as the process linking a rigorist interpretation of religion with the committing of violent acts. A transition to violence was therefore needed.

While France was one of the top priorities for “Daesh”, it was also, Ms. Domenach noted, a country of freedom of expression, of equality between men and women, and of solidarity and secularism as the guiding principles of communal life.

Ms. Domenach gave a short account of certain policies developed by the French government since 2014 in order to counter the radicalization of young people (reporting situations of radicalization, policies of dissuasion and national education), which have achieved varying degrees of success. Providing psychological assistance, centres for de-radicalization, and tougher criminal law were some aspects being prioritized by the French authorities. Building strong partnerships with civil society networks was seen as a strategy to be given special attention, as the counter-narratives required were more effective and credible if they arose from society itself. The defeats that “Daesh” was suffering in Syria and Iraq were also a very important factor, as “Daesh” was beginning to be perceived as losers.

Ms. Domenach concluded by stating that we faced two challenges when fighting violent extremism: on the one hand that of defeating the forces of terror, and on the other that of preserving our freedoms while doing so, in order to remain true to our own identity.

Mr. Fercher presented the outcomes of the workshop “Youth and the Prevention of Violent Extremism” that took place in Vienna on 4 October. He mentioned three key concepts that were essential to explaining the feelings of many youngsters perceiving that “something is going wrong” in our societies: identity, exclusion, and discrimination. Mr. Fercher stressed the co-existence of a number of different critical factors in the process leading to radicalization, which included: identity, the sense of belonging, traumas, exclusion, discrimination, and status.

Mr. Fercher identified four pitfalls that governments should avoid when fighting radicalization, and presented the following imperatives: 1) Do not overreact, as it fuels polarization; 2) Do not undermine the rule of law or violate human rights; 3) Do not stigmatize particular groups; and 4) Do not validate extremist narratives by accepting and reinforcing their use of terminology (by using the expressions “caliphate” or “Islamic State” when referring to “Daesh”; or, similarly, “floods” or “waves” of refugees).

Nevertheless, the workshop discussions had also resulted in several positive recommendations for policymakers: 1) Emphasize prevention rather than repression; 2) Match words with action with regard to youth participation; 3) Invest in both short-term intervention and long-term solutions (infrastructure for social cohesion, critical thinking, media literacy); 4) Acknowledge diversity in our societies and ensure equal rights and opportunities; 5) Engage youth as positive agents; and 6) Raise awareness amongst the media of their impact when covering terrorism and violent extremism.

Mr. Benfreha noted that Algeria was conducting an in-depth programme of de-radicalization in all sectors and all segments of the population. This strategy, implemented on several levels, ensured respect for human rights and equality and justice for all. One crucial step in this strategy was that of National Reconciliation, which had been approved by referendum in 2005 and had been a successful step forward in the fight against radicalization.

Mr. Benfreha emphasized that the Algerian strategy took a soft counter-radicalization approach in which good governance was a *sine qua non* (among other things, the fight against bureaucracy and corruption, decentralization, and partnership with local stakeholders and civil society). Particular attention was given to the role of education as a tool for improving access to knowledge on the values of diversity, tolerance, and acceptance of other cultures. Employment was also an important way to protect young people from the potential influence of extremist ideas. The strategy was also based on the maintenance of high levels of mobilization and vigilance by all security forces. Actions taken in this regard included: identification of radicalization centres; isolation of radical groups; and the combating of cybercrime as a vector for terrorism, in order to prevent and halt the use of new information and communications technologies for terrorist purposes.

Mr. Benfreha concluded by providing information on some of the results obtained so far in Algeria: the citizenry’s rapid acknowledgment of the importance and impact of the de-radicalization programme; the substantial weakening of extremist rhetoric; young people’s attentiveness to the policies designed for them; and the limited number of young Algerians involved in terrorist groups such as “Daesh”. In this context, he stressed, there were a number of experiences and lessons that could be shared with the OSCE.

Mr. Touati started on a positive note by recalling one of the concluding remarks from the workshop on preventing and countering violent extremism held in Tunis in May 2016: “No one is born a terrorist.” This proved that de-radicalization was achievable. Further conclusions to which Mr. Touati wished to draw attention related to empowering young people, re-establishing trust between youth and government, and underlining the principle that terrorism has no religion.

Three key elements were presented by Mr. Touati as illuminating ideas: learning, dialogue, and co-operation. Learning history and general culture opened the mind to tolerance and cultural exchange. Dialogue – between government and young people, amongst youngsters themselves, and with NGOs and other parties – contributed to preventing the brainwashing

carried out by extremists. Finally, co-operation between all social actors and groups was necessary if radicalization was to be prevented.

France's de-radicalization centres and the "Tomorrow is Better" initiative carried out by the Tunisian Ministry of Religious Affairs were both extolled by Mr Touati as worthy projects and as examples to be followed.

Finally, he concluded by suggesting that we all should make an effort to avoid stereotypes that present Islam as the main trigger for radicalization.

Debate

During the debate among participating States, Partners for Co-operation, international organizations and youth representatives, several delegations emphatically stressed that OSCE countries and Islam were on the same side in their efforts to counter violent extremism. It was therefore wrong to postulate any kind of link between violent extremism and religion. Although the perpetrators of terrorist acts seldom had a deep knowledge of religion, Islam frequently ended up being held as the culprit, largely on account of the role played by some media. Religion had been hijacked by terrorists, one delegation stated. On this matter, several States presented their initiatives on the promotion of Islam as a religion of peace and "the just middle", and others underlined the importance of studying the history and true values of Islam. Some delegations proposed the promotion of interfaith dialogue between Christians, Muslims and Jews as a way of bringing young people together in the fight against extremism. One delegation called upon the participating States and Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation to engage in the planning and building of "a culture of dialogue and encounter".

Some delegations commented on the need to find ways to improve the interaction between Partners for Co-operation and participating States, so as to better meet the security challenges shared by the OSCE area and the Mediterranean region; as one delegation put it, "one hand cannot clap alone". Several States offered to share their expertise on the prevention of violent extremism with other States, providing information and discussing the lessons learned; one Partner for Co-operation underlined the important role of the soft-power dimension.

The link between radicalization and discrimination was underlined by one delegation, which warned against the risk of fast radicalization among youngsters. The same delegation underscored the need to reach out to families, though without making them feel like targets, and to provide young people with role models who have been capable of finding their own way to success despite having started out in difficult neighbourhoods. One participant argued that social rejection always led to tensions, which could later fuel extremism. A youth representative showed how critical it was, in his personal experience, to engage with youth at risk of radicalization through social workers rather than through the police. Another youth representative stressed that young people should be empowered to play an active role in de-radicalization activities, as they were the most credible voices for other young people.

Another delegation stressed the link between risk of radicalization and unemployment, presenting some strategies developed by its Government aimed at addressing the employment needs of refugees. The critical importance of education was mentioned by many delegations, one of which linked it to the fight against discrimination and to improving the understanding of the role of religion in society.

One delegation expressed the view that States should build platforms for their youth, in order to create networks that would allow their voices to be heard. As well as stressing that it was essential to take into account the gender perspective on this matter, the same participating

State also noted that UNSCR 2250 (2015) on “Youth, Peace and Security” called for an increase in the representation of youth in decision-making processes. A participating State followed the same line, stressing that engaging with youth should not only imply working *for* youth but also *with* youth.

According to one delegation, implementing the United Nations Secretary-General’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism implied taking into account the causes of such violence; preventive measures should be designed in order to diminish the capacity of terrorist and violent extremists to attract new recruits. Inclusive political dialogue processes were important avenues for preventing violent extremism. In this regard, one youth representative suggested that colonialism could be considered as one of the root causes of violent extremism.

Several participants suggested putting an end to use of the term “Islamic State”, since it implied an acknowledgement of “Daesh”’s narrative and therefore a kind of participation in its brainwashing strategy.

3.2 Session II: Lessons Learnt and Best Practices in Dealing with Challenges for Youth North and South of the Mediterranean: Current Migration Trends

Report by Andrea De Bono Sant Cassia, Policy Officer, EU Delegation to the OSCE

Moderator: **H.E. Amb. Claude Wild**, Permanent Representative of Switzerland to the OSCE and Chair of the Informal Working Group Focusing on the Issue of Migration and Refugee Flows

Keynote speakers:

Hassan Abdel Moneim Mostafa, Senior Regional Adviser for Senior Regional Adviser for North Africa, the Middle East and the Gulf States, International Organization for Migration

Johanna Nyman, President of the European Youth Forum

Ghanem Al Shmer, Austrian Integration Ambassador and Refugee from Syria

Amb. Wild spoke of the need to establish a comprehensive governance structure in order to deal with current migration and refugee flows and avoid the situation experienced in 2015. In order to be successful, the international community would have to adopt adequate and substantive policies in the areas of protection, the preventing and combating of crime, border management, the successful integration of migrants and refugees, as well as partnerships with the countries affected. These policies would need to encompass both a gender and a youth perspective and would need to be adopted in a spirit of collective responsibility.

Mr. Mostafa focused his presentation on the need to transform the currently high levels of youth migration from a perceived “challenge” into an opportunity to be seized. He pointed out that, tragically, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region had not only produced the largest number of refugees but also hosted large numbers of migrants and refugees. Current migration and refugee flows meant that the MENA region is an area of origin, of destination, and of transit. Mr. Mostafa lamented that the present priorities had dampened the international community’s ability to focus on more long-term issues such as the demographic challenge. Demographic realities in both Europe and the developing world indicated that Europe, contrary to public perception, actually needed more young migrants, in order to compensate for ageing populations. He touched on some of the factors that make the MENA region an area of origin for migrants and refugees: the high rates of population growth coupled with improved access to education have created societal expectations of employment that the labour market cannot satisfy. It is therefore unsurprising that many youths in the region wish to migrate. The vast majority of those crossing the Mediterranean are within the 18–29 age bracket and are often victims of abuse during their journey. In order to mitigate and overcome the dangers associated with migration, and for countries to truly benefit from youth migration, Mr. Mostafa called for action in four key areas.

Firstly, there should be a concentrated effort to combat abuse, exploitation and violence faced by migrant youths both in the MENA region and in Europe. State actors needed to improve their legal frameworks and practical capacities in order to ensure the protection of human rights and grant equal opportunities in areas such as education and labour market access. Secondly, it was essential to reduce the push factors of migration in communities of origin and transit. Given the magnitude of such a task (which would necessarily involve mammoth-scale projects aimed at improving the quality of education and the generation of jobs), he

recommended a local-scale approach focused on local job creation and livelihood support. Thirdly, there should be provision of adequate pathways to lawful migration, with of different kinds and skill levels. Finally, measures to ensure social integration are essential as the rising discrimination and marginalization faced by migrants in many countries has even led to cases of radicalization.

Mr. Mostafa concluded by stating that migration will remain on the agenda for years. The driving forces behind youth migration such as demography and desperation will persist. It is our responsibility to empower these youths, by enabling them to realize their potential in their home countries, but equally by providing opportunities for safe and regular migration.

Ms. Nyman began by saying that young people today were growing up in difficult circumstances. She praised UN Security Council Resolution 2250, the UN's first thematic resolution on Youth, Peace and Security, stating that it portrayed young people as the positive force of change they can be. As migration was not something that could be eradicated, it was necessary to turn it into a positive phenomenon and to create a situation where nobody is forced to migrate because of difficult circumstances at home. It was necessary for the international community to respect their international agreements and commitments and to show an active sense of solidarity with those millions of people forced to flee their homes.

She emphasized the positive role that youth organizations could play in the sphere of migration: facilitating the integration of migrants into their host communities, acting as bridges between employers and migrants, and playing a role in the prevention of violent extremism and radicalization by ensuring that young people are enabled to exercise their rights and given the opportunity to express their opinions. Youth organizations are excellent entities for empowering youths and enabling them to become active citizens contributing to the decision-making process in their communities.

Ms. Nyman concluded her address by criticizing certain counter-productive anti-radicalization programmes that had the potential to marginalize the very youths they are supposed to help. The legitimate way forward was to ensure that young people are empowered, and to provide a safe space for intercultural and interfaith dialogue. Although this was not the primary function of youth organizations, it is a beautiful by-product of their work.

Mr. Al Shmer gave a harrowing account of having been forced to discontinue his studies because of the ongoing war in Syria, where he feared being apprehended by the Syrian Arab Army. Having fled Syria via Turkey, he arrived in Austria where he managed to integrate swiftly, learning the language in only ten months. He ended with the uplifting message that he hoped to be admitted to university to realize his childhood dream of becoming a doctor.

Debate

Numerous delegations repeatedly stressed a small number of major points. Firstly, migration ought to be perceived as an opportunity to be grasped and not as a threat. Secondly, any approach to dealing with current migration trends ought to be humane, fully respectful of human dignity and human rights, and focused on the integration of migrants and refugees, particularly as their current situation makes them vulnerable to exploitation, trafficking, extremism and radicalization. Thirdly, dealing with migration and refugee flows had to entail a concentrated and co-ordinated effort to address the root causes of migration. The root causes

mentioned included (but were not limited to) poverty, the failure of State institutions, ongoing violence, climate change, and persecution.

Emphasizing the need for a globally co-ordinated effort, one delegation stated that the current scenario exceeded the capacity of any individual country, as was shown by the current situation in Greece. Similar comments were made in relation to the daunting task faced by Turkey in satisfying the needs of all the migrants and refugees it was hosting. Similarly, several participants pointed out that the major problems faced by transit States, particularly along the Western Balkans migratory routes, reflected the transnational complexities generated by current migration trends.

The New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants adopted at the UN Summit on 19 September was welcomed by numerous delegations as evidence of the current situation being addressed globally, with the necessary co-operation of all members of the international community. Nevertheless, responsibilities needed to be equitably distributed.

As examples of positive initiatives aimed at addressing current migratory trends, some participating States explicitly mentioned the Migration Partnership Framework of the European Union, designed for the development of partnerships with countries of origin, transit and destination in specific areas of migration (including activities aimed at ensuring protection for those in need, ensuring legal migration pathways, enhancing co-operation on the return and re-admission of irregular migrants), and the European External Investment Plan with its goal of supporting investment in Africa and the Mediterranean neighbourhood.

With specific reference to the OSCE's Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation, it was pointed out that Algeria is no longer purely a transit country for migrants and refugees but also a country of destination hosting a substantial number of Syrians and sub-Saharan nationals forced into migration by poverty and a lack of stability. Emphasizing that migration was not something that could be stopped, the representative called for a greater focus on the circular flow of migrants, mentioning Algerian agreements providing for the repatriation of sub-Saharan nationals. Current migration trends could not be altered by EU naval operations alone, as a minority of people actually benefit from the presence of such operations.

Another participant, by contrast, pointed out the value of the EU's naval operations in the Mediterranean as together they have saved more than 100,000 lives. It was hoped that the European Border and Coast Guard would complement these efforts aimed at preventing human tragedies in the Mediterranean by tackling people-smugglers. In this connection, one delegation explicitly called for the renewal of UN Security Council Resolution 2240 authorizing, which authorizes EU Member States to intercept suspected migrant-smuggling vessels off the Libyan coast.

A representative from Morocco spoke about the country's national policy aimed at preventing youth migration, a policy prioritizing security and the protection of human rights. National legal frameworks had been updated and a migration observatory administrative body established. On the operational level, biometric data for identity cards had been introduced and 11,000 agents mobilized who specialized in the fight against human trafficking. On the international side, Morocco was considered an important partner of many EU Member States on account of its management of legal migration and its co-operation in dealing with cases of illegal migration (through, for example, the identification and repatriation of illegal migrants). Reference was made to Morocco's regularization campaign and anti-discrimination measures designed to protect sub-Saharan nationals in the country. Mr. Mostafa praised this campaign for having changed the lives of so many irregular migrants and refugees present in Morocco. After emphasizing that the negative effects of climate change were a major cause of forced

migration, the representative concluded his presentation by asserting Morocco's determination to find a common solution to deal with illegal migration.

The representative of Egypt said that migration was becoming an increasingly important issue for the country, with Egypt becoming both a source of migrants and a country of destination for migrants. The 500,000 Syrians present in Egypt aren't confined to camps and are granted equal rights in the fields of education and health, even though this created a difficult economic situation for many Egyptians. Within the field of migration, Egypt is currently working on a comprehensive strategy to strengthen border controls and crack down on criminal networks.

A few delegations emphasized the need to resolve the ongoing conflicts in the Mediterranean region and to work tirelessly for global peace. This would not be possible without a sense of communal responsibility and political will. While one participant stated that the resettlement of migrants into third countries should be expanded, another delegation proposed that migrants should be guaranteed the right of return to their State of origin.

One delegation linked current migration trends to States interfering in the domestic affairs of other States. This was unacceptable, and such States should bear the lion's share of responsibility for dealing with the consequences of their foreign interventions.

A few delegations also stressed the importance of implementing the 2016 EU-Turkey deal, with one delegation stating that it could produce positive results if both parties honored their respective commitments.

Some delegations referred to the advantages that could accrue to States from migrants and refugees. One delegation explicitly pointed out that the United States of America has benefited greatly from taking in migrants and refugees, citing their economic and societal contributions to their host communities. The same delegation argued that young people were best able to pave the way towards benefit being gained from migrants and refugees, as they were more likely to integrate quickly and could then act as agents of integration for their families.

Many delegations also called for increased efforts to address situations of protracted displacement more efficiently. Dignified living conditions and greater access to education and livelihoods needed to be guaranteed in order to enable migrants and refugees to live in dignity and contribute to their host communities. Many mentioned the assistance their countries had given to States hosting Syrian refugees. Similarly, participants praised the fact that youth migrants and refugees in Greece and Turkey were being granted the same rights to education as locals, particularly given the depressing economic climate.

Several delegations concluded their statements by expressing support for the Informal Working Group Focusing on the Issue of Migration and Refugee Flows and the report produced by the OSCE Chairmanship-in-Office, stating the OSCE had an important role to play in the current situation. This, it was hoped, would be reflected in the adoption of a text at the forthcoming Ministerial Council in Hamburg.

3.3 Session III: The Way Forward: Enhancing Opportunities

Report by Johanna Bischof, Delegation of Germany to the OSCE

Moderator: **H.E. Amb. Alessandro Azzoni**, Permanent Representative of Italy to the OSCE

Keynote speakers:

Fathallah Sijilmassi, Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean

Samia Hathroubi, European Director, Foundation for Ethnic Understanding, France

Itay Weiss, social activist and entrepreneur, Israel

Amb. Azzoni introduced the topic by defining the two main challenges faced by youth in the Mediterranean region: unemployment and political instability. These two factors, he said, created an environment of uncertainty that had led to a loss of perspectives among youth. Despite this difficult situation, however, some young people were stepping up and playing a leading role in improving their situation by starting their own enterprises and initiatives. It was important to support these ventures and thereby help young people to improve their situation.

Mr. Hendawi reported on the activities of the intergovernmental organization UfM in the field of employment and labour, especially with regard to women and young people.

Against the background of the creation of greater regional stability being the most important priority, the UfM saw two major fields of action: on the one hand creating more employment for youth, and on the other hand fostering regional integration in the Mediterranean region in order to increase investment and trade flows. By means of a variety of projects, the UfM aimed to help economies to exploit the full potential of youth and make them active players. The speaker also referred to UNSCR 2250 (2015) on the maintenance of international peace and security as an example of the international community coming together to enable youth to participate meaningfully in peace processes and the resolution of disputes, and encouraged all concerned to continue in that spirit.

Ms. Hathroubi spoke out strongly for the empowerment of young people. Describing the lack of perspective faced by youth in our time, she stated that by contrast with previous generations, who had lived in a spirit of positively connoted perspectives such “reconstruction” or “pan-Europeanism”, the youth of today was faced with negative developments such as the world economic crisis and European disintegration. The speaker expressed her support for the linking up of already existing fruitful initiatives in order to maximize their output, one example being the workshop on the prevention of youth radicalisation in Western Europe that had taken place on the eve of the Mediterranean Conference and had brought together youth representatives from various backgrounds and countries. On the other hand, it was crucial that the media should not play along with the agenda of the terrorist fighters by news coverage that unintentionally drew the picture of heroes fighting for their values and convictions. Furthermore, it was important not to report on Islam solely in the context of terrorism because this laid the ground for the stigmatization of Islam as a whole. On the contrary, the media should focus on creating positive role models for the fight against terrorism.

Mr. Weiss gave a presentation on the role of media in the formation of opinion and in radicalization. He pointed out the difference between demonstrations in the past and in the present. While in the past crowds gathered sporadically and spontaneously, today crowds formed online and persisted indefinitely. Under the impression of being anonymous, online contributors often made their statements quickly and uncritically. By contrast with demonstrations in real life, the many silent moderates were not in evidence in the Internet and were therefore not recognized. Mr. Weiss underlined the importance of the role of media by pointing out examples of online incitement turning into real life violent attacks within just a few days. Both perpetrators and victims were often very young people. One way to counter those phenomena was to create – possibly in co-operation with governments – online groups and petitions to transport the opposing message of mutual understanding and respect, and to speak out in favour of a pluralistic society.

Debate

Many delegations agreed that empowerment and creating perspectives were the most powerful tools for countering terrorist networks' recruitment activities, taking the opportunity to present initiatives in this field introduced by their respective countries. There was also general support for the idea that it was important to create meeting points, not dividing points, and that more effort had to be made to link fruitful initiatives nationally and internationally.

Many delegations agreed that youth should be supported and should be encouraged to participate in the public and political spheres. The low level of women's participation in public life was also addressed.

Broad support was given to the statements made in previous sessions and echoed in the present session to the effect that that terrorism has no religion and that nobody is born a terrorist. Terrorist activities also occurred in non-Islamic regions of the world.

In their statements, many delegations referred to education as a key factor in the fight against radicalization: a profound knowledge of history and religion would help youth to resist terrorist recruitment propaganda and enable them to be active players, as would education in respect for human rights (especially human dignity), intercultural understanding, and media literacy. One delegation pointed out that education was a powerful motor for change, especially in times of conflict and crisis, maintaining the hopes of young men and women for the future and acting as a catalyst for the recovery and rebuilding of post-conflict countries.

The topic of education was also addressed by one youth representative, who mentioned the important role women could play with regard to poorly integrated families. To educate and integrate women, especially mothers, by offering them language classes and other support was a way of strengthening whole families.

Several delegations argued that migration should not only be seen as a threat but also, in the light of the mobilization of skills, as an opportunity. The key to using those skills lay in successful integration policies designed to contribute to the social and economic development of new societies and to promote cultural and religious diversity and tolerance.

Delegations also spoke in favour of treating the Mediterranean region as an integral and not a separate part of the OSCE framework. Furthermore, only a global response would have the potential to rise to the challenge presently faced by youth and to reduce social and economic tensions. In addition, dialogue between countries of origin, transit and destination should be enhanced.

4. High-level Segment on 6 October 2016

4.1 Opening Remarks

Report by Raphaël Bez, Political Advisor, Delegation of Switzerland to the OSCE

H.E. Sebastian Kurz, Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, Austria

H.E. Vincenzo Amendola, Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Italy

H.E. Mohammed Taher Siala, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Government of National Accord, Libya

H.E. Martin Kobler, UN Secretary General’s Special Representative and Head of the UN Support Mission in Libya

The High-level Segment was opened by **Minister Kurz**, who highlighted what he considered the three main security threats currently faced by the OSCE area: 1) the increase in military confrontations, 2) the growing radicalization of young people, and 3) a general decrease of confidence in national institutions and organizations. He then addressed the security risks posed by “foreign fighters”, especially when they return to their country of origin, and strongly denounced their actions. Austria was particularly concerned by this, as approximately three hundred of its citizens had left the country to fight in Syria/Iraq. After reaffirming that terrorism had no religion and that nobody was born a terrorist, he concluded by calling for better protection of young people and increased engagement across generations, reaffirming the readiness of Austria to continue fostering the exchanges with youth representatives within the OSCE.

Undersecretary Amendola underlined the importance of unity between the participating States, the Mediterranean Partners and the North African countries, including Libya. The challenges they were all facing – for example, demography and migration – should be addressed together in forums such as the OSCE Mediterranean Contact Group. In this regard, the OSCE provides an appropriate platform for dialogue and for shaping solutions to meet the needs of the entire Mediterranean region. Undersecretary Amendola also welcomed the work of the UN in Libya, which was complementary to that of the OSCE. He reaffirmed that the needs of the young people of the Mediterranean region should be at the top of everybody’s agenda and encouraged OSCE structures to focus more on addressing them. He finished by calling for a positive agenda in the different contexts of conflict resolution and for greater respect and mutual understanding between cultures.

Minister Siala called for united action against terrorism and radicalization through more exchange of experiences and enhanced dialogue on security and co-operation in the Mediterranean region. While calling for a special focus on youth and migration, he strongly condemned the “exportation of responsibilities” by certain countries that wished to avoid theirs, especially in the context of the current migration challenges. Libya did not want to become a place to which Europe could send all the people to whom it denied access to its own territories. The challenges faced by Libya – such as terrorism, irregular migration, corruption and lack of opportunities for its youth – needed a broader response than just a national one. Minister Siala wished for collective work, a better sense of responsibility, and an increase in

international co-operation on these various issues. In conclusion, he thanked the UN Support Mission in Libya and the EU Border Management Assistance Mission for their support, and reiterated Libya's wish to become a Partner for Co-operation of the OSCE.

H.E. Martin Kobler focused his remarks on the particular need to engage young people, for example, on preventing radicalization and violent extremism. As a good practice he mentioned the Debate and Dialogue Group that brings young leaders together in Tripoli with the aim of engaging them in decision-making processes. He shared his admiration for their ideas, readiness to take initiatives, and ability to mobilize their peers to go out and vote. As today's younger generation was the largest in history, it was clear that no conflict resolution was possible without its full support. The adoption of UNSCR 2250 and the establishment of a UN Secretary-General's Envoy on Youth underlined this reality: the contribution of young people to peace and security was both crucial and vital. He suggested three ways to increase youth participation: 1) give the youth a greater role in decision-making processes, including political ones, 2) invest more in training in the fields of journalism and the use of social media in order to foster the production of objective news, and 3) increase efforts to bring together young people from both sides of the Mediterranean. In this regard, the OSCE – including the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly – could play a key role, though, for example, the creation of a Mediterranean Youth Parliament. The speaker advocated a real investment in the next generations, which, he said, was a prerequisite for peace and security. He concluded by stating that the challenges facing Libya were enormous, but the country had a great asset with which to surmount them: its youth.

4.2 Discussion

Report by Nevena Jovanovic, Second Secretary, Delegation of Serbia to the OSCE

Moderator: H.E. Lamberto Zannier, Secretary General of the OSCE Rapporteur: Ms.

The *High-level Segment* was devoted to observations concerning youth and to recommendations within the larger context of a fast-evolving Mediterranean security agenda. Sharing the assumption of close links between security in the OSCE area and in the Mediterranean region, the high-level speakers and other distinguished representatives from OSCE participating States and Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation discussed national and regional perspectives for enhancing dialogue and co-operation in facing common challenges.

The participants agreed that violent extremism, radicalization and terrorism were amongst the most pressing challenges facing the modern world, as were current migration trends. During the discussion, special attention was paid to youth as the population sector most widely affected by these phenomena, both to the north and to the south of the Mediterranean. It was underlined that involving and empowering youth was a key element in combating violent extremism, radicalization and terrorism, which were a common challenge to all societies. The necessity of considering the complex issue of youth from a cross-dimensional perspective was also underlined.

Special attention was also paid to the situation and developments in Libya. The participants stated that it was of high importance to reaffirm the relevance of the OSCE Mediterranean Partnership as a platform for forward-looking and action-oriented dialogue between countries north and south of the Mediterranean, as challenges all over the region were on the increase. Both the OSCE participating States and the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation reaffirmed their political interest in and commitment to engaging in exchange on common security issues in the Mediterranean region. The *High-level Segment on Youth North and South of the Mediterranean: Facing Security Challenges and Enhancing Co-operation* was attended by five foreign ministers and seven deputy foreign ministers or secretaries of State representing OSCE participating States or Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation.

H.E. Tzachi Hangebi, Minister in the Office of the Prime Minister of the State of Israel, stated that the increase in strength and continuing savagery of non-State terrorist organizations and transnational networks such as ISIS and Al-Qaida were amongst the most dangerous challenges currently faced by our societies, as was the phenomenon of terrorists acting alone or in small cells. New counter-terrorism policies and strategies had to be developed in order to respond to these new challenges. Minister Hangebi underlined the importance of further enhancing co-operation between the OSCE participating States and their Mediterranean Partners. In this regard, he commended the activities of the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) in the field of combating anti-Semitism, which were an integral part of the ODIHR's promotion of tolerance and non-discrimination.

H.E. George W. Vella, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Malta, underlined that the security issues shared between the OSCE and the Mediterranean were now more acute than ever before. Has the OSCE family done enough, Minister Vella asked, to address

current security concerns? And what steps had to be taken collectively to address the instability in evidence at the southern borders of the OSCE area? He called upon the Partners to continue investing in their active engagement with the OSCE and upon the participating States to give Partners a stronger voice in the Organization. In this regard, Minister Vella proposed the appointment of a Special Representative for the Mediterranean, as this would facilitate the increased attention and focus on the Mediterranean region that was so sorely needed in the framework of regular debate within the OSCE.

H.E. Ioannis Kasoulides, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cyprus, underlined that young people north and south of the Mediterranean were gravely affected by the emerging security challenges and should be at the focus of our endeavours to formulate adequate responses. It was essential to address the root causes of migration, terrorism, radicalization and extremism. There was an urgent need to help affected States to build stable and democratic societies through the positive involvement of young people. Minister Kasoulides stressed that education was a key factor and called upon the OSCE participating States and Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation to realize their full potential in empowering young people, both women and men.

H.E. Aleksey Meshkov, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, discussed the situation in the Mediterranean region and its impact on Euro-Atlantic security in general. Deputy Minister Meshkov stressed that the process of improving the security situation should not be confined to Europe but should extend to other parts of the world, and in particular to the Mediterranean region, which, he underlined, had now become a source of security threats. Political instability in several States had resulted not only in a spiral of armed conflicts, economic collapse and impoverished populations but also in increasing ethnic and religious tensions. Extremism, he explained, had become a danger not only for the States with an unstable social and political situation and low levels of social and economic development but also for quite prosperous countries. Co-ordination of international efforts in political, socio-economic and humanitarian areas was urgently needed if the major challenges to international security were to be addressed effectively.

H.E. Ibanez Rubio, Vice-Minister in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Spain, stressed the need to educate young people on both sides of the Mediterranean as a prerequisite to countering the growing radicalization in the Mediterranean region and beyond. On the subject of the combined counter-terrorism campaign, he underlined the necessity of joint efforts in order to defeat ISIS. Vice-Minister Rubio also touched on the situation in Libya, stressing the Libyan people's urgent need for peace.

H. E. Ioannis Amanatidis, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of Greece, stated that the OSCE area and its Mediterranean neighbourhood were facing a deteriorating security environment. Violent extremism, radicalization and organized crime were amongst the most serious challenges the OSCE area was now facing. In that context Deputy Minister Amanatidis underlined the need for enhanced dialogue with the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation and for a more proactive approach in this regard, also stressing the key importance of education in preventing radicalization of youth.

H.E. Roksanda Ninčić, Political Director of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Serbia, stressed that security in Europe was closely linked to security in the Mediterranean region as a whole. At no time had this link ever been more apparent than in very challenging times of the present day. Violent extremism, radicalization leading to terrorism, and terrorism itself were

amongst the most pressing challenges, as were current migration trends. The growing number of foreign terrorist fighters travelling from OSCE participating States to Syria and Iraq had added a new dimension to this challenge. Youth, said Mrs. Ninčić, was the population group most widely affected by these negative trends. On the subject of migration, Mrs. Ninčić stressed that the world was faced with a phenomenon of historic proportions which required a comprehensive, humane and sustainable solution.

H.E. Lukáš Parížek, State Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia, called for active partnership and co-operation from both sides of the Mediterranean, underlining the key importance of engaging all relevant actors in combating terrorism and radicalization. There was a particular need to improve the capacities of the OSCE in combating these global phenomena, with special attention being attached to youth, especially in the field of education.

H.E. Anne Sipiläinen, Under-Secretary of State, Foreign and Security Policy, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland, pointed out that taking into consideration the needs of youth was not a question of soft policy, but of security and of the common future of the OSCE area. The OSCE should proactively engage young people in integration-oriented strategies and the prevention of radicalization leading to violent extremism. In this context, the OSCE participating States and its Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation shall promote the empowering of young people both south and north of the Mediterranean and ensure their ability to voice their opinions. With reference to the situation in Syria, Ms. Sipiläinen called upon all parties to the conflict to immediately cease all attacks against civilians and civilian infrastructure, and to allow unhindered and continuous humanitarian access to those in need. Challenges brought about by migration had to be tackled with a unified approach, anchored in human rights.

Tunisia underlined that in the context of the challenges of extremism and radicalization all countries bore a joint responsibility to make young people's voices heard and to take appropriate action to address security in comprehensive manner.

Egypt stressed the importance of considering the social conditions north and south of the Mediterranean in order to improve peace and security in the region. The fight against terrorism and radicalization must include a special focus on youth, as young people were the sector of the population most affected by these global threats. Egypt also expressed its full support for the Libyan people and for peace processes in Libya.

Jordan also expressed its support for the people of Libya and welcomed the fact that developments in Libya were occupying an important position in discussions at the present Mediterranean Conference. On the other hand, Jordan expressed grave concern over the situation in Syria, stressing that resolution of the migration crisis was dependent upon sustainable political solutions to the Syrian crisis.

Morocco emphasized the need for exchange of best practices and lessons learned in order to generate positive developments with regard to the current challenges on both sides of the Mediterranean. Morocco also underlined the need to avoid negative narratives that postulated a link between acts of terrorism and specific religious groups.

Algeria, as well as a number of other Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation, stressed the importance of strengthening co-operation and enhancing dialogue with OSCE participating

States, especially in the context of combating violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism, and of combating terrorism itself.

Slovakia/European Union emphasized the EU's continued engagement and co-operation with its Mediterranean neighbours, which remained one of the central elements of its Common Foreign and Security Policy. With regard to the situation in Libya, the EU called for swift advance in Libya's political process through the formation of a new Cabinet of the Government of National Accord. The EU also underlined its commitment to pursuing and strengthening co-operation with the Mediterranean Partners, doing so through the OSCE in all areas where the Organization could be of assistance with its comprehensive approach to security.

The **United States of America** expressed concern about the rising numbers and various kinds of different non-State actors, including terrorists who attacked Mediterranean and OSCE countries alike. The situations impacting upon economic opportunity, food security and stability and resulting in an increase in global mobility were the result of the failure on the part of some governments to effect democratic transformation and secure democratic gains. In this context, the USA underlined the importance of the youth-powered online social network Youth Voices and of making young people not only objects in our conversations but also subjects in our progress.

Turkey stated that transnational threats did not recognize geographical boundaries, emphasizing that the humanitarian crisis in Syria continued to threaten the stability of the wider region. Turkey also expressed support for Libya's stability and prosperity, also underlining that the empowerment of Libya's youth would be of critical importance to preventing violent extremism and radicalization.

Montenegro stressed that the unprecedented migration and refugee flows bore formidable social economic and security implications for all groups on the move, and especially for youth. The magnitude and complexity of the challenges required a common response based on shared responsibility, solidarity and partnership.

Switzerland expressed its support for strengthening the integration of the Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation within the OSCE, especially in the context of migration management and the prevention of radicalization, also welcoming the fact of young people taking an active part in the present Mediterranean Conference, which was a positive step forward.

Slovenia pointed out that while young people were one of the groups most susceptible to radicalization that leads to terrorism, they could be drivers of positive change. Slovenia also called for the generation of positive alternatives for youth, through education and job creation, and through their active involvement in the political process.

Bosnia and Herzegovina stated that investing in youth on both sides of the Mediterranean, offering them positive alternatives, fostering dialogue and enhancing their opportunities should be at the centre of the efforts of the OSCE and its Mediterranean Partners.

The representative of **NATO** underlined the high importance of strengthening co-operation between NATO and the OSCE, as an integral part of the comprehensive approach to security.

The representative of the **ODIHR** stated that while young people were one of the most vulnerable social groups, especially in situations of conflict and migration, they were also the present and future forces of change for our societies and States. The ODIHR stood ready to contribute with its experience to an enhanced role of the OSCE in addressing related challenges.

One **youth representative** from the workshop on youth and the prevention of violent extremism stressed the necessity to strike the right balance between fighting violent extremism and prevention as a long-term strategy.

The participants agreed that the *High-level Segment* had provided an opportunity to recognize lessons learned in the field of countering violent extremism, radicalization and terrorism, to identify best practices in dealing with current migration trends, and to assess and dwell upon the importance of involving youth in dealing with these emergencies. The OSCE participating States must continue to collaborate with their Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation on promoting integration as the foundation for diverse and peaceful societies in order to reverse negative trends towards extremism and radicalization. They bore a shared and joint responsibility to develop a strong counter-narrative and to reaffirm shared values.

5. Summary of the Closing Session

Report by Emiliano Alessandri, Senior External Co-operation Officer, OSCE Secretariat

H.E. Lamberto Zannier, Secretary General of the OSCE

H.E. Sebastian Kurz, Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs, Austria

Minister Kurz closed the conference by noting the constructive and forward-looking tone of the discussions. He thanked all participants and praised in particular the contribution of ideas provided by youth representatives. He expressed Austria's intention to carry forward the ongoing dialogue and initiatives with Mediterranean Partners, including in the field of countering violent extremism and radicalization to 2017 when Austria will hold the Chairmanship of the OSCE. He reiterated that the OSCE and its Mediterranean Partnership offer a solid platform for exchanging best practices and fostering co-operation between the two sides of the Mediterranean. He underlined that Mediterranean issues will remain high in the OSCE agenda.

Secretary General Zannier stressed the need to focus on a positive agenda of dialogue and co-operation with the Mediterranean Partners. The Partnership, he remarked, should not be exclusively seen through the lens of threats and challenges but also common opportunities. He argued that discussions at the OSCE Mediterranean Conference showed that migration can be turned into an opportunity for growth and development and that youth can be empowered to be the catalyst for more cooperative processes in the Mediterranean. He underlined that the work done to counter violent radicalization and fight terrorism should be combined with the equally important task of fostering dialogue and promoting integration. In this context, he emphasized the role that education can play in preventing the formation of stereotypes and the propagation of divisive and negative ideologies. In closing, he reiterated the need to ease mechanisms and procedures of the OSCE Mediterranean Partnership, starting with more straightforward ways to implement projects on the territory of the Partners.