



Permanent Mission of Italy
OSCE

STATEMENT BY ITALY

**Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation,
Mr. Benedetto Della Vedova**

OSCE-WIDE COUNTER-TERRORISM CONFERENCE

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Distinguished chairperson, dear colleagues,

May I first of all congratulate the Swedish chairmanship for the extraordinary work carried out in extremely difficult times marked by an unprecedented pandemic.

Despite the constraints, these two days of conference provide us with a precious contribution in terms both of reflection and of policy making.

Namely, I am impressed by the enduring commitment of the International Community to countering terrorism and violent extremism, despite the tremendous burden that the pandemic has posed on all of us.

The pandemic, besides the tragic cost in human losses, has increased the risk of radicalization among the weakest and most marginalized components of our societies, women and youth in particular. The pandemic has dramatically affected the life of families, especially low-income households, with a dramatic “fall-out” on the social life of teenagers.

More than ever, it is of key importance to invest resources on women and youth, empowering them and making them a positive transformative force of our societies.

Terrorism and violent extremism narratives seek to build upon social discontent, now exacerbated by the pandemic driven economic crises, to promote radicalization and attract marginalized individuals.

Terrorists increasingly use social networks and the cyberspace to reach out to such individuals. Indeed, countering terrorist threats in the virtual space is an impelling priority to address, in all its various aspects: online radicalization, propaganda, dissemination of violent and extremist contents, use of crypto-currencies for fundraising, among others.

In order to face such an ever-changing and multifaceted security threat it is absolutely necessary to take a holistic approach.

Italy firmly believes that the resilience of our society to radicalization and terrorism must be based, first and foremost, on the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Collaboration among states on “hard security” issues alone cannot be considered as the exclusive instrument of the International Community to fight back terrorism and the threat it poses. Upholding our shared principles and values should remain the core essence of our action.

The national and international strategies of de-radicalization should always envisage specific measures on prevention, rehabilitation and reintegration of vulnerable individuals, with specific focus - I repeat - on women and youth.

It is on this basis and with this vision that Italy and the EU have been promoting the dialogue and the adoption of new commitments within the OSCE, on issues and areas indeed relevant for the fight against terrorism, embracing a holistic and cross-dimensional approach, open to the contributions of civil society and the private sector.

Among the areas where Italy has provided an active contribution within OSCE, I would like to recall: the fight against illegal smuggling - of human beings, drugs and cultural goods - and illicit financial flows; the disruption of online platforms exploited by terrorist groups and individuals; the advocacy and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in drafting national legislation on counter-terrorism.

Italy continues to support a number of OSCE projects to fight terrorism, violent extremism and radicalization in the OSCE region, especially in the Western Balkans, in Central Asia and in the Mediterranean

Distinguished chair, dear Colleagues, the OSCE Participating States have long acknowledged the severity of the terrorist challenge. OSCE’s added value in countering terrorism and violent extremism lies in its comprehensive approach to security, its diverse membership and in the leverage it has as a convening power.

Surely, sustaining our multilateral pressure on terrorist actors in the midst of a global pandemic is daunting; however, putting international cooperation on hold would be short-sided and against our self-interest.

Now is the moment to reaffirm our commitment to international cooperation; now is the moment to rise together to the challenge before us.

Thank you for your attention.