



Rappresentanza Permanente d'Italia  
OSCE

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**PROMOTING WHOLE-OF-SOCIETY APPROACH TO YOUTH CRIME PREVENTION  
OSCE side event on the margins of the 32<sup>nd</sup> Session of the UN Commission on Crime  
Prevention and Criminal Justice**

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First of all, I would like to thank Ambassador Alena Kupchyna and the OSCE Transnational Threats Department for bringing us together to discuss how to promote a whole-of-society approach to youth crime prevention and to share the valuable experience of the OSCE in this area.

Allow me to start by saying that – by coincidence – today is a particularly significant date for holding this event. It is the Day of legality and the fight against all mafias (*Giornata per la legalità e il contrasto alla criminalità mafiosa*), when in Italy we remember the anniversary of the brutal killing of Giovanni Falcone, his wife and three security officers by the mafia in 1992.

As you know, Palermo Magistrates Giovanni Falcone and Paolo Borsellino – who was also killed by the mafia a few months later, in July 1992 – made great strides in the fight against the mafia and paid their commitment with their lives. The heartfelt reaction and commotion of ordinary citizens to their death has been key in continuing and further advancing their work in the fight against the mafia. The lesson that Italy has learnt in 1992 is that a strong institutional response and civil society engagement are essential pillars of the fight against criminality and for the rule of law and justice.

Magistrate Antonio Caponnetto, who headed the pool of Magistrates in Palermo at the time and who first brought together Falcone and Borsellino, used to say: “mafia fears schools more than justice” and that “education removes the grass from under the feet of the mafia culture” (*La mafia teme la scuola più della Giustizia, l'istruzione toglie l'erba sotto i piedi della cultura mafiosa*).

Therefore it will not surprise you if I say that Italy is very proud to support the OSCE work on youth crime prevention, under the project carried out in South-Eastern Europe by the Transnational Threats Department and the Office of for Economic and Environmental activities.

A holistic approach to youth crime prevention, through education and awareness raising activities, civil society engagement and recognizing and addressing youth risk factors at an early stage is crucial. For the safety and security of our communities, but most importantly to give young people the skills and confidence they need to make positive choices and become active contributors to society.

The added value of OSCE's work on youth crime prevention lays precisely in its holistic and regional approach, built on three pillars:

1. **Empowering young people.** To give an example, through Italy's support, the OSCE will contribute to the development of the youth strategy of the Canton of Sarajevo and form multidisciplinary Expert Working Groups, composed of experts from police, schools, social services, civil society and young people. The OSCE will include the voice of young people from the very beginning to ensure that the youth strategy takes into account their challenges, priorities and ideas.

2. **Civil society engagement.** Civil society organizations can provide youth with access to positive role models, mentorship opportunities, and programs that help build life skills, self-esteem, and resilience - all of which can help prevent youth from engaging in criminal activities.

I am very glad that we have Libera here with us today and involved in this project. Libera is a true global leader when it comes to effectively strengthening resilience to organized crime and in promoting a culture of legality from an early age.

3. **Regional cooperation** is key to bring together interested stakeholders from different countries, create opportunities for dialogue and confidence building. This is what the OSCE does best. The regional event on youth crime prevention in Skopje this June, in cooperation with the OSCE Chair of North Macedonia, will serve this purpose. It will bring together law enforcement and educational institutions, civil society and young people from the region to discuss challenges and good practices in the field of youth crime prevention.

In conclusion, let me once again to thank Ambassador Kupchyna and the OSCE for today's wonderful opportunity to share the OSCE experience and contribute to the promotion of effective approaches to youth crime prevention.