

OSCE's Consolidated Framework for the Fight against Terrorism

by Reinhard Uhrig

In December 2012, participating States of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the world's largest security organisation, adopted the OSCE Consolidated Framework for the Fight against Terrorism. This Consolidated Framework builds on previously adopted decisions, commitments and mandates over the past ten years. The document constitutes an important milestone for the Organisation. OSCE has contributed considerably to efforts of the international community aimed at effectively countering terrorism while adhering to the rule of law and upholding human rights standards.

The Consolidated Framework provides a new blueprint for the OSCE's contribution to global efforts against terrorism. It was discussed for more than one year before being adopted by the 57 participating States of the Organization during the OSCE Ministerial Council in Dublin in December 2012. The document identifies the operational principles and strategic focus areas for the anti-terrorism work of the different executive structures of OSCE. It builds on the Bucharest Plan of Action for Combating Terrorism adopted in 2001, which can be seen as the starting point for the active engagement of the OSCE in support of the fight against terrorism.

Why is the Consolidated Framework important? Three answers...

The Consolidated Framework is bringing the *acquis* of previous political decisions into a single strategic statement/vision. This helps to communicate in clear language to States and international partners what the profile, comparative advantages and unique organisational strengths of the OSCE are. This is particularly important at a time when fewer resources are available whilst an increasing number of actors seek to contribute to the global efforts against terrorism.

The Consolidated Framework underlines the importance of close collaboration to achieve comprehensive security - collaboration that is indispensable on multiple levels: between countries, within countries, and among international organisations. As a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, co-ordination and co-operation with the United Nations and relevant specialised organisations is key for the OSCE, in particular with a view of an effective implementation of the international legal framework against terrorism and the United Nations Global Counter Terrorism Strategy.

The Consolidated Framework identifies strategic focus areas for counter-terrorism activities of the OSCE and its executive structures. The organisations' main role is to assist its participating States in fulfilling their international obligations and political commitments. The executive

structures – in particular, the Secretariat and its Transnational Threats Department, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), and several of the Organization’s field operations – run numerous programmes that contribute to strengthening States’ capacities to prevent and combat terrorism. The Consolidated Framework provides political guidance on how to prioritise this work while taking into account that the threat of terrorism is multi-faceted and evolving. Such prioritisation will ultimately help to enhance donor co-ordination, which is important as most OSCE activities to counter terrorism require extra budgetary funds.

The Way Ahead...

In 2013, under the Chairmanship of Ukraine, the OSCE will be working towards the implementation of the Consolidated Framework. The Transnational Threats Department will work with other OSCE executive structures and the participating States to further operationalise this vision and enhance the Organization’s effectiveness and value added. (*The Consolidated Framework can be found at: <http://www.osce.org/atu>*)

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