



Empowering young people and engaging with individuals at risk of radicalization is crucial to countering the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters and confronting violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism, said participants at the start of a two-day OSCE-wide counter-terrorism conference which opened in Vienna today.

The conference, organized by Serbia's 2015 OSCE Chairmanship, brings together over 300 experts from OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation, and 20 international and regional organizations, as well as academia and civil society organizations, to facilitate the exchange of good practices and lessons learned on countering the incitement and recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters.

"Serbia's OSCE Chairmanship firmly believes in the agency of young people," said Aleksandar Nikolić, State Secretary of Serbia's Ministry of Interior. "Empowering youth through education and training in media literacy and critical thinking helps to prevent the seeds of intolerance, radicalization and extremism from taking root," he said.

Conference participants will discuss how to make better use of community policing and other public-private partnerships to prevent terrorism; ways to engage youth in countering violent extremism; and good practices in developing and disseminating positive counter-narratives at the local level. They will highlight ways to increase intercultural and inter-faith dialogue and partnerships – particularly involving youth – aimed at fostering tolerance, mutual respect and understanding, and contributing to the promotion of democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

"Upholding the principles, commitments, and goals of the OSCE, enshrined 40 years ago in the Helsinki Final Act, is the best antidote to terrorism and violent extremism," said OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier. "This includes strong inter-governmental partnerships, but also partnerships with civil society, the media and the private sector."

The conference also sees the launch of the campaign ["OSCE United in Countering Violent Extremism"](#), which will encourage all OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation, as well as civil society and academic institutions across the OSCE space, to speak with one voice against the corrosive appeal of violent extremism by promoting tolerance, mutual respect, pluralism, inclusion and cohesion.

*Photo by:OSCE/Micky Kroell* □