



The OSCE must take a united approach, encouraging co-operation at all levels, and engaging youth and communities, to effectively counter terrorism and the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters, said Vuk Žugić, Chair of the OSCE Permanent Council as he concluded a two-day OSCE-wide conference today on behalf of Serbia's 2015 OSCE Chairmanship.

Welcoming the launch of the OSCE's new campaign 'United in Countering Violent Extremism', Žugić stressed that participating States should recognize the need for an inclusive and co-ordinated response at all levels, including enhanced co-ordination among public authorities within and outside the security sector, as well as partnerships between these agencies and the private sector, academia, the media and civil society.

The campaign, which was launched on the first day of the conference, aims to unite the voice of all parts of the OSCE and its 57 participating States, by showing that everyone must rise to the challenge of responding to the corrosive appeal of violent extremism by promoting tolerance, mutual respect, pluralism, inclusion, and cohesion.

The campaign will build on the momentum from the two-day conference in which participants emphasized the need for increasing the exchange of information and international co-operation among OSCE participating States and their Partners for Co-operation, in order to adapt their legislation and policies to prevent violent radicalization and to counter the appeal of terrorism.

"Young people should be involved inside and outside the classroom, at the level of their city, country and internationally," said Žugić. "Youth should actively participate in the design, implementation and evaluation of efforts to counter violent extremism. And this involvement should not be top-down or unidirectional, but rather a two-way process through which the voices of the young are heard and valued."

Participants said that communities were often best placed to develop authentic and credible messages that take into consideration the local context, the challenges, and the possible grievances that some of the more vulnerable members of society may experience. Here women, youth and youth organizations could play a key role, they added. Adopting community

policing-type approaches to preventing terrorism, in particular at the local level, was an approach that the OSCE can support to help foster trust and transparency, experts said.

The conference reaffirmed the key role played by the promotion and protection of human rights and the rule of law to successfully combat terrorism. Participants encouraged the OSCE to continue supporting participating States in ensuring compliance of their anti-terrorism laws and strategies with international human rights standards, and by helping identify and disseminate good practices supportive of a human-rights based approach.

More than 300 delegates including national counter-terrorism co-ordinators and other governmental experts from participating States and Partners for Co-operation, as well as representatives from international organizations, academia and NGOs participated in the conference.