



Strasbourg, 17 March 2005

Third High-level multilateral meeting
of the ministries of the Interior

Fight against terrorism and organised crime
to improve security in Europe

Warsaw (Poland)
Hotel Sofitel Victoria

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Statement by Minister Jan TRUSZCZYNSKI

On behalf of Chairman of the Committee of Ministers
of the Council of Europe

Mr President,
Mr Secretary General,
Ministers,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It's a pleasure and privilege to speak today to such distinguished audience on behalf of the Polish Chairmanship in the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. I'm really glad that the Ministry of Interior and Administration decided to host this important event under auspices of the Poland's presidency.

Poland, deeply concerned about the global phenomenon of terrorism, organised crime and other threats for security of European citizens, defined the struggle against terrorism as one of priorities of its presidency in the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. This issue will also be one of main topics of discussion at the Third Summit in May.

This conference provides a unique opportunity to make a comprehensive overview of existing mechanisms and instruments that we can use to overcome those threats in the most effective way and in full respect of human rights.

While leaving the specific questions to experts I would like to focus on two main issues which remain in the centre of attention of the Committee of Ministers: firstly on the problem of implementation of existing instruments and secondly – on the question of existence of sufficient means based on common legal grounds.

The Committee of Ministers monitors the state of play of signatures and ratification of the existing conventions including those which have a bearing on the fight against terrorism. It has been exercising this role in particular with reference to the Protocol amending the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism. Although it was adopted two years ago it has been ratified by 13 countries only till now.

Recently adopted Guidelines on the protection of victims of terrorist acts and the Declaration on freedom of expression and information in the media in the context of the fight against terrorism only prove the existence of different dimensions and multilevel approach the Committee of Ministers takes to tackle terrorism.

Another jewel in the crown of the Council of Europe conventional basis, the Convention on Cybercrime should also be added to the list, as offences related to information and communication technologies may be linked to organised crime, money laundering (cyber-laundering) and terrorism (cyber-terrorism).

Broad ratification and implementation of all available instruments remains the crucial issue and I will not cease to appeal to enhance efforts in this respect.

Representing the Chair of the Committee of Ministers I feel privileged to announce that as a result of almost two years of intensive work in the Council of Europe new draft instruments have been elaborated which directly address different aspects of terrorism threat:

- Draft convention on the prevention of terrorism and
- Draft convention on money laundering and the financing of terrorism.

Moreover three recommendations on special investigative techniques, the protection of witnesses, and identity documents are on their final stage of preparation.

Let me assure you that the Committee of Ministers will do its utmost to adopt these instruments as quickly as possible, the most preferably at the Third Summit which will take place in two months. Their early entry into force as well as their proper implementation depends on each and every country and our efforts to secure early ratification will be indispensable.

In the organised crime domain the finalisation and adoption of the Convention on Trafficking in Human Beings is particularly important, as trafficking in human beings is both an issue of organised crime and of human rights.

Proper application of agreed standards can be assured by well functioning monitoring mechanisms as proved by those already established by the Council of Europe: MONEYVAL (for money laundering) and GRECO (for corruption). Other mechanisms will start operating once the new conventions are in force (COSTER for terrorism; GRETA for trafficking in human beings). It is of utmost importance that our countries fully cooperate within these mechanisms.

To conclude, terrorism, organised crime, cybercrime, corruption, trafficking in human beings and other forms of serious crime will remain high on the agenda of the Committee of Ministers in the future. This organisation has already developed a coherent approach to assist its Member States in their efforts to protect their societies from all possible threats. We should make good use of this support and cooperate with the Council of Europe in this joint action.

The Third Summit of Heads of States and Governments of the Council of Europe, which the Committee of Ministers is now preparing, and which will be held here, in Warsaw on 16 and 17 May, will take a stance on the security of European citizens showing the path for further developments of means and methods of protection. I am convinced that your discussions and conclusions which you will take at the close of the Conference will add new elements for reflection and further considerations.

Thank you for your attention.