Speaking points for Mr Igor CRNADAK,
Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina and
Chairman of the Committee of Ministers
Special meeting of the Counter-Terrorism Committee
with member States and international and regional organisations
on “stemming the flow of foreign terrorist fighters”
(Madrid, 28 July 2015)

It is an honour for me to address this meeting representing a regional
organisation, the Council of Europe, which is actively contributing to the
global fight against terrorism.

This year Bosnia and Herzegovina is chairing the Committee of Ministers
of the Council of Europe for the first time since its accession to the
Organisation in 2002. Along with the one year tenure as a non-permanent
member of the Security Council of the United Nations, this is the most
challenging task with which our country has been entrusted since its
independence. However, we do not see it as one of those arduous
challenges we hope to overcome as soon as possible, but rather a challenge which we have eagerly been anticipating and during which we hope to thrive.

One of the priorities of the Council of Europe and also of our Chairmanship is the fight against terrorism as this phenomenon is a major threat to the Council of Europe’s values.

The Council of Europe’s activities regarding the fight against terrorism are built on three cornerstones:

1) strengthening legal action against terrorism;
2) safeguarding fundamental values; and
3) addressing the root causes of terrorism.

A fundamental principle for the Council of Europe is that human rights must be respected in all cases, including in the fight against terrorism. For this purpose the Committee of Ministers adopted Guidelines for member States on human rights and the fight against terrorism in 2002. These Guidelines are based on the case law of the European Court of Human Rights.
Although the Council of Europe was active in the field of action against terrorism before 9/11, the main legal instruments of the Organisation were adopted after the tragic events in Washington and New York.


Following the 9/11 attacks and, also a number of terrorist attacks in Europe at the beginning of the 21st Century, the Organisation also enhanced its cooperation in this field with the UN, the European Union and the OSCE.

The terrorist attacks in Paris in January this year and in Copenhagen in February set off a series of further activities and incited the Council of Europe to intensify its work.

Early this year, the Ministers' Deputies endorsed a series of immediate measures proposed by the Secretary General. The first concrete result of
this action was the elaboration of a draft Additional Protocol to the Council of Europe Convention on the prevention of terrorism on the issue of foreign terrorist fighters. This Protocol will assist member States with the implementation of Resolution 2178 (2014) adopted by the United Nations Security Council on 24 September 2014.

The Committee of Ministers also decided to devote it annual ministerial session, which was held in Brussels on 19 May, to the fight against violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism.

Thanks to very rapid work at the expert level, the above-mentioned Protocol could be adopted by the Ministers at the May Ministerial Session. Both in my capacity as the Chairman of the Committee of Ministers and as the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Bosnia and Herzegovina, I cannot stress enough the importance of a rapid entry into force of this document. It is therefore my intention to ensure that the Protocol will soon be opened for signature so that member States can sign and ratify it promptly in order to further strengthen the fight against the emergence of foreign terrorist fighters.
The Ministers present in Brussels also adopted a Declaration and an Action Plan to fight against violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism. The Ministers stressed that the terrorist attacks perpetrated in recent months in Europe and elsewhere in the world were unacceptable infringements of the values and principles which are the foundations of our democratic societies.

The Action Plan is set to run until 2017, with the aim of strengthening the legal framework against terrorism and violent extremism in the public sector.

During its Chairmanship, Bosnia and Herzegovina, in close co-operation with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, will seek the best possible ways to implement the Action Plan.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Council of Europe is uniquely positioned to help find the right response to the major challenge posed by terrorism. Besides the legal arsenal of its conventions in the fight against terrorism, it also has the tools
and expertise that can help member States in their efforts to prevent extremism and radicalisation, particularly among young people.

Thus another priority of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Chairmanship is the promotion of intercultural dialogue. In this perspective, during our Chairmanship, we will host the annual “Council of Europe Exchange on the Religious Dimension of Intercultural Dialogue”. This event will be held in November 2015 in Sarajevo.

It will be the occasion to set into motion a number of proposals which were put forward at the closing session of the 2014 Exchange in Baku with a view to, inter alia, enhancing the profile of the Exchange, increasing the level and representation of participants from the member States and raising the visibility of intercultural dialogue.

The main theme of the Exchange will be “Building Inclusive Societies Together”. Under this heading, the Exchange will address the need to work together to prevent radicalisation and extremism and will seek to identify innovative and successful ways to do so.

Ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for your attention