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Third High-level multilateral meeting  
of the ministries of the Interior  
Fight against terrorism and organised crime  
to improve security in Europe

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure for me to be here today in order to discuss issues, which are of first priority for every government worldwide; issues that relate to safe and peaceful coexistence of all the citizens on earth, since, nowadays, terrorism and organized crime are not confined within the strict geographical frontiers.

Let me start by thanking the Polish Presidency for this invitation and by expressing my admiration for the Council of Europe, which, since 1949, has accomplished a universal task, aiming at the support and the strengthening of the human values, such as **Human Rights**, the rule of law and the pluralistic Democracy.

The protection of Human Rights is the sole obligation of every democratic government. One can easily conclude that terrorism and organized crime constitute the **greatest enemy of Democracy**, since this criminal form of violence threatens directly the most prominent Human Rights, which are life and freedom of the individual.

Therefore, I think that no one doubts the necessity for fighting against terrorism and organized crime; on the contrary, many questions are raised in relation to **the ways of fighting** these phenomena. In particular Democratic governments, are faced with the **tragic dilemma**: face terrorism on the basis of democratic rules, that is respect of human rights and legality, (with high probability of being inefficient) or eradicate the phenomenon drastically, while acting in some cases antidemocratically? I fear that in both cases Democracy will be the ultimate victim.

Nevertheless, nowadays no one doubts that terrorism in combination with organized crime have led to the formation of a new universal reality.

The recent cruel terrorist attacks in the USA, Istanbul, Madrid have shown that terrorism concerns us all; no country has the "luxury" to regard them as remote and unimportant incidents.

Terrorism is a complex, global, contemporary phenomenon, extremely difficult to deal with. For this reason, the fight against it will be long-lasting and we will have to develop **new "cooperation"** and take action both on national and international level.

The United Nations and the European Union have already developed a broad range of legislative and operational measures aiming at the strengthening of police cooperation. Especially for the European Union, after the 2001 attacks, an integrated Action Plan for the fight against terrorism has been one of its **prominent political objectives**.

It is essential to organize our action against terrorism both at a national and an international level, developing the appropriate policies and choosing the proper

means in order to deal with it successfully. In relation to this, it is very crucial to cut terrorist organizations off from their **financing sources**. This is difficult because the financing of terrorism rests on activities, directly bonded with organized crime networks.

That's why, and rightly so, organized crime is characterized as the "**Trojan Horse**" of terrorism.

Our experience has shown us that for the successful dealing with terrorism at a national level, we need to apply a set of legal, political, financial, and social measures on the basis of the following parameters:

- **Determination of a clear national framework regarding terrorism and its basic forms,**
- **Recognition and definition of the links between terrorism and organized crime**
- **Harmonization of the national legal framework to international regulations, while taking into account the particular characteristics of every country**
- **Creation of an effective coordination and cooperation framework among the co-competent national authorities and Services in the field of domestic security**
- **Ensuring the necessary resources and infrastructure**
- **Strengthening the international cooperation in terms of law enforcement, judicial authorities and authorities against economic crime**
- **Development of national plans for better communication and media management with regard to the successful facing of terrorism and organized crime**
- **Creation of national solidarity and humanitarian help mechanisms, including the possibility of foreign assistance in case of crisis.**

The measures taken by the countries must aim both at the prevention and the effective management of terrorist attacks repercussions. In particular, the measures must mainly aim at:

- **The creation and strengthening of designated institutions and procedures**
- **The breaking off of the direct links of criminal organizations from their financing sources**
- **The protection of vital infrastructure**
- **The protection of transports**
- **The strengthening of the country's response mechanism in case of terrorist incidents**
- **The seeking of cooperation by and information of the public.**

Securing individual liberties and fundamental values and rights while taking the aforementioned measures is a sine qua non condition.

However, the effect which such new measures dealing with terrorism and organized crime might have on the fundamental human rights must be thoroughly analyzed and compared with the added value in respect of security. There is no question that our basic objective must be the design of the appropriate and well-balanced solutions.

The rapid progress of technology and communications contributed to the new face of terrorism and organized crime. Nowadays, they both use new forms of action.

Consequently, old methods for managing these phenomena are no longer effective. We must create new institutions, new infrastructure and procedures – through which the proper training, the development of a common, constructive cooperation and the elaboration of joint action plans, must be the priority of every country's competent security authorities.

Cooperation among law enforcement services, judicial and economic authorities and those responsible for civil protection and public health is of paramount importance.

The Services of such an integrated domestic security sector must be interconnected having, at the same time clearly defined roles and competences; but they must also act on the basis of distinctive management and control levels, as well as clear responsibilities and clear rules of engagement.

Moreover, they must have rapid and secure access to European or international information systems and mechanisms, reports and prompt warnings as regards terrorist attacks or serious threats occurring from organized crime networks.

In case of terrorist threats, **cooperation and communication between the national authorities and the citizens** has proved to be equally important. The lack of communication and accurate information of the public usually results to panic or mass hysteria. On the contrary, prompt information reduces the consequences and the losses from a terrorist attack.

Accurate communication results from effective cooperation between the competent authorities and the media. It is well-known that terrorists are more interested in making their act widely known rather than achieving their target.

In this sense, it wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that terrorism would have been abandoned long ago, if it weren't for the dual opportunity of "the hit and the propaganda".

There is no question to restrict the freedom of speech, information and dissemination of ideas. Such a restriction would result to a greater evil than the one we would try to cure. Besides, in this case, terrorists would have achieved what they really seek for.

However, there is a huge distance between the realistic broadcast of terrorist acts and the exaggeration and “idolization” of these acts. “Self-control” and “self-restriction” on behalf of the media could function, little by little, as a barrier for the publicity of terrorism.

Measures taken (individually) by national governments cannot deal with terrorism. **The fight against terrorism and organized crime requires the cooperation of us all.**

Regional and international organizations through their initiatives, policy and specialized action, support, assist and guide the efforts of the various countries. At this point, special reference should be made to the work of the Committee of Experts on Terrorism/CODEXTER.

The European Union along with other organizations have taken several measures for the fight against these criminal phenomena. For example, **the Declaration on combat against Terrorism**, adopted by the European Council last March (25.03.2004), represents an important call for all countries. This specific Declaration refers to the institution and enforcement of legislative measures, the strengthening of operational cooperation and border controls, the safeguarding of documents, etc.

As far as Greece is concerned, we make concerted efforts for the effective fight against terrorism and organized crime, enforcing specially designed measures. The new methods implemented, led to the breaking up of the criminal organization “17 November”, the most important terrorist network ever in Greece.

Moreover, Greece, with an increased feeling of responsibility towards its partners and in full respect of its international obligations, contributes to the world-wide efforts of the competent bodies, at an international, regional and bilateral level.

Already, before September 11<sup>th</sup>, Greece had **amended the Greek Penal Code**, to provide for the prevention and suspension of terrorism and organized crime.

We have also adopted the **European Arrest Warrant** and we have signed all **12 International Conventions** for the fight against terrorism.

In addition to its activity and initiatives in the framework of the European Union, Greece has also intensified its cooperation with the countries in the wider regions of South Eastern Europe, the Adriatic and the Ionian Sea, where we have established, inter alia, communication channels for the rapid updating and exchange of information on illegal activities. As an example, we can mention the following Agreements:

- The Black Sea Economic Cooperation, where 12 States participate
- The South East Cooperation Initiative (SECI), with the participation of 12 States as well
- The Adriatic and Ionian Initiative, with the participation of 7 States.

Finally, Greece has signed up to now **21 Bilateral Police Cooperation Agreements** with various States.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Along with the aforementioned measures, I would like to refer to my personal experience as Minister of Public Order, responsible for the Athens 2004-Olympic Security Planning. As the organizing country, we had the immense task of designing and implementing one integrated security plan in an extremely hostile international environment. Particular importance was given to dealing with incidents of conventional terrorist action as well as to cases of asymmetric threats. The basic measures taken in this framework, had to deal with:

- **The reorganization of the counter-terrorism services and forces**
- **The training and specialization of law enforcement officers on new methods and practices in relation to counter-terrorism issues (investigation, collection and processing of data, questioning, information analysis)**
- **The strengthening of the existing counter-terrorism law in terms of expanding the intervention capabilities for judicial and persecuting authorities**
- **Ensuring the citizens' cooperation and consensus for dealing with these threats**
- **Strengthening international cooperation.**

At the same time, we have elaborated and implemented special plans, such as *the C.B.R.N. threat plan, the plans for the protection of vital infrastructure, of facilities, of VIPs, spectators and visitors, of airports, ports, etc, the plan for the accreditation of persons and transport control*. To achieve all this, considerable amounts of money were spent, both for securing modern security means and infrastructure and for the training of the personnel, with a series of special anti-terrorist readiness and crisis management exercises.

From the very beginning, our strategic objective was the establishment of a clearly defined framework for the prevention of terrorist acts, by creating an environment totally deterrent for every aspiring organization or individual terrorist, who would plan to cause any kind of damage to the games.

Judging from the results, we believe that the planning has been exhaustive and effective. We proved that we can apply efficient security plans ensuring, at the same time, the cooperation and consensus of the citizens with no detriment to the basic personal rights and fundamental freedoms.

On the basis of the acquired experience from the Olympic Security Planning regarding the eradication of terrorism, every country needs, inter alia, the following:

- An integrated domestic security plan
- Modern infrastructure, institutions and procedures
- State of the Art technology and “know-how”
- Experienced personnel specialized in the fields of crisis management and counter-terrorism response
- Communication and crowd management plans.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me put the finishing touch by pointing out that besides the measures we have to take in order to deal with terrorism, it would be useful to reach to some conclusions. Humanity and mainly the rich western world, must engage in some self-criticism and cure the myopia that befalls it on many an occasion. First of all, it has to realize that what we call “technological progress” today must not be reversed to a **hybris**. “Progress for progress” may lead to retrogression and end up to savagery; because it is impossible to maintain such a progress and development while disregarding at the same time, human misery which prevails in many places around the world.

In this era of globalization, the advocates of Democracy, free dealings and international cooperation will unquestionably be the chief beneficiaries. But the stronger they become, the stronger the reaction of all those suffering damage will be. Globalization must apply to everyone on earth. If this fails to happen, the mighty of the world will be responsible for the repercussions of such a reaction. And subsequently we will experience unprecedented security problems. The unsolved problems of remote areas will soon become domestic problems of the developed countries. To avoid that, problems related to minorities, underdevelopment, poverty, health, human rights, must be faced with perspicacity, sensitivity and wisdom.

Thank you.