

**Commission:** OSCE

**Subject:** Towards a strategy of cooperation between the OSCE and the European Union to counter terrorism and cyberwarfare ?

**Author:** Albania

In OSCE, Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, participating States agree that terrorism and cyberwarfare are some of the most significant threats to peace, security and stability to humankind. Therefore, European countries are now looking for a strategy of cooperation between the OSCE and the European Union to finally counter these two issues. Albania is a Parliamentary Republic headed by Ilir Meta since 2017 and it is ruled by the Socialist party under Prime Minister Edi Rama since 2005. Albania, as a committed member of the OSCE knows first hand the complex questions surrounding these concerns, and is willing to participate in a cooperation strategy.

For the purposes of the OSCE, terrorism and cyberwarfare are extremely relevant subjects since their effects have been felt through Europe, and increasingly so in recent years. Terrorism, as it is widely known, is the use of criminal violence to force a government policy change. Defense against terrorism is very difficult because of the unexpected nature of the attacks. In combination with the physical violence of terrorism, another very important destabilisation factor is cyberwarfare. Terrorist groups are increasingly using IT to plan and mobilize resources as well as to recruit, train, radicalize and incite others to carry out attacks using the Internet and social media platforms. Very powerful mafias located in Albania have traditionally provided a safe haven for the activities of these terrorist groups. The combination of mafias and terrorist groups represents an existential threat to the viability of the Albanian state itself.

Albania was the last country, other than the USSR where communism was taken out of power in Europe, with the consequences of economic collapse and social unrest. As a result, it was clear that the transition to democracy would be very problematic. Efforts to establish a free market economy caused severe dislocation, and in 1997, the economy collapsed when many Albanians lost their savings in various pyramid investment schemes. Against this backdrop of increasing poverty and social unrest, mafias emerged and started to thrive. Mafias and terrorists group have engaged in a mutually beneficial relationship: due to the breakdown of the rule of law in post communism Albania, a flourishing market for illegal arms trading was put in place with mafias selling and terrorist buying. It was a very profitable business for the mafia who had to launder the benefits from the trade in any of the tax havens available. It is quite obvious that in this state of affairs, the mafia became more and more powerful, turning into a state within the state. But it was, crucially, a criminal state, a real danger for the institutions at any level of the state. And let's not forget the role played by the terrorist groups in this outcome. Since Albania is a member of the OSCE, an organization, as we have seen before, fully committed to fighting terrorism and cyberwarfare, it is imperative for Albania to seek the cooperation of the rest of the member states.

Thus, Albania, to fight this problem has entered into several international treaties. Alongside commitments related to the Council of Europe, UN and OSCE frameworks, Albania's counter-terrorism portfolio includes engagements in the NATO framework. Also, at the European scale, Albania has signed some cooperation terrorism-related initiatives of sub-regional partnerships such as the South-East Cooperation Process (SECI), the Organization of the Black Sea Cooperation (BSEC), the Adriatic and Ionian Initiative (AII), the Central European Initiative (CEI) and the South-Eastern European Cooperation Process (SEECP). In addition to that, at the domestic level, there are several authorities within the Executive and the Judiciary responsible for the suppression and combating of terrorism and cyberwarfare. For instance, the National Security Council is responsible for determining plans, goals and objectives concerning security and the armed forces, or the Interministerial National Coordinating Committee which was created in 2003 to coordinate work between the ministries and agencies responsible for the fight against terrorism. But the fight against terrorism must be necessarily linked with the abolishment of money laundering. To this effect, Albania has signed the Council of Europe Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism in 2005. Therefore, Albania proposes to establish alliances with other OSCE members in order to pass stricter laws on the subject with the aim of making this activity more difficult. This may make it necessary for some countries to change their domestic policies to align their financial systems with these goals.

It has been made clear that the domestic problem posed by the mafias providing arms for terrorism and cyberwarfare can only be countered by limiting the possibility of laundering the proceeds of this trade, which makes international cooperation essential. Once the mafias realize that they cannot get rich by selling weapons, their activity will have less incentive to carry on such activities and therefore the terrorist attacks will hopefully diminish throughout Europe. Albania hopes that this proposal of International cooperation will have international benefits, apart from the obvious positive effects at the domestic level, which are less mafia and a more powerful state.