

Commission: Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Council

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

Author: Belarus

Supported by the centuries-long history of development of Belarusian statehood, under the March 1994 constitution, the Republic of Belarus is a democratic social state and guarantees the rights and freedoms of every citizen. The Supreme Soviet, the government's highest legislative body, called for national elections and referenda through universal adult suffrage in 1994, electing President Alexander Lukashenko. However, the constitution was revised to greatly expand the powers of the president. Thus, Pres. Alexander Lukashenko, gained the right to prolong his term in office and to rule by decree.

The Republic of Belarus, in accordance with international treaties, co-operates in the sphere of the fight against terrorism with foreign states, with law enforcement bodies and special services, and also with international organisations involved in the fight against terrorism. Guided by the interest in securing the safety of individuals, society and the state, Belarus will carry out criminal prosecution on its territory of people connected with terrorist activity. Including in such cases where the act of terrorism was planned or carried out outside the borders of Belarus but aimed against the state's interests, and in other cases as provided for by international treaties to which Belarus is a party.

The Belarusian delegation took part in the the first UN history conference (2018) of the Heads of the Counter-Terrorism agencies of the Organization's member states in New York. In recent years, Belarus has hosted a number of significant events in the counterterrorism field. In October 2018 a high-level international conference "Preventing and Combating Terrorism in the Digital Era" was held in Minsk under the auspices of the OSCE. The Belarusian diplomacy emphasized the need for close coordination of efforts of all countries, international and regional organizations, analytical circles, civil society and private sector under the auspices of the UN in order to form a united anti-terrorist front.

Belarus has been participating in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism, which assembles today 88 Partner Nations. This Initiative, which is of voluntary nature, aims at facilitating the development of necessary infrastructure of accounting and control of nuclear and radioactive materials.

As a Member State of the Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) Belarus participates in this Organization's activities to counter terrorism, drug trafficking and other security threats and challenges.

On January 2019, Belarus welcomed the Countering money laundering and terrorism financing in Belarus (PGG II Belarus). One of six projects from the EU/CoE Partnership for Good Governance (PGG) programmed interventions to support Eastern Partnership countries to counter economic crime. In Belarus it worked towards strengthening measures to respond to money laundering and terrorist financing threats. Concerning various institutions, the PGG Project contributed to enhancing the understanding of money laundering trends, as well as expanding methods and techniques essential for policy makers and law enforcement in developing operational and investigative strategies to combat these threats.

Building on this understanding, a specialised training was delivered on money laundering and terrorist financing investigations and prosecution. Overall, forty-eight financial analysts, law enforcement officers and judges benefited from two training sessions, one on effective investigations and one on improving detection of trends in money laundering to help investigative processes in Belarus. Results were achieved as feedback from the participants confirmed their increased understanding of good practices in identifying typologies of MLTF, developing investigative and operational strategies, use of special investigative techniques, financial investigations and confiscation and money-laundering detection.

Furthermore, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko participated fully in the OSCE Istanbul Summit, thereby clearly endorsing the active role of the OSCE Advisory and Monitoring Group in support of the development of democratic institutions. However, despite Belarus' involvement in the assurance of security, a new worry arises in accusations claiming human rights violations within national territory. The United States, the United Kingdom and the European Union stated that the 2020 presidential elections held in the Republic of Belarus were neither free nor fair and many Western countries do not recognize Alexander Lukashenko as the rightful President of Belarus.

In response to the allegations made through the 2020 OSCE report concerning the current political and legal situation in Belarus, accusing of fraud the 2020 August elections held in Minsk, as well as denouncing a systematic and massive abuse of power in the current democratic government; these are not people detained abusively. The manifestations that have spread through the streets after the presidential elections have threatened the safety of a stable democracy. In reality, there was an attempted coup. The actions carried out by the forces of the order and the authorities were appropriate and necessary in the face of all the demonstrations which were not peaceful, but violent. The fate of the country was at stake. And when it comes to choosing between the fate of the country and "human rights", the Belarussian government opts for the maintenance of the independence of the state and sovereignty.

Today the situation in Belarus is stable, normalized, free of manifestations. Regarding any individuals who have been detained in the past, it has been done so within full legality through accusations of specific crimes and violations of lawful rights. These violations would have been evaluated within the same conditions in any country of the European Union. Crimes of terrorism have impacted Belarus, with 8 cases of terrorism related to arson against buildings, car bombings, etc, and 10 cases of rail blockages and a very large number of road blockages. Violations of the specific legislation of the Republic of Belarus. Attacks on police officers and threats against relatives of officials and law enforcement officers, including against their children. All of this is subject to criminal sanctions in Belarus. Belarus acts as other countries do. Those who were unjustly detained have been and are being released. As for the other detainees, they are being prosecuted and will be punished under the laws of the state.

To touch upon those cases of clear politically motivated terrorism, The Republic of Belarus has detained Mr. Zenkovich, Mr. Avtukhovich and Mr. Olinevich for specific acts of terrorism as well as a coup d'etat. In fact, the special forces of the Republic of Belarus in cooperation with the Russian special forces deflected a plot aimed at the Belarusian authorities which planned the assassination of the head of state and the overthrow, internment and then the murder of 30 members of the government. However the Western public opinion neglects these coercive plots, those that jeopardize the prosperity of our anchored institutions.

Finally, Belarus, as a victim of cyberwarfare, due to the Hacktivists from the anti-Lukashenko and anti-Putin activist group the Belarusian Cyber-Partisans (BCP), that targeted the Belarusian state as part of the cyberwar against the invasion of Ukraine; though cyberattacks and rail sabotage activities, will also continue to combat cyberwarfare conceived through new technological advances. Cyber attacks now pose even more of a threat than nuclear weapons. The cyberwar is just starting, rooting itself in the Russo-Ukrainian conflict, and Belarus will enable every method to combat the unjust continuation of terrorism and cyberwarfare in the 21st century, ensuring before all the security of the own Republic of Belarus, its state and sovereignty and ultimately the health of its population.