OSCE and UNOCT discuss ways to responsibly use passenger data to prevent return of foreign terrorist fighters

The OSCE Transnational Threats Department's Border Security and Management Unit and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (UNOCT) organized the fourth OSCE-wide Seminar on Passenger Data Exchange on 29 and 30 October 2020, bringing together more than 250 passenger data experts from OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation.

This year's event, held online, aimed at identifying the technical assistance needs of States in their implementation of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2396. This Resolution, passed in 2017, focuses on preventing the return of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) by mandating States to adopt and use both Advance Passenger Information (API) and Passenger Name Record (PNR) data systems to check against national and international watchlists of known and suspected terrorists, and in accordance with international law and human rights. The International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) similarly requires its members to use both API and PNR.

"Advance Passenger Information and Passenger Name Record systems play a central role in enabling a targeted and risk-based approach to screening travellers, minimizing disruption to legitimate movements, while hindering, detecting and investigating those of terrorists and other criminals," said Vladimir Voronkov, the UN's Under-Secretary-General for Counter-Terrorism. "These systems, made mandatory by the Security Council, are also very complex to establish. That is why we established the United Nations Countering Terrorist Travel Programme. Our goal is to help Member States build their capabilities to collect and analyse data related to known and suspected terrorists, and to disseminate the results to national and international authorities."

Ambassador Igli Hasani, Albania's Permanent Representative to the International Organizations in Vienna and Chairperson of the OSCE Permanent Council, said: "As Chair of the OSCE this   1