

Vlaho Orepić, Minister of the Interior of Croatia

While witnessing the times in which migration is no longer a crisis but rather a permanent state, we have to consider security as a public good that inevitably affects all aspects of life. When it comes to foreign fighter returnees, we have to be able to identify and register them but also to prevent them from engaging in violent behaviour by eliminating reasons and the need for resorting to such type of behaviour in the first place.

That the vicious cycle of passing on the feelings of hatred and negative emotions to younger generations can be broken illustrates the Minister's personal experience from the recent Homeland War, where he, years after, extended his hand to the once aggressor and managed to free his son's growing-up from the burdens of the past.

Croatia, as a country, is a good example not of the assimilation, but of the integration of Islamic citizens in particular. Muslims see Croatia as their homeland. It is possible to be a Muslim and have a European identity. But we must make sure that religion does not turn into ideology. The perception of the Islam and Muslims and the Islamists is often very blurred and it is a very big mistake to link all the problems with a single religion.

In this respect, Croatia, being a European Union Member State, can also assist in creating a secure environment that will influence the whole region. Thus, we are conveying our knowledge and sharing our expertise and funds with our neighbours, for example through Twinning and other projects in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The European Union must remain a destination for talented and entrepreneurial students, researches and workers, but also a safe haven for people in need. It is from this perspective that migrants and refugees should be looked at.