

Speech of the Minister of Justice of Austria, Mr. Wolfgang Brandstetter, at the High Level Segment on 12 April 2015 at the 13th United Nations Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice in Doha, Qatar

!!! CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY !!!

Austria fully aligns herself with the statement by the European Union and would like to add some additional remarks.

- The **rule of law** and development are strongly interrelated and mutually reinforcing. The advancement of the rule of law at the national and international levels is essential for sustainable development, the eradication of poverty and the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms. I therefore hope that the 13th Congress will send a strong message on the essential role of the rule of law to the negotiations of the post-2015 development agenda.
- Our standards in the rule of law and the protection of human rights are currently put to a test by **violent extremism, radicalization and terrorist attacks**. We must not fail this test. The rule of law and the protection of human rights must guide all responses to these challenges. No other measures can be sustainable in the long run.
- Austria is committed to holistic and comprehensive approaches in order to **counter the existing radicalization of juveniles and young adults**, especially via the Internet, as well as to **counter the ongoing recruitment for the sake of becoming terrorist fighters**. Furthermore Austria **condemns the ongoing destruction of cultural heritage** in Africa and the Middle East continuously being **carried out by terrorist groups**.
- Austria is **actively participating** in the **ongoing negotiations for an additional protocol supplementing the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism**. This binding legal instrument aims at implementing the criminalisation obligation contained in paragraph 6 of Security Council Resolution No. 2178 on foreign Terrorist Fighters and is scheduled for adoption on 19 May 2015.
- Austria has intensified her efforts to **combat the problem of overcrowding**, inter alia, where appropriate by enhancing the **use of non-custodial sanctions**, such as **Electronic Monitoring**, by as far as possible **avoiding, shortening and improving the quality of prison sentences for juveniles as well as young adults** and ultimately by expanding the capacity of its prisons.

- Austria is strongly committed to promoting **human rights in the administration of justice**. In this context, I would like to reiterate Austria's strong opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances and our call to all those states that still maintain the death penalty to consider introducing a moratorium with a view to abolishing it. We also need to make security and justice institutions responsive and accountable to the specific needs of women and children.
- **Children** in contact with the law are especially vulnerable to violence. Together with Thailand, Austria has initiated and supported the development of the **"United Nations Model Strategies and Practical Measure on the elimination of violence against children in the field of crime prevention and criminal justice"**. The aim was to strengthen the implementation of child rights in the administration of justice. We are very pleased that the "Model Strategies" have been approved by ECOSOC and the General Assembly last year and will continue to promote their implementation by Member States.
- Promote **gender equality and the advancement of women** in crime prevention and criminal justice is another priority for Austria. This includes the gender dimension in the protection of victims and witnesses of crime, the treatment of female prisoners, the non-discriminatory access to justice as well as the advancement of women in security and justice institutions, including in decision-making and leadership positions.
- Austria strongly supports the UN efforts in combating **trafficking in persons**. We commend the **UN Voluntary Trust Fund for Victims of Trafficking** under the leadership of former Foreign Minister and EU Commissioner Benita Ferrero Waldner for helping victims to regain their rights and dignity and to rebuild their lives. Austria has continuously made financial contributions to the Trust Fund and will continue doing so.
- **Corruption** undermines the rule of law, the trust of citizens in state institutions and can undo years of efforts and investment in sustainable development. Combating this negative phenomenon is a high priority for Austria. We contribute to UNODC projects and support the **International Anti-Corruption Academy** as an independent center of excellence in the field of anti-corruption education, research and cooperation.
- The **UN conventions and protocols** on crime, corruption, drugs and terrorism as well as the **UN standards and norms** in crime prevention and criminal justice offer the best range of instruments in our joint efforts to combat these phenomena while respecting the rule of law and human rights. Austria therefore strongly promotes the universal ratification of the UN conventions,

the development of mechanisms to review their implementation, and the most effective use of the UN standards and norms.

- Progress has been made and in this context I would like to particularly commend the **critical role of UNODC** as the leading entity in the UN system for addressing the issues of crime prevention and criminal justice and the assistance it provides to members states. Unfortunately the level of voluntary contributions to UNODC is not always commensurate with its mandate. I therefore hope that this Congress once again highlights to what extent the work of UNODC is needed in order to make our world safer and more just.

- The UN Crime Congress has made very useful contributions in the past. One of its added values is the openness of its format which clearly is a case in point how important the meaningful **participation of civil society** can be. Austria strongly supports a strong role of civil society in the development, implementation and monitoring of crime prevention policies.