



European Union
Statement on the occasion of the 30th session of the
Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice
Vienna, 17-21 May 2021
Opening Statement

Chair,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. The following countries align themselves with this statement: the Republic of North Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia*, Albania*, Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Iceland+, Norway+, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia, Georgia and Andorra.
2. We wish you every success in guiding this 30th Session of the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice at this challenging time and look forward to fruitful discussions.

Chair,

3. We continue to strongly believe that national criminal justice systems should ensure effective, fair and humane procedures, based on international human rights law, including the right to a fair trial. Human dignity, liberty, the rule of law and respect and protection for human rights and fundamental freedoms are at the heart of everything we do.
4. The European Union opposes the death penalty in all cases and without exception, and we are consistently calling for its universal abolition in every forum.
5. Advancing crime prevention and criminal justice, in full respect of the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, plays a crucial role in the promotion of sustainable development, the eradication of poverty and the reduction of social inequality.
6. We call on further international efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda, which includes a commitment to promoting peaceful, inclusive societies for sustainable development, providing access to justice for all and building effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goal 16.
7. We appreciate and support the valuable work of UNODC in supporting Member States' efforts on crime prevention and criminal justice. The European Union, together with its Member States, remains a large contributor to the technical assistance and capacity-building work of the Office. We look forward to further results-oriented collaboration, taking into account the new UNODC strategy, while keeping in mind the need for coordinated responses with other multilateral organizations.

* Candidate Countries the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania as well as potential Candidate Country Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
+ Iceland and Norway are members of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

Chair,

8. We are deeply concerned that transnational organised crime and corruption undermine human development, the rule of law, transparency, fair competition and democracy, damage private and public sector integrity and reduce access to public services.
9. In this context, we reaffirm the importance of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and the Protocols thereto as well as the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC). We welcome the work of UNODC to assist Member States in the full and effective implementation of these conventions. UNTOC and UNCAC provide a solid basis for international cooperation in criminal matters, especially extradition and mutual legal assistance. As party to the Conventions, the European Union is participating in their relevant review processes.
10. Several important events are marking our work in 2021. We congratulate the Government of Japan on the successful 14th UN Crime Congress, which took place in March in Kyoto, and the adoption of the Kyoto Declaration. We look forward to the UN General Assembly Special Session against Corruption in June that should help focus the attention of the international community on the cross-cutting priority of preventing and fighting against corruption and the need for all States to implement their existing legal obligations.
11. Corruption, the risk of progressive infiltration of organised crime into the legal economy and public administration, the terror-crime nexus, the smuggling of migrants, the trafficking in all persons including women and children, as well as of firearms, drug trafficking, environmental crime, including, inter alia, wildlife crime, the illicit trafficking in falsified medicines and the illicit trade in cultural goods – all constitute examples indicating that the challenges we face must be addressed based on effective national law enforcement and judicial systems and on international cooperation in full compliance with international human rights law. Combating these criminal phenomena has become more urgent in these times of pandemic.
12. Combating cybercrime represents a very special challenge demanding an even better international cooperation. The European Union remains strongly committed to a free, open and secure internet respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms. The negotiation of a UN Convention on Cybercrime which started with an organizational session just last week should build on the existing frameworks for international cooperation. We also value the Vienna UN hub as the centre of UN expertise on preventing and combating cybercrime and underline the need for a platform for experts to be maintained in Vienna to foster exchanges on this subject matter. We will also continue to encourage further capacity-building efforts in this area.
13. We unreservedly condemn and deplore terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and we attach great importance to the universal adherence to, and full implementation of all international Counter-Terrorism Conventions and Protocols as well as to support the victims of terrorism. We reaffirm our commitment to ensuring that effective investigative tools, such as those which are used in combating organised crime or other serious crimes, are made available for investigating and prosecuting terrorist offences. We also want to emphasise that any measures we take to prevent and combat terrorism must comply with our obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law, refugee law and humanitarian law.

Chair,

14. We welcome that the thematic discussion this week focuses on effective measures to prevent and counter the smuggling of migrants while protecting the rights of smuggled migrants, particularly women and children, and those of unaccompanied migrant children. The European Union remains committed to preventing and combatting the smuggling of migrants that remains a common challenge requiring international cooperation and coordination as well as effective border management.
15. Migrant smuggling remains a key activity for organised crime groups. As highlighted in the recent EU Strategy on combatting trafficking in human beings 2021-2025, migrant smuggling is often intertwined with other forms of organised crime such as trafficking in persons. The majority of the victims of trafficking are women and children trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation. We attach great importance to combatting criminal networks involved in these crimes, as well as to the early identification and support of the victims of this crime, and remain committed to cooperating with partner countries, through targeted counter migrant smuggling and anti-trafficking partnerships. We look forward to a lively debate later this week.

Chair,

16. We urge all Member States to fully and effectively include the contribution of the civil society, the private sector, academia, media and all relevant stakeholders in the development, implementation and monitoring of crime prevention policies, on the basis of a participatory, inclusive, collaborative and integrated approach.
17. We also underline the crucial role of education and awareness-raising, especially among young people, in preventing and countering crime in all its forms and manifestations and in promoting a culture of lawfulness based on the protection of human rights and the rule of law.

Thank you, Chair.