

General Debate CCPCJ, 16 May 2022
Kingdom of the Netherlands

Chair, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

The Netherlands aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. In my national capacity, I would like to add the following.

Mister Chair, let me first express the solidarity of the Netherlands with Ukraine and the Ukrainian people. The Netherlands strongly condemns Russia's unprovoked and unjustified aggression against Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as its violations of international law.

We find ourselves confronted with a paradigm shift that is shaking our core values of freedom, democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights.

Transnational organised crime is characterised by the use of indiscriminate violence. Given the cross-border nature of transnational organised crime, international collaboration is key to countering the threat effectively. The Netherlands has therefore stepped up its efforts to combat transnational organised crime and its undermining impact on societies worldwide to ensure that the internal and external nexus is addressed effectively.

While it is good to highlight the international efforts, we must also focus on our national challenges in combating this issue. Dutch society is increasingly affected by organised, subversive crime. Transnational organised crime networks are infiltrating districts and neighbourhoods and are investing drug money in real estate and legitimate companies. In doing so, they are undermining the legitimate economy and our society as a whole. We have seen the harsh impact of organised crime in contract killings in broad daylight, most recently those of a prominent lawyer, a well-known journalist and several innocent bystanders. Our seaports are being flooded with cocaine and heroin. Year upon year, larger quantities are being intercepted. This illustrates on the one hand the success of our law enforcement services; on the other hand, however, we must be realistic: it's still a mere drop in the ocean. The Netherlands remains an important logistical hub in Western Europe, which gives us a special responsibility, also at the international level.

In an effort to turn the tide, the Netherlands launched in 2020 a broad offensive against drug-related crime. This entails a combination of repressive and preventive measures aimed at rounding up traffickers, confiscating drugs and preventing drug-related crime. The focus is on intelligence, investigation, prosecution, cooperation and information exchange, in order to enhance our methods of monitoring and halting the flows of criminal money and illicit drugs.

Four cross-border themes are receiving our specific attention:

1. increasing cooperation between logistical hubs (sea- and airports) and fostering their resilience;
2. disrupting cross-border criminal money flows by means of anti-money laundering measures and confiscation;
3. strengthening upstream disruption of drug trafficking; and
4. enhancing the ability to deal with, and use, technology and innovation.

International cooperation has enabled us to unlock the encryption of communication technology like EncroChat and Sky ECC. It has also enabled us to identify leading criminal subjects, and submit requests for mutual legal assistance and for extradition. Many prominent offenders are now behind bars, some facing life sentences. This is what international cooperation can do. This is what we're aiming for. You may rest assured that the Kingdom of the Netherlands stands ready to work with you all to fight this modern-day scourge.

Thank you.