

Thank you Madam Chair, and good afternoon everyone.

First of all, let me congratulate you, Madam Chair, as well as other members of the bureau, on your election, and thank you as well as the UNODC Secretariat, for all your efforts to organize this CCPCJ session.

Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished colleagues, the Czech Republic fully aligns itself with the statement made by the European Union and wishes to add the following in its national capacity.

The Czech Republic continues to condemn in the strongest possible terms the continuing war Russia has been waging against Ukraine. During the long months of war which Russia has unjustly and inexcusably initiated against Ukraine, many crimes have been committed, including war crimes, crimes against humanity, trafficking in human beings, cybercrime and many other types of transnational organized crime. We have been witnessing the hopeless situation of the victims and survivors there and of course have been providing all help to Ukraine which is within our means. And that is one level of the story.

Another level might be a less serious one at the moment, but equally alarming. And that is the atmosphere here, in the United Nations. Unfortunately, the Vienna spirit of consensus seems to have left the building, or at least has hidden really well. All of us have been able to observe the discussions during the informal consultations held to negotiate the resolutions tabled for this CCPCJ session. The Czech Republic extremely appreciates and would like to sincerely thank all the sponsors and all those who have been working to improve the situation that each resolution tries to tackle, and to reach consensus on the text. Sadly, it seems like whatever is proposed by some states is immediately rejected by other states, no matter what the substance is. But that is not what we are here for, and what the United Nations is for. As we all know, the UN has been created to prevent war, settle disputes by peaceful means and support human rights and fundamental freedoms all over the world. We therefore call on all the members of the UN, that means on all of us, to not wage wars – whether military, cyber or verbal – and to come back to the roots on which the UN is based. Russia thus has to immediately stop its war of aggression against Ukraine and engage in finding a peaceful solution. And all supporters of Russian aggression, all those who do not condemn it - which means that they silently support it - must know that supporting a crime, all the more a war crime, is a crime too.

Madam Chair, despite all that, we believe in a genuinely good nature of all human beings and we are therefore confident that our efforts to prevent crime and strengthen criminal justice will stay clear and dedicated. We therefore very much appreciate your devotion, Madam Chair, to find a compromise on the topic of the next Crime Congress to be held in 2026, as well as on the related resolution. We are also delighted to see that the topic of the next Crime Congress focuses on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda and on achieving the sustainable development goals in the digital age. The Czech Republic considers the implementation of SDGs crucially important and that is why it has already conducted two voluntary national reviews. The SDGs might seem natural in a way, so that we might not feel to be that compelled to focus on their implementation, but the opposite is true. We have to show and strengthen our commitment to ensure all the fundamental freedoms and rights enshrined therein, and not take them for granted. We therefore call on all UN member states to also conduct their VNRs to see where they stand in the implementation of SDGs and also to motivate other states to the same.

Madam Chair, digital age brings along digital crimes and the need for digital, or electronic cooperation. The Czech Republic therefore actively participates in the negotiations of the future UN convention on cybercrime to fight this borderless phenomenon globally and to work together on its prevention.

We place a key importance on capacity building and technical assistance, and that is why we engage in providing capacity building to all interested partners from all over the world. And we believe that capacity building is just a start which enables us to create closer ties and friendships with our partners from other countries and therefore not only cooperate better, but also understand each other better and thus prevent any potential substantive, cultural or political misunderstandings.

(Speaking about cybercrime, we continue to be convinced that there is a lack of a platform, like the Intergovernmental Expert Group on cybercrime was, where the experts could meet and discuss their experience, good and bad practice and bridge the gaps in the implementation of all related global and regional instruments. We would therefore support all efforts leading to the re-establishment of any similar expert group as soon as possible.)

The Czech Republic also actively engages in the UNCAC and UNTOC review mechanisms and is grateful to the UNODC and all the reviewing and reviewed states for their cooperation. We however believe there is space to make these mechanisms more efficient and modern, and we would therefore call on the UNODC to initiate discussions on the improvement of these review mechanisms, especially given the fact that the UNCAC review mechanism is soon to enter its new phase and the UNTOC review mechanism, however rather recent, has been facing huge delays.

Last but not least, we would like to emphasize the important role of civil society which it plays not only in the review mechanisms but in all the UN discussions. Our views, meaning the views of states, might often be a bit isolated from reality and that is why the input of civil society is so valuable and appreciated. (We therefore support the broadest and most inclusive participation of the civil society representatives as possible to help us improve our work and see all aspects of the topics which we focus on.)

Madam Chair, allow me to conclude by expressing a confidence that it is still really only Elvis who has left the building, and not the Vienna spirit of consensus.

Thank you.