

Statement of the Czech Republic

**Delivered by H. E. Mr. Ivo Š R Á M E K,
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to the United Nations, OSCE and other International
Organizations in Vienna**

**at the 63rd Session
of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs**

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Thank you, Mr. Chairperson,

Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. First of all, I would like to thank the Secretariat of the UNODC for their hard work in preparing the 63rd session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs as well as in preparing interactive intersessional meetings during 2019 that gave us the opportunity to share our ideas and state of play of drug policies in countries, regions and also in the world.
2. Dear excellences, dear delegates. At this moment, we are almost one year from the adoption of the Ministerial declaration 2019 in which we committed to bridge the gaps in addressing the persistent and emerging trends and challenges in responses to the world drug situation. Therefore, we need to continue our work to achieve the progress that we all agreed in March last year and accelerate the practical implementation of international drug policy commitments through integrated, balanced, evidence-based and comprehensive approach.
3. Although the drug policy and the situation are developing and differ in the world, we need to support the re-building of Vienna spirit in order to achieve effective responses and interventions on the world drug situation, implement preventive measures as well as support reduce drug-related harms and other interventions such as treatment, reintegration etc. We have evidence to show that society free of drugs is unachievable and unrealistic intention, and vice versa that other measures can be effective in addressing the world drug situation.
4. At this time, we see new threats and challenges that drug policy has to face and that the drug situation is changing rapidly. We are facing the advent of new technologies and innovative ways of producing and trafficking illicit substances, the level of prescription drug misuse is growing, on the other hand, the therapeutic potential of some substances is developing. We are also concerned with the emergence of new psychoactive substances that are more dangerous than ever before.
5. Regarding the producing and trafficking illicit substances, the Czech Republic actively participates in the EU Policy Cycle, especially in the effort to reduce the production of synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances in the EU and to dismantle organized

crime groups involved in their production, trafficking and distribution. The Czech Republic is the leader of the two-year EU project aiming at the dismantling of illegal drug methamphetamine laboratories in the EU and any criminal activities overlapping the supply of drug precursors and other active chemical substances for the production of methamphetamine and other synthetic drugs.

6. In our point of view, it is necessary to invest in the protection of society through prevention, programs reducing harm and risk provided to people who use drugs as well as addressing the drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime as the pillars of drug policy. We would also like to support the promotion of prevention programs and strategies aimed at children and youth in order to develop their healthy lifestyles. It is our responsibility to accept the evidence that is clearly leading to a balanced approach and to focus on the availability of and access to services and interventions for people who use drugs. We also believe that our responsibility is to create the conditions to support the availability of and access to services, programs and interventions.
7. Experience with disproportionate drug control policies focused on repression are counterproductive, while also violating human rights of people who use drugs in many countries. One of the reasons for increasing health harm and risk among people who use drugs is the frequent imprisonment and stigmatization accompanied by exclusion from prevention and other programs, including syringe and needle exchange programs or opioid agonist treatment. Therefore, all policies, programs and interventions must take into account human rights and fully support the proportionate sentencing for drug related offences and promotes alternatives to coercive sanctions. This kind of policy will allow improving the quality of life and promote social reintegration of people who use drugs.
8. There is also a need to continue in close cooperation with the relevant UN drug agencies in order to address the world drug situation, including drug use, supply and drug-related harm and risks. Therefore, we welcome the UN system common position on drug-related matters and work of the Task Team that confirm effective cooperation through different but complementary roles of agencies within the UN system. We also emphasize the important role of the scientific community and other organizations in the efforts to improve the world drug situation and its contributions in decision making processes. This

comprehensive approach supports a balanced and evidence-based approach based on public health perspective.

9. We should not be afraid to follow approaches and interventions where evidence shows a valid contribution to addressing the world drug situation. In this regards, we consider the UNGASS outcome document as the most comprehensive policy commitment that will help us achieve measurable progress in global drug policy.

10. Every year we see new developments in drug policies and the drug situation in the world. Therefore and with regard to our common and shared responsibility, we should work together to increase our collective efforts with the aim of effectively responding to the world drug situation – to ensure safety, health and well-being of all members of society, availability of and access to healthcare, reduce the harm related to drug use and promote and respect human rights. We should not forget that individuals, including those who use drugs, must be placed at the centre of all policies and political decisions.

Thank you ladies and gentleman for attention.