

Statement of the Czech Republic

**Delivered by Mrs. Jarmila VEDRALOVA,
Director, Drug Policy Department of the Government Office of
the Czech Republic**

**at the 64th Session
of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs**

Vienna, 12 - 16 April 2021

Check against delivery

Thank you, Mrs. 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 64th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in a new hybrid format, that give us the opportunity to share our ideas and state of play of drug policies in countries, regions and in the world.
2. Dear excellences, dear delegates. Last year has been strongly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic that has brought dramatic changes to our lives, including many losses, and many of us have had to change the way we go about our daily lives. The pandemic has resulted in negative consequences for different public health aspects and for the world drug situation in general as well. Let me take this opportunity to thank all those directly facing the pandemic, including the providers and all the staff of addictology services. These services responded very quickly and were able to adapt the provided interventions, such as prevention, harm reduction, treatment, rehabilitation, recovery and social reintegration, to the situation through an innovative approach.
3. The COVID-19 pandemic has also affected our common efforts to bridge the gaps and address the persistent and emerging trends and challenges in responses to the world drug situation. Therefore, we need to reaffirm our joint commitment to international cooperation and multilateralism to achieve the progress and accelerate the implementation of international drug policy commitments through an integrated, balanced, evidence-based and comprehensive approach.
4. Although drug policy and the situation in different regions and countries are evolving, we need to closely cooperate in order to achieve effective responses and interventions in addressing the world drug situation; from the implementation of preventive measures, the promotion of reducing drug-related harms and other demand reduction interventions such as treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration to the stabilization of the mental health and social situation of people affected by addictive behaviour. In order to develop a healthy lifestyle and prevent the substance use and addictive behavior among children and youth, special attention needs to be paid to these groups. We also believe that our responsibility is to create the conditions to support the availability of and access to services, programs

and interventions. It is necessary to invest in the protection of society through demand reduction and harm reduction programs, as well as addressing the drug trafficking and other forms of organized crime as pillars of drug policy.

5. Regarding the production and trafficking of illicit substances, the Czech Republic is actively involved in the EU Policy Cycle, especially in activities 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. The Czech Republic also closely cooperates in the preparation of the following EU Policy Cycle for the period 2022-2025.
6. At this time, we see new threats and challenges that drug policy has to face and how drug markets and drug trafficking have been able to adapt to the new situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. We are facing the advent of new technologies, online drug sales and trafficking methods and innovative ways of producing illicit substances. We are also concerned about the emergence of precursors, pre-precursors and other chemicals used to drug production that are still highly available.
7. The increase in health-related harms among people who use drugs is also caused by disproportionate drug control policies and stigmatization accompanied by exclusion from preventive and other programs. Therefore, all policies, programs and interventions must take into account human rights and support the proportionate sentencing for drug-related offenses.
8. Reaffirming our joint commitment to international cooperation and multilateralism, we welcome the UN system common position on drug-related matters and work of the Task Team which confirms effective cooperation through the different but complementary roles of UN agencies and aims to support the development and implementation of policies that put people, health and human rights at the center. We also emphasize the important role of the scientific community and non-governmental organizations in their efforts to cooperate in addressing the world drug situation.

9. Ladies and gentleman, the last year has brought many challenges that each of us has had to face, but let us not forget that 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, prevention of risky behaviour, availability of and access to healthcare, reduce the harm related to drug use and promote and respect human rights.

Thank you ladies and gentleman for your attention.