

Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

speech by **Mr. Ivan Malenica, PhD**

Minister of Justice and Public Administration of Croatia

Secretary-General of the United Nations,

Madame President,

Dear Colleagues

- First, I would like to thank the Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and to the Government of Japan for the excellent preparation and organization of this important Congress, even in these difficult circumstances caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Rule of law is the essential building block for any society to be fair and peaceful, and it is now more than ever crucial to ensure respect of the rule of law.
- It guarantees respect of fundamental rights and values and it is one of the core values upon which all of our societies should be based on.
- Access to justice and independent and impartial judiciary are the fundamental principles of the rule of law. Only when all our citizens have access to justice in a timely and fairly manner, they are able to exercise their rights.
- The European Union, of which Croatia is a proud member, has a wide range of mechanisms to preserve the rule of law. It is important to emphasise that the responsibility to ensure the respect of the rule of law lies primarily on each State.
- Croatia also remains committed to preserving the rule of law. Last year, during our presidency of the Council of the EU, we placed the issue of the rule of law at the forefront of all our activities. We held a video conference

on the activities of the European Union and the Member States in the field of justice regarding the responses to the challenges posed by the crisis caused by the COVID-19 virus.

- Regardless of the approach that countries have in ensuring the rule of law, it is important to preserve its core elements and not to give in under the pressures of current and future challenges. It is crucial to be aware that any challenge of the rule of law can lead to possible threats to our rights.
- Any threat, or ultimately denial of individual's rights endangers the very core of democratic societies. Therefore, upholding rule of law is crucial for our societies not only as a principle but as a true value.
- Today, world is faced with numerous challenges in fight against transnational crimes, atrocity crimes, terrorism, environmental crime and new emerging form of crimes. Key element for tackling these challenges is international cooperation and States individually, and collectively, must do everything to make this cooperation as successful as possible.
- Allow me to conclude that Croatia strongly supports collective international cooperation and partnership in taking great efforts against threats to sustainable development and to the rule of law. Sustainable Development Goal 16 of 2030 Agenda goes hand in hand with the Rule of law.
- Madam President, I am very proud that the work of my country and ministry was recognized at this Congress through the invitation and participation of our national experts.
- We give full support to the implementation of the Kyoto Declaration and the role of the Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice as a forum for continuing exchanges of good practices in crime prevention and criminal justice.
- Thank you all for your attention!