

CZECH REPUBLIC

Your Excellency, Madam President, Dear Ministers, Distinguished Colleagues,

It is my great honor to be able to speak to you at this significant forum at the occasion of the 14th UN Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice. First of all let me congratulate Madam Minister for her election as the President of the Congress and to express our sincere and deep respect to our Japanese colleagues. The work they have undertaken on the preparations of this Congress is admirable. They had to face a situation like no other Congress organizer before them. And thanks to their enormous efforts we can be here together today. A big part of us virtually, but still together. And this way, thanks to our dear Japanese colleagues, the main idea of the United Nations, unity, has been preserved. And we may feel the need for it now more than ever before.

We have always had to face phenomena which should not belong to any society. Organized crime, corruption and other types of crimes are unfortunately still omnipresent. Reducing and preventing crime is our long-term common goal. Already the ancient Roman philosopher Seneca said that he who does not prevent a crime when he can encourages it.

The Czech Republic places a great importance upon crime prevention and related programs. A solid legislation serves as a basis for that and I am glad to state on behalf of the Ministry of Justice of the Czech Republic that our legal order is fully aligned with the international legal instruments and commitments in this respect. Thanks to a sufficient legal basis we have the space to focus on practice. The Probation and Mediation Service of the Czech Republic has been a very active actor in this respect, implementing programs focused on restorative justice, comprising also the provision of assistance to victims, including women and children, but also assistance to perpetrators. It thus operates right at the roots and contributes to the prevention of recidivism, to the increase of safety in the society and this way also to sustainable development. The Czech Republic thus contributes to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in particular its SDG 16.

Last year, the Czech Republic as one of the three pilot states also took part in a UN project focusing on researching the causes of recidivism. The outputs of the project have been processed into an international study which is to serve as a basis for similar projects in other countries.

Ladies and gentlemen, over one year already we have had to face a disease which has been endangering all of us. I believe, however, that we will soon learn how to defeat it. But as Mahátmá Gándhí once said, all crime is a kind of disease and should be treated as such. We should try to eradicate it. Last year, however, as a result of the pandemics, several specific types of crime have become more frequent, for example domestic violence, falsification of medical products or cybercrime. We have to pay due attention to these new and more emerging forms of crime to be able to also react to them and possibly eradicate them in future just like some disease.

Cybercrime in particular has been developing very rapidly and we have to keep up with its actors and, if possible, to be ahead of them. I believe that the international legal framework to combat cybercrime is sufficient but what we are in need of is the strengthening of international cooperation, capacity building and mutual sharing of experience and best practices.

I am glad that this Congress will cover also these very up-to-date topics. And the Czech Republic is ready to get actively involved not only in discussions here but also in consequent activities which will follow up after the Kyoto Congress.

Madam President, let me once again congratulate the Japanese government for the organization of this very important Congress. It is also necessary to express our appreciation to the United Nations for the work it has done on the preparations of this event and also for its long-term activities it has been undertaking in the area of crime prevention and criminal justice. I consider the CCPCJ to be a significant platform where global expertise meets experience and which helps Member States to fulfill both the 2030 Agenda as well as their national goals.

I wish all of us lots of success in sessions during this Congress and interesting discussions, and I am looking forward to see you all in person one day soon.

Thank you for your attention.