

**The Tenth United Nations Congress on the Crime Prevention
and the Treatment of Offenders**

High-level Segment
Vienna, 14 April 2000

**Intervention by Mr. Petr IBL, Vice-Minister of Interior,
Head of the Delegation of the Czech Republic**

Mr. Chairman,

Let me first express my conviction that under your able chairmanship the present Congress will further the international cooperation in prevention, law enforcement and strengthening of the rule of law. Let me begin with some observations on the crime situation in my country.

The Czech Republic, which opened itself to the world in 1989, has not been spared of the dark side of globalization, has also attracted the interest of international organized crime. In the early 90's, only foreign criminal groups were operating in my country. However, the situation has changed rapidly since then. International and domestic criminal organizations have integrated, foreign influence and permissive domestic environment stimulated the emergence of new forms of crime. An estimated number of organized crime groups operating in the Czech Republic in 1999 reached 75, out of which only some 20% were exclusively domestic ones. Principal activities of the organized crime on the Czech territory in 1999 concentrated on drug production and trafficking, car theft, wide-scale prostitution and illegal migration.

Within the past few years, the Czech Republic took a number of measures for the prevention of and struggle against the international organized crime. Modern legislation was adopted, including appropriate adjustments to the Penal Code, and new specialized police structures were established. Significant results have been achieved in combating illicit drug trafficking, especially of cocaine, which has almost been eliminated.

Despite positive accomplishments, further progress is not feasible without strengthening of international legal instruments. The Czech Republic therefore fully supports the early elaboration of a Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and protocols to it, including a separate legal instrument on corruption and money laundering. We note with appreciation that the latest draft Convention and its protocols cover also more comprehensive issues such as prevention, rehabilitation of victims and technical assistance.

One of the most condemnable type of organized crime is the trafficking in women. This issue is extremely sensitive for the Czech Republic which, due to its geographical position, has become a country of destination, transit and origin at a time. Effective countering of such detrimental and multifaceted phenomenon requires good national as well as international legislation, efficient enforcement together with an intensive international interaction. The Czech

Republic has thus welcomed the initiative of the Center for the International Crime Prevention (CICP) aimed at creating the "Global Program against trafficking in human beings" and is pleased to participate in the related European Project. The work of CICP so far done in connection with the Project deserves our appreciation. We also noted positively that many delegations have referred to the problem of trafficking in human beings as a matter of their national priority. The topical problem of the trade in women is tackled by several international organizations, including the United Nations. In our opinion, the CICP should further increase coordination of its activities with similar efforts of the European Union and the Council of Europe.

A number of issues discussed at this forum, in particular the violence against women and children and their trafficking, have direct bearing on human rights. Many delegations underlined the interconnection between crime and human rights. It is therefore fully justified that some topics are dealt with both by the Commission for Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) and by the Commission for Human Rights. We are convinced that their cooperation and exchange of information are of vital importance.

Mr. Chairman,

Our Congress will adopt the Declaration on Crime and Justice. My delegation considers the Declaration to be a comprehensive document of a major importance addressing the most urgent needs in the area. Let me emphasize one specific aspect of the Declaration which opens up a relatively new subject - that of xenophobia, racism and racist criminal acts. Although such criminal acts represent only one tenth of a percent out of the total volume of crime in the Czech Republic, they exist and do cause concern. In the past years, the Czech Republic has taken legislative and policy steps including the establishment of a specialized police unit to fight such type of crime. An increased attention has been paid to its prevention and to promotion of an intercultural and inter-ethnic understanding. To this end, we have been pursuing a number of international cooperative efforts with our European partners. Specific reference in the Declaration to that new subject and its possible inclusion into the agenda of the respective international bodies deserve support.

Mr. Chairman,

finally, I would like to stress that my delegation also values the attention given by the Congress to the crime prevention on the community level. In the Czech Republic, a complex programme for the crime prevention at local level has been implemented for many consecutive years. The programme has brought about positive results in reducing crime, especially property theft, as well as in enhancing cooperation between the state authorities, non-governmental organizations and citizens themselves and we have shared our experience with others in the Committee II.