

STATEMENT OF LITHUANIA**THE SYSTEM OF PREVENTION AND CONTROL
OF ORGANISED CRIME AND CORRUPTION IN LITHUANIA****10th UNITED NATIONS CONGRESS ON CRIME PREVENTION
AND THE TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS****Vienna, 10-17 April 2000**

Honourable President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today we are meeting here in this amazing City - Vienna - at a juncture of the two millennia with a possibility to explore the ways to promote the Rule of Law and strengthen the Criminal Justice system as well as to meet the challenges of transnational crime.

Therefore, I thank you for the possibility to present to your attention the Lithuanian efforts to prevent and control organised crime and corruption.

Lithuania is completing the restitution of a democratic society and market economy. Today it is extremely important to create and implement a complex of measures directed at and enabling us to prevent organised crime and corruption related threats, such as spread of "shadow" (or illegal) economy in the state; the import of organised crime and corruption from the East and West; influence upon the state's political system or attempts to "subject" the country and restrict its sovereignty.

Thus, not only interior (national) but also international (transnational) aspects of this issue are to be considered.

Organised crime and corruption are social phenomena derived from the "shadow" economic activity and business, relating to illegal privatisation, smuggling of highly taxable goods, money laundering, tax evasion, drug trade, illegal immigration, prostitution, etc.

These forms of crime are marked by high latency, therefore their real dimensions are hard to estimate. Organised criminal groups within the country are not very dangerous, therefore, it is easier to "fight" against them and a more effective prevention and control of organised crime and corruption is possible. However, alongside expanding market relations, strengthening of legal economy in Lithuania (as one of the transit countries between East and West), its organised crime and corruption acquire characteristics typical of the operation of similar structures in many states. Thus, "consolidation" and "internationalisation" features of crime can be identified, containment of which correspondingly requires united international efforts.

Principal directions of the Lithuanian policy aimed at implementing prevention and control of organised crime and corruption are, firstly, Government programmes. Lithuania embarked on serious political measures to prevent and control crime. Therefore, one of the principle objectives of crime control identified in the Programme of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania is the prevention of organised crime and corruption. It is attempted to eliminate a complex of causes and preconditions of these phenomena by use of not only legal but also social, economic, financial, organisational, informational, analytical and other measures.

Last year (1999) a complex long-term Organised Crime and Corruption Prevention Programme was approved, specific programmes are also being designed and implemented in such branches as economic crime prevention, drug control and drug abuse prevention, control of immigration processes. The National Corruption Prevention Strategy that is currently being created, and the National Drug Control and Drug Addiction Prevention Programme for 1999-2004, should also be mentioned.

Secondly, the Republic of Lithuania is combating these crime categories through legal regulations. The State's political determination to prevent organised crime and corruption is expressed in numerous laws establishing the regulatory framework of these criminal activities. I will not proceed with their analysis, but a brief review ought to be presented.

First of all, an emphasis should be made of the new draft Criminal Code and the draft Code of Criminal Procedure which will comply with the traditions of Western law.

Another set of Lithuanian laws important in the area under the discussion of the Congress covers anticorruption (or preventive) laws, such as:

- Law on Declaration of the Property and Income of Residents;
- Law on the Adjustment of Public and Private Interests in the Public Service; Law on Public Procurement;
- Law on Financing Political Parties and Political Organisations; Law on the Prevention of Money Laundering etc.

Currently the draft Law on Lobbying Activities is being deliberated. Furthermore, a new integral Anticorruption Law is being drafted that is expected to incorporate and systematise the previously mentioned statutory norms.

Specific mention should be made of the Law on Organised Crime Prevention and the Law on Operative (or Secret Pursuit) Activities. These laws have expanded the possibilities of the state authorities to control organised crime and corruption.

Thirdly, the Government policy is directed to the improvement of organisational measures, which cover the work of law and law enforcement institutions. Lithuania has a network of institutions dealing with prevention and control of organised crime and corruption. There are specialised Agencies of Organised Crime Investigation and of Special Investigations at the Police Department of the Ministry of Interior. For the purposes of control and prevention of financial offences a separate unit Department of Tax Police has been established. A special Organised Crime and Corruption Investigation Division is in operation at the Office of the Prosecutor General of the Republic of Lithuania. Some functions in this area are carried out also by the State Security Department. The previously mentioned Anticorruption Law envisages the founding of a respective Co-ordination Board, which should be made of the highest ranking state officials.

Last year the system of administrative courts soled functioning in Lithuania. These are the courts of special competence the purpose of which is to ensure legal safeguards of individuals against abuse by civil servants in public administration.

Furthermore, emphasis should also be placed on the significant role the Centre for Crime Prevention in Lithuania, which is supported by the United Nations Development Programme field office in Lithuania and the Lithuanian Government, plays in the area of prevention of organised crime and corruption. In 1997 with the support of the United Nations the Centre was established to assist the state and society to professionally create and implement the policy, strategy and tactics of crime prevention, including organised crime prevention.

The Republic of Lithuania is seeking to enhance international co-operation in the area of prevention and control of organised crime and corruption. Lithuania has already acceded to the majority of the Council of Europe Conventions regulating mutual legal assistance in criminal matters and to the respective documents of the United Nations. In 1999 the Government of the Republic of Lithuania became a member state of the GRECO. Numerous bilateral Treaties covering inter-country relations in the area of judicial co-operation, including the treaties with the USA, Russia, Poland, have been concluded. With a view to strengthening the protection of the state borders, attention is being focused on the Eastern borders, i.e., the first serious blockage against trafficking illegal immigrants and drugs from Asia through the area of the CIS to the Western Europe.

Lithuania is taking an active part in the activity of the universal international organisation Interpol and of the UN Ad hoc Committee for elaboration of the Convention against Transnational Organised Crime. Regional co-operation with the European Union is also being extended: in 1998 the European Union and candidate countries, including Lithuania, entered into a multilateral Agreement the Pre-Accession Pact on Organised Crime. The Pact envisages the extension of regional co-operation, establishment of liaison offices in every state, and development of joint strategies for fighting organised crime, as well as co-operation within the Europol. Co-operation between the Baltic and Scandinavian countries is developing.

Finally, let me conclude by emphasising that we expect that the present highest level forum the 10th United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders - will significantly contribute to the enhancement and development of the aforementioned line of actions.

Thank you for the floor.