

Distinguished President of the 10th Congress,

my congratulations to you and the whole committee on your elections and I wish you and the all the participants every success in the work of the 10th Congress.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Globalization of world economy, mass spreading of new communication technologies, opening of borders all this creates new dimensions for the development of criminality. Its present size is a challenge, which developed countries with long-lasting democratic traditions, countries in transition and developing countries face alike.

The Slovak Republic belongs to the group of countries in transition. The extensive change of the political system that happened so to say on the move has affected all components of the society. I dare to say that the changes taking lace now have affected our society down to its roots and have been manifested e.g. also in the shaping of inter-personal relations. Unfortunately, the transformation process, though it has a positive goal, has brought with it also negative aspects. Growth of crime or corruption has become a part of life in the transition countries. It is an objective process, which was initiated by the opening of our societies. Our countries have joined the general globalisation in a sink or swim manner. It was not possible to prevent growth of crime. Often, we lacked professionals trained to combat crime, not to mention the technical support of their work. However, it is important that the continuing process of democratisation increases the resolve of the representatives of reform governments to suppress crime and combat corruption.

The Slovak Republic has been committed to a transformation process -which started with the fall of the communist regime that will result in our integration into the Euro-Atlantic structures. This challenge is for us the driving force also in the case of crime and corruption. We simply realise that the countries with which we want to integrate have a long record of success in combating crime. Corruption is, in fact, an exceptional phenomenon in their countries. And when it occurs these countries are capable to cope with it in a radical way. And we have the same ambition. We would not like to become member of such developed institutions like NATO or the EU in case when our contribution would be high crime rate or lack of transparency in public affairs which is fertile ground for corruption. We do realise this

challenge and we shall do our utmost to achieve the standard of developed democratic countries.

Therefore it is necessary that combating crime becomes a society-wide issue and it must contain a repressive as well as preventive component and it must be conducted on national, regional and global level. The rapid rise of organised crime at the beginning of the 1990s called for an accelerated creation of necessary legislation and building of legal protection institutions. At the same time repression-oriented approach to combating crime prevailed. Due to adopted measures we were able to stop the quantitative growth of crime and since 1998 the situation has stabilised. We have also been able to improve the detection rate of crime and in 1999 the rate was above 50%. However, practical experience shows that preventing crime is more effective from the long-term perspective. Therefore the Government of the Slovak Republic approved The Strategy of Crime Prevention in the Slovak Republic last year. Realising the social and economic causes of crime and other factors affecting it our strategy focuses on social, situational and victim prevention. It also contains specific preventive measures in economy, organised and drug-related crime. The whole project pays special attention mainly to the youth, seniors, continuous improvement of training of the entities involved and implementation of adopted measures in such a way that they are in compliance with the international standards of fundamental human rights and freedoms protection. The increase of the share of children and the juvenile in crime, in particular violent crime and crime against property, is especially alarming. Children and youth are also frequent victims of this crime, which is often committed among peers. This is also the reason for the youth to be the primary target group of our preventive measures. Also in this area the words of Winston Churchill that Headmasters have powers at their disposal with which Prime Ministers have never yet been invested, is still valid. So we come to the point that principles of civil society are also the basis for such a complex area as crime prevention.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

International co-operation is an inseparable part of the programme. The United Nations have an irreplaceable role in this struggle. The Slovak Republic clearly supports UN efforts for a rapid adoption and subsequent ratification of the Convention on International Organised Crime as well as other activities concerning drafting of international instruments for combating corruption, preventing and sanctioning crime related with racism, xenophobia, racial discrimination and other

forms of intolerance which jeopardise fundamental human rights and freedoms and poison the atmosphere of international and inter-human relations. Co-operation with the UN Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice, European Committee on Crime Problems, institutions of the European Union and bilateral contacts are our priority. Just for illustration one could mention Community Policing preventive programmes carried out by the Slovak police in co-operation with Dutch and Swiss colleagues or several activities focusing on drug-abuse prevention, prevention of xenophobia, violence and other anti-social activity oriented on school-youth under the Slovak-Dutch MATRA programme.

Organised economic crime causes significant damage to Slovak economy, in particular in the field of tax evasion, customs duty evasion, privatisation fraud, etc. This crime is the main source of illegal proceeds and it represents more than a half of all damage caused by crime. Pursuing the objective to stop the legislation of income we are preparing now legislation that will more consistently take into account standards adopted by the UN, European Union and FATF (Financial Action Task Force) recommendations. Last year the Slovak Republic ratified Council of Europe Convention No. 140 on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime of 1990. Financial institutions have the duty to report suspicious financial transaction to the financial police already today. By doing so the anonymous character of part of deposits was abolished and the bodies of legal protection co-operate closely with foreign partners in the Council of Europe, the European Union. Egmont group also on a bilateral basis.

Computer crime does not so far present a significant problem. However, it can be expected that progress in computerisation will increase the number of such criminal offences. Until now only sporadic attempts of tapping protected data with the intention of their commercial use or illegal transfers of money by means of computers have been registered. In this context we are joining the call for taking steps to adopting also international measures preventing and controlling computer crime. We are also interested in assistance in the training of our experts in this field.

Bilateral and multi-lateral police co-operation is an important part of crime control, in particular in combating international and organised forms of crime. The Slovak Republic has concluded relevant agreements with 14 European countries, other seven are in the final stages of preparation. We have been a member of INTERPOL since 1993 and in the framework of the

integration process it is our ambition to establish an effective co-operation with EUROPOL on the basis of Schengen.

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

When entering the office the Government of the Slovak Republic has undertaken to make progress in combating corruption. To meet this goal the government has prepared a broad National Programme for Combating Corruption. The Programme takes into account main UN, OECD, and Council of Europe and EU documents adopted recently. Many of them have already been or soon will be implemented into the legal order of the Slovak Republic.

The main goal of the programme is first of all to reduce corruption in public life and in the use of public funds and means in Slovakia. The Government has, thus, clearly declared its political will to consistently combat this evil. The programme envisages broad involvement and knowledgeability of the public as well as public control, e.g. by NGOs, of the steps undertaken. Currently this programme of the Government is presented to public discussion.

Essential steps to achieve the defined goals on the basis of adopted or prepared laws include: elimination of points of potential corruption, elimination of arbitrariness in the decision-making by officials and increasing the level of transparency in the system of state and public orders. These and other measures were also added the obligation on the side of public actors to disclose their income and the tasks of law enforcement agencies in sanctioning corruption. The introduction of criminal liability of legal entities is also envisaged.

Reform of the judiciary is another important part of preventing and sanctioning corruption. This reform will include the adoption of the code of conduct for judges, simplification of rules of procedure, reform of administration and funding of the judiciary combined with the strengthening of its self-governance bodies and improvement of the efficiency of work of individual courts e.g. also by supporting out of court settlement.

Crime control and combating corruption have become one of the priorities of the Government in Slovakia. It is not possible to cover all its aspects. However, I believe that some of

the approaches applied could be a source of inspiration. Just like several issues contained in the documents of the 10th Congress and in the presentation of participating delegation have inspired us. Coping with this threat is our common job because the nature and social impacts of current crime are capable to endanger functioning of democratic institutions, to distort or retard necessary economic reforms and, in the end, imperil the foundations of the existence of the rule of law. I would therefore like to thank all who participated in the preparation of this Congress and I wish this body a lot of creative invention in the search for solutions that will be for the benefit of all of us.