



European Union

Statement on the occasion of Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice

Doha, 12-19 April 2015

Opening Statement

Excellencies,
Madam President,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The following countries align themselves with this statement: the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland[‡], Serbia*, Albania*, Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Liechtenstein⁺, Norway⁺, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova.
2. We congratulate the President of the 13th Congress on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice and we thank the people and the government of Qatar for the invitation to host the congress.
3. It is widely acknowledged in various UN documents that crime prevention and criminal justice systems, in full respect of the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms, play a crucial role for the promotion of sustainable development, the eradication of poverty and the reduction of social inequality. As such, they also constitute important elements in the framework of the post-2015 development agenda. We believe it is essential to ensure that the post-2015 agenda is universal, people-centred, founded on a rights-based approach encompassing all human rights and fundamental freedoms, combating all forms of discrimination, including gender inequality and the elimination of gender based violence. We have consistently called for an agenda that also promotes peaceful and

* Candidate countries Albania, former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia as well as potential candidate countries Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

[‡] Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

⁺ Norway and Liechtenstein are members of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

inclusive societies, democratic good governance and the rule of law, which are strongly interrelated and mutually reinforcing with sustainable development.

4. The EU strongly condemns the recent attacks which have been carried out by terrorist groups and individuals in Europe, the Middle East, Africa and Asia, directed against all countries and all people regardless of their ethnic background, religion or belief and against our common cultural heritage, belonging to all mankind. In a globalized world, such threats can only be countered through international cooperation and determined national action.
5. We underline the need to counter the threats posed by the multiple links between transnational organized criminal activities, terrorism and its financing, and we call upon all States that have not done so to consider ratifying or acceding to the relevant international legal instruments. We also call upon all States Parties to use those instruments and the relevant United Nations resolutions to enhance international cooperation in countering all forms of terrorism, as well as its financing.

Madam President,

6. To ensure an effective criminal justice system, all must be given equal and full access to impartial and timely justice with credible enforcement of judgments in order to eliminate impunity for perpetrators allowing those whose rights have been violated to seek redress, but also aiming at the rehabilitation of the offenders.
7. We emphasize the need for Member States to promote and protect all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all individuals, regardless of race, national origin, age, religion, political opinion, disability, sex and sexual orientation, and to ensure effective, fair and humane national criminal justice systems, strongly based on the protection of human rights, including the right to a fair trial.
8. The EU considers that the abolition of the death penalty contributes to respect for human dignity and to the enhancement and progressive development of human rights at the global level. We consider death penalty as a cruel, inhumane and degrading punishment, for which there is no conclusive evidence of its deterrent value and welcome the steps taken by some States to reduce the number of offences for which the death penalty may be imposed, as well as steps taken to limit its application. In

this regard we call upon all States to abolish the death penalty in all circumstances.

9. We strongly condemn all acts of violence against women and girls, in particular when they occur in situation of armed conflicts and in any other circumstance in which women and girls are particularly vulnerable and we call upon Member States to develop and implement national gender-related plans, promoting the full protection of women and girls in their national criminal justice systems. We fully support the implementation of the UN Security Council resolution 1325 on Women, Peace and Security in this regard.
10. We strongly condemn all acts of violence, exploitation and abuse against children: we call upon Member States to elaborate and implement national child justice policies aiming at preventing violence against children, including by implementing the United Nations Model Strategies and Practical Measures on the Elimination of Violence against Children in the Field of Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice.
11. The EU is gravely concerned that sexual orientation and gender identity continue to be used to justify serious human rights violations around the world. LGBTI persons constitute a vulnerable group, who continue to be victims of persecution, discrimination, bullying and gross ill-treatment, often involving extreme forms of violence, including torture and murder. The EU is committed to the principle of the universality of human rights and reaffirms that cultural, traditional or religious values cannot be invoked to justify any form of discrimination, including discrimination against LGBTI persons.
12. We are deeply concerned that transnational organized crime and corruption, being mutually reinforcing, undermine human development and democracy, distort markets, damage private and public sector integrity and reduce access to public services.
13. The EU is strongly committed to prevent and combat trafficking in persons and smuggling of migrants. Trafficking in persons constitutes a gross violation of human rights. Both crimes are very lucrative illicit activities globally, and generate income used to fund other forms of criminal activities.
14. The EU is stepping up its efforts against wildlife crime, which has a dramatic adverse impact on sustainable development, biodiversity, and

regional stability. In this regard, the EU is working with partners on demand reduction measures for major markets.

15. The EU calls upon Member States to take effective national measures in order to prevent and to combat counterfeiting, including fraudulent medicines.
16. The EU is strongly committed to a free, open and secure internet respecting individual human rights. We promote the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime as a framework for international cooperation and we join the broad international consensus on the need to increase our capacity building efforts.

Madam President,

17. We underline the need to promote the full and universal implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols thereto, the United Nations Convention against Corruption, the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and the universal legal instruments against terrorism, as main international legal instruments relevant in the area of crime prevention and criminal justice, and call on those States that have not yet ratified or acceded to them to do so.
18. We recognize that international cooperation in criminal matters is a cornerstone of the efforts of States to prevent, prosecute and punish crimes, in particular transnational organized crime and corruption, and underline the need for a deeper analysis and understanding of their causes and *modus operandi*, through studies, statistical data and research, in order to assist Member States in the elaboration and implementation of most effective national strategies on crime prevention and criminal justice policies, laws, procedures and programmes.
19. We urge all Member States to fully and effectively include the contribution of the civil society, the private sector, academia, media and all relevant stakeholders in the development, implementation and monitoring of crime prevention policies, on the basis of a participatory, inclusive, collaborative and integrated approach. We also underline the crucial role in preventing and countering crime in all its forms and manifestations of the promotion of a culture of lawfulness based on the protection of human rights and the rule of law, especially among young people, through education and awareness-raising.

Madam President,

20. We conclude by reiterating our commitment to work with international community in integrating crime prevention and criminal justice into the wider UN agenda to address social and economic challenges and to promote the rule of law at the national and international levels, and public participation. We invite the Congress to take appropriate action in this respect and United Nations Member States to work together to achieve the important objectives before us.

I thank you, Madam President.