



UNITED NATIONS
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Criminology and Social Policy

Special address of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the
Institute of Criminology and Social Prevention
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Mr. Minister,
Distinguished Experts,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

When in 1960 the Institute of Criminology and Social Prevention was established, it came into being five years after the adoption of the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners (in 1955). Both developments took place in a very politically and ideologically divisive age, when prison labour as a means of treatment of prisoners was still being abused in Eastern Europe, rather than used as a means for rehabilitation.

At that time, in 1960, the United Nations Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Programme had been in its exactly 25th year of existence. Its outreach throughout Eastern Europe had been minimal and still limited to official governmental contacts, including the emerging network of the UN national government-appointed correspondents on crime prevention and criminal justice. This lasted through the Cold War era which divided the entire globe. Criminology in this country and other Eastern European countries of that pre-1989 period was very different from Western criminology. And so was social policy.

Since 1989 this is no longer the case. No longer do we have Eastern and Western criminology but national, regional, international and global, be it from East or West, from Orient and Occident, and more often than not “United Nations criminology”.

Over the 50 years of the Institute’s functioning, but especially since 1989, United Nations criminal policy and crime prevention has gradually and substantively made its inroads into Czech criminology and social prevention, as Czech criminology and social prevention has reciprocally done into the United Nations. The Ministry of Justice, the founder of this Institute, can be proud of that relationship.

What is important to note in the above context is that ever since the United Nations has started addressing crime and social problems across the world it has been doing this with the social welfare mandate originating from the United Nations Charter. There is no coincidence that also the name of this Institute captures this combination very well. It now implies in social crime

prevention the promotion and protection of human rights, so explicitly stated in the United Nations Charter.

All this is well reflected in the many publications of this Institute of Criminology and Social Prevention, the main goal of which is to contribute by research (theoretical, analytical and its publishing) and other activities to provide citizens with sound, secure and functioning justice system; to create quality legislation and sanction policy formulation and uphold efficient crime control policies. Certainly, the most recent Institute's book "*Kriminalita očima kriminologů*", commemorating its 50th anniversary, testifies well to that goal.

Distinguished Participants,

The title of this special United Nations address is "*Criminology and Social Policy*". Do we know that criminology is really "social policy-influential" or "policy-influential"? As criminologists, experts in social prevention do we know that our recommendations are followed by the politicians? In how many countries in the world are those social policies pursued? And if they are, how do popular sentiments for more punitive justice modify the policy response? Are the recommendations on what works followed in State crime prevention and criminal justice policy?

This statement is named as the "address", for it only addresses some issues through those questions, but does not provide answers. And there may be several answers to one such a question.

Let us hope that in the course of this two-day conference we will get some answers to those questions.

Let these two days be the beginning of a new 50-year period of the development of social policy and social prevention for more humane and efficient crime control policies.