



## **OPENING ADDRESS**

by

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INTERPOL Secretary General

**44th INTERPOL EUROPEAN REGIONAL CONFERENCE**

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Prague, Czech Republic

Honourable Minister of the Interior,

Police President and Senior Government representatives of the Czech Government;

Members of the INTERPOL Executive Committee;

Distinguished Chiefs of Police;

Heads of INTERPOL National Central Bureaus;

Delegates from INTERPOL Member Countries;

Partnering Organizations, Observers and Guests;

Colleagues from INTERPOL;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Dámy a Pánové;

Dobre Rano!

A very good morning to you all.

It is a great honour for me to welcome you all to this 44th INTERPOL European Regional Conference, here in the Czech Republic, which is commemorating the 700th birth anniversary of Charles IV this year. I do this also on behalf of the INTERPOL President Madame Ballestrazzi, who unfortunately could not join us here today.

During this conference, our Czech hosts have also organized an exclusive event inside the Prague Castle, which will be an opportunity for all of us to learn more about the long and fascinating history of this remarkable city.

The fact that over 50 INTERPOL member countries and over 150 participants have gathered today in this prestigious capital city at the heart of Europe, boasting a rich, historical and cultural heritage, marks our shared desire to strengthen cooperation in the interest of our common security.

The security of Europe also depends on the close ties that this region keeps with countries beyond its borders, as well as regional and international organizations active in the security realm.

Today, we are also honoured to have the observer-participation of member countries from different parts of the world including African, Asian and Americas regions; as well as key international organizations and partners. Allow me to recognize some of them: Council of Europe, EU

Counterterrorism Coordinator, Eurojust, Europol, Frontex, International Organization for Migration (IOM), Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), Southeast European Law Enforcement Center (SELEC), a large number of United Nations' agencies, World Customs Organization (WCO) among others. A very warm welcome to all of you.

Part of INTERPOL's commitment to the European region as a whole will be to forge even stronger relationships with all such actors.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the Minister of Interior, Mr Milan Chovanec, for honouring the international policing community with his presence today, and for the warm welcome and hospitality that we have received in the Czech Republic.

The commitment shown by the Czech Authorities in organizing this conference is a testimony to the outstanding contribution they make towards the security of the region and beyond – to the world.

In particular, I would like to pay tribute to the Czech Police Force which is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year, and is currently under the leadership of Police President, Mr Tomáš Tuhý, who just last month honoured INTERPOL with a personal visit to our headquarters in Lyon, France. Mr Tuhý, it is now my turn to thank you for your hospitality, on behalf of INTERPOL!

I would also like to thank the INTERPOL Executive Committee for its support to the ongoing steps being taken towards the organization's next phase of evolution. Executive Committee delegates for Europe Mrs Catherine De Bolle from Belgium, and Mr Alexander Prokopchuk from Russia – who is chairing this conference, are also with us here today.

In addition, let me commend the extraordinary work of the INTERPOL European Committee, which works to enhance cooperation within this region, and to facilitate the implementation of the activities that are discussed in this forum.

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

This 44th European Regional Conference is taking place in a rapidly and constantly changing international context, marked by a multitude of new and evolving threats to the security of our countries. In particular, this region has faced large-scale terrorist attacks. Added to this has been a vast number of migrants arriving in Europe – including many children – fleeing violence and poverty while falling prey to the criminal networks exploiting them. And finally, Cybercrime poses an unprecedented threat for smartphones, private computers and critical infrastructures in our societies.

In this context, I would particularly like to draw your attention to the “INTERPOL 2020” initiative, which you will have the opportunity to discuss over the next three days. It will also be the subject of a specific draft recommendation that will assist the organization in the future in adapting itself to these new threats and your daily policing needs in a sustainable manner.

Turning INTERPOL 2020 into a reality on the ground will of course require strong political support through constant dialogue with Governments at the highest level.

In fact, INTERPOL has already seen remarkable recognition for its efforts; for example, the UN Security Council Resolution 2178 of 2014.

Because ultimately, for bringing about a safer Europe and indeed a safer World – support from all regions of the world is needed for truly strengthening international police cooperation.

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On that note, Honourable Minister, Police President, Ladies and Gentlemen; I wish you all a fruitful INTERPOL conference ahead and a very enjoyable stay in the “Golden City”! Yes - combined with its symphony of beauty and elegance, this magnificent city that bears the imprint of one of Europe’s oldest universities, has earned itself that nickname.

Děkuji. Thank you for your attention.