

MINISTRY OF THE INTERIOR
OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

STRATEGY TO FIGHT AGAINST ORGANISED CRIME UNTIL 2030

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Strategy to Fight against Organised Crime until 2030 (hereinafter referred to as the "Strategy") was prepared on the basis of Government Resolution No. 325 of 23 May 2018, as amended by Government Resolution No. 359 of 3 May 2022, and builds on the Strategy to Fight against Organised Crime until 2023¹, its Action Plans and previous similar materials.

The current text is largely based on the previous Strategy, which, together with its Action Plans, proved to be a suitable framework for the long-term anchoring of the fight against organised crime in the environment of the Czech Republic. The current text also respects the requirements set out in the Methodology for the Preparation of Public Strategies.² The first part of the text contains a brief summary of the current state of organised crime in the Czech Republic. This is followed by the identification of the main problem areas, which are further addressed through the structure of the global objective and subsequent strategic and specific objectives. The Strategy has a total of 6 strategic objectives (denoted by letters A-F) and 24 specific objectives (denoted by a combination of letters and numbers - e.g. B2). The Strategy also includes intermediate objectives, which are described in more detail in the following chapters. Compared to the previous Strategy, the intervention logic of the individual objectives has also been moved to the definition of problem areas and no longer has its own chapter.

Taking into account the fact that much has already been achieved in the fight against organised crime in recent years, some of the objectives of the Strategy also focus on maintaining, continuing and developing the activities already underway. The final part of the document outlines the implementation structure of the Strategy, risks to its implementation and information on the financing of individual measures. A detailed description of the current state of organised crime is included in Annex 1. A detailed evaluation of the previous Strategy is included in Annex 2.

The implementation of the Strategy continues through the biennial Action Plans. A total of three Action Plans will be implemented during the six-year period of the Strategy for the years 2025-2026, 2027-2028 and 2029-2030. The first Action Plan, developed in conjunction with this Strategy, is presented together with it.

The fight against organised crime falls under the competence of the Ministry of the Interior and the law enforcement agencies are involved in actively combating it. Other ministries, their subordinate units and other state bodies are also involved to varying degrees in the fight against organised crime, in particular the Ministry of Finance (Financial Administration of the Czech Republic, Customs Administration of the Czech Republic, Financial Analytical Office), the Ministry of Justice (especially in the area of criminal legislation, international treaties and the

1 <https://www.mvcr.cz/soubor/koncepce-boje-proti-organizovanemu-zlocinu-do-roku-2023.aspx>

2 <https://mmr.gov.cz/cs/microsites/portal-strategicke-prace-v-ceske-republice/nastroje-a-metodicka-podpora/vystupy-projektu>

fight against corruption), the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic (drug-related issues) and the Ministry of the Environment (crimes against the environment).

A significant role in the fight against organised crime is played by the Police of the Czech Republic (PČR), where the National Organised Crime Agency of the Criminal Police and Investigation Service, the National Drug Headquarters of the Criminal Police and Investigation Service, and the National Counter Terrorism, Extremism and Cybercrime Agency deal with this issue. Many cases are also dealt with by the Criminal Police and Investigation Service within individual regional police directorates. Intelligence services also play an important role in this area, participating in the issue within their remit and, in accordance with the provisions of Section 8(3) of Act No. 153/1994 Coll., forwarding findings to the Police of the Czech Republic for possible investigation.

After the approval of this Strategy by the Government, its text will be published on the Ministry of the Interior's website, together with the subsequent Action Plan, so that the public can become acquainted with it.³ An English version of the Strategy will also be prepared and published.

Relationship to other strategic documents and other materials

The Strategy to Fight against Organised Crime builds on the Security Strategy of the Czech Republic and develops it in this area. However, other government and departmental materials also deal with the topic of organised crime. The main ones are listed in Annex 3 and a more detailed overview is provided by the Strategy Database.⁴ These include, among others, the National Strategy for the Prevention and Reduction of Harm Associated with Addictive Behaviour, the Government Strategy for Combating Corruption, the Report on the Second Round of the National Risk Assessment Process for Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing, and the National Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in the Czech Republic, Inter-ministerial Strategy for Supporting Security Research in the Czech Republic, National Strategy for Cyber Security in the Czech Republic, Strategy of the Czech Republic for European Integrated Border Management 2024-2029, Strategy for Schengen Cooperation 2021-2027 and Medium-term Strategy for Secondment of Experts of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic Abroad for the period 2024-2028.

In the area of the activities of the Police of the Czech Republic, it is also necessary to mention the Strategy for the Development of the Police of the Czech Republic and the Strategy for the

³ <https://mv.gov.cz/clanek/bezpecnostni-hrozby-337414.aspx?q=Y2hudW09Mg%3d%3d>

⁴ <https://www.databaze-strategie.cz/>

Development of the Capabilities of the Police of the Czech Republic in the Field of Crimes Committed in Cyberspace. The Strategy to Fight against Organised Crime until 2030 builds on both materials.

It is not possible to perceive the Strategy in isolation, as it only really makes sense when looking at the entire system of government security policy documents. At the same time, it is not intended to copy measures contained in other strategic materials. Therefore, neither the Strategy, nor the subsequent Action Plans, will as a rule address specific areas such as drug crime, corruption or human trafficking, as these issues are already covered in other documents. This does not mean, however, that the measures taken under the Strategy cannot have a positive impact on these areas, nor does it in any way diminish their importance in the context of organised crime.

There is also a relationship between the Strategy and the emerging related strategic materials, in particular the National AML/CFT Strategy prepared by the Financial Analytical Office and the National Strategy for the Recovery of Criminal Assets, which will be developed on the basis of the Confiscation Directive and will be prepared within the framework of the Action Plan for 2025 and 2026. The relationship between the Strategy and the National Strategy for Countering Hybrid Activities is also relevant in the context of the findings on the link between hybrid threats and organised crime, which can be considered synergistic.

The aim of the Strategy is to implement more broad measures that will benefit the widest possible range of areas in the fight against organised crime, to fill certain gaps that are emerging among other sector-specific documents, and to help identify new areas where organised crime is gaining ground or new opportunities for organised crime that arise due to technological developments or other changes.

In addition to the various strategic documents, other new or expanded instruments have been introduced in recent years in the fight against organised crime. International cooperation in the fight against organised crime can also make use of the tools offered by sanctions policy. In particular, the EU's new hybrid sanctions regime makes it possible to effectively combat activities that target EU Member States and the functioning of the EU as a whole. In conjunction with other instruments, the sanctions regime can then offer an effective way to fight organised crime together across Europe, in line with our wider security interests. Another tool that the Czech Republic can use to respond to the specific form of threats associated with organised crime is the foreign investment screening mechanism. This allows for an effective response to the risks associated with a foreign investment in a Czech target company, if this is necessary to protect the security of the Czech Republic or public order, e.g. if the investor may be involved in illegal or criminal activities.

The European dimension of the fight against organised crime

The text of the Strategy is also based on Europol's findings, published in the 2021 and 2025 EU Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment Report⁵, its updates and other related Europol material (IOCTA, material on criminal networks in the EU and corporate abuse). EU Internal Security Strategy published in April 2025 is also relevant in this context as well as the strategic documents published by the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO).⁶

European Union's permanent policy for the fight against organised and serious international crime - EMPACT 2022+ and the implementation of relevant EU legislation also contribute to the fight against organised crime in the Czech Republic. This includes, among others, the EU Confiscation Directive,⁷ all three components of the so-called AML package⁸ and the Environmental Crimes Directive.⁹ Last but not least, the Strategy also reflects the EU Roadmap for Combating Drug Trafficking and Organised Crime issued by the European Commission in October 2023 and the EU Strategy for Combating Organised Crime 2021-2025.

The Czech Republic is involved in all the so-called priority areas of EMPACT 2022+, and therefore is represented in all 15 Operational Action Plans (OAPs), where it occupies different positions. Various services participate on behalf of the Police of the Czech Republic. The General Directorate of Customs is also very significantly involved. In the OAP Carousel Fraud (MTIC), the Police of the Czech Republic covers the position of co-driver. In five cases, experts from the Police of the Czech Republic and the Customs Authority act as the leaders, namely in the OAP High Risk Criminal Networks (HRCN), the OAP Trafficking in Human Beings (THB), the OAP Synthetic Drugs (SYD), the OAP Carousel Fraud (MTIC) and the OAP Crimes against Intellectual Property, Counterfeit Goods and Currency (IPCCGC). The Czech Republic acts as a co-leader in two operational actions in the Synthetic Drugs OAP. In total, the Czech Republic participates in 130 operational actions across the OAPs (as of March 2025) and participation in EMPACT 2022+ represents an integral part of international police cooperation. Nearly 300 different operational actions are planned each year within EMPACT 2022+, which are focused on joint investigations, training activities, prevention, information sharing, cooperation with non-EU countries, improving the process of gathering information on individual areas, specifics of crime, etc.

5 <https://www.europol.europa.eu/publication-events/main-reports/european-union-serious-and-organised-crime-threat-assessment-socta-2021>; <https://www.europol.europa.eu/publication-events/main-reports/changing-dna-of-serious-and-organised-crime#downloads>.

6 <https://www.eppo.europa.eu/en/media/news/2024-annual-report-eppo-leading-charge-against-eu-fraud>

7 Directive (EU) 2024/1260 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 April 2024 on the recovery and confiscation of assets

8 <https://fau.gov.cz/aml-balicek>

9 Directive (EU) 2024/1203 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 on environmental criminal law and replacing Directives 2008/99/EC and 2009/123/EC

The topic of organised crime is also raised in a number of EU platforms aimed at developing law enforcement cooperation within the EU - in particular the Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation in Internal Security (COSI) and the Council of the EU Law Enforcement Working Party (LEWP). In addition, this issue is also routinely discussed by the European Network on the Administrative Approach (ENAA) and the European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN).

2. CURRENT SITUATION IN THE FIELD OF ORGANISED CRIME

Organised crime is repeatedly identified as a serious threat to the security of the Czech Republic and the fight against it is a priority area of law enforcement activity. There is no doubt about its presence on the territory of the Czech Republic. This chapter serves as a brief description of the current situation. Detailed information, including an analysis of individual topics and issues in the field of organised crime is provided in Annex 1.

The deterioration of the security situation in the world is increasingly affecting the Czech security environment, especially as a result of external geopolitical factors. In particular, the war conflicts in the EU neighbourhood, most visibly in Ukraine and the Middle East, have a major impact. Another important factor is the impact of illegal migration and smuggling, which is manifested throughout Europe, including the Czech Republic.

A significant new factor is the technological development associated with the information data explosion and the rapid emergence of the phenomenon of artificial intelligence (AI). Criminals are able to quickly adapt to this development and use it as an opportunity. The misuse of rapid information transfer and the misuse of AI create a significant asymmetry in the ability and real capacity of law enforcement agencies to prosecute serious crime. This threat could be described as 'analogue policing with analogue tools and standards in a rapidly evolving digital age'.

Taken together, these new security threats are creating growing pressures and internal tensions in society that threaten to disrupt its internal social, economic and political stability and the prevailing consensus. The old threats associated with organised crime, also described in previous materials, have not disappeared but have been transformed by geopolitical, social and technological developments.

In addition to domestic criminal groups, mainly Eastern European, Asian and Balkan groups continue to operate in the Czech Republic. In recent years, a number of legislative changes have been adopted that significantly limit the scope for criminal groups to operate, but several unresolved obstacles remain. As a result of these developments, some illegal activities are

being curtailed (e.g. skimming, excessive VAT deductions, car theft), while others are on the rise (illegal employment, phishing and other forms of mostly online fraud). Russia's aggression against Ukraine is a huge opportunity for organised crime in many areas - for example, in the area of illegal employment and exploitation of refugees, in the recruitment of new associates, or in the transfer of residence of some criminal structures to EU territory.

If it is advantageous for the organised criminal group, an international element (a legal entity based abroad, or legal entities' executives residing abroad) will also be involved in an otherwise purely domestic organisation, in particular in order to make its investigation more difficult and complicated. On the other hand, even international criminal groups of predominantly one nationality cannot fully operate in the Czech environment without links to Czech citizens.

Organised groups do not have precise membership boundaries. Rather than closed groups in which everyone knows and trusts each other, loose groups of criminals who engage in criminal activity on the basis of their expertise and are called upon for particular tasks by the organisers of that activity are common. Individual offenders thus often do not know anyone outside their contact in the group. Straw men – usually vulnerable or otherwise marginalised persons (e.g. homeless and socially excluded persons, persons with mental illness, substance addicts, foreigners with no knowledge of the language and legal system, and generally people in difficult life situations) are deployed in the lowest and most exposed positions. On the other hand, those in the highest positions appear outwardly as respectable citizens who are in no way linked to any criminal activities.

Organised crime, like society itself, is constantly modernizing and professionalizing. The expertise of the perpetrators is increasing, modern technologies are increasingly being used, the international and global element is growing and state actors are becoming involved. The general tendency is towards polycriminality, where organised crime does not specialise in one area, but actively seeks various new opportunities for profit in the illegal sphere, or infiltrates the legal business sphere through its practices. Consequently, illicit and ostensibly legal business activities are effectively merged within interconnected criminal structures. The execution of criminal business is divided into different areas, where the key players remain in the background in the role of coordinators and investors, and thus remain often beyond the reach of state authorities.

This flexibility is made possible by the development of the money laundering industry, which is a logical part of organised crime, as organised crime is almost always profit-oriented. A qualitatively new element is the global development of this structure, which makes it possible to legalise the funds from illegal activities, but also to move, anonymise and reinvest them. It is a parallel financial system based on service intermediaries, which contains both formal and informal elements and is damaging to nation states, but also to the global financial system and economy. If the domestic financial system is to be protected from toxic capital, the ability to

disrupt this money laundering system is crucial to the success of the authorities fighting organised crime.

Major international fraud cases show that it is increasingly difficult to distinguish organised crime from risky business strategies where high risk is associated with potentially high reward. The essence of such criminal schemes is only a simulation of investment activity, a significant information disparity, the transfer of risk to investors and the circumvention of financial market regulators.

In the Czech Republic, organised crime is often associated with large public expenditures and public finances. On the part of criminal organised groups, this requires infiltration of public administration and expert knowledge of legislation and decision-making processes. The general trend is criminal organisations moving away from spectacular violence, which attracts unwanted attention and remains present only as a potential threat, towards the use of economic and legal tools.

An important change that Czech society has undergone is a shift in the perception of organised crime, whose manifestations are no longer considered to be limited to traditional areas (e.g. drug crime, violent crime), but are perceived in their entirety, including organised economic crime.

At the same time, in the last few years, it is possible to note a steady and irreversible shift of crime to the digital environment. The increase is evident both in the issue of pure cybercrime and in the area of crime committed with significant use of information and communication technologies, the object of attack being in particular health, property, freedom, human dignity and morality. Some drug crime processes are also moving into the digital environment. The development of technology and the availability of encryption increases the level of anonymity of perpetrators and offers a space not limited by national borders, which increases the transaction costs for the relevant state authorities.

Cybercrime often targets the most vulnerable part of the population (individuals) and uses social engineering methods. Detecting and prosecuting perpetrators who operate in other countries is extremely difficult, not only because it requires the collection and preservation of digital evidence, but also because it requires extensive international cooperation (especially in terms of evidence provision), the speed of which is not correlated with the requirements of today's times. Online fraud can deprive individuals of lifetime savings and can lead to a reduction in public confidence in the security of cyberspace and in their own ability to protect themselves effectively against such fraud.

The phenomenon of "crime as a service" is also on the rise, where groups of professional criminals may supply specialised services to other criminal organisations or customers outside the criminal environment - typically counterfeiting, software tools and cyber-attacks, illegal commodities, etc.

The above-mentioned trends have created a need for the state authorities to come up with innovative procedures, including, to a previously unprecedented extent, cooperation with private entities and to seek solutions tailored to specific ways of committing crime. The importance of effective crime prevention and cooperation with entities other than public authorities is increasing dramatically. The fight against organised crime cannot be limited to repressive procedures.

3. IDENTIFIED PROBLEMATIC AREAS

This chapter summarises the main areas where certain shortcomings are perceived in current practice in the fight against organised crime. It includes findings from previous papers and working meetings as well as new suggestions made during the preparation of this document. The problematic areas are not ranked hierarchically. Compared to the previous Strategy, the chapter describing the intervention logic is omitted and the strategic and specific objectives related to each problem area are listed directly under each problematic area.

A) Legislative conditions for the activities of the authorities fighting organised crime

Despite great efforts in this area, criminal investigations are still complicated by current criminal procedure regulations. The current Criminal Procedure Code is perceived as inadequate. Although the adoption of a new Criminal Procedure Code was seen as a political priority, it has not yet been achieved. In recent years, some changes have been adopted to facilitate the conduct of criminal proceedings¹⁰ and high hopes are pinned on the amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code currently in the legislative process¹¹ to bring about some of the necessary changes. Even their adoption will not completely resolve the situation. For example, searches of law offices are still perceived as problematic.

Partial areas are still identified which should be addressed already within the existing legislation by amendments. These include, for example, the possibility of using information lawfully obtained by intelligence services under specific regulations as evidence in criminal proceedings or the area of freezing and confiscation of suspicious financial assets. Attention should also be paid to the issue of electronic evidence in light of new technological developments in this area, as well as to addressing the breaches of protected rights for the purposes of criminal proceedings (e.g. debating the possibility of using already requested bank data in another criminal case).

10 In particular, Act No. 333/2020 Coll., which, among other things, extended the applicability of the plea bargain, established the institution of the declaration of guilt and regulated the obligations of the cooperating accused

11 Parliamentary Papers 854 and 861

Problematic aspects negatively affecting the fight against organised crime are also perceived in other legislation, for example in the current broad concept of postal secrecy.

Strategic Objective A and its related specific objectives are designed to address this problematic area.

B) Cooperation, sharing and use of information within the Czech Republic

The cooperation between law enforcement authorities and other state and non-state actors is generally perceived as good and useful, but it still suffers from certain shortcomings. In some cases, there is no cooperation in solving individual cases, information is not shared, there is no adequate legal basis for such sharing, or information sharing is inefficient and inflexible. Individual authorities often have a large amount of useful data, but the mechanisms for sharing and using it are not yet fully established. The increasing availability of large amounts of information linked to the use of modern technologies further complicates the situation.

The private sector is another vital source of information needed to combat organised crime. In view of the growing corporate social responsibility and the high risk of abuse of legitimate business in the activities of organised crime¹², the potential for cooperation between the private sector and the authorities fighting organised crime is also growing. However, for a number of reasons, this potential has not yet been fully realised, which has a negative impact on the fight against organised crime. In some cases, cooperation is based only on good personal relations between individual staff and can be jeopardised by personnel changes.

The method of intensive cooperation between the Customs Administration of the Czech Republic, the Financial Administration of the Czech Republic and the Police of the Czech Republic in the area of tax crime (Tax Cobra) has proven to be very effective in the long term and should therefore be further supported and developed and even applied to new areas of the fight against crime.

Strategic objective B, its follow-up specific objectives and specific objective E1 are designed to address this problematic area.

C) International cooperation

In view of the prevailing international character of the activities of organised criminal groups, effective international cooperation is a necessary condition for combating them. Despite the long-term efforts of the entities involved in this area, international cooperation is still perceived rather negatively in the practice of law enforcement authorities. Cooperation with distant countries, where there is no liaison officer of the Police of the Czech Republic and where there is no contractual basis for cooperation, is particularly complicated. From the point

¹² See, for example, the Europol report <https://www.europol.europa.eu/media-press/newsroom/news/europol-analysis-reveals-how-criminal-networks-exploit-legal-businesses-to-strengthen-their-grip-economy>

of view of law enforcement authorities, a negative feature of international police cooperation in some cases is its lengthiness and administrative complexity, which depends on the circumstances of specific cases and the requirements of foreign partners.

As a rule, the prolongation of the information exchange process does not occur at the national level, but on the part of some foreign partners. With some countries, effective international cooperation is almost impossible because they are so-called non-cooperative jurisdictions for various reasons. With the growing importance of cooperation at EU level in the fight against organised crime, it is also necessary to strengthen the Czech Republic's involvement in this cooperation. Criminal groups from these countries may have links to the Czech Republic or use these countries as logistical bases for their activities.

Strategic Objective C and its related specific objectives are designed to address this problem area.

D) Scope of organised crime activities and their flexible nature

Organised crime groups are usually polycriminal by nature¹³ and focus their activities on areas where they perceive it easiest to achieve profit or other objectives given their capabilities. In recent years, organised crime has increasingly focused its activities on areas such as waste trafficking, investment fraud, and internet fraud. More recently, its involvement has also been detected in attempts to circumvent international sanctions. The scale and evolving nature of these activities call for an adequate state response, including the strategic alignment of law enforcement and other authorities with the current areas of organised criminal activity.

Effectively addressing organised crime also demands more intensive cooperation among state entities in a strategic and coordinated manner. However, institutional siloing and a continued focus on traditional mandates remain significant obstacles. As a result, the state may lack the necessary capacity to adequately respond to emerging criminal phenomena and may struggle to effectively address these evolving challenges.

In the field of combating organised crime, a single overarching document (this Strategy) has long existed alongside numerous thematic strategies targeting specific areas in which organised crime groups operate — such as drug trafficking, human trafficking, environmental crime, and cybercrime. These sectoral strategies are not limited to organised crime, but rather address the full spectrum of related issues across all levels. Nonetheless, they often significantly overlap with organised crime. These documents differ in structure, scope, and duration, and their implementation varies in effectiveness.

Strategic objective D, its specific objectives, and also strategic objective E and specific objective F1 are intended to address this problem area.

¹³ dealing with several different types of crime

E) Capacities and capabilities of the authorities fighting organised crime

Despite long-standing efforts in this area, law enforcement agencies and other state entities involved in implementing the Strategy continue to face significant shortfalls in personnel, financial, material, and technical resources. Some institutions are hampered by outdated computer technology and obsolete information systems that no longer meet the demands of combating organised crime — and in some cases, crime in general. Inadequate tools for crime fighting ultimately lead to increased financial burdens.

There is a complete or partial absence of effective software for collecting and analysing data. The volume of data to be processed — such as that retrieved from mobile phones, computers, or servers — continues to grow, placing heightened demands on the professional capacity and technical infrastructure of competent authorities. This often negatively affects both the duration and success of criminal proceedings. A key challenge is the need for the rapid, efficient, and secure implementation of artificial intelligence (AI), for which state institutions currently lack sufficient hardware, software, and qualified personnel.

Given current demographic trends and labour market conditions, staffing law enforcement agencies will become increasingly difficult, especially in less attractive fields such as economic crime investigation. The growing sophistication and secrecy of organised crime demands ever-higher levels of professional expertise from those tasked with its suppression.

Despite the high state budget deficit, adequate funding for the fight against organised crime must not be neglected. Strategic focus is urgently needed to strengthen the material and technical capacities of law enforcement authorities, particularly the Police of the Czech Republic. Retaining and motivating qualified experts is essential — and requires salaries that are competitive with the private sector. Without this, the gap between the capabilities of state institutions to detect and investigate organised crime and the opportunities for such crime to flourish will widen even further.

In parallel, it is necessary to expand professional capacities, modernise information systems, and address the rising financial demands associated with acquiring state-of-the-art digital tools.

Strategic Objective E and its related specific objectives are designed to address this problem area.

F) New and old tools of organised crime

Organised crime continues to adapt swiftly to new technologies and opportunities to support its activities. In the past, this included the use of crypto assets, the darknet, and end-to-end encryption technologies. Today, organised crime is already exploiting the potential of artificial intelligence — particularly large language models — and it is plausible that future misuse may

extend to quantum computing, autonomous vehicles, and other emerging disruptive technologies.

There is a persistent delay in the adoption and regulatory oversight of new technologies by state authorities. Organised crime has consistently maintained a technological advantage over law enforcement and other state institutions.

Moreover, organised crime has long relied on a set of well-known tools (detailed in Annex 1), which have been repeatedly identified in strategic and operational documents. Despite this awareness, many of these enablers — such as anonymous SIM cards, the use of straw men in various roles, ready-made companies with virtual offices, offshore jurisdictions, the misuse of certain professional services, and the creation of fraudulent domains — have not yet been addressed in a way that would meaningfully reduce their abuse potential.

Strategic objective F and its related specific objectives, as well as specific objective E2, are designed to address this problem area.

4. GLOBAL OBJECTIVE OF THE STRATEGY

The objective of this Strategy is to ensure that organised crime is effectively detected, investigated, and prosecuted. State authorities should possess adequate material, informational, and human resources to address all forms of organised crime, including those with international dimensions. Law enforcement powers must be clearly defined in legislation in a manner that ensures both effectiveness and a balanced respect for fundamental rights and public interest. The state must be able to respond flexibly to technological and other environmental changes, actively minimising new opportunities for organised criminal activity. Proceeds from organised crime should be effectively identified and seized, making such activity unprofitable for perpetrators.

The Strategy seeks to maximise the effectiveness of state resources in combating organised crime and to establish the necessary legal framework enabling authorities to access all relevant information sources. Officials must be equipped with appropriate material and technical tools and provided with adequate professional training. A strong emphasis is placed on inter-agency cooperation, including proven models such as the Cobra method, institutionalised not only through informal channels but also through contractual or standardised arrangements.

International cooperation represents another essential pillar — particularly the conclusion and implementation of bilateral and multilateral agreements on police and judicial collaboration. As organised crime continues to exploit advanced technologies, state authorities must keep pace. The development, modernisation, and effective use of information systems by law enforcement agencies is therefore a key priority.

A cross-cutting objective of this Strategy is the integration of innovation and the adoption of new technologies and practices in the fight against organised crime. This includes securing funding through security research, development, and innovation programmes, as well as tapping into extra-budgetary sources.

5. STRATEGIC AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGY

The following section sets out the overall strategic objectives (designated by letters) and specific objectives (designated by a letter-number combination). Some specific objectives are identified as intermediate objectives. This designation indicates that the objective will be pursued primarily within the standard operations of the responsible institutions, without requiring new or intensified inter-ministerial coordination. As a result, these objectives will generally not be included in individual Action Plans.

Intermediate objectives will be partially assessed during the evaluation of individual Action Plans, with a comprehensive assessment to be conducted at the conclusion of the Strategy's implementation period. This approach is based on experience from the previous Strategy, where certain objectives—though not featured in Action Plans—were nonetheless successfully achieved as part of routine institutional activity.

This model is especially suited to long-term initiatives (e.g. improving the qualifications of criminal justice personnel, advancing security research, or developing information systems), as well as areas where significant progress has already been made and the current focus is on maintaining and gradually enhancing the existing high standard (e.g. management of seized assets or sub-areas of organised crime covered by their own strategic frameworks).

Specific objectives that are not designated as intermediate will be implemented through targeted measures set out in subsequent Action Plans. Strategic objectives correspond to previously identified problem areas and carry the same letter designation.

A) Effective legislation and new tools in the fight against organised crime

This strategic objective is intended to improve the legislative conditions for the work of law enforcement agencies, to make their procedures more efficient and to enable them to devote more time to the detection and investigation of crime. It is also intended to provide the new tools needed to effectively combat organised crime. In this context, it is particularly important to complete the legislative process for the confiscation of assets of unlawful origin

and to adopt the proposed amendments currently under discussion as part of the criminal law reform.¹⁴

The following specific objectives lead to this:

A1) Adoption of amendments to criminal procedure and related legislation

When adopting amendments to the legislation on criminal procedure, the administrative burden on law enforcement authorities should be taken into account and excessive formalism should be limited. Attention will be paid to the issue of electronic evidence, its status in criminal proceedings and the practical difficulties associated with securing and evaluating it, as well as other areas that will become problematic during the validity of the Strategy.

A2) Adoption of legislation on the confiscation of assets of unlawful origin

Article 16 of the Confiscation Directive should be implemented in national law in a way that also takes into account the need to address the problem of the abuse of transit accounts for the laundering of the proceeds of crime.

A3) Use of intelligence information in criminal proceedings

Given the evolving security environment, it is essential to establish clear legal conditions under which information obtained through the lawful activities of intelligence services—i.e. in compliance with the legal frameworks governing their operations—may be used as admissible evidence in criminal proceedings. This objective has been pursued since the 2016 National Security Audit and its related Action Plan. Its importance continues to grow, particularly considering hostile activities by certain foreign states against the Czech Republic, which are often addressed by both intelligence and law enforcement agencies. Although a legislative solution has been drafted and enjoys broad expert consensus, it has not yet been adopted.

B) Strengthening information sharing and cooperation between all relevant actors in the fight against organised crime

The aim is to improve cooperation between all relevant actors to achieve maximum synergy in the fight against organised crime. Long-term cooperation should be based on the principle of agreements that clearly define standard procedures and the scope of cooperation between the various actors. The creation of cross-cutting and ad hoc teams for individual

¹⁴ Parliamentary Papers 854 and 861

issues based on the Tax Cobra model of cooperation (i.e. primarily without increased costs and changes in legislation) is encouraged. Cooperation should also be developed with local government, non-profit organisations, the academic sector and the private business sector. Partnerships with private entities seem to be effective in this respect, for example in the area of combating illegal gambling, counterfeit goods or other illegal products. Cooperation with financial institutions, freight forwarding and logistics companies, online platforms and other service providers that are at high risk of being used by organised crime is also of great importance.

The following specific objectives lead to this:

B1) Expanding and embedding cooperation between actors fighting organised crime

Although the cooperation between the individual entities may be based on mutual trust, the formalisation of this cooperation more reliably sets procedural steps in the exchange of information and the provision of cooperation and thus prevents potential disputes. Cooperation based on agreements is also more stable in the long term than mere personal ties and leads to an increase in the volume of shared communication. **Intermediate objective.**

B2) Establishment and development of central and regional cross-cutting and ad hoc crime fighting teams

It is advisable to set up teams operating on a similar basis as Tax Cobra in other issues. This form of cooperation does not require a change in legislation or financial costs and is therefore the most effective form of response to emerging or expanding forms of organised crime. It is desirable to continue to develop the Tax Cobra method of cooperation and to address new challenges through it. **Intermediate objective.**

B3) Promoting administrative approach in the fight against organised crime

At the EU level and in some specific countries (in particular the Netherlands, Italy, Belgium), measures of an administrative approach have been effectively used in the fight against organised crime, which rely on intensive cooperation between control authorities, state administration and local government in the issuance of permits and licences that can be misused for criminal activities, as well as in the prevention of organised crime. Awareness of this approach should be expanded in the Czech Republic along with a more active involvement of local governments in the fight against organised crime. In this context, the active involvement of the Czech Republic in the activities of the European Network on the Administrative Approach (ENAA) and the European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN) and the implementation of appropriate measures resulting from the ENAA and EUCPN projects for 2025 and 2026 and beyond are also desirable. **Intermediate objective.**

B4) Streamlining procedures for sharing information between government entities with each other and with the private sector

There are many processes of information exchange between state actors among themselves and between the private sector and state actors, based on statutory provisions as well as contractual cooperation. These processes must be effective and meet the needs of the fight against organised crime. An automated exchange of queries and responses with the fastest possible access to the necessary data in a usable format is desirable. In this context, the completion of projects to make efficient use of bank account data and to extend the exchange of information with postal and freight forwarding companies is essential.

C) Development of international cooperation activities in the fight against organised crime

This strategic objective aims to improve the availability of information obtained through international police and judicial cooperation in the investigation of cross-border organised crime cases. To achieve this, the contractual basis for this cooperation needs to be expanded and updated. Effective cooperation tools such as the deployment of liaison officers, cooperation within the EU Justice and Home Affairs Focal Point Networks, active involvement in the EMPACT 2022+ platform and cooperation with the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) should be further promoted. Awareness of the benefits of joint investigation teams for securing evidence for criminal proceedings from abroad as well as the use of European and other transnational crime-fighting information systems will be promoted. The Czech Republic will actively participate in the discussion on the new European Internal Security Strategy, other strategic initiatives of the new European Commission in the period 2024-2029, as well as in the debate on the future role and mandate of Europol and the Czech Republic's involvement in this agency. The Czech Republic will continue to support the capacity of developing countries in the fight against organised crime through the Security Development Cooperation Programme of the Ministry of the Interior.

The following specific objectives lead to this:

C1) Security Development Cooperation Programme of the Ministry of the Interior

The Security Development Cooperation Programme is the optimal instrument for improving cooperation with developing countries. By intensifying the use of this instrument, it is possible to achieve more effective cooperation with selected partner countries and to contribute to the development of their capacities to fight organised crime, which may also extend to the territory of the Czech Republic. **Intermediate objective.**

C2) Conclusion and revision of police and judicial cooperation agreements with selected countries

Long-term effectiveness in international cooperation is best achieved through formal agreements. For certain countries, contractual arrangements are the only viable means of collaboration. These treaties must be regularly updated to reflect current needs in the detection and investigation of organised crime. Support is also given to initiatives by Europol, Eurojust, and the EU to enhance cooperation mechanisms with third countries, especially those that serve as source or destination points for persons or goods linked to organised crime, as well as with jurisdictions that are otherwise non-cooperative.

C3) Secondment of liaison officers and national experts to countries of interest, EU agencies and institutions and international organisations

Given the proven effectiveness of this international cooperation tool and the highly positive evaluations of Czech liaison officers (both police and migration), it is essential to continue developing this mechanism. This includes expanding it to additional countries, EU agencies and institutions, and international organisations, based on the agreement of the relevant state entities. A strong network of liaison officers not only accelerates and streamlines international cooperation but also advances the interests of the Czech Republic.

Beyond direct police collaboration, these officers play a crucial role in identifying security risks related to visa processes, detecting forged documents, and addressing cases where government-imposed migration quotas are circumvented. Furthermore, strengthening the Czech Republic's representation by national experts in EU agencies, institutions, and international organisations remains a key priority.

Support should also be given to the participation of Czech representatives in international initiatives aimed at enhancing law enforcement agencies' ability to access electronic data, such as the High-Level Group on Access to Data for Effective Law Enforcement and the International Symposium for Lawful Access.

C4) Strengthening cooperation within the Justice and Home Affairs Focal Point Networks

The exchange of information and best practice through the networks of contact points and other similar initiatives in the area of justice and home affairs at EU level and in other formats is a useful tool for cooperation with other Member States, but also with third countries participating in these initiatives. The Czech Republic should actively participate in these networks. **Intermediate objective.**

C5) Ensure the full use of all functions of international information systems used to combat organised crime

Sufficient technical and staffing conditions need to be ensured to fully use all the functionalities of these information systems (in particular the Schengen Information System and the systems being built within the framework of the interoperability architecture between EU information systems in the area of justice and home affairs) in a way that supports the fight against transnational organised crime. **Intermediate objective.**

D) Development of activities in sub-areas of the fight against organised crime

Currently, many sub-policy areas of the fight against organised crime have their own strategic materials (e.g. drug policy, fight against corruption, human trafficking, environmental crime, etc. - see Annex 3). This objective is aimed at maintaining the current state of affairs, where sub-areas are detailed in the existing materials of the individual ministries, based on long-standing best practice anchored at the level of government resolutions. Another objective is closer cooperation and coordination of activities in the preparation of these strategic materials to promote their potential synergies, sharing of good practice and elimination of duplication. Efforts will also be made to develop strategic materials in areas where this has not yet been done and where it is needed.

The following specific objectives lead to this:

D1) Continue to develop and implement strategic materials focused on sub-areas of crime with a significant share of organised crime

The long-standing and proven model involves relevant ministries working collaboratively with law enforcement agencies and other relevant entities to focus on particular areas and tools of organised crime. **Intermediate objective.**

D2) Promote the sharing of good practice and synergies between the authors of strategic materials for the fight against organised crime

For example, through regular meetings, exchanges of experience and contacts between the promoters of individual materials and, in general, at the level of the strategic work of individual entities. **Intermediate objective.**

D3) Develop new strategic materials for crime areas where this approach is needed

These areas may include those mandated by the Czech Republic's international obligations, as well as emerging or expanding fields where such a need has not previously been recognized. When developing new strategic documents, it is essential to carefully assess their added value, potential overlaps, and opportunities for synergy with existing materials. The creation of new strategies also presents a valuable opportunity to foster closer collaboration among relevant stakeholders. A current example is the National AML/CFT Strategy under development.

Intermediate objective.

E) Improving the conditions for and the effectiveness of the work of the authorities fighting organised crime

Improving the working conditions of authorities combating organised crime is essential to keep pace with its dynamic evolution. This improvement should not be seen merely as a substantial increase in individual agencies' budgets but rather as enhancing process efficiency, eliminating unnecessary administrative and statutory burdens, implementing new information systems, and adapting the structure of state bodies to reflect current security challenges and organised crime trends, including the appropriate allocation of personnel.

It is also crucial to effectively utilize insights from security and criminological research, leverage extra-budgetary funding sources, and adopt new technologies. Attention must be given to support functions, logistical backing, and the development of specialized service units.

Combating organised crime effectively requires embracing innovative approaches, such as expanding law enforcement presence in cyberspace and recruiting experts skilled in emerging and disruptive technologies.

The following specific objectives lead to this:

E1) Development of information systems relevant to the fight against organised crime

As the volume of data and demands on the relevant public authorities grows, the level of IT support for them must also keep pace. Central to the fight against organised crime is the completion of new IT systems, data repositories and projects that are currently under development and have the potential to significantly increase the efficiency of the actors involved. These new systems must use the latest technologies for data storage, evaluation and analysis, including artificial intelligence and machine learning tools. These include, inter alia, the PČR's Unified Analytical Tool and Central Data Model, the new Tax Information System of

the Financial Administration, the new case management system of the public prosecution and other similar tools. **Intermediate objective.**

E2) Support for security and criminological research and related projects focused on organised crime

Security and criminological research must add value in the fight against organised crime. This research is an opportunity to develop new methods and tools for detecting and investigating organised crime, including the implementation of new and ground-breaking technologies (machine learning, the use of large language models and artificial intelligence etc.). It also enables new insights to be gained into areas of organised crime that have not yet been sufficiently explored or are emerging or gaining in importance. These methods, tools and insights need to be implemented in the work of law enforcement agencies. **Intermediate objective.**

E3) Support for further training and capacity development of staff of the authorities fighting organised crime

Given the shortage of qualified candidates for law enforcement and other state agencies, coupled with unfavourable demographic trends, it is crucial to focus on developing the skills and capabilities of existing personnel. Efforts should be made to both deepen and broaden the expertise of all individuals involved in combating organised crime, including enhancing relevant language skills, particularly English. Training programs must integrate new technologies that impact criminal methods—such as artificial intelligence, crypto-assets, and modern communication tools—and leverage these technologies, especially AI, to design, evaluate, and improve the training itself. Additionally, taking advantage of training opportunities offered by international institutions like CEPOL is highly recommended. **Intermediate objective.**

E4) Developing the use of non-budgetary funding to fight organised crime

The effective fight against organised crime demands state-of-the-art facilities and equipment for law enforcement agencies, necessitating substantial investment. Given the limited capacity of the state budget to cover all such needs, it is advisable to maximise the use of extra-budgetary funding sources. This includes European funds and programmes, such as the Internal Security Fund (ISF), as well as bilateral funding initiatives like the Norwegian and Swiss financial mechanisms and similar resources. Additionally, joint procurement efforts—such as acquiring software licenses in collaboration with other EU member states—offer a promising alternative, providing both cost savings and opportunities for knowledge transfer and enhanced cooperation. **Intermediate objective.**

E5) Seized assets management

Much progress has been made in the management of seized assets in recent years thanks to the development of the CenZA and the adoption of new legislation in this area. Nevertheless, it is advisable to pay further attention to this previously problematic area and to work on further streamlining of processes in this area. **Intermediate objective.**

E6) Adoption of the National Strategy for the Recovery of Criminal Assets

A need related to Specific Objective E5 is the requirement to adopt the National Strategy for the Enforcement of Assets from Criminal Activity to fulfil the obligation set out in Article 25 of the Confiscation Directive.

E7) Introducing new practices in the fight against organised crime

Organised crime uses the Internet environment to recruit victims and accomplices, arrange illegal activities and move funds. For this reason, innovative practices and initiatives by law enforcement authorities are needed to expand their presence in the Internet environment (including specific, e.g. gaming communities). The development of activities referred to as cyber patrolling, applied e.g. by the Police “Ofenzíva” team, is desirable. Inspiration for these activities can be drawn from abroad, where this concept is already well developed in some countries. **Intermediate objective.**

F) Current challenges in the fight against organised crime

The realization of this objective is directly forced by the changes that are taking place in the environment of organised crime. Criminal activity is becoming increasingly sophisticated, using the services of professionals in related fields as well as the latest technology. In this context, it is particularly important to pay attention to the possibilities of using AI, quantum computers, 3D printing, autonomous technologies and 5G networks (specifically the issue of S8 home routing - see Europol report).¹⁵

State authorities must promptly detect emerging trends in organised crime, followed by thorough analysis and the development of effective tools to ensure an adequate state response. Systematic efforts are required to restrict the availability of tools exploited by organised crime. In this regard, potential legislative changes at the EU level, based on the

¹⁵ <https://www.europol.europa.eu/media-press/newsroom/news/home-routing-limiting-law-enforcement-evidence-gathering-warns-europol>

so-called High-Level Group (HLG) Recommendations on Access to Data¹⁶, will play a critical role.

The following specific objectives lead to this:

F1) Regular exchange of information on new trends in organised crime

It would be beneficial to reactivate the working group previously established under the Action Plan to Combat Organised Crime, focusing on issues related to the darknet and virtual currencies. This group should address new trends employed in organised crime and evaluate the capacity of state authorities to respond effectively. Additionally, the Ministry of the Interior will once again prepare a comprehensive Assessment of the Situation in the Fight Against Organised Crime.

F2) Analysis of long-standing tools employed by organised crime and associated legislative gaps

It has long been recognized that various tools are vulnerable to misuse by organised crime. These include anonymous SIM cards, crypto-assets, the use of straw men in various roles, involvement of ready-made companies with virtual offices, offshore jurisdictions, and the exploitation of professional services such as accountants and tax advisers to facilitate criminal activity. In each case, any potential changes to the legal framework must be carefully evaluated to reduce opportunities for organised crime without undermining legitimate business operations.

6. IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURE OF THE STRATEGY

The Ministry of the Interior, specifically its Security Policy Department, is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Strategy's global objective, in coordination with all participating entities. Responsibility for implementing individual strategic and specific objectives lies with the respective state institutions to which those objectives are assigned. The Ministry of the Interior will also oversee preparation of the Action Plans and evaluating both the Action Plans and the overall Strategy upon its completion. Each Action Plan will clearly designate the lead and co-lead entities for every measure.

The Action Plans will always be evaluated on the fulfilment of the indicators of the individual measures and the measures themselves will be evaluated on a scale of

¹⁶ High level group on access to data

https://home-affairs.ec.europa.eu/networks/high-level-group-hlg-access-data-effective-law-enforcement_en

fulfilled - partially fulfilled - not fulfilled

with appropriate clarifying commentary. If the measure is not fully implemented, its inclusion in the following Action Plan or another solution to the situation will be considered. After the expiry of the Action Plan, the evaluation will be prepared by the Security Policy Department of the Ministry of the Interior based on the submitted documents and presented to the Government by 30 June of the following year, together with the follow-up Action Plan. The evaluation of the final Action Plan will be submitted to the Government by 30 June 2031.

Although Action Plans exist, individual state authorities may also implement measures against organised crime that are not included in the current plan. Such initiatives are in fact encouraged, as certain actions may need to be taken without delay, regardless of when a new Action Plan is adopted. At the same time, some thematic areas of the Strategy may not be addressed by specific measures in every year, as their implementation involves ongoing or phased activities. These areas are now referred to as intermediate objectives. Individual measures within the Action Plans may contribute to the achievement of multiple specific objectives, and conversely, multiple measures may support the achievement of a single objective. In some cases, measures may be linked only to strategic objectives if no corresponding specific objective exists. This approach provides the necessary flexibility in implementation, which is crucial for the effective fight against organised crime.

The Strategy will be evaluated upon its expiry, focusing on the extent to which its strategic and specific objectives have been achieved, and assessing whether the measures outlined in the Action Plans effectively addressed the identified issues. Following the end of the Strategy's validity, it may not be necessary to develop an entirely new strategic document; if the current model proves effective, the existing Strategy can simply be updated.

7. FINANCING OF THE STRATEGY

Currently, no dedicated funding is allocated for the implementation of individual measures arising from the Strategy and its Action Plans. For each measure, the Action Plans will specify the intended source of financing. In general, the aim is to secure funding, where possible, from extra-budgetary sources such as EU, Norwegian, or Swiss funds. In this context, the Strategy serves as a clear framework for national priorities in the fight against organised crime, providing a foundation on which externally funded projects can be built.

Another financing option is the regular budget of the implementing entities, especially since many measures involve minimal costs beyond the personnel involved. If a measure requires funding beyond the entity's existing budget, the necessary resources will be requested through the standard budget preparation process for the coming years, or potentially through the release of funds from budgetary reserves.

8. RISKS TO THE FULFILMENT OF THE STRATEGY'S OBJECTIVES

The individual risks are assessed in terms of the severity of their impact - "D" (1 - very low, 2 - low, 3 - moderate, 4 - significant, 5 - very significant) and the probability of occurrence - "P" (1 - rare, 2 - unlikely, 3 - moderate, 4 - likely, 5 - almost certain). Their significance - "V" - is given by the product of these values (1-8 common risk, 9-16 severe risk, 17-25 critical risk).

	Risk	D	P	V	Description of risk	Method of risk elimination
1	Disagreement among stakeholders on how to achieve the objective	4	4	16	There is not always consensus among the different stakeholders on how to achieve each objective. These disagreements may result in a lack of support and therefore in the non-implementation or only partial implementation of individual measures.	Consistent communication between the various actors, seeking compromise and alternative solutions in the pursuit of defined objectives. Choosing less conflicting measures for implementation.
2	Lack of financial resources	3	4	12	In the absence of funding, the achievement of objectives that require financial costs may be jeopardised.	Prioritization of measures according to financial efficiency, advocacy and securing funds for implementation of measures, search for operational savings, distribution of measures over time.
3	Lack of staff capacity and failure to meet the implementation schedule	3	4	12	If too many measures are set for some stakeholders to manage on top of their normal agenda, individual tasks may be delayed or even not completed.	Rationalisation of individual measures in terms of their complexity of implementation, distribution of workload among individual stakeholders and their personnel,

	Risk	D	P	V	Description of risk	Method of risk elimination
						prioritisation of measures and their distribution in time, advocacy for staff reinforcement of measures according to priorities.
4	Negligent approach by individual measure coordinators	4	2	8	If the responsible authority does not fully identify with the need to implement the measure, this may result in poor implementation or a failure to implement the measure at all.	Appropriate choice of responsible authorities, consistent monitoring and evaluation of measures, sufficient explanation of measures.
5	Non-acceptance of legislative solutions by the political representation	4	3	12	Some of the objectives will require changes in legislation that are dependent on approval by the political representation. This representation may not agree with the proposed changes for various reasons.	Consistent justification of changes and communication with political representation. In the extreme case, implementing only a part of the measures that do not require legislative change, or postponing the implementation of changes.

ANNEX 1 - CURRENT STATE OF ORGANISED CRIME IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

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Disclaimer: The following text is based on machine translation from the Czech original with only limited manual corrections applied.

1. INTRODUCTION

This material is part of the Strategy for the fight against organised crime until 2030. Its main purpose is to provide up-to-date information (as of April 2025) on the state of organised crime activities in the Czech Republic. The document is linked to similar texts prepared at the level of the European Union (e.g. EU SOCTA 2021 and 2025)¹⁷, its main difference from these texts lies in the limitation of its scope to activities carried out on the territory of the Czech Republic. This relatively narrow scope allows for a detailed analysis of the issues at stake. In the preparation of the text, the findings of similar materials prepared by the Security Policy Department of the Ministry of the Interior over a long period of time were taken into account, in particular the material Evaluation of the situation in the field of organised crime in the Czech Republic for the period 2016-2023.

The material has been prepared on the basis of data provided by the Police of the Czech Republic (the National Centre against Organised Crime, the National Centre against Terrorism, Extremism and Cybercrime, the National Drug Control Centre, the Office of the Criminal Police and Investigation Service of the Police Presidium of the Czech Republic, individual regional directorates and the Directorate for International Police Cooperation), the Ministry of Finance, General Directorate of Customs, General Financial Directorate, Financial Analytical Office, Supreme State Prosecutor's Office, Ministry of Justice, Institute for Criminology and Social Prevention, General Inspectorate of Security Forces, National Office for Cyber and Information Security, Ministry of Environment, Czech Environmental Inspectorate and Security Information Service.

In preparing the text, the findings of the Reports on the situation in the area of internal security and public order in the Czech Republic in recent years and the annual and other materials of other entities (e.g. the Police of the Czech Republic, the Supreme State Prosecutor's Office, the Customs Administration of the Czech Republic, the Financial Analytical Office and others) were also taken into account.

The entire text is divided into chapters corresponding to the main areas related to the activities of organised crime in the Czech Republic and the fight against it. The structure of the chapters differs slightly from the previous similar material and thus reflects the development of the activities of organised crime groups.

2. CHARACTERISTICS OF ORGANISED CRIMINAL GROUPS IN THE TERRITORY OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

In general, organised criminal groups in the Czech Republic, regardless of their ethnicity, can currently be characterised as **polycriminal**¹⁸ in relation to their areas of interest, adaptable to external conditions and trends, and using cash transactions (beyond the reach of the supervisory authorities).

There are two main types of organised criminal groups operating in the Czech Republic. These **are predominantly domestic groups and ethnically based groups**, i.e. composed mainly of foreigners. At the same time, if it is advantageous for an organised group, it involves an

¹⁷ <https://www.europol.europa.eu/publication-events/main-reports/changing-dna-of-serious-and-organised-crime#downloads>.

¹⁸ Polycriminal means the focus of criminal groups is on several different areas of criminal activity

international element (a legal entity based abroad or legal entities' executives residing abroad) in an otherwise purely domestic organisation, especially to make investigations more difficult and complicated. On the other hand, ethnically based groups of persons of predominantly one nationality may also find it difficult to operate entirely without links to citizens of the Czech Republic. Specific chapters are devoted to the involvement of legal persons in the activities of criminal groups and also to criminal groups operating in cyberspace.

According to IKSP research data, based on expert surveys of law enforcement representatives, despite minor fluctuations, the ratio of the international to the domestic element has been essentially balanced in the field of organised crime over the long term. Between 2018 and 2022, the representation of Czechs in organised groups was reported to be between 50% and 55%, with a slightly increasing trend in recent years. The next survey will be conducted in 2025.

Table 1 - Share of foreigners and Czechs in organised crime groups in 2018-2022 according to the IKSP expert survey

Year	Total foreigners (groups composed exclusively or predominantly of foreigners)	Total Czechs (groups composed exclusively or predominantly of Czechs)	Proportion of groups consisting of foreigners only	Proportion of mixed groups with a majority of foreigners	Percentage of mixed groups with a majority of Czechs	Proportion of groups consisting of Czech Republic only
2018	50 %	50 %	27 %	23 %	21 %	29 %
2019	49 %	51 %	29 %	20 %	21 %	30 %
2020	45 %	55 %	22 %	23 %	23 %	32 %
2021	45 %	55 %	20 %	25 %	26 %	29 %
2022	44 %	56 %	23 %	21 %	22 %	34 %

Source: 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023 IKSP Expert Survey

Between 2019 and 2022, in the opinion of the experts surveyed by the IKSP, Vietnamese, Ukrainians, Russians and Albanians/Kosovo Albanians were the most strongly represented among the foreigners cited in connection with the commission of organised crime, with the ranking stabilising and increasing in the prevalence of Vietnamese, Ukrainians and, from 2020, Russians. The second group consisted, with a visible gap, of nationals of mostly Balkan countries, Slovaks and Poles. The representation of nationalities according to the results of the 2020 to 2022 expert examinations can be compared in the following table. The next survey will be carried out in 2025.

Table 2 - Nationalities most represented in organised crime in the territory of the Czech Republic in 2020, 2021 and 2022 according to the expert survey IKSP

2020			2021			2022		
Ranking	Nationality	Index ¹⁹	Ranking	Nationality	Index	Ranking	Nationality	Index
1.	Vietnamese	165	1.	Vietnamese	272	1.	Ukrainians	324
2.	Ukrainians	162	2.	Ukrainians	258	2.	Vietnamese	257
3.	Russians	122	3.	Russians	245	3.	Russians	244
4.	Albanians	88	4.	Albanians	131	4.	Albanians	203
5.	Serbs	43	5.	Serbs	78	5.	Serbs	95
6.	Slovaks	39	6.	Poles	72	6.	Slovaks	89
7.	Bulgarians	35	7.	Chinese	69	7.	Turks	54
8.	Poles	29	8.-9.	Romanians	56	8.	Poles	49
9.	Romanians	25	8.-9.	Bulgarians	56	9.	Romanians	47
10.	Nigerians	24	10.	Slovaks	53	10.	Bulgarians	40

Source: expert investigation IKSP 2020, 2021, 2022

In the results of the expertise for 2022, we can note a shift of Ukrainians to the first place, a rise in the representation of Turks, and a slight decrease in the position of the Chinese, as shown by the above indices. None of the Western European countries appear in the top ten. It can be concluded that, according to the experts' opinion, the representation of foreigners in organised crime in the territory of the Czech Republic has been steadily dominated by citizens of four countries, as evidenced by a more pronounced concentration of experts' opinions on these countries (see index values).

In connection with the activities of organised crime groups, various actors have repeatedly warned of the risk of their infiltration into the ranks of the security forces. However, according to the available information, this phenomenon does not occur to a greater extent in the Czech Republic. According to the statement of the General Inspectorate of Security Forces, only 8 crimes related to organised crime were investigated or prosecuted in 2016-2021. In 2022 and 2023, there were three crimes.

Domestic organised groups

¹⁹ The order of representation of foreigners is determined by indexation, based on experts' opinions and their ranking of a particular nationality higher or lower in the ranking. Experts could list a maximum of ten nationalities in order from the most numerous representation. The index was determined by multiplying the number of respondents who indicated the respective nationality (citizenship) in the 1st place by 10 times, in the 2nd place by 9 times, etc. up to the 10th place by 1. The total index is then the sum of these multiplications. (For example, one point in the index means that only one of all experts listed the nationality in 10th place.)

Significant domestic organised criminal groups have long been worked on by law enforcement agencies, particularly in the area of organised violent crime (murder, kidnapping, robbery, extortion). In recent years, however, the nature of criminal activities of Czech criminal organisations has begun to change visibly, and **a clear trend towards a decrease in the level of direct violence used** has been noted in the environment of these criminal structures. Organised violent crime, the nature of which has always been very latent, has not completely disappeared, but is currently at a significantly lower level than before. In connection with the decline in the importance of organised violent crime, there has been a significant change in classic domestic organised crime, which, by moving away from overt violence, is losing its most distinctive characteristic.

Across Europe, one of the active sources of violent crime remains the internationally active "motorcycle gangs", whose criminal activities were primarily focused on the illegal trade in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, illegal arms trafficking and activities related to the laundering of the criminal profits generated by such activities. Motorcycle gangs (in particular the Hell's Angels MC group) have long-standing branches in the Czech Republic with Czech members, who, however, according to available evidence, have long been committing criminal activities (including violent ones) mainly abroad. In this context, the activities of the internationally active motorcycle club Night Wolves, which has its base in the Russian Federation, also appear to be a security threat.

After 2018, there has also been a trend of a very gradual increase in the importance of online extortion carried out by easily detectable perpetrators or groups of perpetrators who hide their identity in a very professional way in the online environment.

Domestic highly organised criminal structures, although clearly moving away from violence, have not reduced their criminal activity and have focused even more on other areas of crime, particularly tax, financial and economic crime. Domestic criminal organisations, particularly groups of organisers and their enablers, have also long focused their attention on infiltrating state and local governments with the intention of committing crimes in the areas of public procurement and subsidies.

As a result of the shift away from violent crime, it is currently impossible to identify any typically structurally or otherwise describable and hierarchically organised criminal organisation. Domestic criminal organisations are often established on an ad hoc basis to commit specific criminal activities that result from information that has come to the attention of the organiser and the controlling link in one person. Rather than a circumscribed criminal organisation, domestic criminal structures thus form a loose relational network in which business entities (e.g. competitors for public contracts) and the main organisers and their associates move. In doing so, they use their knowledge of the criminal environment and their corruption skills.

However, the use of violence, especially the threat of violence, has not been completely abandoned by these criminal structures, which distinguishes them from traditional perpetrators of tax, financial or economic crime, where the possible use of violence merely compensates for the absence of the more sophisticated part of the know-how necessary for the successful perpetration of tax, economic or financial crime. A typical example of this type of criminal activity is the use of various forms of extortion in the form of creating fictitious obligations (promissory notes, arbitration awards) in the business environment and their unjustified enforcement by legal means (sometimes with the help of a corrupt state authority),

which, however, lead to the actual liquidation of the damaged company if it does not take advantage of the offer of the "creditor" to buy the obligation or the company holding it. Violence is threatened, especially if the victim of this type of extortion finds a way to effectively defend himself through legal means.

Information obtained by the elaboration of domestic (highly organised) criminal structures, especially in the years 2021 to 2023, confirmed that **one of their key interests is to gain long-term control over public financial flows and the distribution of public funds, e.g. within various subsidy programmes, the awarding and execution of public contracts.** Domestic criminal networks have been identified that are able to influence the development, course and outcome of public procurement in favour of predetermined business entities on the basis of their long-established political-business relationships and clientelist links to the public sector. The most important criminal structures of this type usually operate in several regions of the Czech Republic and their political-clientelist links are spread across the political spectrum to minimise risks. Some of these links have also been widely publicised in recent years.

Domestic organised groups, which in the past had established themselves significantly in the field of economic crime, were able to respond to the success and potential of law enforcement authorities in the detection of tax fraud in the area of indirect taxes (excise duty, VAT). These groups have focused their activities on other areas of interest, such as waste management, the provision of financial and investment advice or development projects using incentives and subsidies.

Ethnically based organised groups

These groups are described below according to the predominant ethnicity of the perpetrators. The main ethnic-based groups are **Asian** (predominantly Vietnamese and Chinese), **Eastern European** (Russian-speaking, post-Soviet) and **Balkan organised groups**. If a specific crime mentioned in Chapter 5 is predominantly committed by a particular ethnically based group, this fact is also mentioned in the relevant chapter. In the case of foreign criminal structures operating in the Czech Republic, the impact of the change in the external security environment is visible, which is manifested in particular in the connection between criminal organisations and the activities of foreign state actors.

These may not only be typical hybrid (e.g. influence) operations, but also the related use of criminals by state actors for violent actions and intimidation targeting foreign diasporas living and doing business in the Czech Republic. It may also involve the use of criminal organisations, e.g. for industrial espionage or financial crime actions, e.g. in the area of tax and customs, laundering proceeds of crime or violation of international sanctions. The close link between hybrid threats and organised crime in the EU is also referred to in a number of places in similar texts developed at EU level (e.g. EU SOCTA 2025).

Organised criminal networks are increasingly intertwined with hybrid threats originating from abroad and encompassing a wide range of criminal activities and other related illegal activities, which are often carried out through persons from the criminal environment operating in the Czech Republic. While the main motivation of criminal structures in this case is also to make profits from illegal activities, the specific effects of their hybrid activities also serve - directly or indirectly - the geopolitical interests of foreign actors who organise or support hybrid attacks with the aim of illegitimately (often illegally) influencing events in the Czech Republic in favour

of fulfilling their own geopolitical interests. Thus, the main goal of hybrid attacks is an attempt by a foreign state actor to use criminals to interfere and destabilize society in an effort to weaken its adversary in every way without provoking a direct military conflict. Hybrid threat actors and criminals thus work together for mutual benefit, leveraging each other's resources, expertise, and protection to achieve their goals.

Asian organised groups

The Asian, and in the case of the Czech Republic mainly Vietnamese and Chinese, environment of highly organised criminal structures has not shown a more established criminal hierarchy for a long time, it seems to be more of a "two-tier" environment, in which groups assert themselves at the forefront according to their current power. **There is a gradual generational change and the leadership of individual structures is taken over by representatives of the generation born in the Czech Republic.** These are Czech nationals of Asian origin, fully integrated and oriented in the environment of the majority Czech society. Some prominent representatives of the older generation represent a form of community authorities, despite a certain influence, they do not seek to manage the criminal environment from which they originated; on the contrary, they present themselves as successful entrepreneurs and investors who are building their legal social status.

The activity of Vietnamese organised groups in the field of drug crime has been stagnant since about 2019 and their influence has been gradually declining. A number of groups remain active in the illegal production and trafficking of marijuana and methamphetamine, and their influence remains particularly evident in the Czech-German border region, Prague and the Central Bohemian Region. The ongoing assessment of current trends also shows a shift of these groups to neighbouring countries, mainly Poland and Germany, but also to the Netherlands and Belgium. The main reasons for this are better availability of chemicals and drug precursors in Poland, increased demand for methamphetamine and marijuana in neighbouring countries and lower penalties for illicit drug production and distribution than in the Czech Republic.

The traditional domain of Vietnamese criminal groups remains the **organisation of tax evasion and customs fraud**, which is associated with the Criminal Investigation Service (CaaS) - DICH VU HAI QUAN (Customs Clearance Service). Its essence is the massive underestimation of the value of imported goods at entry into the EU by up to 90 % by means of falsified purchase invoices, combined with the transfer of the obligation to pay VAT at entry (due to customs underestimation and subsequent circulation at real prices, profitability is very high) to Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) businesses which, although they submit the relevant tax returns, do not pay the tax assessed. This service also sophisticatedly eliminates the various attempts to curb this type of criminal activity through legislation. Corruption has also long been used by perpetrators to penetrate the customs administration (eliminating the physical inspection of undervalued goods) and the financial administration (e.g. delaying the declaration of a trading company as non-contactable). This is how the vast majority of import goods offered by Vietnamese traders in markets and brick-and-mortar shops have long been imported into the Czech Republic.

This system has long been followed by other Vietnamese criminal organisations by operating a system that allows for **hidden payments for imported goods** (due to their undervaluation at entry, only a small portion of the purchase price can be paid by open bank transfer), export of

criminal profits back to Vietnam, legalization of criminal profits (funds are secretly exported and returned as foreign investment), etc. This is the so-called DICH VU CHUYEN TIEN (money sending service), which again is operated in the form of CaaS. It is the Vietnamese equivalent of the Arabic traditional Hawala system. This service, in addition to the long-used couriers that carry significant amounts of cash, is also newly starting to use various online tools (cryptocurrencies, online non-bank payment systems, start-up banks, etc.).

Another area from which some Vietnamese criminal groups have long benefited financially is **the provision of entry visas and subsequent long-term stays for Vietnamese citizens**. This is the so-called DICH VU CU TRU (residence and visa processing service), again provided in the form of CaaS. Between 2017 and 2019, there has been systematic cooperation between Vietnamese criminal organisations and citizens of former Soviet Union countries. As a result, the Czech immigration policies aimed at medium-skilled labour of Vietnamese origin were completely paralysed and the issuance of work visas to Vietnamese applicants had to be completely stopped for a certain period of time. Subsequently, after the elimination of the key criminal structure, other criminal groups focused on criminal assistance in obtaining other residence titles (study, family reunification) or on the use of the quota for so-called highly skilled workers.²⁰

Violent crime perpetrated by this community has been rather low in recent periods, but it is characterized by an extremely high level of latency because it focuses exclusively on its own community, which does not inform the police about possible violent acts.

Thanks to their considerable financial capabilities, Vietnamese organised crime groups operating in the Czech Republic are able to make long-term corrupt infiltrations into state and local government bodies and influence their decision-making to their advantage.

The Asian glitch environment is generally open to cooperation with members of the majority society, from which it expects to secure its actions (imports, taxes, logistics) more efficiently. There remains an active interest in building contacts and links with government officials. On the other hand, it operates more independently in the field of narcotics and psychotropic substances. The possible operation of illegal gambling remains restricted to the community environment.

Vietnamese organised crime groups operating and based in the Czech Republic have traditionally been involved in the **production and distribution of traditional Chinese medicine**, which historically and culturally is a very important trade commodity in both Europe and Asia. The Czech Republic has traditionally been a transit country in terms of international illegal trade in fauna and flora. One of the reasons for this is the favourable location at the crossroads of smuggling routes from Africa and Asia, where the profits of traffickers in these specimens reach the income of drug traffickers. The evidence and clues currently gathered confirm the fact that this is a well-functioning organised group of persons who, thanks to a grouped hierarchy, are able to trade or otherwise dispose of illegally obtained specimens of felines. The main destination of these products tends to be Asia.

There has been a gradual rise in the importance of the Chinese criminal and intelligence community in the Czech Republic, which was, among other things, a consequence of the Czech government's earlier welcoming attitude towards Chinese investors, which was closely linked to the significant influx of people of Chinese origin into the Czech Republic. The Czech Republic

20 This issue has also been addressed in the framework of the Action Plans against Organised Crime.

does not have to be the main interest of Chinese criminal organisations, business corporations or intelligence agencies, but can serve as one of the gateways for Chinese interests, whether state, business or criminal, to the whole EU.

The scope of criminal activities committed by Chinese organised groups is similar to that of Vietnamese organised groups. They mainly focus on importing goods from China, covert exports and transfers of funds abroad, but mostly to mainland China, and corrupt activities in the context of gaining influence. Organised crime perpetrated by groups of Chinese nationality is highly sophisticated and is predominantly committed at international level (across EU countries). Chinese groups cooperate intensively with Vietnamese groups, in particular using the sales network (brick-and-mortar shops, marketplaces including SAPA in Prague) of Vietnamese groups to sell imported goods burdened with tax losses.

The Revenue has also detected organised groups of Turkish nationals targeting similar types of crime. These groups are assimilated into the territory of the Czech Republic in terms of ownership of real estate and business property. They are involved in the importation of goods at a loss of tax, intra-community acquisition fraud and are also involved in risky gold trading, where the origin of the so-called "blood gold" may be legalized.

Balkan organised groups

Balkan criminal organisations established on the territory of the Czech Republic primarily focus on the commission of criminal activities consisting in **smuggling, illegal production and subsequent distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances or their precursors**.

The most significant and long-term stable activities in the Czech Republic are those **of persons of Kosovo-Albanian nationality or ethnicity**. These groups operate primarily in the larger cities of the Czech Republic (especially Prague and Brno) and in northern Bohemia (Teplice, Most, Ústí nad Labem), where they cooperate closely with each other in legal business activities (trading in luxury foreign vehicles, clothing and accessories, gold, currency exchange, gambling, catering), whereby groups operating at the lower levels of criminal organisations often conceal their illegal activities. As a rule, persons higher up in the hierarchy of organised groups are not directly involved in business activities in the Czech Republic; persons close to them - business partners, subordinate managers, wives and girlfriends - are actively involved in business. They are practically not involved in illegal criminal activities themselves, but they decide on them and ensure their financing. **The recent trend is to finance the purchase and sale of drugs** (especially cocaine, partly heroin and drugs containing pseudoephedrine) **by exchanging them for luxury vehicles of foreign brands**, with which they legally cross national borders, thus significantly eliminating the risk of random checks during the transport of large sums of money that could be seized as suspicious by domestic and foreign security forces. Organised groups make maximum use of modern encrypted communication platforms and applications to coordinate with each other.

A very significant criminal activity systematically committed by Balkan criminal structures in the Czech Republic is the **laundering of proceeds from the production and distribution of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances**. In addition to the aforementioned retail trade in specific goods, this is also done through investments in real estate, construction investment projects and gambling. Balkan criminal structures are involved in international banking transfers of funds which serve to conceal the origin of the funds. This activity does not only serve to launder their own criminal profits, but is also provided to other international criminal

groups operating outside the Czech Republic. However, in the case of criminal profits originating abroad, the possibility of elaboration by Czech law enforcement authorities is difficult.

Although organised property crime (e.g. serial burglaries) is systematically and even transnationally committed by these groups, the key organisers are permanently based in one of the Balkan countries and usually send only one-off (in some cases repeatedly) hired perpetrators to the Czech Republic (Austria, Slovakia, etc.) under the supervision of minor members of the criminal organisation. However, they are not directly involved in the commission of the crime and only supervise the group of perpetrators.

Balkan criminal organisations are also active in the Czech Republic in the area of arms trafficking, but according to long-term findings, this activity is more complementary to drug crime, which is associated with competition for territory and the settlement of sometimes very old mutual disputes. Violent crime (extortion, murder) committed with illegally possessed weapons is usually a concomitant of criminal-trade relations in the drug trade. In the Czech Republic, it has not yet been possible to sufficiently confirm the hypothesis that some of the Balkan criminal structures operating here systematically commit crimes for payment (extortion or murder) in the form of CaaS.

Groups established on the territory of the Czech Republic are involved in international criminal structures, so their activities are not exclusively linked to the territory of the Czech Republic. These criminal organisations are usually clan-based and follow clan-tribal rules valid within the Balkan diaspora settled in the EU. The individual structures have a solid and stable core, which is usually formed on the basis of kinship (clan) ties or territorial-ethnic ties. This core is used by other actors in the criminal environment when necessary. Several recognised criminal authorities with significant influence in transnational Balkan criminal structures have long been active in the Czech Republic.

Efforts by these groups to penetrate local governments and public administrations in order to influence their economic decision-making are also monitored on a long-term basis.

Information indicating possible tax crimes, such as trafficking in premium cars or gambling, has also been recorded. However, this crime is rather random and secondary to the process of laundering the proceeds of crime, and its scale does not tend to exceed the level of normal criminal tax optimisation. No information has been obtained during the period of analysis of the Balkan criminal structures to confirm the hypothesis that some of these structures are aimed at systematically committing tax fraud as a primary criminal profit-making activity (e.g. running a carousel fraud).

In terms of drug crime, there has been a relatively **high increase in diasporas from Serbia** among Balkan organised groups, **which have quickly established themselves in indoor cannabis cultivation in the Czech Republic**. Their activities are mainly carried out through many (in the order of dozens) small, stand-alone cultivation facilities located in apartments, which are able to provide a continuous supply of cannabis to distributors and end customers. At the same time, the risk of losses if detected is well distributed and eliminated by this activity. In these very well organised groups, the ethnic, but above all the territoriality of the perpetrators from specific areas of Serbia has been confirmed. In some cases, the involvement of these groups in the trafficking of other drugs, especially cocaine, and in the production of methamphetamine has also been confirmed.

Eastern European organised groups

Within the environment of Russian-language criminal structures, which in the past was known for its intensive use of violence in the commission of crime, a long-term **trend of retreat from the extensive use of organised violent crime** has begun to take hold in recent years. Any violent crime currently committed on a very limited scale now tends to focus more inwards in foreign communities, or in the parts of them directly linked to the commission of crime.

In contrast to Asian or Balkan structures, more elements of criminal hierarchy persist in the Russian-speaking environment, in which established criminal structures, individual major criminal authorities, and the so-called “vory v zakone” play an important role. **Compared to the previous decade, a significant part of the "traditional" criminal authorities has been pushed out of the Czech Republic** (our territory was used as a logistical base in the past), while great emphasis has long been placed on security prevention against the entry and granting of residence permits to such persons not only in the Czech Republic but in the entire Schengen area.

In the area of violent crime, there is a significant risk in connection with the war conflict in Ukraine in the form of a massive influx of members of criminal structures from Ukraine and other states of the former USSR (including the Russian Federation), who have a criminal past and are trying to avoid mobilisation by moving to the EU, or who may be incoming war veterans suffering from the trauma of the ongoing war conflict. Czech intelligence services also publicly warned of this risk in March 2025.

On the other hand, other types of criminal activity (e.g. tax crime, laundering of criminal proceeds, building of so-called clientelist networks with the aim of obtaining income from public budgets, etc.) have long been promoted by Russian-language criminal structures. There is no evidence that they play a major role in drug-related crime. As part of the refugee wave from Ukraine after the beginning of the new phase of the Russian Federation's military aggression against Ukraine in February 2022, many drug addicts arrived in the Czech Republic, and with them drug dealers, but according to the available findings, their activities are focused only on sales within their own community, not competing with other criminal groups.

In the long term, the ability of Russian-language criminal structures to channel criminal profits derived from criminal activities abroad into or through the Czech Republic remains. During most of the period under review, activities aimed at **investing and legalising criminal profits originating in the former Soviet Union** have been repeatedly recorded **on the territory of the Czech Republic**. In these cases, Russian-language criminal structures with their centre of gravity in the Czech Republic primarily provide links to important representatives of the social, business and political spheres in the Czech Republic in order to gain unjustified competitive advantages for the investment of criminal profits.

Due to the need to find and substantiate the source criminal activity, **it is extremely difficult for Czech law enforcement authorities to prove this type of laundering of proceeds of crime and confiscate the funds, despite information about the criminal origin of at least part of these funds**. Assets of this type invested in the Czech Republic have long been entrusted to the management of family members or even friends or authorised representatives of their real owners. According to available evidence, Russian-language criminal structures operating in the country have long been involved in transfer schemes and in the management of invested assets. A major complication in this respect is also the de facto non-cooperation of law enforcement authorities from the Russian Federation.

This long-standing modus operandi has been greatly strengthened with the significant expansion of the sanction's regime targeting Russian citizens after Russia launched military aggression against Ukraine in 2022. A wave of divestments was thus observed, which significantly accelerated the previous slight decline in Russian citizens' holdings in Czech business entities observed in 2020-2021. However, this is only a partial and often only fictitious withdrawal of Russian citizens (including members of criminal organisations) from holdings. Thus, at the beginning of 2025, the Czech Republic still has the highest number of Russian-controlled business entities in the EU, both in relative and absolute terms.

Between 2016 and 2021, there was a **massive increase in the demand from Russian-speaking persons to obtain any form of residence permit or citizenship of any EU Member State through fraudulent practices**, typically by falsifying personal data or mistaken identities of specific living persons. Russian-speaking organised criminal groups provided a criminal assistance service (CaaS) to these applicants by providing them with relevant forged documents, etc. Important customers of this type of service were high-ranking criminal authorities of Russian-language organised crime, who used Ukrainian travel documents issued by criminal organisations in the identities of persons originating from the occupied territories of the eastern part of Ukraine for their travels in the EU.

Russian-speaking, especially Ukrainian, criminal structures have gradually started to focus on **committing crimes related to the employment of foreigners** (especially of Ukrainian nationality) in the Czech Republic due to a significant shortage of labour in the Czech economy. This criminal activity consists in creating conditions for obtaining various public contracts for service activities (typically cleaning services), where corrupt infiltration into Czech state administration bodies, local government and state-run organisations (state enterprises, teaching hospitals, etc.) takes place. Corrupt activities are a means of obtaining long-term contracts secured by chain employment agencies, which then commit the main criminal profit-making activity - i.e. they do not pay VAT or corporate income tax, nor do they pay the mandatory social and health insurance and income tax on behalf of individual employees. Tax crimes linked to the activities of employment agencies, controlled mainly by Ukrainian criminal structures, are committed both in the public and in the purely private sector. In the wake of the Russian aggression against Ukraine, employment agency crime has gained significant importance within Ukrainian criminal structures.

The dramatic expansion of the Ukrainian diaspora in the Czech Republic and the consequent expansion of Ukrainian criminal structures is associated with the risk of accelerating the rate of establishment of Ukrainian criminal groups on our territory.

A separate chapter is the activity of Russian-language organised groups in the area of **violating or circumventing international sanctions**, which is carried out in a highly sophisticated and organised manner. It involves linking criminal structures with business entities seeking to avoid the impact of sanctions, as well as with Russian intelligence services seeking to import military and dual-use embargoed material.

The importance of criminal structures with direct links to Russia has also increased in the area of espionage activities in the Czech Republic, as a direct result of the significant elimination of the Russian diplomatic and espionage headquarters operating for a long time at the Russian Embassy in Prague, as a direct result of the public announcement (in April 2021) of the findings of the investigation into the Russian background of the explosions in the ammunition depots in Vrbětice in 2014. Russian intelligence services are forced to turn to local criminal

organisations made up of individuals with links to Russia, which are thus becoming a new tool for espionage and other domestic intelligence operations. The close interconnection between hybrid attacks by the Russian Federation and the activities of the Russian-language criminal environment is a new and high-risk trend detected in recent years in the Czech Republic and at the level of many other EU states (as highlighted, for example, by the EU SOCTA 2025).

Another significant risk is the long-standing practice of misusing non-biometric travel documents, mainly by Russian-speaking criminal structures and intelligence services of the former USSR states (especially the Russian Federation), where forged or even formally genuine travel documents are used to identify persons using altered or completely fictitious identities in order to make it more difficult to identify them and to enable them to cross the state borders of the Czech Republic and other EU countries and enter the Schengen area undetected. Some so-called diplomatic passports used mainly by members of Russian intelligence services to cover their illegal intelligence activities in EU countries and to move freely within the Schengen area have been repeatedly misused in a similar way.

Organised groups operating in cyberspace

Cyberspace is a very specific environment (virtual territory) in which crime is committed. Where cross-border crime can be physically prevented in certain cases, in the case of cyberspace this "crossing" of borders can be prevented only very rarely or not at all. Therefore, the characteristics of organised criminal groups in cyberspace cannot be applied in most cases only to the territory of the Czech Republic, and therefore proving the structure corresponding to an organised criminal group is also quite difficult. Similarly, it is necessary to look at the national composition of criminal groups, which is often multinational.

Rather than nationality, it is the expertise of the individual members of such a group that is decisive, especially in cases where it is not the ideological stance or worldview of the attackers that is decisive, but financial gain. **Modern means of communication allow anonymised, encrypted and fast communication, which removes the need for geographical proximity of the perpetrators.**

Of course, even in relation to cyberspace, there are certain situations in which the composition of the group is predominantly ethnically homogeneous. These are often cases in which it is the ideological or state orientation of the attackers, whose aim is to work against the interests of the Czech Republic in favour of the interests of another state, that is decisive. This is what the law enforcement agencies have recently encountered in connection with Russian aggression against Ukraine. It is particularly difficult to uncover Chinese or North Korean hacker groups whose cyber-attacks are primarily aimed at obtaining sensitive state or industrial information. Russian-language groups are largely involved in ransomware attacks, but this is also the domain of Chinese hacking groups.

Activities of legal persons in organised crime

Legal entities (business corporations) play a significant role in the field of organised economic and, in particular, tax crime, both as a subject that is part of an organised criminal group and as an instrument of organised criminal groups used to conceal criminal activity and the identity of perpetrators or to launder the proceeds of crime. A significant factor affecting the level of abuse of legal persons for the commission of crime in the Czech Republic **is the availability of**

so-called ready-made companies. In terms of legal form, limited liability companies are the most frequently abused, which is due, among other things, to the ease of their establishment and the relatively low costs involved. More information on the riskiness of legal forms of legal entities is provided in Annex 1 to the Report on the second round of the national risk assessment process on money laundering and terrorist financing.²¹ Organised criminals also use long-established legal entities that carry out normal business activities and therefore do not arouse suspicion among the control authorities. Such companies are then used, for example, for tax crimes.

It should be added that in relation to the overall crime rate, there is a trend towards a **decreasing number of prosecuted legal entities**, because law enforcement authorities in cases of so-called shell companies where the statutory body is often a homeless person, or another person completely unrelated to the legal entity and not fulfilling their obligations towards the Commercial Register, they use so-called **extra-criminal means** against these legal entities, namely the institute regulated in Section 93 of Act No. 90/2012 Coll, on companies and cooperatives, and do not prosecute the legal person due to its dissolution by the court.

In the structure of the offences committed by the accused legal entities, the dominant offences are the offences of evasion of tax, fee and similar compulsory payment (Section 240 of the Criminal Code) and non-payment of tax, social security contributions and similar compulsory payments (Section 241 of the Criminal Code). This phenomenon can also be attributed to the activity of tax administrators and the tools used by them to detect tax crimes, such as the VAT control declaration institute. Furthermore, the crimes of violation of the obligation to make a true declaration of assets (Section 227 of the CC) and misrepresentation of data on the state of economic management and assets (Section 254 of the CC) are also found in relation to non-compliance with obligations towards public authorities, in particular the tax authorities. These unlawful acts are often accompanied by deliberate non-transparency in the form of violation of the legal information obligation of legal entities towards the registration courts. In this respect, it is necessary to call for the consistent application of existing sanction measures, which is in particular the offence under Section 9(2)(a) of Act No. 251/2016 Coll., on certain offences, as well as for the continuous reduction of the number of inactive and potentially risky entities, in particular in accordance with the procedure under Section 105a of Act No. 304/2013 Coll, on public registers of legal and natural persons and on the registration of trust funds, which allows the registry court to dissolve inactive business corporations without liquidation and subsequently delete them from the public register.

Particularly after 2021, an increase in the number of acts of the offence of laundering the proceeds of crime (Section 216 of the Criminal Code) in relation to legal persons can be observed, as organised crime uses legal persons to a greater extent as subjects intended for laundering the proceeds of economic crime.

²¹ <https://fau.gov.cz/files/nra-priloha-c-1.pdf>

3. STATISTICAL DATA ON ORGANISED CRIME

This chapter is divided according to the source of each data for clarity. These data are not directly comparable with each other because they are collected in different ways in different parts of the criminal proceedings.

The data of the Police of the Czech Republic are based on the number of registered (i.e. known to the Police) offences and the number of persons prosecuted. However, they do not track the outcome of the cases in court. Therefore, they may contain information on acts and persons who are not convicted.

The Ministry of Justice data, on the other hand, are based on the number of convicted persons, but no longer contain information on the number of solved crimes. Given that in some cases several dozen persons may be convicted of a single offence, it is difficult to compare data between years and between departments. At the same time, the Ministry of Justice data have a longer delay compared to the reality than the data of the PČR due to the length of the entire criminal proceedings.

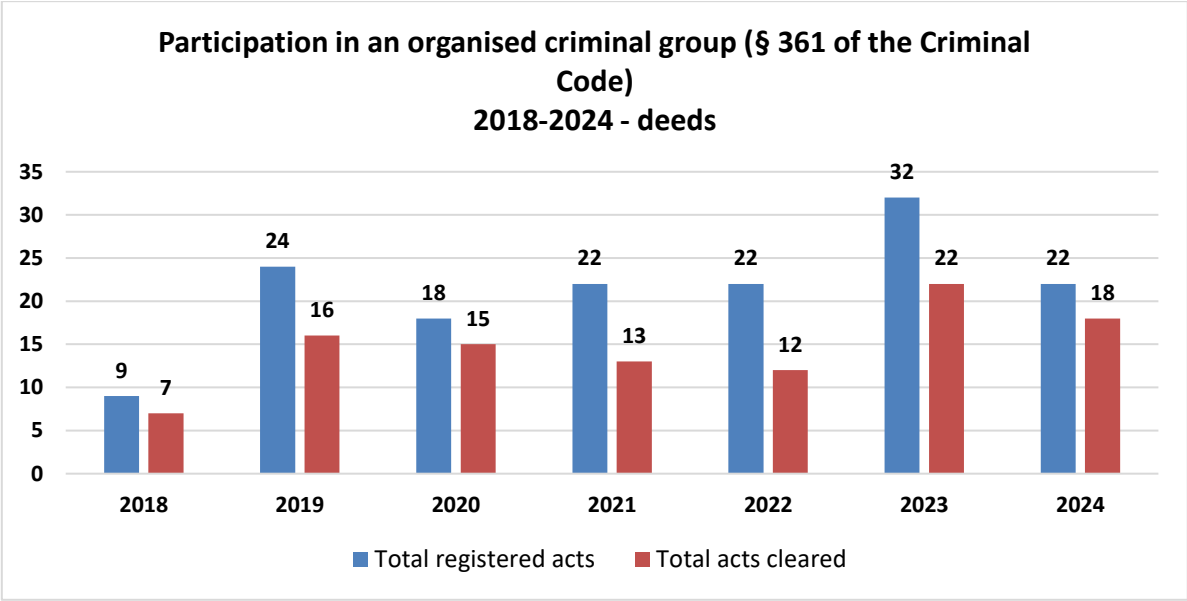
Data of the Police of the Czech Republic

Participation in an organised criminal group (§ 361 of the Criminal Code)

An organised criminal group is defined as a community of at least three criminally responsible persons with an internal organisational structure, division of functions and division of activities, which is aimed at the systematic commission of intentional criminal activity. The establishment of, participation in and support for such a group is punishable under criminal law. The commentary below is based on data for full calendar years, i.e. including 2024. At the same time, it should be noted that participation in an organised criminal group under section 361 of the Criminal Code is quite difficult to prove and a large number of crimes committed by criminal groups are punished under other sections of the Criminal Code.

For the correct interpretation of the data, it should be further noted that Section 361 of the Criminal Code only punishes participation in an organised criminal group, unless it is connected with the commission of another crime (e.g., it punishes the mere establishment of such a group). Thus, the data below do not take into account specific crimes committed by a member of an organised criminal group within the meaning of Section 107(1) of the Criminal Code, from which it would be possible to infer which areas organised criminal groups most often focus on when committing crimes (e.g. Section 107 of the Criminal Code does not define the facts of the offence, but only sets a higher penalty rate for the perpetrators, and therefore is not statistically reported in the data of the Czech Police. It can be noted that in recent years **the number of registered offences** has stabilised at around 20 cases per year (see the following graph).

Chart 1 - Participation in an organised criminal group (Section 361 of the Criminal Code) in 2018-2024 - acts



Source: statistics of the Police of the Czech Republic

The year 2019 was a landmark year, with an increase of +167% in the crime of participation in an organised criminal group compared to the previous year, while the increase in total crime was only +3.5%. In addition to the percentage of the year-on-year increase, the absolute number of acts of the offence in question must of course also be taken into account; however, it can be stated that, starting in 2019, more acts were registered than in previous years, and that the development of the number of registered acts of the offence of participation in an organised criminal group did not follow the development of overall crime in the period in question. In 2020, there was a one-off more significant decrease in the number of registered offences of participation in an organised criminal group, which may have been influenced by the covid-19 pandemic. The record year in that time series was 2023 with 32 registered offences and 22 cleared offences.

The clearance rate for the offence of participation in an organised criminal group is quite variable from year to year, which is significantly influenced by the not very high total number of reported offences (the clearance or non-clarification of a single offence can have a very significant impact on the clearance rate in a given year). The highest clearance rate (83%) was recorded in 2020, while the lowest (55%) was recorded in 2022 (with 22 offences). No trend can be drawn from the clearance rate.

In terms of the territorial distribution of registered offences of participation in an organised criminal group, most offences have been registered in the territory of the capital city of Prague for a long time. Other regions where at least one offence was committed each year in the monitored period are the South Moravian and Moravian-Silesian regions. On the other hand, only one offence was recorded in the Pardubice Region in the reporting period. This fact corresponds to the focus of organised crime groups on the largest cities of the Czech Republic, which logically offer the most opportunities for the commission of organised crime.

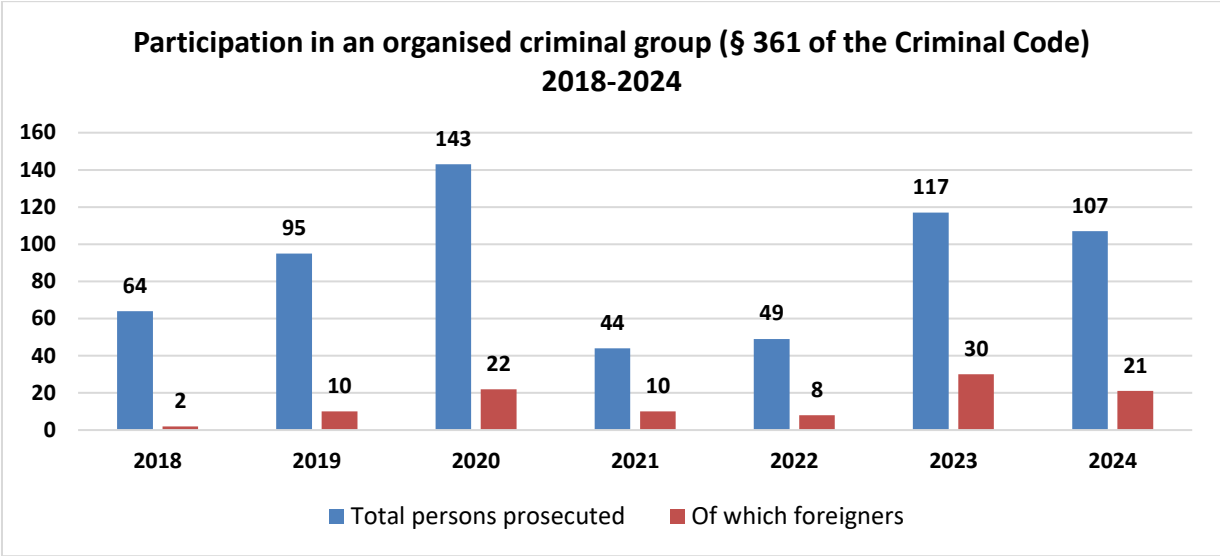
Table 3 - Participation in an organised criminal group (Section 361 of the Criminal Code), registered offences by region 2018-2024

Participation in an organised criminal group (§ 361 of the Criminal Code) registered offences by region 2018-2024								
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
Capital City of Prague	6	10	7	5	10	9	8	55
Central Bohemia Region	0	1	1	0	1	2	0	5
South Bohemia region	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	4
Pilsen Region	0	0	0	2	1	1	0	4
Karlovy Vary Region	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	2
Ústí nad Labem Region	0	0	1	1	1	1	2	6
Liberec Region	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Hradec Králové Region	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2
Pardubice Region	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Vysočina Region	0	4	2	0	0	2	3	11
South Moravian Region	1	5	3	4	6	9	3	31
Zlín Region	0	0	0	1	1	4	1	7
Olomouc Region	1	0	0	0	0	2	0	3
Moravian-Silesian Region	1	1	4	5	1	1	3	16

Source: statistics of the Police of the Czech Republic

The number of persons prosecuted for cleared offences varies significantly between years depending on the scope of the individual cases (see chart below). The highest number of persons prosecuted in 2020 was 143 (including 22 foreigners) in relation to 15 clarified acts, and the lowest number in 2021 was 44 (including 10 foreigners) in relation to 13 acts. Legal persons were also among those prosecuted each year, most in 2023 (13 legal persons). However, the number of legal persons prosecuted is usually in the order of units, which corresponds to the trend of not prosecuting empty boxes mentioned above.

Chart 2 - Participation in an organised criminal group (Section 361 of the Criminal Code) in 2018-2024 - prosecuted persons



Source: statistics of the Police of the Czech Republic

As regards the **nationality of the persons prosecuted** (see table below), the vast majority of them were Czech citizens in the period under review. Slovak citizens were also prosecuted every year during the period under review (in the order of units of persons). Otherwise, the representation of foreigners is variable and the overall numbers are always insignificant. However, it is not without interest that in the vast majority of cases these are nationals of countries to the east of the so-called Iron Curtain or citizens of Asian countries. This confirms the theory that the Czech Republic is not an interesting territory for criminal groups composed of citizens of Western European countries. At the same time, the prevalence of prosecuted Czech citizens is really overwhelming (they make up 82 per cent of all prosecuted persons). Therefore, it may be hypothesized that it is difficult for the CID to prosecute persons of foreign nationality under Section 361 of the Criminal Code, although their involvement in criminal activities is quite clear in the above-mentioned chapters. The reason for this may be the difficulty of the law enforcements agencies to penetrate foreign criminal groups or their greater insularity. At the same time, it is not possible to confirm this theory on the basis of the available data.

Table 4 - Participation in an organised criminal group (Section 361 of the Criminal Code), prosecuted persons by nationality 2018-2024

Participation in an organised criminal group (§ 361 of the Criminal Code) Prosecuted persons by nationality 2018-2024								
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Total
Republic of Azerbaijan	0	0	0	0	0	4	0	4
Republic of Belarus	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	2
Republic of Bulgaria	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Czech Republic	59	80	119	29	36	74	77	474
People's Republic of China	0	0	0	0	0	3	6	9
Republic of Lithuania	0	0	0	0	2	0	1	3
Republic of Latvia	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Republic of Moldova	0	0	0	2	0	1	0	3
Republic of Poland	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	3
Republic of Northern Macedonia	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Romania	0	1	0	0	2	0	2	5
Russian Federation	0	0	6	0	2	0	0	8
Slovak Republic	1	1	5	7	1	3	1	19
Federal Republic of Germany	0	1	0	0	0	1	0	2
Republic of Turkey	0	0	0	0	0	6	4	10
Ukraine	0	4	3	0	1	10	1	19
Socialist Republic of Vietnam	0	1	6	0	0	0	6	13
Czech Republic - legal person	3	5	2	5	5	13	9	42

Source: statistics of the Police of the Czech Republic

Offences committed in an organised group

An organised group is defined by case law as an association of at least three persons in which a certain division of tasks is made among the individual members (not necessarily with a leader who would divide the tasks among the other perpetrators), and whose activities are consequently characterised by a certain degree of planning and coordination, which facilitates the commission of the offence, increases the likelihood of achieving the objective pursued, and thus increases the harmfulness of the offence to society. Such a group need not be of a more permanent nature.

Precise statistical data relating to this form of criminal activity is not available to the Czech Police. In fact, the system of crime statistics of the CRP is based on a reporting principle that is resistant to amendments to the Criminal Code, which guarantees comparability of data from one year to the next. Fixing the reported data to the paragraph structure of the Criminal Code, taking into account the individual circumstances that condition the application of a higher criminal rate, which is also the case for the commission of a crime by a member of an organised group, is unreliable in the long term (the more strictly assessed facts may have different

content in different periods as a result of amendments, as well as they may be added or deleted). The indicative numerical data that can be obtained would not provide a sufficiently accurate picture of reality.

In 2023 and 2024, the following frequencies of offending in an organised group were recorded by offence (in order of most to least frequent):

- illicit production and other disposal of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and poisons (Section 283 of the Criminal Code) - indicatively, there are less than a hundred registered offences per year,
- theft and fraud (§§ 205 and 209 of the Criminal Code) - high dozens of acts for each of these offences,
- organising and facilitating illegal crossing of the state border (§ 340 of the Criminal Code) - dozens of offences per year,
- laundering the proceeds of crime (§ 216 of the Criminal Code) - less than a dozen offences per year,
- obtaining an advantage in the award of public contracts, public tenders and public auctions (Section 256 of the Criminal Code) - less than a dozen offences per year,
- other crimes - in units of no statistical significance.

Regardless of the number of registered offences, the most important area in terms of frequency is drug crime. Unlike property crime, it is characterised by a significant degree of latency, so its actual rate is higher than the number of offences registered by the Police Department suggests.

Ministry of Justice data

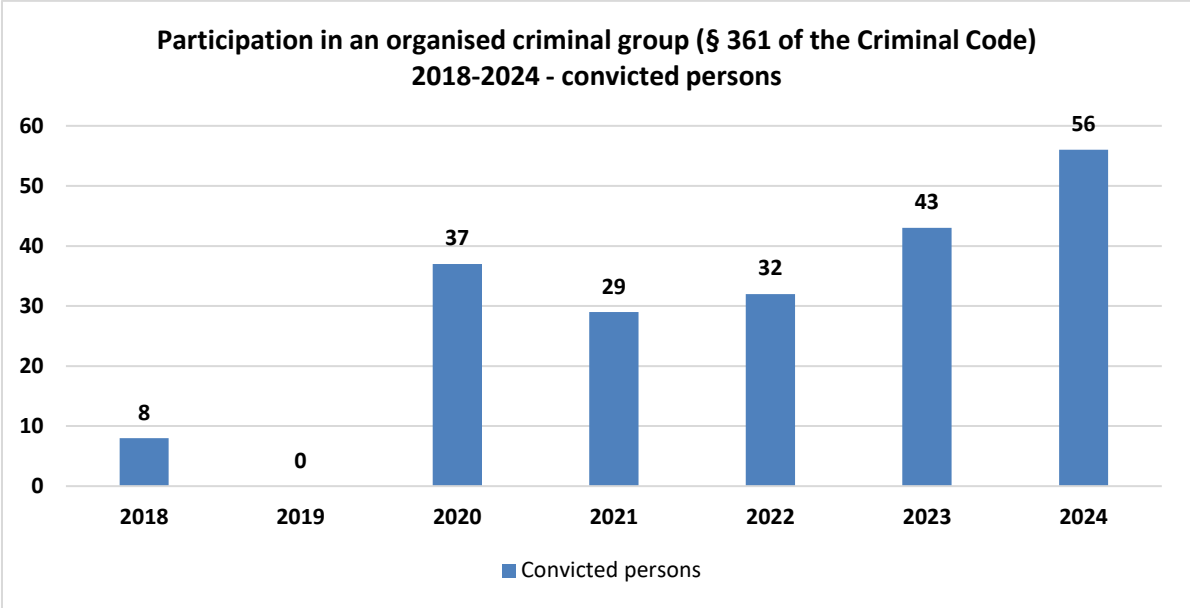
Data on convicted persons

The chart below shows the number of persons convicted of the offence of participation in an organised criminal group (Section 361 of the Criminal Code) in each of the years 2018 to 2024. This figure is to some extent more telling than the data on prosecuted persons from the Police of the Czech Republic, as it shows the number of persons who were actually convicted of this offence. It therefore does not include persons who were prosecuted but were acquitted by the court or had their prosecution terminated by the prosecutor. However, it should also be added that this data may be significantly delayed compared to the time of the crime.²²

As can be seen from the graph, **the number of convictions rose sharply in 2020 and then remained at a similar level with a new peak in 2024**. The reasons for this rise may be due to the higher number of prosecutions in previous years or the coincidence of the completion of more court proceedings in 2020. This trend corresponds with the higher number of persons prosecuted from the Police data in 2019 and 2020 and may indicate higher prosecution efficiency for this offence, but also a higher incidence overall, or a higher success rate in detecting it. However, it is not possible to draw far-reaching conclusions on this matter from the available data.

²² For example, the crime was committed in 2018, the case was detected by the Police and an investigation was launched in 2019, but the person could not be convicted until 2020 or 2021.

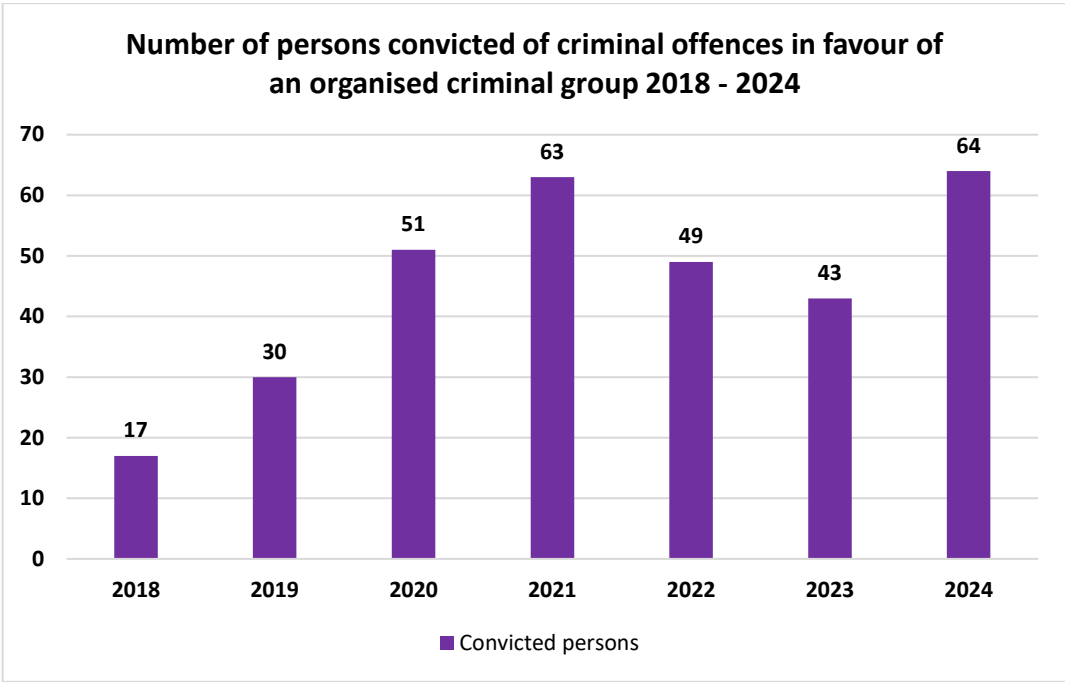
Chart 3 - Participation in an organised criminal group (Section 361 of the Criminal Code) 2018-2024 - convicted persons



Source: Ministry of Justice statistics

Another relevant indicator is the number of persons convicted where the offence was committed for the benefit of an organised criminal group (Sections 107 and 129 of the Criminal Code). This indicator is monitored and reported in the Ministry of Justice data, as compared to the data of the PČR, because the structure of the Ministry of Justice data corresponds to the Criminal Code. The number of convictions for this indicator is on average several dozen higher than the number of convictions for § 361 of the Criminal Code. Again, there is a large increase in the number of convictions in 2020 and this trend again persists until 2024. As in the previous case, there is insufficient data to explain this trend.

Chart 4 - Number of persons convicted of criminal offences in favour of an organised criminal group



Source: Ministry of Justice statistics

The Ministry of Justice also has information on individual offences committed for the benefit of an organised criminal group and the number of persons convicted for them (see table below). It should be noted that the sum of persons convicted for individual sections of the Criminal Code is higher than the total number of persons convicted. This is due to the fact that one person can be convicted of several offences (sections of the Penal Code).

The table shows that the most frequent offences committed for the benefit of an organised criminal group are drug offences (illicit production and other trafficking in narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and poisons), for which 71 persons were convicted between 2016 and 2024. This is followed by economic crime (evasion of tax, fee and similar compulsory payment). The third most common offence committed for the benefit of an organised criminal group was pimping and organising and facilitating the illegal crossing of the state border. For 15 offences, 10 or more convictions were recorded.

It can be stated that the statistics of convicted persons to some extent correspond to the main activities identified in the activities of organised criminal groups across this material. At the same time, however, some of these types of crime are not significantly represented in the statistics on convicted persons (e.g. crimes against the environment and cybercrime). It is possible that a large number of cases of these types of crime have not been detected and documented in recent years, or that criminal proceedings in these cases have not yet been completed. It is also possible that these types of crime have not been proven in court to be organised, or that, according to statistical data, these crimes have not been significantly organised in the Czech Republic in recent years.

Table 5 - Number of persons convicted of criminal offences in favour of an organised criminal group by offence in 2016-2024

Section CC	Criminal offence	Number of convicted persons	Share of total in %
283	Illicit production and other disposal of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and poisons	71	12,9
240	Evasion of tax, levy and similar compulsory payments	62	11,3
189	Merchandising	39	7,1
340	Organising and facilitating the illegal crossing of the state border	39	7,1
209	Fraud	36	6,6
205	Theft	29	5,3
234	Unauthorised measure, forgery and alteration of a means of payment	22	4,0
256	Gaining an advantage in public procurement, tendering and auctioning	21	3,8
348	Forgery and alteration of a public document	20	3,6
210	Insurance fraud	17	3,1
403	Establishment, support and promotion of a movement aimed at the suppression of human rights and freedoms	13	2,4
173	Robbery	13	2,4
341	Aiding and abetting an unauthorised stay in the territory of the Republic	11	2,0
329	Abuse of official authority	10	1,8
216	Legalization of proceeds of crime	10	1,8
Other crime	-	126	24,8

Source: statistics from the Ministry of Justice

4. ACTIVITIES OF ORGANISED CRIMINAL GROUPS

This chapter deals with the main types of crime committed by organised groups. It is by no means an exhaustive list of the activities of criminal groups; at the same time, some activities are deliberately treated very briefly, as there is already relevant information on them in other materials, which are also referred to in appropriate places (in particular human trafficking, drug crime).

Activities according to the IKSP expert survey

As part of the expert surveys organised by the IKSP, members of the law enforcement agencies answer annually which activities of organised crime groups they consider to be the most widespread. A comparison of the most widespread activities in 2021 and 2022 according to the opinion of the experts surveyed is presented in the following table (the column after the name of the activity shows the number of experts who identified it as developed, the next column shows their share of the total number of experts who responded in that year. Forty-three experts commented on development in 2021 and 48 experts interviewed in 2022. The next survey will be conducted in 2025.

Table 6 - Developed forms of organised crime activity in 2021 and 2022

2021				2022			
	Activities	N=43	%		Activities	N=48	%
1.	Setting up fraudulent and fictitious companies	37	86 %	1.	Corruption	41	85 %
2.	Money laundering	36	84 %	2.	Money laundering	40	83 %
3.-4.	Production, trafficking and distribution of drugs	34	79 %	3.-5.	Setting up fraudulent and fictitious companies	39	81 %
3.-4.	Corruption	34	79 %	3.-5.	Tax, credit, insurance, promissory note fraud	39	81 %
5.	Tax, credit, insurance, promissory note fraud	33	77 %	3.-5.	Influencing public procurement	39	81 %
6.-7.	Crime using information and communication technologies	32	74 %	6.-7.	Fraud linked to the abuse of subsidies	38	80 %
6.-7.	Fraud linked to the abuse of subsidies	32	74 %	6.-7.	Misuse of EU funds	38	80 %
8.	Misuse of EU funds	30	70 %	8.	Legalization of proceeds of crime committed outside the Czech Republic	37	77 %
9.	Organising illegal migration	28	65 %	9.	Crime using information and communication technologies	35	73 %
10.	Fraud related to illegal employment	27	63 %	10.	Bank fraud	33	69 %
11.-12.	Bank fraud	25	58 %	11.	Production, trafficking and distribution of drugs	32	67 %
11.-12.	Forgery of documents	25	58 %	12.	Organising illegal migration	31	65 %

2021				2022			
13.	Illegal production and smuggling of alcohol or cigarettes	23	53 %	13.	Infringements of competition rules	28	58 %
14.	Organising prostitution and trafficking in women	21	50 %	14.	Fraud related to illegal employment	28	58 %
15.-18.	Trading in goods infringing trademark rights	20	47 %	15.	Payment card fraud	26	54 %
15.-18.	Trafficking in stolen goods	20	47 %	16.-17.	Organising prostitution and trafficking in women	25	52 %
15.-18.	Illegal trade in medicines and pharmaceuticals	20	47 %	16.-17.	Forgery of documents	25	52 %
15.-18.	Customs fraud	20	47 %	18.-19.	Gambling	23	48 %
19.	Car thefts	18	42 %	18.-19.	Customs fraud	23	48 %
20.-22.	Illegal import and export of hazardous waste	17	40 %	20.	Illegal production and smuggling of alcohol or cigarettes	22	46 %
20.-22.	Payment card fraud	17	40 %	21.-22.	Illegal trade in medicines and pharmaceuticals	21	44 %
20.-22.	Forgery of cheques, money and coins	17	40 %	21.-22.	Car thefts	21	44 %

Source: expert investigation IKSP 2022, 2023

A noticeable change is the decline in drug production, trafficking and distribution - from third to eleventh place. Corruption has risen to first place, although it is more of a tool or method of criminal organisations to achieve their own profit goals (which can also be said of crime committed using information and communication technologies, which in 2022 is ranked ninth). Nevertheless, this illustrates both the traditionally significant role of corruption in the spectrum of organised crime activities and the ongoing shift towards modernising the way in which crime is committed.

From the second to the eighth place is economic or financial crime; in the tenth place we find bank fraud. **It can be said that, according to experts, the activities of economic and financial crime are already clearly predominant in the spectrum of activities of organised crime groups.** Of the "classic" activities, the only ones in the top twenty-two activities that experts most often described as developed, apart from drugs, are the organisation of illegal migration, the organisation of prostitution and trafficking in women, forgery of documents, gambling,

illegal production and smuggling of alcohol or cigarettes, illegal trade in medicines and drugs, and car theft, which, apart from drugs, are generally only in the second ten.

Illicit trade in medicines and pharmaceuticals was one of the most common activities reported during the covid-19 pandemic, but remained there last year. Customs fraud was also named again, as it was in 2020 and 2021. Fraud related to illegal employment tended to be named sporadically in 2020 as a reminder of possible new forms, but in 2021 and 2022 it was already among the top 20. In 2021, experts thus highlighted the laundering of the proceeds of crime with predicate offences committed outside the country; in 2022, this has already appeared even in the top ten listed activities.

Organised car crime

In this area, the Police recorded a continuation of the trend from the previous period, i.e. a **decrease in the number of thefts of luxury motor vehicles by organised groups on the territory of the Czech Republic**. The Czech Republic has become primarily a transit country through which luxury vehicles stolen in Germany, Austria, Italy and France are transported to Eastern European countries, especially Poland and the Baltic countries. However, their final destinations are likely to be even further east. On the basis of international police cooperation, stolen vehicles are seized in the Czech Republic, found parked or information is obtained on their passage. The organisers are persons mainly from Poland and Lithuania who do not reside in the Czech Republic. Persons from lower social classes, often drug addicts, are hired to transport the stolen vehicles themselves.

Organised vehicle thefts take place mainly in regions neighbouring Poland, where the vehicle can be exported outside the Czech Republic in a short time, thus reducing the risk of its tracing during transport.

Between 2017 and 2019, cases of legalisation of trucks stolen in Germany and Poland were solved in the Central Bohemia, Ústí nad Labem and Prague regions. The criminal activity was committed by an organised group of persons, mostly of Lithuanian nationality. After transporting the kits to the Czech Republic, the perpetrators changed the identification numbers (VIN) of the stolen vehicles and subsequently registered the vehicles in the Czech Republic as private imports. The technical certificates presented when applying for the approval of the roadworthiness of the individually imported vehicles were forged. Immediately after the registration of the vehicles, the legalised vehicles were exported from the territory of the Czech Republic abroad, mainly to Lithuania and then to Russia and Kazakhstan.

In the period under review, an increase in the number of cases of theft of GPS navigation systems from agricultural equipment, mainly John Deere, by organised groups mainly from Lithuania, Moldova and Romania was recorded. Information obtained through international cooperation shows that this phenomenon also occurs in other European countries.

In the Czech Republic, but also in Western European countries, organised groups also commit theft of catalytic converters, either from individual vehicles or during transport from the manufacturer, or in production plants from newly completed vehicles. The perpetrators are mainly Romanians and, in the case of theft with greater damage, which is characteristic of theft during transport or in production plants, Poles.

Drug offences

The area of illicit trade in addictive substances has undergone a number of changes in recent years. The major trends in the supply of drugs in recent years have undoubtedly included a partial **shift to the online environment of the internet, the darknet, social networks and the distribution of substances to end-users, as well as others involved in the illicit trade in these substances, through mail order and postal services.** The most frequent transactions are small quantities of substances destined for end-users. There are still dealers who offer large quantities of these substances, but small quantities are the predominant supply as they allow for very efficient distribution with a low probability of detection by the control authorities. The use of mail transport to smuggle drugs has become a logical trend, as the availability of these substances on websites allowing for the trade in addictive substances and the possibility of anonymity, attracts many users or potential buyers. As the interest of customers in purchasing is influenced by shared references, these are generally high purity substances. These are mainly **orders from foreign servers**, where the recipients of these shipments are mostly young people, for the most part still students.

The situation has been further compounded and accelerated by the restrictions imposed by the covid-19 pandemic. The use of modern encrypted communication platforms and applications, which at the same time enable many activities that make it difficult to detect illegal activities (e.g. automatic deletion of messages after reading), significantly complicates not only the detection but also the documentation and investigation of these crimes by law enforcement authorities.

The demand for cocaine has been growing over the last few years, and not only in the larger cities. This is most likely due to the stagnating or decreasing price, the higher quality (purity) of the substance and the increasing income of Czech citizens. The main distribution routes for cocaine remain unchanged, with maritime transport through ports in Germany (Hamburg), the Netherlands (Rotterdam) and Belgium (Antwerp) predominating.

Other psychoactive substances, which have been flowing into the Czech Republic from abroad and are very popular among young and adult users alike, have become a recent trend. These include e.g. **kratom**, but also cannabis products containing cannabinoids (e.g. HHC, THC-P), as well as substances with psychedelic effects (e.g. ayahuasca, psilocybin), many of which or their components are already on the list of banned substances. Unfortunately, despite repeated efforts by the Police and other authorities, **problematic substances such as kratom, HHC and THC-P were not included in the list during the latest amendment of Government Regulation No. 463/2013 Coll., on the lists of addictive substances.**

The illicit drug trade in the Czech Republic has traditionally been dominated by marijuana and methamphetamine. Although **fentanyl** and other synthetic opioids are receiving a lot of attention worldwide, especially in the USA, they are not yet a serious problem in the Czech Republic. Political discussions and activist efforts to partially legalise and decriminalise marijuana have contributed significantly to its easier availability and greater tolerance in society. Methamphetamine production has been particularly affected in recent years by changes in the availability of precursor drugs, especially pseudoephedrine-containing drugs. Following the adoption of a number of legislative restrictions on the availability of these drugs on the internal market of the Czech Republic, the efforts of offenders are directed towards seeking sources abroad and establishing stable flows to ensure their supply for production. The demand for methamphetamine abroad is mainly directed to the border areas of the

countries neighbouring the Czech Republic, with occasional exports to other European countries, but **"Czech" methamphetamine is gradually being displaced by methamphetamine produced directly in Germany, Poland, Belgium or the Netherlands by Vietnamese or Mexican organised groups.**

The Mexican criminal cartels operate mainly in the Netherlands and Belgium and market so-called Mexican methamphetamine made from the precursor benzyl methyl ketone (BMK). This type of methamphetamine is very different from the "Czech-style" methamphetamine, reportedly of lower quality according to user references, and also more affordable. Its production is carried out in larger volumes, often on an industrial scale, in contrast to the classic Czech brewhouses with lower production.

In the area of drug crime, organised criminal groups, whose platform is composed mainly of Czech citizens, do not operate in positions that would have a major impact on the illegal drug trade in the Czech Republic or in Europe. Rather, Czechs, as individuals or small groups, are linked to foreign or ethnically based criminal groups. Often, they are only in positions as individual couriers of drugs or funds or are assigned to partial tasks. In the production of methamphetamine, this is primarily due to the atomization of individual producers and breweries, which often provide distribution only to a narrow range of customers and therefore do not compete with each other. A similar situation exists in the cultivation of marijuana. In some cases, there may be offenders dealing in larger quantities of drugs who, through distribution via social networks or the darknet, do not need the wider facilities and service support of a larger organisation or group. If they cooperate with foreigners, especially in the provision of chemicals and drug precursors (drugs containing pseudoephedrine), they use individual contacts in Poland, Slovakia or Romania, from where these drugs are illegally imported despite the restrictions in place.

The majority of foreign drug offenders in the Czech Republic are Slovaks, but the number of Poles and Ukrainians has recently increased, while the number of offenders from Vietnam has decreased significantly since 2018. Only marginally in large cities and in Prague is there a Nigerian community, which is mainly involved in the street sale of cocaine, ecstasy and hashish.

The largest number of detected drug offences is in the capital city of Prague and in regional cities with a higher concentration of drug users, a higher standard of living, better mobility and easier perpetration of secondary property crime.

In the course of its activities, the Customs Administration of the Czech Republic registers an increase in cases of illegal trade and illegal use of so-called designer precursors, or pre-precursors of drugs, which are used exclusively for the illegal production of drug precursors and subsequent drugs, both at the national level and in the area of international cooperation. These substances have no legal use, and are produced mainly to circumvent control and monitoring by law enforcement authorities. This trend is registered in view of the steeply increasing number of seizures in the EU and the Czech Republic.

A significant increase in criminal activity can be observed in the offence **of illegal production and other disposal of substances with hormonal effect** under Section 288 of the Criminal Code. Although this offence has been codified in the Criminal Code for more than 10 years, it has not received due attention from law enforcement authorities. For this reason, the availability of anabolic, steroids and other substances with hormonal and other effects and the funds secured from these illegal activities very often exceed the proceeds of drug trafficking.

Organised groups involved in the importation, repackaging, relabelling and distribution of these harmful substances to end-users are also active in this area.

Illicit trade in pharmaceuticals, such as antidepressants and opiates, is also gaining importance, with individuals rather than organised groups dominating the majority of perpetrators.

In 2013, the lists of addictive substances were separated from Act No. 167/1998 Coll., on Addictive Substances, into a separate Government Regulation No. 463/2013 Coll., on Lists of Addictive Substances, which can be amended much more quickly and flexibly. **Since 2017 alone, a total of 473 new drugs have been added to the list of addictive substances.**

In the area of organised drug trafficking, we can expect **increasing activity by Serbian and Kosovo-Albanian groups, but also an increase in Ukrainian and other Russian-language groups** in the coming years. Mexican cartels will continue their efforts to dominate the methamphetamine trade and industrial production in Western Europe, which will affect supply in our country and, as a consequence, the selling price can be expected to fall. Afghanistan is also becoming a major player in the illicit methamphetamine industry and will look to Europe for new markets. In the context of the envisaged legislative changes in the area of cultivation, possession or use of certain substances, there will be an increase in the supply in the public space, bringing other illicit substances closer to the customers.

For those interested in a detailed description of the issue, reference can be made to the regularly published annual reports of the National Drug Control Centre²³, the annual reports of the National Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction²⁴, or the reports of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA).²⁵

Methamphetamine

The inclusion of one of the main precursors necessary for the production of this drug (the so-called Czech route) - red phosphorus - in category 2A of the European Regulations on drug precursors has led to a reduced possibility of its purchase and thus an increase in demand on the illegal market, including an increase in its price. Also, the introduction of the electronic register for the dispensing of restricted medicines (medicines containing pseudoephedrine) forces methamphetamine producers to purchase and import these precursors from abroad. In the Czech Republic, which is considered to be one of the major producers of methamphetamine in Europe, the **search for new suitable precursor drugs for its production** continues to resonate. It is no problem for the tightly and sophisticatedly organised groups involved in this illegal activity to organise their purchase, transport and storage throughout Europe.

In the Czech Republic, a number of drugs containing pseudoephedrine or ephedrine, which are or have been registered in other EU Member States, or unregistered drugs intended for distribution to third countries, have been identified as precursors for the production of methamphetamine. These included, for example, products under the names Cet-Der, Gripont, StopCold, Respidina, Rhinoad, and more recently Ephedrina Adrena and Cold Relief

23 <https://www.policie.cz/clanek/vyrocní-zpráva-národní-protidrogové-centraly-za-rok-2022.aspx>

24 <https://www.drogy-info.cz/publikace/vyrocní-zpravy/>

25 https://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/european-drug-report/2023_en

manufactured in Romania, which have become a very important source (precursor) for production in the Czech Republic. Ephedrina Arena contains 50 mg of ephedrine per tablet, where one pack contains 1 500 tablets, which can be used to produce approximately 45 grams of methamphetamine. This drug is illegally traded on the territory of the Czech Republic for between CZK 11 000 and CZK 15 000.

Since around 2017/2018, a trend of methamphetamine production through Vietnamese organised crime groups has been observed to shift from the Czech Republic to Poland, Germany, Belgium or the Netherlands. Methamphetamine produced in these countries is subsequently imported back into the Czech Republic, distributed and offered mainly in markets and shops in the Czech-German border area. These organised groups often use Czech citizens as couriers. In this connection, seizures of methamphetamine made from the precursor BMK have also been recorded in the Czech Republic, which is offered in the Czech Republic for between CZK 400 000 and CZK 450 000 per kilogram, while methamphetamine produced in the so-called Czech way is sold for between CZK 500 000 and CZK 560 000 per kilogram.

Table 7 - Seized quantities of methamphetamine on the territory of the Czech Republic and number of breweries

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Methamphetamine (g)	106 155	27 576	29 602	33 403	41 916	34 033	164 892
Laboratories	244	238	162	191	202	189	192

Source: statistics of the Police of the Czech Republic

Marijuana

The illicit cultivation and trafficking of marijuana, especially on a large scale, has seen a **slight decline in production and distribution** in recent years. This is not due to a decrease in the consumption of cannabis drugs in the Czech Republic, which is still mainly saturated by domestic production. A change has occurred in the modus operandi of criminal groups, which **have turned away from large-scale (500 to 999 plants) and industrial (1000+) cultivation facilities** in order to eliminate the risk of detection. These are only detected by the Police in the order of units per year. There has been a slight increase in the number of small-scale grows of up to 250 plants, which mainly involve Serbian criminal groups. One of the conspiratorial tactics of the perpetrators is the cultivation of so-called CBD cannabis, or cannabis containing HHC, which can often disguise the illegal cultivation of cannabis containing THC in excess.

The growing trend is currently towards outdoor cultivation of marijuana in some regions, e.g. in South Moravia. Local production is then destined for the local Czech market and for export to Austria and Slovakia. The trend in recent years has been an **increase in the number of offenders who buy marijuana from smaller growers and then resell it in large quantities to other distributors (dealers)** for distribution in the Czech Republic or abroad. The marijuana is then exported to Slovakia, Poland, Hungary, Austria, as well as the UK and Northern Ireland. In recent years, the share of exports to Germany has been decreasing, with the German market now much more significantly supplied by marijuana from Spain or the Netherlands.

There has also been a case of importation of cannabis with high THC content from abroad - Spain and Italy. Such illegally imported marijuana is diluted domestically with its own

production, possibly with technical or low-grade cannabis. The resulting product is usually exported. The activity of a Czech-Polish gang has been recorded, where the export of cannabis from the Czech Republic to Poland was paid for in return for the delivery of cocaine from Poland to the Czech Republic.

The topic of marijuana, its partial legalization, the possibility of so-called recreational use, the establishment of cannabis clubs, and the cultivation or possession of large quantities of this substance for personal use has been resonating very strongly not only in society, but especially in the political scene for at least the last two years. This is reflected in the increasing supply of other cannabis products (CBH, HHC, THC-P and others) on the legal market and in the public space.

As of 1 January 2022, an amendment to Act No. 167/1998 Coll., on Addictive Substances, came into force, which set the limit for the content of the active prohibited substance THC in cultivated technical hemp from 0.3% to 1%. The possible legalization of cannabis will certainly have an impact on organised crime and its involvement in "legal" activities related to the sale and production of marijuana. This may lead to a cover-up of illegal activities.

Table 8 - Seized quantity of marijuana in the Czech Republic and number of cultivation facilities

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Cannabis (g)	948 015	546 339	655 130	1 368 537	926 737	648 766	621 267
Cultivation plants	202	258	167	151	139	138	109

Source: statistics of the Police of the Czech Republic

Cocaine and heroin

The global overproduction of cocaine (a record 1,982 tonnes in 2020, according to a report by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)) is driving down the price of the psychotropic substance and thus its availability. Cocaine is smuggled into Europe mainly by sea in shipping containers, bound for the seaports of Antwerp (Belgium), Hamburg (Germany), Rotterdam (Netherlands), Marseille (France), Genoa (Italy) and others. Demand for cocaine is also increasing in the Czech Republic, and one of the factors behind the increased popularity may be the growing purchasing power of the population. The average purity of cocaine sold at retail is of increasing quality and is around 45 %. One gram of cocaine can be procured for as little as CZK 1 500, with prices typically in the range of CZK 2 000 to CZK 2 500 per gram. Cocaine use is mainly concentrated in dance clubs, nightclubs and bars in larger cities. In 2022, a total of 1 194 kg of cocaine was seized in two shipments of fruit in the Czech Republic, which was probably not intended for the domestic market but was probably a logistical error in its distribution. **The Czech Republic is not a significant destination or transit country for cocaine.** Organised groups from Nigeria and the Western Balkan countries are steadily involved in local distribution, not only in distribution to end-users, but also in importing and organising courier journeys from South America to Europe.

The heroin trade has not seen any significant changes in recent years, with imports being organised by persons from Balkan countries. **The Czech Republic is usually a transit country**, with only a part of these shipments remaining here and the rest going to Western and

Northern Europe via Germany. A large user community is located in the larger towns in the north-western part of the country, such as Teplice, Most, Chomutov and Ústí nad Labem, where the substance is largely favoured by the Roma community, who not only use it but also participate in its further distribution.

Table 9 - Seized quantities of heroin and cocaine in the Czech Republic

	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Heroin (g)	1 340	8 838	286	107 199	102	906	14 539
Cocaine (g)	24 189	187 102	2 642	180 660	1 194 635	677 523	56 615

Source: statistics of the Police of the Czech Republic

New synthetic drugs

The new psychoactive substances are still very popular worldwide, but **they have not enjoyed any particular interest in the Czech Republic for a long time. Since 2015, a slight decrease in the seizures of brand-new substances can be traced on a European scale.** Over the last 5 years, an average of around 50 new substances have been identified per year.

The new psychoactive substances are mostly traded via the internet - darknet or social networking sites - and sent by mail or express delivery. This includes both individual imports for end consumers and imports of larger quantities of substances for resale. In the Czech Republic, there are traders, so-called vendors - anonymous shippers of these substances who obtain them by purchasing large quantities from, for example, China or illegal production facilities in Europe. For the purpose of effective action by law enforcement authorities, it is important that these substances are included in the list of addictive substances (Government Regulation No. 463/2013 Coll. establishing the list of addictive substances), which is done through the Early Warning System group at the Office of the Government of the Czech Republic.

In 2022, 283 new substances were added to the list, including 155 synthetic cannabinoids, 22 synthetic benzodiazepines and 86 cathinones. In 2023, 3 substances were added to the list as of 1 August 2023. Other new substances were also added in 2024. Potent synthetic opioids may pose a great danger to law enforcement officers or persons involved in the transportation process, but a large proportion of these are not listed as addictive substances.

Counterfeiting of means of payment (including skimming)

As in previous periods, most counterfeits of Czech currency are printed on inkjet printers or by another digital printing method and are usually less successful counterfeits, which usually lack the security features entirely or are imitated by a simple and low-quality method. **Moreover, criminal activity related to the counterfeiting of domestic currency has not shown signs of a higher degree of organisation in the long term,** and is usually attempted by individuals or small groups of perpetrators (often juveniles).

In the case of counterfeiting of foreign currencies, especially EUR and USD, it can be stated that this crime is committed in a highly organised manner using the most modern printing

techniques. Such counterfeits do not lack high-quality security features, are printed on paper of a quality close to that of the original paper and the printing techniques used also mimic the original printing very well. These counterfeits are often marked with a hazard rating of 2, i.e. very dangerous. However, the counterfeiting workshops producing such counterfeits caught in the Czech Republic **are always located abroad and the organisers who put them into circulation do not usually enter the Czech Republic at all.** Ad hoc counterfeits are brought into the Czech Republic by criminal structures operating in the Czech Republic as a complement to their own criminal activities, which usually have their focus elsewhere, e.g. in the illegal distribution of narcotics or weapons.

A trend in the last few years has been the distribution of counterfeit foreign currencies through advertising on the darknet, where interested parties are usually delivered to their homes by courier service without meeting the distributor.

The incidence of counterfeit Czech and foreign currencies in the Czech Republic has been steadily decreasing over the past few years. A certain exception was in 2021, when an unexpectedly high number of counterfeit EUR currency was seized, which were uncharacteristically domestically produced, according to the investigation carried out were not intended for circulation at all (it was a different type of fraudulent behaviour) and their quality was so low that even an untrained layman would have been able to recognise them. The year 2022 was quite exceptional in terms of the increase in counterfeit coins of the Czech currency, with a total of 170 counterfeit coins in the denomination of CZK 20 being seized (an increase of 170 compared to the previous year) and 86 counterfeit coins of the EUR currency (an increase of 52 compared to the previous year). The quality of the counterfeit Czech coins of CZK 20 denomination, which were rated as grade 2, i.e. very dangerous, was a particular outlier.

A separate case of counterfeiting of payment means is the unauthorised reading of electronic identification data on a payment card inserted into an ATM by means of a special reading device together with the reading of a PIN code, usually by means of a camera. **In the past, so-called skimming was a relatively widespread type of crime in the Czech Republic and was often organised by criminal gangs originating from one of the Balkan countries. However, this crime also started to show a steep decline in the monitored period, with only one such attack recorded in the Czech Republic in 2022.** One of the reasons for the decline in the intensity of crime in the area of counterfeiting of currency and means of payment can be considered to be the continuing trend towards contactless withdrawals from ATMs and the increasing prevalence of cashless payments.

During the entire period under review, there was an increase in payments with so-called film money (imitation money meeting the legal criteria for theatrical and film use), which is freely available in various shops and marketplaces and whose possession is not punishable under the Supreme Court's interpretative opinion.

The use of conventional PC inkjet printers and conventional paper will persist in the coming years. The perpetrators will continue to produce counterfeits to solve their own current financial difficulties by consuming their own production in the purchase of services and goods.

Within the organised groups involved in counterfeiting and distribution of foreign currency, the trend of using high-end printing machines and techniques, on security paper, using printing inks purchased mainly outside the EU (typically in China) will continue, with printing taking place in Turkey, Bulgaria or Romania. The counterfeits will be distributed to Europe mainly

through the Arab community as the upper and middle links of the organised group, which will then be linked to the lower links, which will receive the lower hundreds to thousands of such counterfeit notes for their own consumption or final distribution. The US dollar, in particular the USD 100 note and the EUR 50 and EUR 100-euro notes, will always be at the forefront of the counterfeiters' interests.

The eventual replacement of the domestic currency by the European currency (EUR) in the period in question could be a definite turning point. In such a case, the development that was also observed in Slovakia after the adoption of the EUR could be reversed. At the very least, there would be a rapid increase in the incidence of counterfeit euro banknotes and an increase in the organised smuggling and distribution of counterfeit euro banknotes into the Czech Republic.

Illegal Migration

Illegal migration has developed dynamically in recent years and the activities of organised crime groups have played a role in this. After the migration crisis in 2015 (8 323 persons intercepted), the number of persons detected in irregular migration decreased and stabilized (2016 - 5 261 persons, 2017 - 4 738 persons, 2018 - 4 922 persons, 2019 - 5 677 persons), which lasted until 2020, when the covid-19 pandemic broke out. In 2020 (7,093 persons) and 2021 (11,170 persons), the numbers of persons detected in irregular migration increased slightly due to cases of foreigners **who were in** our territory in **violation of anti-pandemic measures**. However, after their decline, there was an even more significant increase due to the increased activity of organised criminal groups, with the **highest number of persons detected in illegal migration since the Czech Republic joined the Schengen area in 2022 - 29 235 persons**. This high number was caused by the dramatic situation in the area of so-called transit illegal migration, which involves illegal entry of foreigners into the territory of the Czech Republic by land or air, with the aim of continuing through our territory to other countries in Western Europe.

Transit irregular migration is a type of irregular migration in which organised criminal groups are very active, in the form of smuggling. In 2022, these activities have intensified and smugglers have engaged in highly aggressive behaviour. As a result, it was necessary to take the unprecedented step **of temporarily reintroducing checks at the border with Slovakia**, from where the majority of persons detected in transit illegal migration on our territory were heading (a similar step was also taken in 2023). The primary reason was the increased movements and activity of smuggling groups on the so-called Western Balkan route, where the highest level of illegal border crossings towards the EU since 2015 was detected. In the Czech Republic, transit irregular migration also surpassed 2015 or 2016, and significantly so. The value of 21 852 persons detected in transit irregular migration is the highest since this statistic has been monitored (since mid-2015).

In 2023, it was possible to observe a calming down of the situation, with 4,742 persons detected in the Czech Republic during transit irregular migration (13,898 persons detected during total irregular migration), but this was still one of the highest values since the beginning of the monitoring, moving at a similar level as in the crisis year 2015. In addition, numbers in neighbouring countries and along the Western Balkan route remained very high. A clear reversal of the trend occurred in 2024, when transit irregular migration values fell to the level

of 2016-2020 - 420 persons detected (with total irregular migration detected at 9,461 persons).

In the area of highly organised and ordinary illegal migration, the trend that the Czech Republic is not the primary destination country for illegal migrants and **remains a transit country** from a European perspective has been confirmed for a long time. The most frequently secured migrants in transit illegal migration on the territory of the Czech Republic have long been **nationals** of Turkey, **Afghanistan and especially Syria**, which is influenced mainly by international factors such as the uncertain situation in Afghanistan or the ongoing instability in Syria.

Between 2019 and 2020, evidence was gathered on irregular migrants from Vietnam using the route through Russia and other Eastern European countries. In particular, Vietnamese migrants abused tourist visas to legally travel by air from Vietnam to the territory of Russia. Later, Iraqi citizens were also transported to Russia in a similar way. These migrants were then illegally transported in an organised manner to the EU, in particular to Lithuania and later to Latvia and Poland, with the subsequent involvement of the Belarusian state authorities in the organisation of these migration flows (state support for organised crime).

In the context of the migration wave between 2021 and 2024, international organised groups of perpetrators engaged in organising the transportation of illegal migrants used truck transport and passenger vehicles, which they rented for this purpose from car rental companies, to transport foreign nationals without a residence and movement permit in the Schengen area. **Following increased controls on international trucking, there has been a gradual shift away from trucks and replacement of this capacity with passenger vehicles.** The main management cells of criminal organisations usually operate completely outside the territory of the Czech Republic. In the case of the involvement of Czech citizens, these are often lower-level, executive positions (vehicle procurement), recruiting **citizens from socially vulnerable segments of the population**. Recently, however, Ukrainian refugees are also often involved, usually in the role of driver. Other members of these organised groups (often, but not exclusively, in the position of drivers) are foreigners with a residence permit in the Czech Republic, originally from Vietnam or one of the Middle Eastern countries. The members of the organised groups communicate with each other and with migrants mainly through internet communication applications.

The most commonly used social platforms in the organisation of irregular migration include TikTok, Telegram, WhatsApp, Facebook and many others. The channels are mainly used to promote the services of smugglers (TikTok and Telegram). They are also used to recruit new drivers (Facebook, Telegram and TikTok). Social networks such as WhatsApp and Telegram are also used for specific communication between operators (getting more information about the trip, its mode, price, etc.). Often, transfer groups cancel and modify established groups on social networks and create new ones. From this point of view, it is very difficult to identify and possibly infiltrate any group. The use of different types of social platforms is related to both the regional presence of the smuggling groups and the origin of the irregular migrants. In 2022, the emergence of new organised groups for the purpose of committing this crime was recorded, partly involving Czech nationals as members, who were tasked with procuring vehicles for the transport of irregular migrants, providing drivers for individual transports, or participating in the transport of irregular migrants as drivers themselves. Other members of these organised groups of perpetrators were foreigners with a residence permit in the Czech Republic, coming from Ukraine, Vietnam or one of the Middle Eastern countries. All these

organised groups are international in nature, which means that they are partly composed of foreign nationals and operate in several countries.

The prosecution of detected perpetrators of this crime (especially drivers) is not very effective, as it is difficult to prove their connection to an organised group operating abroad, the penalties are not linked to direct imprisonment, given the level of the penal rates of the offences in question, and the refugees are returned to Slovakia, from where they attempt to cross the Czech Republic to Germany again.

Act No.326/1999 Coll., on the Residence of Foreigners in the Czech Republic and on Amendments to Certain Acts, does not currently contain a precise definition of what is meant by "security risk for the Czech Republic" in relation to persons applying for a residence permit or asylum protection. The aim is to ensure a higher level of protection of public order and to prevent persons posing a security risk from gaining these residence permits. An unambiguous definition of "security risk for the Czech Republic" would fully preserve the possibility of judicial review, however, it would allow the relevant security services to establish that a person is a security risk within the meaning of the definition set out in the Act on the basis of the information available to and verified by the security services, and thus there is a legal basis for not granting the requested residence permit or asylum protection.

All of these **criminal organisations are international in nature**, meaning that they are made up of members operating in several countries. In some cases, citizens of the Czech Republic involved in an international criminal network organising migration flows do not commit criminal activities (transporting migrants) on the territory of the Czech Republic, but on the territory of a foreign state located on one of the migration routes.

The use of international air transport of illegal migrants continues, especially on flights from Greece to Prague, where migrants are equipped with forged or purchased personal documents from one of the Schengen countries. However, this is a financially costly mode of transport, so the total numbers of migrants transported in this way have remained relatively low in the long term.

As in previous periods, the **so-called Balkan route**, which leads from Turkey to the Greek islands and the Greek mainland, is still a key route for criminal structures organising transit migration through the Czech Republic. Migrants then use mainly the territory of Bulgaria and Northern Macedonia, from where they try to cross into Serbia and Hungary. Subsequently, migrants are transported by criminal structures through Slovakia and the Czech Republic to Germany, or from Hungary directly to Austria. According to the available findings, the organisers of migration flows operate, among others, in refugee camps in Turkey, Greece, Serbia and Hungary.

Act No. 173/2023 Coll. was published, which also contains an amendment to the Criminal Code, where the subject matter of the offences of forcible crossing of the state border, organising and facilitating the illegal crossing of the state border and the unauthorised employment of foreigners was expanded to cover **not only migration to the Czech Republic, but also to other EU Member States and Schengen Area countries**. The criminal offence of organising and facilitating the illegal crossing of the state border under Section 340 of the Criminal Code is often accompanied by inhuman or degrading treatment of migrants (exposing them, whether intentionally or negligently, to physical or mental suffering due to lack of food, liquids or inadequate sanitary conditions), and therefore a new circumstance has been added to condition the application of a higher criminal rate if a larger number of persons are

subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment. This law entered into force on 1 July 2023 and has enabled the CID to better prosecute cases where a criminal group is detected that uses a route that does not cross the border of the Czech Republic or that exposes a larger number of migrants to inhuman or degrading treatment when illegally crossing the border.

An obstacle to successfully combating organised crime in the field of illegal migration appears to be Hungary's decision of May 2023, which resulted in the release from Hungarian prisons of foreigners who have been convicted of smuggling illegal migrants in Hungary, provided that they leave Hungarian territory within 72 hours, have not been sentenced to more than 5 years imprisonment and are not under investigation for other criminal activities.

In the area of illegal migration, the Czech Republic will continue to remain primarily a transit country in the coming years (in connection with the tightening of migration approaches in many EU countries, however, there is a risk that the Czech Republic may become a destination country after many years of being a transit country). New organised groups of people engaged in various forms of illegal migration (smuggling in various means of transport, including international train connections and regular international air routes, forging identity documents of Schengen states) may emerge. The so-called Balkan route will continue to be the most used migration route. However, as a result of the imposition of international political sanctions, emerging and ongoing war conflicts and the adoption of various security measures by the individual states forming the Schengen area, the emergence of new forms of illegal migration and new migration routes cannot be ruled out in the future.

Forgery of personal documents

EU Member States are attractive to third-country residents both in terms of free movement within the Schengen area, or the absence of visa requirements for entry, and in terms of the prospect of employment in the European labour market, which is why forged identity documents from EU Member States have become a sought-after commodity.

Russian-speaking, mainly Ukrainian criminal structures have been using this space since 2016, when they offered forged documents to high-ranking authorities of Russian-speaking organised crime as a so-called criminal service (CaaS), who used Ukrainian travel documents issued by criminal organisations using the altered identities of persons originating from the occupied territories of the eastern part of Ukraine for their travels in the EU.

In addition to Ukrainian travel documents, organised forgery or alteration of Romanian and Lithuanian personal documents was also recorded, which again served both to legalise residence on our territory and for illegal employment through employment agencies, to which the area of forgery of personal documents is closely related. In this case, too, the forged or altered identity documents were used mainly by Ukrainian nationals. However, the demand of Ukrainians for forged documents disappeared with the beginning of the Russian aggression against Ukraine, as a result of which it is now possible to additionally legalise an initially illegal stay by obtaining temporary protection status, which entitles Ukrainians to work in the country.

Human trafficking

In this area, **only evolutionary changes in the specific forms and ways of behaviour of perpetrators have been occurring for a long time**. The methods of perpetration used in the Czech Republic correlate with current trends observed in other EU countries. The Czech Republic can be considered a destination, transit and source country in the long term. Criminal organisations committing this type of crime usually operate on the territory of the Czech Republic and another country, exploiting their victims for prostitution, forced labour or other forms of exploitation.

The perpetrators are getting more sophisticated. They are increasingly using deception and misleading to attract victims, building and then exploiting the dependency of their victims (e.g. throwing a disobedient victim on the street in a foreign country with no resources and waiting for her to return to them), using psychological manipulation (e.g. organisers promising women a partner relationship), etc. In keeping the victim in a relationship of subordination, there is a clear move away from the use of direct physical violence, which is often replaced by the threat of violence and has thus become a last resort for traffickers. The 'lover boy' method is also emerging, where traffickers try to get young girls or boys to fall in love with them. They then threaten the victims using blackmail and violence.

There is a persistent trend of **perpetrators targeting people with some added vulnerability** (social, economic status, alcohol or drug abuse, psychological problem). Traffickers also target persons with developmental and physical disabilities.

The proliferation of communication platforms in everyday life also has implications for human trafficking. Online platforms are applied in two main segments in the issue of trafficking in human beings: in the first segment, they accelerate and largely anonymize the communication between traffickers and their potential victims, and in the second segment, they significantly hinder the ability of law enforcement authorities to detect and document these communications. These are mainly communications via WhatsApp, Signal, etc., where recording these communications is very difficult for the CID.

In cases where the Czech Republic is a source country, perpetrators seek out victims among homeless persons, who are usually persuaded to travel abroad for work by means of deception. They then transport them abroad (in the past usually to the UK, more recently e.g. to Germany²⁶), where they arrange physically demanding and poorly paid work for them and usually take the vast majority of their money from their wages. The working environment was e.g. car washes, fruit and vegetable sorting plants, poultry farms, restaurants, construction sites and various manufacturing plants. Women are then forced into prostitution (as an alternative to physical labour). In some cases, victims are forced to marry people from outside the EU. The marriages are mainly organised in the UK and Ireland, with potential spouses most often coming from Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan. In addition, victims are forced to take out bank loans, with the money taken from them by the perpetrators and the repayments not paid, increasing the long-term dependence of the victims on the perpetrator.

During the period under review, cases of trafficking in human beings for the purpose of servitude and enslavement (perpetrators had a personal servant) were also recorded, which

²⁶ With the withdrawal of the UK from the European Union, the number of cases dealt with in relation to this country continues to decline and this downward trend can be expected to continue in the coming years.

also occurred as a secondary criminal activity of criminal organisations committing economic crime in a premeditated manner.

Human beings have long been trafficked for **sexual abuse, exploitation and pimping** in the Czech Republic. However, street prostitution (as well as the occurrence of various nightclubs) has been on the decline for a long time and can only be observed to a lesser extent and in specific locations. During the period under review, **organised prostitution gradually moved to private premises**, which are cheaper to run than sex clubs and attract less attention than street prostitution. One of the influences on this shift was the covid-19 pandemic, which both caused a temporary decline in this area of crime and probably accelerated the shift to private premises as a result of the anti-pandemic measures taken.

The organisers of the above-mentioned type of crime usually come from other EU Member States (e.g. Romania or Austria) and their victims are women imported to the Czech Republic mostly from poorer EU countries (e.g. Romania, Slovakia) or from non-EU countries (Ukraine, Russia), with Romania being the most important source country. The victims are lured to the Czech Republic under the pretext of securing legal employment. In many cases, girls already come to the Czech Republic knowing that they will be engaged in prostitution, but they are often lured into this activity by the promise of unrealistically (also in terms of prostitution) high earnings. In addition to pimping, these cases may also lead to the commission of the crime of trafficking in human beings.

In the case where organised criminal groups brought victims to the Czech Republic primarily for the purpose of labour and, in addition, sexual exploitation, not only countries in the Balkan region, especially Romania and Bulgaria, but also the Philippines, Nepal and Mongolia were recorded as source territories. **Agency work** plays a significant role in this area of trafficking in human beings.

The relatively stable situation in this area is confirmed by statistical data. There is a relatively low number of registered offences (the offence of trafficking in human beings under Section 168 of the Criminal Code), with a **maximum of 39 in 2024 and a minimum of 13 in 2018**, while the number of prosecuted persons in that period was a **maximum of 28 in 2024 and a minimum of 15 in 2018**. The question for the future is whether the high number of offences registered in 2024 represents a new trend or a one-off fluctuation. In the vast majority of cases, this crime is committed by citizens of the Czech Republic. Over the above period, the **highest number of persons** enrolled in the Ministry of the Interior's Programme for Support and Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings **was 33 in 2022 and the lowest was 11 in 2021**.

Table 10 - Number of registered offences and prosecuted persons in trafficking in human beings

THE CRIME OF TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC IN 2018-2024 (ACCORDING TO SECTION 168 OF THE CRIMINAL CODE)							
	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Registered acts	13	20	18	14	18	20	39
of which clarified	9	12	11	6	9	13	25
clarified later	4	1	2	6	3	6	4
Persons prosecuted	15	26	20	21	16	25	28
of which men	11	13	12	14	9	10	16
of which women	4	13	8	7	7	15	12
of which foreigners	2	6	2	4	2	3	2
of which citizens of the Czech Republic	13	20	18	17	14	22	26

Source: statistics of the Police of the Czech Republic

The year 2022 was quite unique with regard to **the Russian invasion of Ukraine**, which resulted in the Czech Republic becoming a destination for approximately **480,000 war refugees**, mainly women and children. Their vulnerable situation and the conditions of their arrival significantly increased the risk that they could become victims of various types of crime, including trafficking in human beings. In this context, there has been an extraordinary mobilisation of all stakeholders (public authorities, NGOs, volunteers, etc.) and massive prevention and awareness-raising campaigns and activities. Even as a result of these activities, **no victim of trafficking in human beings from among refugees from Ukraine has been confirmed** by the Police in **connection with criminal activities committed on the territory of the Czech Republic**.

In connection with the findings from the application practice in the area of trafficking in human beings, it is necessary to point out the problem of the lack of legal regulation of **the institution of surrogacy**. This lack may represent a space for the abuse of women for surrogacy and potential violation of children's rights and abuse of their vulnerable position. It cannot be ruled out that organised criminal structures are parasitic on this practice. The legal framework is insufficient in terms of the possibility of sanctioning such conduct. There are no legal conditions for the use of surrogacy, even though the legal order approves it (cf. § Section 804 of Act No 89/2012 Coll., Civil Code, as amended). It would seem desirable to consider a legislative change in terms of civil law and, subsequently, possibly a change in criminal law (§ 168 trafficking in human beings, § 169 entrusting a child to the care of another). **However, without the primary establishment of a statutory civil regulation of surrogacy, it is not possible to subsequently adequately criminalize surrogacy for payment.**

The Ministry of Justice has been working intensively on the issue of the regulation of the surrogacy institute, the concrete result of which can be considered, for example, the Analysis

of the Surrogacy Institute, which was prepared in connection with Government Resolution No 351 of 17 May 2023 and which fully replaces the substantive plan of the Act. This analysis was approved by Government Resolution No. 554 of 21 August 2024. Currently, at the level of the ministries concerned, i.e. in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of the Interior and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the legal regulation of surrogacy is being prepared.

Regarding the future development of the issue, it can be expected that typical street prostitution and prostitution in night clubs will continue to have a slightly decreasing tendency and will continue to move towards private provision. This situation will be characterised by a higher level of latency of the crime committed and will place greater demands on searches by the Police.

A high number of Romanian nationals involved in this criminal activity is also to be expected, not least because the country is part of the European Union and their citizens are subject to free movement. Romania is a significant source country within the European Union. In view of the development of the labour market in the Czech Republic and in particular the persistent labour shortage, an increasing demand for cheap labour can be expected, which may be linked to the crime of trafficking in human beings for labour exploitation.

More information on the current situation in the area of trafficking in human beings can be obtained from the regularly published reports of the Ministry of the Interior, most recently the 2022 report.²⁷

Illegal arms trade

The illegal arms trade in the Czech Republic is dominated by groups of perpetrators who, although partially participating in each other's activities, do not **usually fulfil the characteristics of organised criminal groups.**

Their activity in the vast majority of the recorded cases consisted in the abuse of so-called precursor weapons, which are considered to be originally live firearms classified as weapons subject to registration under the Firearms and Ammunition Act, which were legally **converted into expansion weapons or Flobert-type weapons**, as well as **devalued weapons** that could be reactivated relatively easily into their original design as live weapons due to their inadequate technical design.

Most of the abused weapon's precursors originated in Slovakia, where their production was made possible by the previous lack of legislation. According to available estimates, Slovak commercial companies produced more than 27 000 of these weapons precursors, which could be procured almost anonymously in Slovakia until the Slovak Arms Act was amended in line with EU requirements in 2022. The adoption of the amendment has radically changed this situation and the production of these precursors has now fallen to almost zero, but the large quantities produced will continue to represent a significant potential source of illegal firearms in the future.

The group of precursor weapons also includes weapons originally made as expansion - alarm weapons (so-called gas guns), which some manufacturers have started to produce from high-

²⁷ <https://www.mvcr.cz/clanek/obchod-s-lidmi-dokumenty-924305.aspx>

quality materials identical or at least comparable to the materials used for sharp weapons, which can also be easily modified for firing live ammunition, and this fact leads to their popularity in the criminal environment.

In the medium and long term, apart from the aforementioned precursor weapons, the illicit arms trade will be affected primarily by **the risks arising from the war in Ukraine, which may become a significant source of illegal firearms**, as was the case in the past in the war in the former Yugoslavia. This is suggested by the individual cases already recorded and by operational information obtained in the criminal environment. The main challenge for the future will be to prevent the import of firearms, ammunition, ammunition and explosives, or other military material originating from the war conflict in Ukraine into the Czech Republic, or their transit through the territory of the Czech Republic because of their possible misuse for criminal activities or terrorist attack.

A not insignificant risk is also seen in the spread of the 3D printing technology phenomenon, which is becoming increasingly accessible to the general public. Thanks to the gradual increase in the quality of the materials used, it is beginning to be exploited in attempts to produce so-called hybrid firearms, which are created by combining parts produced by 3D printing technology and freely available metal parts (e.g. the FGC-9 gun²⁸, where not only blueprints of printed plastic parts are circulated on the internet, but in particular the working procedures for making the metal parts and assembling and debugging the whole gun).

Tax crime (including customs evasion)

In 2014-2016, the Czech Financial Administration implemented a number of legislative and administrative measures aimed at tax evasion, including organised tax evasion. These measures include, for example, the introduction of the control reporting system in the legislative area, the introduction of the reverse charge (value added tax) "nationwide control jurisdiction", the extension of the unreliable taxpayer institute in the administrative area, the extension of risk analysis processes, the establishment of designated KOBRA workplaces and the implementation of the KOBRA working method in accordance with the relevant agreements. The measures taken appear to have achieved the partial elimination, or displacement outside the country, of organised crime and a change in the behaviour of some taxpayers. The reduction of the tax gap²⁹ on value added tax by more than 4% between 2016-2020 (i.e. tens of billions of crowns per year), the substantial reduction of reported excessive deductions and the related increase in the collection of fiscally key taxes - value added tax and income tax - can be considered as significant and fundamental consequences of these processes, where the conclusion regarding the increase in collection takes into account the aspect of economic growth and inflation. Although the above measures appear to be effective, the Financial Administration estimates that a gap in VAT collection of tens of billions of crowns remains.

Despite the measures taken, the General Financial Directorate has long detected persistent activity of organised tax evasion groups linked to selected commodities/activities. The exceptional risk of tax evasion in these detected areas lies in the fact that there has already

28 It is an abbreviation of "Fuck Gun Control" and the designation of the 9 mm calibre (usually 9 mm Luger). It is one of the first realistic, dangerous models of a gun made in a criminal environment, mostly using the 3D printing method.

29 The tax gap is the difference between the tax liability and the amount actually paid.

been an intermingling with the normal economic processes in society and that some of the entities (customers) associated with the processes consider this situation normal or even desirable (cheap goods imported from third countries for retail customers) or cannot do without receiving the outputs of this organised activity in their business activities (labour supply).

In terms of fiscal and social risks, the most serious consequences relate to tax evasion associated with the provision of labour (illegal work, disguised employment), the import of goods from selected destinations and the provision of advertising and consultancy services. Rooting out organised groups in these areas is complicated by the above-mentioned intersections and the requirements of the buyers of goods and services, and by the interests of exporting countries. This is not a stand-alone effort to benefit from tax evasion, but tax evasion is a secondary consequence of the connection with an economic or social process.

Specifically, in the case **of imports of goods**, the accelerator is the interest of final consumers in obtaining cheaper goods or cheaper inputs for production, where low prices are achieved by cutting customs duties on imports of goods and not paying value added tax and income tax. **Thus, in addition to the tax cuts themselves, the activities of organised groups are displacing compliant entrepreneurs and destroying the market environment.** The flexibility of organised groups with a foreign element in particular is extremely high and is reflected in the operability of operations between Member States, the redirection of goods in terms of transport logistics and the confusion of ownership of goods. Criminal groups often create or acquire storage and transport facilities, ranging from port facilities to storage facilities in the target countries of the European Economic Area.

The distribution networks of retail goods used by organisers can be divided into 'electronic' and physical. Electronic networks are systems of webshops in different countries offering goods which are then delivered by mail order. Physical distribution networks are represented by marketplaces and brick-and-mortar stores, which are generally controlled by the Vietnamese community established in the country. Here, the sale of goods from the domestic market, again burdened by tax cuts (cigarettes, alcohol), but also the sale of drugs is combined. Illegal proceeds are legalised and currency conversion takes place, see the case of the "Currency changer" presented by the media.

In the case of **labour supply**, the crucial fact is the shortage of lower-skilled labour on the labour market; the second aspect is the reduction of the burden on employers, where the employer's obligations are transferred to the labour supplier. The above generates a demand from entrepreneurs in the Czech Republic for the supply of labour in order to ensure the very essence of business despite the risk of being involved in a circle of persons in which tax evasion and criminal sanctions occur.

A new trend in the subject of fictitious invoicing has also been observed in companies engaged in the employment of persons, especially foreign workers, the so-called employment agencies. These are invoices related to employment placement, accommodation, transport, training of workers, etc. These are invoices for activities which are very difficult to prove are fictitious or to disprove that they have taken place. A significantly growing trend, also linked to the war conflict in Ukraine, is the non-payment of insurance contributions by employment agencies employing foreigners. The organisers of this criminal activity - i.e. the evasion of taxes and insurance contributions in connection with the provision of labour - are mostly foreign individuals, often of Ukrainian origin.

In the case of **the provision of advertising services**, there was a partial elimination of value added tax evasion, where some organised groups, in an attempt to circumvent the risk analysis processes of the Financial Administration of the Czech Republic, cut income tax (the element of providing services from abroad or the element of the time shift of income tax returns - calendar year versus calendar month of value added tax). An important fact associated with this tax reduction is the target pursued. In a significant number of cases, the primary purpose is not to shorten taxes, but to generate unaccounted funds used to corruptly influence (public) procurement and subsidy procedures, which significantly increases the dangerousness of the conduct. In contrast to the previous areas, to which foreign national promoters are mainly linked, tax evasion in connection with the provision of advertising services is purely domestic in nature.

Organised tax evasion associated with the provision of advertising services is characterised by the fact that the advertising services are actually provided, but their value is increased several times over the real price in the purpose-built structure of the companies involved (and controlled by the organisers). The inflated price is then paid to the 'person interested in this form of tax optimisation', usually in cash, after deduction of the commission.

For tax crimes, there has been a long-term decline in the recorded damage for individual offences, which is most noticeable in cases with damage exceeding CZK 150 million. This is the case for the most significant tax losses. **Carousel frauds, which resulted in the extortion of millions of euros in VAT refunds in the Czech Republic, no longer occur in the Czech Republic, as the activity has moved to other EU Member States.** The newly adopted legislative measures, in particular the introduction of control reporting or the use of seizure orders, have had a clearly positive impact on the fight against this crime.

VAT remains the most frequent target of attacks with the highest recorded damage. However, the aim of the vast majority of perpetrators is no longer to extort excessive deductions, but primarily to avoid paying VAT. However, an increasing number of perpetrators are also targeting the secondary "beneficial" impact of a lower tax base for income tax.

The modus operandi for tax crime remains essentially the same as in the past, with Missing Trader Intra-Community (MTIC) fraud remaining among the most frequent scams. This means that goods and services not subject to VAT enter the domestic market, or the declared taxable supply of services or sales of goods is wholly or partly fictitious. The Czech Police continues to encounter criminal groups specialising in the production of fictitious documents, not only tax documents for specific services (advertising or intermediary activities, cleaning services, etc.), but also simplified tax documents for various hobby markets with a value not exceeding CZK 10,000 for a fee, which then very often appear in the B3 control reports of interested parties.

In recent years, there has been a steady increase in the organisation (e.g. entire structures are being created - "stables" of straw men or purpose-built business chains) and sophistication of tax crime, including the increasing scale of tax evasion and the number of entities involved.

In cases of **customs fraud**, cases of circumvention of set customs or trade policy measures are continuously recorded. In addition to the deliberate declaration of imports of goods in favour of a non-contact or fictitious consignee in the capacity of taxable person (for customs regimes 40 00 and 42 00), primarily with a place of dispatch from China, following the coronavirus pandemic in the world and the outbreak of the war conflict in Ukraine, cases of non-standard trade operations in the case of trade with Turkey, accompanied by the so-called 'ATR certificate', have now begun to occur to a significant extent. An ATR certificate is a customs

certificate for the movement of commercial goods between Turkey and the European Union, providing preferential (largely zero) tariffs. The intention was that industrial goods could travel between the EU and Turkey without tariff restrictions. In reality, however, goods are deliberately imported into the European Union in this way which are not of Turkish origin, are sourced from other countries and have been shipped from Turkey with an ATR certificate granting their preferential origin, under the model of the aforementioned circumvention of customs rules through the proposed 40 00 or 42 00 tariff regimes.

In the future, we can expect increasing efforts by organised crime **to take their profits out of the country in order to reduce their tax liability**. This may include the use of tax havens, fictitious international transactions or illegal mechanisms to move capital abroad. Increasing efforts by companies to shift profits and costs through "transfer pricing" to reduce tax liability in different jurisdictions are expected in the future. Such practices may include artificially inflated invoice prices for international transactions or misreporting of costs in reports, all to avoid domestic income tax liability.

Primary VAT fraud (and associated MTIC fraud) can be expected to continue, with a secondary impact on income taxes. This may include falsification of income documents, unrealistic employment contracts, hidden income or shifting of income to foreign companies to reduce tax liabilities.

Public procurement and subsidies (including EU)

In relation to public procurement and EU subsidies, it is appropriate to note that this area is a **subject of long-standing interests of organised groups involved in the commission of crime**, given the significant source of funds. Organised crime related to public procurement, or its influence, and the distribution of EU subsidies is a deep-rooted and systemic problem. This crime, like tax crime, is becoming increasingly sophisticated and conspiratorial.

The area of illegal influence on public procurement remains a significant form of **corruption-related crime**. This type of crime is very difficult to detect and prove, given the involvement of organised groups of persons at various stages of the public procurement process, where it is not possible to prove the crime through witness testimonies and usually not even through official documentation. It is very difficult to penetrate the environment of these organised groups of perpetrators, as they are usually made up of persons who have been in the business environment for a long time and whose activities are usually linked by long-standing personal and business relationships.

As in previous periods, identical or similar unlawful acts have been detected in the construction, IT services, healthcare, cleaning and technical services sectors in connection with the awarding of public contracts under the Public Procurement Act. In particular, tendering procedures are purposely influenced in favour of a single bidder by the contracting authority setting unjustified, biased, purposeful and discriminatory qualification requirements for suppliers in the tender documentation. Corrupt practices are also detected in these cases. The basic principles of the tendering procedure are being denied and the competitive and competitive environment is being distorted. In some cases, these are public contracts that have been financed by subsidies, both at national and EU level.

In public procurement crime, the so-called "**pre-market consultation**" is now often abused. A contracting authority which illegally agrees with a tenderer on the award of a contract

subsequently defends itself by claiming that it has only carried out preliminary market consultations within the meaning of Section 33 of the Public Procurement Act. Contracting authorities are also more cautious in that it is no longer possible to tell at a glance from the award itself whether the contract is 'tailor-made' for a particular tenderer. However, in addition to the objective criteria of the contract, **subjective criteria** (e.g. 'quality of food', etc.) are often added to the tender itself, which then make it easier for selection committees to choose a pre-agreed bidder. Also, for example, an **unreasonably high security** is required as a condition of participation in the tender procedure or high contractual penalties are set for failure to fulfil certain obligations under the contract, but which the pre-arranged tenderers know, in agreement with the contracting authority, will not actually be enforced. These 'harsh' conditions then deter other potential tenderers from participating in the procurement procedure.

When detecting this crime, it is very important that the law enforcement authorities learn about it in time, i.e. while it is still being committed, so that they can react by deploying operational measures (wiretapping, surveillance, etc.), without which it would be difficult to prove this crime. The perpetrators tend to agree in advance to influence a particular public contract, often with the contracting authorities, whose decision is crucial to the award of the public contract to a particular entity.

In the well-known case of influencing contracts at the Na Homolce Hospital, the main perpetrator, the former director of the hospital, was sentenced **to forfeiture of his property**. This punishment is, in the decision-making practice of the courts, imposed quite rarely for particularly serious crimes by which the perpetrator obtained or tried to obtain a financial benefit, and this punishment may affect the entire property of the convicted person.

In 2020, the High State Prosecutor's Office in Prague filed indictments against 27 people in a case of organised and sophisticated **influence on the evaluation process of the selection of projects competing for subsidies from the NUTS II North-West Regional Operational Programme**. The case concerns the distribution of EU subsidies in the Ústí nad Labem Region and is extremely extensive in scope, involving a **total of CZK 14 billion in subsidies**.

In the area of damage to the EU's interests, there are also similar and identical types of offences as in previous years, which correspond to the offence of damage to the financial interests of the European Union under Section 260 of the Criminal Code. This involves the submission of false or grossly distorted documents on the basis of which funds from various national and EU funds are used unlawfully. Financial amounts charged for e.g. construction works, IT services or salaries are often falsely stated.

Other economic crime

Other areas where organised economic crime is detected are investment fraud, illegal gambling and illegal tobacco trade.

Investment fraud

In recent years, large-scale investment fraud or "Ponzi scheme" fraud has been detected. The operator of the fraudulent fund promises clients huge returns, they then trust him with their money and often reinvest it after the promised returns, delaying the collapse of the fraud. The

problem is that the scammer does not invest the funds entrusted to him and pays out the 'profits' to investors from the deposits of other clients. The lifespan of this fraudulent scheme tends to depend on the number of clients and the amount of funds received from them. The larger the number of clients or funds, the longer the scheme can operate. However, it is always doomed to failure and in most cases only a fraction of the victims will get their money back, who will only need to withdraw their deposits in time while the perpetrator is still trying to pretend that the funds entrusted to him are actually invested.

It is typical for these scams that they always promise a high and stable appreciation (e.g. tens of percent per year), which is not possible in real investment, e.g. on stock markets. The organised group here usually consists of fund operators and their subordinates, in particular sales agents, who solicit individual clients (victims). It is often difficult to prove that these so-called 'sales agents' are aware of fraudulent behaviour, as they often believe that the clients' funds are properly invested. **These cases are characterised by high numbers of victims** (up to several thousand) and a **huge amount of damage caused** (up to billions of CZK) and are very time-consuming to the work of the law enforcements agencies due to their scale.³⁰

Unauthorised gambling

Between 2014 and 2018, technical devices (**quiz machines**) were operated by an organised criminal group in violation of the law. Specifically, these perpetrators operated, organised, promoted and facilitated a gambling game which they declared as a knowledge or memory game, with the game taking place on winning technical devices. After the outbreak of the covid-19 pandemic, there was a significant decline in this criminal activity, due to the closure of the establishments where the technical devices were located. Gambling has therefore moved to the Internet, where the involvement of organised groups can be expected in the coming years.

The Financial Administration, in cooperation with the Customs Administration, detects an increase in the volume of criminal activity consisting in the illegal provision of **online gambling**, where gambling tax and income tax are being evaded. In order to eliminate the phenomenon, the Ministry of Finance has proposed a legislative amendment extending the competences of the CS as a police authority, so that the activities of the administrative authority (state supervision), the financial administration and the police authority (investigation of criminal activities) are systematically linked within the Ministry. Given the electronic aspect (rapid change of the location of the registration point and access to the game) and the foreign element of the operator, eliminating the phenomenon is very challenging.

Illicit tobacco trade

In the area of illegal trade in tobacco and tobacco products, **several autonomous illegal large-scale cigarette and tobacco factories** are **detected every year** in the Czech Republic. These are always production sources of a highly latent and diversified nature, fully controlled and organised by foreign criminal groups of a polycriminal nature, composed mainly of persons from the countries of the former Soviet Union. These are so-called 'offshore' illegal cigarette

³⁰ These cases are described in more detail in the analytical material produced on the basis of the Action Plan against Organised Crime for 2022 and 2023.

factories in the EU, which aim to satisfy the demand for untaxed and cheap tobacco products in Western European countries. This is a completely new trend and situation in the whole of Europe today, which can most likely be attributed to the losses suffered by criminal groups in recent years when smuggled cigarettes from the countries of the former Soviet Union were discovered being smuggled across the EU's external border.

The Czech Republic is also one of the countries exploited by traffickers in tobacco, non-tobacco materials (glues, filters, cigarette and filter paper, aluminium paper, box cuttings, etc.) and cigarette finishing and manufacturing machinery. In the Czech Republic, so-called ready-made shell companies are being set up to cover the activities of the illegal trade in tobacco and non-tobacco materials in Europe.

With rising excise duties on tobacco products, the volume of criminal activity in cigarette smuggling, illegal manufacture and distribution of cigarettes or false labelling of tobacco products is expected to increase.

Organised cybercrime

Organised cybercrime has undergone a turbulent evolution in recent years and has gradually reached a stage where the cybercriminal environment can be perceived as a complex ecosystem defined by several elements.

These elements include, in particular, **dynamism**, with individual groups often forming and dissolving within months to years, and members fluctuating across these groups. This dynamism makes efforts to suppress this type of crime much more difficult, as the disruption or outright dismantling of one group de facto results in its replacement by other groups.

Professionalisation is also a key element, which is manifested not only by the increasing sophistication of cybercriminal activities, but also by the orientation of actors towards maximising profit. Thus, within the cybercriminal environment, business models are emerging that replicate those of the legal economic sphere. A prime example is the so-called "as-a-service" model, which has been gradually adopted by cybercriminal actors. A higher degree of professionalisation is particularly evident in the ransomware scene, where, among other things, highly organised groups are operating, some of which are beginning to resemble classic commercial companies in many respects (e.g. structure, recruitment processes).

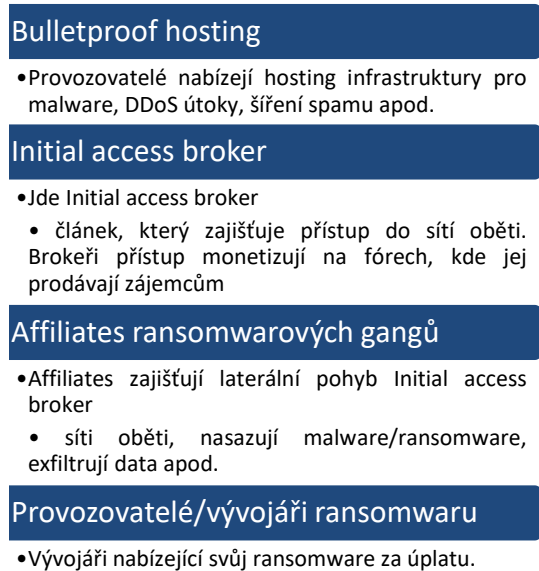
Another element of the current cybercrime ecosystem is **interactivity**. To some extent, this is linked to dynamism, where individual members move from one group to another, bringing with them previous ties and know-how. The current state of affairs, where a number of groups sell stolen data, services or tools (the cybercrime-as-a-service model), also facilitates the mutual communication and cooperation of individual actors. Thus, in the execution of a single attack, there is often real involvement of several different cybercrime actors (see figure below).

One of the significant current trends in the cybercrime scene is that it is becoming increasingly accessible to less technically skilled actors. This is due, among other things, to the **development of the so-called cybercrime-as-a-service model**. Under this model, cybercrime actors offer their services on the black market (in particular through darkweb websites), which can be purchased by actors without sufficient technical knowledge and resources. Specifically, this may include ransomware or other types of malware, access to already compromised systems, complex services for phishing campaigns or, for example, direct vishing.

This situation allows virtually anyone with sufficient financial resources to use tools or services to carry out cyber-attacks. This makes malicious cyber activity more accessible, even to relatively unsophisticated attackers. Given the growing popularity of this model, which brings with it large profits, competition is also increasing, which in turn leads to a wider range of products, but also to a reduction in price. This in turn makes the services and tools provided more accessible to a wider range of potential buyers.

A specific threat in this regard is ransomware-as-a-service (RaaS), which has been dominating the ransomware scene since the end of 2019. The RaaS model relies on ransomware developers offering it to other cybercriminal actors (affiliates) in exchange for a share of the profits. This model, which can also include other actors (see figure below), allows perpetrators to achieve high victim numbers and thus maximise their profits.

Figure 1 - Example of the RaaS model



Source.

It should be noted that despite the significant presence of the RaaS model within the ransomware scene, there are still a number of ransomware groups that do not use this model. Even these groups are capable of achieving a significant number of victims and continue to pose a significant threat.

In recent years, perpetrators of ransomware attacks have increasingly started to use multiple extortion schemes. Apart from traditional encryption, it can also include data exfiltration and threat of data disclosure, DDoS³¹ attacks to increase pressure on the victim or contacting the victim's customers or partners to further increase pressure for ransom payments. Payment of ransoms is usually made through cryptocurrencies, primarily due to the complexity of their routing or the possibility of laundering the proceeds of crime through their use.

The development of the ransomware scene is very dynamic, which is also reflected to some extent in the Czech cyberspace. In addition to established trends such as RaaS or multiple extortion, other emerging trends such as the so-called extortion-only approach can be identified. In this type of ransomware attack, the attackers do not encrypt the victims' data. Instead, they merely exfiltrate them and threaten to start publishing them if the victim does not pay the ransom.

In recent years, there have been several major ransomware attacks on important government offices and institutions, but also on some strategic enterprises. Although proving the structure of an organised criminal group is very difficult, at least at the outset of a case investigation, in many of these attacks there can be no dispute that they are clearly organised and targeted at

31 A DDoS attack is a cyber-attack that aims to restrict or disable the services of computer systems. Typically, it is either the generation of a large number of spoofed requests to overwhelm a system and/or transmission path, or it is a sophisticated attack on weaknesses in the target system and/or transmission path.

a particular type of victim. Similarly, in the case of seemingly less damaging distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks on the websites of strategic entities, the aim is to overwhelm the targeted Internet service by using a large number of computers from different geographical locations. Examples include attacks on the Czech Railways website to prevent online ticket purchases, or attacks on the websites of the Ministry of the Interior or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In 2019 and 2020, the nature of ransomware campaigns has also changed, with a decrease in the number of technically simpler, broad-based attacks, but an increase in more targeted and sophisticated attacks. Attackers used the covid-19 pandemic theme in phishing emails, targeted spear-phishing and ransomware campaigns to increase the success rate of their attacks. In contrast, in 2022, the number of ransomware attacks did not grow and, in particular, ransomware attacks were no longer as massive as in earlier years.

In the case of **DDoS attacks**, this is one of the most common types of attack. Their aim is usually to prevent the availability of certain services, often, for example, the websites of some major government institutions or large enterprises or media houses. Although these attacks are frequent, they do not usually cause very significant damage. In contrast to other types of cyber-attacks, DDoS attacks may not be motivated by a desire to gain financial gain, but rather by the perpetrators' desire to harm an entity, or by activist motives - see below.

Cases where the aim of the attackers is to counteract the interests of the Czech Republic in favour of the interests of another state occur in **connection with Russian aggression against Ukraine**. Most likely, primarily Russian hacker groups are conducting attack operations, e.g. on websites of major entities operating in the Czech Republic that somehow support Ukraine in its fight against Russia. In the vast majority of cases, these are nationalist hacking groups operating from the territory of the Russian Federation or territories occupied by the Russian Federation. Such a situation poses quite a challenge for law enforcement authorities. This adds an extra dimension to the already quite complex task of obtaining electronic evidence in the international legal environment, as the activities of these groups take advantage of the security provided by the state in whose favour they operate. This is effectively one of the major manifestations of hybrid attacks carried out or at least supported by a state actor.

Recently, also as a result of the Russian aggression against Ukraine, the activities of cybercriminal groups have been developing from Ukrainian territory. They focus on a wide range of online scams, which use social engineering methods to target victims in the Czech Republic (both Czech citizens and refugees residing on our territory).

This includes, for example, the perpetration of so-called **reverse advertising fraud**, which begins with the initial contact of a victim who advertises the sale of goods on the internet. The perpetrators, operating in a call centre in Ukraine, then convince the victim of their interest in the advertised goods, using psychological methods to direct them to the websites of fake shipping companies or to fake websites of banking institutions. Here they then obtain sensitive personal data and information, which they use to **penetrate the victim's electronic banking system**, from which they subsequently withdraw significant funds.

In the context of the **phishing** issue³², we have recently encountered so-called topped advertising, i.e. paid advertising. As a result, internet users who search for e-banking websites by entering a query into a search engine are presented with fraudulent websites instead of the real bank's website in the first places in the search results and lose their login details when they try to log in. These attacks are much more sophisticated than in the past, as they are now fully adapted to the Czech internet environment and **cannot be easily detected due to grammatical errors**. The links used to download malicious software to the user's computer or phone appear very credible. As in the past, this criminal activity is mainly organised by persons from the republics of the former Soviet Union, whereby other persons in the Czech Republic set up an account to which money is sent from the victim's account and which is immediately withdrawn in cash or forwarded outside the Czech Republic. Detecting and prosecuting the perpetrators of these attacks, especially the organisers who are not in the Czech Republic, is very difficult. Phishing attacks have increased significantly as a result of the covid-19 pandemic, not least because people have been restricted in their movements and have started to use the Internet more to purchase goods and services.

Spoofing, which consisted of displaying the actual number of a trusted institution on the caller's mobile phone, even though the caller was a person acting fraudulently, also appears in an innovative form in so-called investment fraud. In these cases, the perpetrators display an advertisement on social media featuring a well-known personality (e.g. Petr Pavel, Petr Fiala) and tell the future victims that it is profitable to invest in, for example, ČEZ shares. After leaving their contact details, the prospective buyer is immediately contacted by the fake broker and convinced to make an "investment", which in reality consists in stealing their internet banking login details and then withdrawing all the funds from their account. This distinguishes this type of crime from investment fraud described in another chapter, where victims entrust their funds to the perpetrators entirely voluntarily.

These types of fraudulent acts, which also take various other forms (e.g., fake banker, fraudulent job advertising, fraudulent provision of social assistance), have caused damage to victims in the Czech Republic in the tens or hundreds of millions of crowns. Although these are not entirely new types of online fraud, it is now possible to observe a significantly higher quality and sophistication among perpetrators. Victims are communicated with by persons who speak flawless Czech, fraudulent websites are characterised by a high level of sophistication and often only a very attentive visitor can tell the difference from the genuine, original website.

Perpetrators also take advantage of **encrypted communication** through applications such as Telegram. Obtaining information from foreign operators of these platforms is very difficult or impossible. This is partly because of the principle on which these applications operate (end-to-end encryption) and partly because some of these companies have based their business model on non-cooperation with law enforcement. Despite this, in these cases, it has been possible to detect such criminal activity, also on the basis of very good cooperation with the Ukrainian security authorities.

It is still true in the Czech Republic and throughout Europe that cybercrime and cybercrime in cyberspace are facilitated by **low legal and technical awareness of the public** combined with

32 Phishing usually takes the form of an email, SMS, phone call or social networking message in which the attacker tries to convince the victim to provide sensitive information, open a link leading to a malicious site from which to download malicious code or open an infected file. It may also be an attempt to directly extort funds from the victim.

relatively limited ability to detect, prevent and defend against attacks using information technology. Another problem is the lack of regulation, which is lagging far behind the dynamic development of information technology, both at national and European level. While encryption, the use of cryptocurrencies, the use of biometrics to authenticate access and transactions are already standard, as is the storage of data in remote repositories, the legal frameworks of individual countries and the European Union as a whole lag behind in the regulation of these services. Law enforcement authorities face the limitation of not being able to measure certain data (electronic evidence) for criminal proceedings, as they do not have the legal tools to obtain this data. The problems in setting up a legal framework for regulating this area are mainly due to the conflict between the needs of law enforcement authorities to invade the privacy of users in order to clarify these forms of crime and the degree of protection of the fundamental rights and freedoms of these users, in particular the degree of protection of their privacy when using information technology.

The current legal framework, which does not oblige providers to register data on the use of VPN and encryption services, is limiting for police authorities. These technologies are also used by perpetrators of serious crimes, enabling them to operate anonymously in the internet or darknet environment. At the same time, however, it should be added that end-to-end encryption technology is an important security feature that increases the security of the relevant communication system and there is no consensus in the Czech Republic on the need to restrict or regulate it at the moment. Moreover, regulatory restrictions on encryption could imply an obligation for providers of these services to reduce the level of security of the service in question.

In relation to the most serious organised crime in cyberspace, the amendment to the Criminal Code, specifically **the change to the criminal offence of terrorist attack**, which allows for the punishment of cyber-terrorist attacks against critical infrastructure computer (information) systems, attacks affecting a large number of computer systems using a computer program created or adapted for such an attack, or attacks that cause significant damage, can be considered significant.

In the future, **a further steep increase in cybercrime is expected**, both in absolute numbers and as a share of total registered crime. It can be assumed that this type of crime will also become dominant in the activities of organised crime groups at some point in time.

It can be assumed that, rather than through the time and technology consuming creation of their own malware, criminal groups will achieve their goals using ready-made final products offered, for example, through the darkweb.

Hostile activity by state actors will increasingly take place through sophisticated and anonymous attacks in cyberspace. Artificial intelligence will become more dominant despite efforts to regulate it, automating and facilitating some serious criminal activities. The total financial damage caused by cybercriminals to individual and corporate victims is likely to reach huge sums.

Crimes against the environment

Illegal waste management

In 2021, the NCOZ SKPV started a systematic elaboration of criminal organisations focused mainly on the commission of criminal activities resulting in environmental damage. It is very difficult or impossible to commit environmental crime on a large scale without a criminal organisation or structure. According to the knowledge gained from the work carried out so far, this crime is largely organised internationally or at least across borders, involving the territory of countries neighbouring the Czech Republic.

During the elaboration, it was found that in organised environmental crime there is a direct correlation between the increasing pressure on the environmental behaviour of EU member states and their citizens and the motivation to violate legal norms regulating waste management. This claim is supported by the results of the Europol analysis. In fact, more thorough and better disposal of any waste requires more energy, the prices of which have risen radically in the last two years, not only in the Czech Republic. The dramatically rising prices for disposal thus offer a dramatically increasing rate of criminal profits associated with the imperfect or only pretended disposal of such waste (export, illegal dumping, etc.).

Organised environmental crime has long been linked to criminal activity in the acquisition of public contracts, not only contracts for the disposal of currently generated waste, but also contracts for the remediation of environmental damage that occurred before 1989. This organised criminal activity is also very often closely linked to criminal activity in the form of tax evasion or other compulsory charges, in particular waste disposal charges paid to the municipality in whose landfill site is located.

Public contracts related to the removal of old environmental burdens (SEZ), or generally environmental burdens to which the state or the EU contributes with subsidies, are perceived as potentially problematic. Some of the SEZs have already been removed in the Czech Republic in the past, but according to the opinion of the Czech Environmental Protection Agency, there are still a large number of contaminated sites in the Czech Republic (these may be landfills, industrial and agricultural sites, unsecured storage sites for hazardous substances, former military bases, areas affected by mineral extraction, abandoned and closed storage sites for mining waste posing serious risks, etc.). In the event of a public contract for their removal, this could lead to 'under-pricing' of waste management (i.e. engaging in a public contract with a bid that is lower than the 'normal price' for waste management in the region) with the aim of disposing of waste below the applicable environmental standards.

In recent years, there have also been a growing number of activities such as **illegal cross-border shipments of waste from abroad** for the purpose of disposal in the Czech Republic, for which forged documents on the origin of waste are used or false information is provided in the documents. There are also cases of illegal disposal or dumping of waste from domestic originators at unauthorised sites, whereby fictitious documents are subsequently created for its disposal at an approved facility. Most of the people involved in this criminal activity are Czech citizens, often using straw men.

The most frequent violations of the law detected by the inspection authorities were: transport of waste without consent, i.e. without the necessary or correctly filled in documents, import to a recipient who is not authorised to receive the imported waste, pretended receipt and use

of waste for the purpose of subsequent disposal, or import for energy recovery without a permit. The so-called 'green list' waste regime or the 'commodity' regime is abused to facilitate the process. Imported waste is often declared as waste for recovery and recycling, but in reality, has similarities with, for example, treated municipal waste. The real purpose of the import is then **illegal dumping of waste**, the creation of illegal warehouses (black dumps) or illegal recovery by backfilling. There are also cases of falsified accompanying documents for illegal cross-border shipments of municipal waste, which indicate organised and deliberate violations of waste management regulations. Through this illegal activity, participants in cross-border shipments are not only trying to address the lack of recycling capacity, but are also gaining unjustified financial benefits linked to the waste market.

Furthermore, the ČIŽP repeatedly encounters cases where it has not been possible to trace the actual handling of hazardous waste during the inspection. These are cases where the generator or authorised person most often transfers waste to a so-called mobile facility, the operator of which does not have stationary equipment, i.e. the waste is only transported and "weighed" by a vehicle, but in the records of onward transfers to persons authorised to handle waste, false information is given or not given at all.

Often, waste treatment methods are reported in the waste records in a seemingly correct way, but in reality, the declared treatment or processing has not taken place and the records do not correspond to reality. The operators of these facilities often do not cooperate with the ČIŽP in control operations (concealment of the actual treatment) and the ČIŽP, as a supervisory authority, loses knowledge of the real fate of the waste. As a result, for example, waste is disposed of as other category waste in landfills, where no statutory fee is paid, or it is just "piled up". Also problematic is the fact that waste is often collected in unsecured locations with a high risk of environmental hazards. In some cases, liquid hazardous waste is disposed of as ordinary wastewater.

In general, it can be stated that for hazardous waste, the modern operandi is the purposeful reclassification of waste in the chain of companies that transfer waste or the non-classification of a movable item as waste (e.g. purposeful substitution of waste for waste water, by-product, product, etc.), or directly to final disposal facilities (landfill sites with solidification and decontamination lines, neutralisation and de-emulsification plants), where waste is ultimately disposed of in facilities that are not technologically designed for this purpose.

In the future, **an increase in the scale of crime associated with the obligation to pay for the storage and treatment of waste or the disposal of environmental burdens is expected.** Corruption networks will be created in the state administration and public self-government, especially in connection with smaller contracts, i.e. up to 100 million euros. In the case of public procurement of less than CZK 100 million. Criminal activity related to the renovation of public buildings (often triggered by requirements to reduce their energy consumption) and the subsequent disposal of hazardous waste will come to the fore. There may also be fictitious overestimation of the level of contamination and therefore overestimation of the prices of related public contracts.

Furthermore, between 2025 and 2027, there will be increasing pressure on the import of waste that will be passed off as waste originating in the Czech Republic, or the import will not be covered up, but the waste will be passed off as raw material for further production. There will be an increase in criminal activity related to the disposal of fictitious waste in the form of over-reporting of the (usually) actual volume of municipal waste produced by a private

business entity that is paid from public money to dispose of this waste. There will also be a significant increase in the concealment or imperfect disposal of industrial waste (often in the form of setting up fictitious business entities offering waste disposal).

illegal trade in protected species of wild fauna and flora

The Czech Republic plays an important role in trade in protected plant and animal species as both a **transit and destination country**. On the basis of past cases, it has been proven that organised groups are operating in the Czech Republic, mainly dealing in highly profitable commodities such as ivory, rhino horns, tiger products, etc. **The Vietnamese community living in the Czech Republic** is largely involved in this trade, and they are also the majority of offenders in illegal imports of traditional Asian medicine into the Czech Republic containing endangered species. Another group of people involved in illegal activities involving endangered species are breeders of exotic animals (e.g. rare species of parrots, reptiles, etc.) and hunters for illegal hunting trophies and killing of wild animals.

Illegal handling and **trade in big cats and their products for traditional Asian medicine** remains the most problematic in this area. The Czech Republic is a breeding power, given the hundreds of big felines kept in pet farms. Following the previously identified illegal export of tiger parts from the Czech Republic, a criminal network linking breeders, preparation sites, carcass disposal sites and consumers (exporters) can be assumed to exist. Within the framework of the implementation of the Action Plan for Combating Illegal Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora until 2023, a number of measures have been taken to improve the cooperation of the relevant state administration bodies in this area.

In addition to highly organised groups, the market for protected species also includes professional and amateur breeders and growers, collectors, trophy hunters, and tourists (corals, shells). Live specimens of animals and plants are traded for the purpose of further cultivation or breeding, including breeding animals (e.g. monkeys, felines, parrots, reptiles) as pets. The most commonly traded plant species are orchids and succulents. The inanimate parts (e.g. rhino horn, tiger bones, scales of bushmeat) are used in traditional Asian medicine or as food (bushmeat). Products made from inanimate parts are collected or traded as artwork (e.g. ivory, exotic woods), clothing and fashion accessories (snakeskin, fur, fur fabrics, coral). The ivory trade in many cases involves antiquities dealers, and the covid-19 pandemic and the Russian aggression against Ukraine have seen a shift of these activities into cyberspace.

At the borders of the Czech Republic (international airports), specimens protected by the CITES Convention are confiscated to an undiminished extent³³. Mostly these are individually imported items and preparations used in so-called traditional Asian medicine.

Hunting trophies are another important commodity for which it can be assumed that imports and trade could be coordinated. The hunting community in the Czech Republic is very strong, given the hunting traditions, and connected to a large group of preparators. Organised crime in the form of illegal handling of dead specimens of protected species is thus seamlessly linked to the illegal actions of individuals, or rather it stems from a very broad base of producers, processors and subsequent users of preparations. A number of proceedings related to the illegal origin of owned and processed trophies have already been definitively terminated and

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other proceedings (criminal, administrative) are ongoing. Some of the illegal imports currently under investigation are likely to have been carried out by containerised shipping - in this case, links between persons from the country of origin and the owner of the trophy can be assumed.

According to UNODC data, wildlife crime, including the illegal trade in tropical timber, is currently one of the most important areas of crime worldwide. It is the fourth most profitable illegal business after drugs, arms and human trafficking, with an estimated volume of tens of billions of dollars per year. The illicit trade in valuable commodities such as ivory, rhino horn and others is often linked to terrorist groups and serves as a source of funding for their activities.

In the future, it can be assumed that the planned further development of analytical tools could help to uncover more cases of international organised crime in the field of illegal trade in endangered species.

Illegal employment

In the past, illegal employment was not considered one of the main activities of organised criminal groups in the Czech Republic, but in recent years, groups that used to focus more on tax fraud have moved into this area. Information recorded by the Ministry of the Interior over a long period of time shows the existence of a continuing trend of abuse of the vulnerable position of non-EU labour migrants by employment intermediaries in the Czech Republic and by non-serious employers. In particular, foreigners from culturally and geographically distant countries with low levels of education are at risk of being recruited to perform low-skilled occupations with basic wages. Their vulnerability is also related to their ignorance of the rights of employees (and tenants, consumers, etc.) guaranteed by Czech law. This leads to easier violations of their working and wage conditions guaranteed by the Labour Code and non-compliance with other legal provisions by entities that enrich themselves financially at the expense of these foreigners. Often these are natural and legal persons operating on the basis of so-called **disguised employment mediation**, companies run by straw men, "shell" companies that are not contactable by the Czech state authorities, etc. In many cases, such companies are managed by compatriots of abused foreigners, who find it easier to use communication in a common language and knowledge of the mentality of the abused persons.

War refugees from Ukraine, who are granted temporary protection by the Czech Republic and the associated free access to the Czech labour market, are also at a higher risk of vulnerability abuse. The employment of these persons is not subject to authorisation by the state authorities and thus does not involve the use of the security safeguards associated with the standard labour migration process. In this process, prospective employers of foreigners are screened for their seriousness, both when they are included in government migration programmes and in the administrative procedure for foreigners' residence permits. Similarly, the conditions of accommodation of foreigners in the territory of the Czech Republic are also checked in advance. The arrival of these persons and the restrictions on the regulation of their employment have created room for many entities that were excluded from the normal system of managed labour migration as a result of the application of security rules.

This area has long been associated with **the crime of tax and insurance fraud**, which the Financial Administration has been detecting since 2016 and the public authorities have not yet been able to effectively eliminate it. In the long term, labour brokers are massively involved in disguised employment brokering linked to illegal work of persons of Ukrainian origin (formally,

the provision of labour is disguised as the implementation of work contracts). Currently, this activity causes losses to the Czech Republic in value added tax, but also in income tax (from dependent activities) and, above all, insurance (health and social security). This has also been reflected in the integration of persons who fled the war in Ukraine into the system of illegal employment, including persons who had previously been duly integrated into employers with the help of instruments of the public administration of the Czech Republic. The organisers are committing a systemic and fiscally extremely substantial damage to the budgets (especially in the area of health and social insurance and, secondarily, income tax). Expert estimates of the fiscal impact of this conduct amount to at least the lower units of billions of crowns per year.

It can be assumed that in the coming years, the current trend of focusing labour brokers on EU citizens with free access to the labour market in the Czech Republic will continue, whereby only the obligation to report to the state administration is sufficient for their employment and it is not necessary to deal with visa issues. This will be the case in particular for citizens from Romania and Bulgaria.

Other areas of organised crime activity

In addition to the above-mentioned and to a certain extent „traditional“ areas of activity of organised crime groups, their occurrence was also noted in the following areas.

Organised burglary and robbery

In this area, too, there is a marked increase in crime across national borders. Organised groups are made up of Czech citizens, but also of organised groups of foreigners, mainly from Romania, Moldova, Georgia, Albania and Ukraine, who are constantly moving around the area and whose focus is very diverse. In the period under review, a series of break-ins were recorded in various buildings, such as **tobacco and electronics shops** (with a focus on mobile phones), **jewellery and luxury watch shops**, offices, warehouses, family houses, ATMs, and even fire stations, with a temporary lull during the covid-19 pandemic.

Especially on the territory of the capital city of Prague. Prague, robberies of shops selling luxury jewellery and watches are committed by organised groups not settled in the Czech Republic. Most often the perpetrators are Serbs who select suitable objects in advance and use the threat of a short firearm during the actual perpetration, they are very fast and well organised. They leave the place immediately after the crime. Organised groups are then generated from the Baltic States and the St Petersburg area, which also target luxury goods shops, but use brutal physical violence against shop staff.

Since 2020, there has been an increase in robberies committed against money changers and other private individuals carrying larger amounts of cash. These robberies are committed by groups of perpetrators from Georgia, who usually arrive in the Czech Republic from Poland a few days before the robbery and search for and follow potential victims.

Fraud on the elderly

This is a specific type of crime that is widespread throughout Europe and is specialized in by organised groups of Wallachian Roma living abroad, mostly in Poland and Germany. It is based

on the misuse of the contact details of potential victims - elderly people published in an online telephone directory. Prospective victims are contacted from abroad and, under various legends that are modified over the years, are extorted for cash. Typically this is the legend of a grandchild in financial need, but also the legend of a relative who needs immediate financial help after a car accident, etc. Seniors are asked by callers to hand over the cash to unknown persons (so-called takers, who are also members of an organised group, or taxi drivers) who transport the money outside the Czech Republic or send it to the bank accounts of the perpetrators, from which ATM withdrawals are made abroad.

The short-term decline in this crime was forced by the restrictions on free movement between European countries as a result of the covid-19 pandemic, after which it quickly returned to its previous level. In an effort to protect society from the consequences of these criminal activities, **extensive awareness-raising campaigns** were therefore carried out at national, regional and local level in the second half of 2021 and early the following year, and the search for contacts in the directory was made more difficult in cooperation with the operator of the Internet telephone directory. **Thanks to these prevention activities, not a single act has been registered in the country since February 2022.**

Fraudulent truck transportation of goods

This is a highly sophisticated and organised cross-border crime that requires thorough preparation. The perpetrators always come from several countries (Ukraine, Slovakia, Poland, Serbia) and move across Europe to commit their crimes. This crime is based on the theft of new goods from production plants or warehouses during their transport and takes advantage of the fact that the transport companies do not pay for the goods, they only arrange the transport on the basis of a transport contract negotiated between the production (warehousing) entity and the customer (seller of the goods). **The most frequent thefts occur in the context of international truck transport.** Information obtained in the framework of international cooperation shows that several such well-organised groups operate in the EU.

On the part of the perpetrators, knowledge of the principles of international trucking, familiarity with the functioning of state administration bodies and entities dealing with international trucking (e.g. the Ministry of Transport, insurance companies, trade authorities) is a prerequisite in all EU countries. Unfortunately, perpetrators are also well acquainted with police investigation tactics and procedures of law enforcement agencies, they are familiar with the definitions (legal boundaries) of offences, often through cooperation with former police officers acting as defence lawyers. They use state-of-the-art technology and forged identity documents and registration plates. They benefit from the logistical support of local bosses who are sent to the various states where they are domesticated. The situation on the eastern borders of the Schengen area (between Ukraine and Slovakia, or Ukraine and Hungary) is also abused; there have been cases of stolen cargo passing through as humanitarian aid for Ukraine or bribing border guards.

The modus operandi appears in several variations. In the past, transport companies were set up deliberately for the purpose of committing crime, or entire existing transport companies or shares in them were bought out. More recently, however, there have been more frequent cases of theft of the identity of an existing company on a so-called freight exchange, impersonation of a shipping company in communication with a customer (both of which take

place in cyberspace), or the ingenious diversion of shipments to another warehouse. However, these are always highly sophisticated methods.

In the course of 2019-2022, more than 15 people were arrested in the Czech Republic in connection with trucking, including truck drivers and local bosses. The stolen goods were seized and returned to the original owners. On average, there are 20 partial attacks per year in the Czech Republic, but the analysis shows that one act reported in the Czech Republic is followed by about 5 to 15 other acts in other EU countries. This means that one fraudulent company can commit a larger number of acts across Europe at any one time. These may then not be reported at all, or may not be reported at one central point in the country concerned, so that criminal proceedings are uncoordinated in several places or in several countries at the same time.

Drilling of pipelines

From 2016 to 2019, cases of drilling of the Czech Republic's pipeline system managed by ČEPRO and subsequent illegal pumping of transported products were recorded. While some of the drilling was carried out relatively professionally, there was no element of organisation in the conduct.

The year 2019 was a landmark year, when Russian-speaking organised groups drilled pipelines in the Pilsen and Central Bohemia regions, their procedure being very sophisticated and professional. The extraction points were several hundred metres away from the pipeline system and in both cases were located in a shipping container equipped with professional controls necessary for the extraction of large quantities of product. The stolen fuel was exported abroad. Operational investigations indicated that Russian-language organised groups would continue to attack pipelines in the Czech Republic in the coming years, however, the covid-19 pandemic and later Russian aggression against Ukraine stopped the drilling and **no similar cases have been recorded since 2019**.

Insolvency proceedings

In some cases, insolvency proceedings are abused in a sophisticated way and represent a tool for the legalization of illegal conduct with criminal overlap. These are sophisticated and long-prepared tort methods of cooperation of certain parties to the proceedings with third parties, which usually interfere with other insolvency proceedings, or manipulation of insolvency proceedings. These situations may be different.

In insolvency cases, scenarios have emerged in relation to organised crime in which a group of persons, through other "front" companies to which links are concealed, acquire a large part of the debtor's claims against a debtor in financial difficulties in order to obtain its assets at the expense of other creditors or the debtor himself. Given the fact that this group holds a sufficient number of claims, it can gain significant influence to manipulate the course of the insolvency proceedings. Depending on the nature of the insolvency proceedings, the group will seize the debtor's assets either through a reorganisation or through 'free hand' monetisation. Practices may include not only coordinated voting by covertly connected companies (see cases of prohibition of voting under Section 53 of the Insolvency Act), but also filing fictitious claims or promoting a "proprietary" insolvency administrator, etc. These sophisticated unauthorised practices, which are contrary to the basic principles of insolvency

proceedings, are not easy to detect and adequately respond to, as they are carried out covertly and exploit weaknesses in insolvency law.

Recently, there have also been cases in this area where insolvency proceedings have been initiated by quasi-employees of the debtor so that a (unjustified) claim for unpaid wages can be subsequently filed with the Czech Labour Office. The insolvency claimants - employees of the debtor, whose claim consists only in labour law claims, are not burdened with the obligation to pay a deposit for the costs of the insolvency proceedings, so this scenario is without financial risk for the actors in case of abuse. In the case of abuse, it is usually the case that the non-functioning debtor is taken over by a third party, the employees are then formally (apparently, in reality they do not and should not do any work) employed and are not paid their wages, and in the sense of the above scheme, they file an insolvency petition with the insolvency court and then turn to the competent labour office with a claim for payment of the wages owed. Even these cases are not easy to detect and prove.

More recently, insolvency has also been affected by cases where people have been enticed by financial advisers (or persons in a similar position) to invest in risky instruments (bonds, notes, cryptocurrencies, etc.), either through a standard Ponzi scheme or other fraudulent scheme. These investment services cases have often resulted in insolvency proceedings and are regularly the subject of criminal proceedings. Cases of these types of fraud are mentioned because they involve the risk of manipulation of insolvency proceedings by a group of individuals who participated in the fraud in order to cover up prior wrongdoing.

5. TOOLS OF ORGANISED CRIME

This part of the text deals with the cross-cutting tools of organised crime that are most often used for and in connection with the commission of crime. In general, criminal groups seek to conduct their activities in a manner similar to business, while also working hard to suppress them and also having a need to freely dispose of any financial gains - to launder the proceeds of crime.

The perpetrators are often very familiar with forensic methods, so they most often use encrypted mobile applications (WhatsApp, Viber, Signal, etc.) or encrypted phones to communicate with each other. Encrypted data storage devices such as computer hard drives and portable media are also a problem. Virtual currencies, such as Bitcoin, are increasingly used as a means to launder the proceeds of crime, which are stored in virtual wallets and are not easy for law enforcement authorities to siphon off. The aforementioned difficulty in identifying the owners of virtual currencies is also aided by the knowledge and orientation of users of this commodity in this area. Straw men usually act for a small fee in the statutory bodies of defective companies and who do not know the real organisers of the criminal activity, are an increasingly used tool of organised crime.

Communications Technology

In recent years, we cannot speak of the creation of any significantly new technology or tool for committing crimes in cyberspace. Rather, we can note an increasing awareness of these technologies among criminals. **They are increasingly moving away from conventional calls and SMS in favour of modern methods of communication** (text, voice, multimedia content, file transfer, etc.) enabling **end-to-end encrypted transmission** via a data stream usually provided by foreign entities. As a consequence, the value of the content of secured common communication and metadata decreases. For example, the Telegram application allows the creation of a large number of anonymous channels for direct communication.

The aforementioned encrypted communication options represent one of the biggest and still unsolved challenges for law enforcement authorities. In these cases, the possibilities of conducting interception of offenders' communications are increasingly limited or impossible. Some **encrypted email services**, such as those offered by the Swiss platform ProtonMail, are also a major problem. In general, it is no longer possible to consider obtaining the content of the communication from the service provider, but only the metadata. In conjunction with the use of TOR anonymisation tools, the identification of tech-savvy perpetrators is very difficult. **VPN and VPS technology** has also traditionally been used for anonymisation.³⁴

A separate area of anonymisation is the use of so-called **spoofing applications**, i.e. applications that allow a caller's phone number to be changed in order to carry out internet fraud. In this area, there is a lack of technical means of identifying the true telephone number, already on the part of the telecommunications service providers. Calls are often made from abroad, with the foreign provider passing the call to the domestic provider and the calling number appearing to be a normal Czech telephone number.

³⁴ Virtual Private Network and Virtual Private Server - both of these technologies are used to obfuscate the actual IP address of the device from which the communication takes place

The abuse of software that allows **remote access to the computer**, e.g. Anydesk, TeamViewer, Supremo, which the victim installs on his/her own computer according to the instructions of the perpetrator (typically a fake bank broker), is also a phenomenon nowadays. The perpetrators then extort access details to the victim's internet banking from the victim under a plausible pretext. As a result, the perpetrator takes over the bank account ("enslaves" it) and abuses it for his own purposes, but of course without the knowledge of the account holder.

One of the current trends is the use of mobile phones with encrypted communication platforms, which has been observed in the area of drug crime. They cannot be used for normal traffic, but are only used for communication using the relevant network of encrypted terminals. Such a phone has additional functionalities that essentially make it impossible to locate. Communication within organised groups then takes place mainly within special encrypted applications.

Organised crime also makes extensive use of **cloud storage**³⁵, which is typically equipped with advanced security measures and encryption, making it impossible for law enforcement agencies to secure, decrypt and subsequently analyse the data.

The use of anonymous prepaid SIM cards, which allow perpetrators to keep their identities secret, remains evergreen, as do cheap disposable phones.

In the area of mobile networks, it is essential to take into account the emerging 5th generation mobile network. If the current services for the Police of the Czech Republic are to be maintained, the 5G Standalone solution that can be expected in some locations of the Czech Republic will bring the need for further technical development. Legislative amendments to the Electronic Communications Act may also be necessary.

Darknet and darkweb

The virtual marketplaces on the darknet are showing some decline compared to previous years. This is due, among other things, to internationally coordinated police crackdowns on the largest of these marketplaces. In recent years, the following marketplaces have been decommissioned, among others - Hydra, DarkMarket, Monopoly Market and Wall Street Market.

In particular, large-scale producers of addictive substances from the Netherlands remain active here. The advantage of these marketplaces for drug distribution lies in the absence of the need to build up a network of contacts in the physical world, as well as in the reduction of the costs and risks of drug distribution. The anticipated development in this area is likely to be an increasing reduction of virtual marketplaces in the darknet environment. They will be maintained only for the sale of addictive and illegal substances in large volumes by organised groups, with subsequent distribution by commercial courier and delivery services. **Ordinary users will switch to local distribution using Telegram, Threema or similar communication applications.**

Detecting virtual marketplaces that only operate for a limited period of time is problematic. This may occur due to operators' concerns about their detection, or in a situation where the operator steals the customer's deposited payment funds in the form of cryptocurrencies.

³⁵ Cloud storage is a service that allows you to store files on a virtual storage or remote server of the service provider.

The darkweb environment continues to be used extensively for certain types of trading, such as ransomware malware and weapons. It also continues to be used to exchange information between hackers, or to showcase their successes, and to publish and sell the data of various entities (individuals and companies) obtained in cyber-attacks.

Corruption

All types of criminal structures (Asian, Russian-speaking, domestic and, to a lesser extent, Balkan) are used by all types of criminal structures to penetrate state and local government bodies. Domestic structures focus on areas and authorities within the scope of corruption infiltrations, which are responsible for influencing public procurement, while, for example, Vietnamese criminal structures primarily focus on the areas of customs and tax payment (the Customs Administration of the Czech Republic) or tax payment (the Financial Administration of the Czech Republic).

In corruption cases, the modus operandi is roughly the same. It concerns not only the aforementioned public procurement, but also other ways of handling public funds, such as subsidies. In addition to the usual trends of corruption in the activities of state and local government bodies, corrupt acts in the field of sport in connection with the influence of sports matches are still being recorded. A specific area with a high impact of corruption risk is the upcoming state tenders in the strategic areas of energy, communications, transport, arms industry, etc.

IKSP research has also addressed the issue of corruption. The following table presents the opinion of experts on the use of corruption by organised crime groups in 2020, 2021 and 2022.

Table 11 - Experts' views on the use of corruption by organised crime groups

	Amplified	It stayed on the same level	Fade in	I can't judge
2020	18 %	50 %	4 %	29 %
2021	19 %	59 %	7 %	19 %
2022	29 %	63 %	0 %	8 %

Source: expert investigation IKSP 2021, 2022, 2023

The shift in the experts' responses is significant compared to the 2021 result. The opinion that the use of corruption has increased has increased by 10% among experts. This corresponds in essence to the shift of corruption to the first place among the most frequent activities of organised crime in the Czech Republic. None of the experts surveyed this time were of the opinion that the use of corruption had decreased. The proportion of experts who said they could not comment also decreased.

In 2024, the IKSP conducted a different survey that focused on the **specific form** that bribes take in practice. A significantly predominant response (with a share of almost 47%) was direct financial enrichment in the form of money. The researchers were also interested in the respondents' opinion on the question of who is most often the **target of corruption activities**

by organised crime. Politicians at the regional and municipal level were clearly the most frequently identified target group of corruption activities by organised crime, followed by employees of state administration bodies, organisers of public procurement, local government employees and politicians at the level of central state bodies. In contrast, forensic experts and leaders of private companies were identified in significantly fewer cases.

The Whistleblower Protection Act and an Act amending certain Acts in connection with the enactment of the Whistleblower Protection Act are effective as of August 1, 2023, to provide employees with the ability to report wrongdoing of which they become aware in connection with their employment or service and subsequent protection in situations where they are affected or disadvantaged in their employment or service as a result of such reporting.

A government bill **on lobbying** (or the Lobbying Regulation Act and the Act amending certain laws in connection with the adoption of the Lobbying Regulation Act) is expected to be adopted shortly.³⁶ Its aim is to increase transparency of lobbying activities and strengthen public control in this area, i.e. to reduce corruption and clientelism. The establishment of a register of lobbyists and lobbyists should lay the basis for establishing lobbying as a legitimate activity and for distinguishing it from non-transparent lobbying. By imposing an obligation to provide information on lobbying contacts both on the part of lobbyists and on the part of the legally defined circle of lobbyists, public control over contacts between public officials and representatives of interest groups is strengthened. The introduction of a lobbying footprint for draft legislation is intended to deepen and facilitate public scrutiny of the legislative process and thus reduce the possibility of its corrupt influence.

Legalization of proceeds of crime

In the area of laundering the proceeds of drug crime, there has been a recent trend towards the acquisition of commodities through various alternative financing methods, such as **leasing, loans or renting**, where the offender is not the owner of the item, although he or she uses it in a full-fledged manner. In this way, it significantly limits the possibilities and purpose of possible criminal confiscation. This behaviour is most often carried out in the case of motor vehicles, but often also in the case of electronics and real estate leases. The earlier diversion of property to a relative or a legal entity is thus increasingly being replaced by the type of offender who lives a luxurious lifestyle but without any property of his own. While the police have accurate information on the person's substantial monthly expenditure, the most that can be confiscated is cash found during a search of the home or other premises and land.

Organised criminals also make considerable use of companies they set up in **offshore destinations** to launder the proceeds of crime, where there is a high degree of privacy protection and many of these destinations do not cooperate or find it difficult to cooperate with foreign law enforcement authorities. Using the complex structure of offshore companies, the perpetrators then carry out a large number of interbank transfers that make the flow of money untraceable while allowing the funds to be returned to the perpetrator, who will dispose of them as legitimate income.

In the case of Vietnamese criminal groups operating in the field of drug crime, the principle of "DIH VU", the equivalent of the Arabic Hawala, is very popular, consisting in depositing funds

³⁶ These bills are being debated as House Documents 649 and 650.

in cash at the place of the "service centre" and then withdrawing them in cash, usually in Vietnam. The transport of the funds thus deposited is done in return for a commission, mainly in cash. These 'service centres' are usually located in Vietnamese marketplaces, in particular at the premises of payment institutions such as Western Union, where the service is run in parallel with legitimate business. However, the funds do not pass through the official channels of the payment service, but are a kind of unofficial payment institution that does not use standard methods of transferring funds.

As a result of the covid-19 pandemic and restrictions on the movement of people, drug offenders have been forced to arrange for the transfer of cash abroad in new ways and options, such as transferring it through payment institutions in other names, or increasingly **using the services of foreign financial institutions and foreign payment institutions specialising in fast money transfers**. Another phenomenon is the sending of funds abroad, which are then returned as 'gifts from family', often accompanied by a notarial declaration, and subsequently invested, in particular in real estate. They are also often deposited in vehicles or other assets, or "reinvested" in criminal activities.

Alarming in this context is the activity of a Vietnamese banking institution based in Hanoi, which deliberately creates conditions and actively participates in the legalization of proceeds from the illegal activities of its clients from the Vietnamese community. Illegal funds are deposited in cash into the bank's accounts in Vietnam, whereupon instructed employees actively assist depositors in providing and documenting appropriate legends as to the origin of the funds. The funds are then sent to the bank accounts of foreign commercial banks, with the Vietnamese institution acting as a guarantor of the AML measures.

The Russian-language criminal milieu uses the territory of the Czech Republic to legalize criminal profits originating in the former Soviet Union. In these cases, Russian-language criminal structures with the focus of their activities in the Czech Republic primarily provide links to important representatives of the social, business and political spheres in the Czech Republic in order to obtain unjustified competitive advantages for the investment of these criminal profits.

The **bank accounts of Ukrainian citizens** who are granted temporary international protection in the Czech Republic and who have bank accounts with Czech banks are usually used to launder funds obtained from reverse advertising fraud and so-called top-selling. They are involved in the process of laundering the proceeds by responding to advertisements posted on the Telegram communication platform and then providing their bank account to receive payment and also making cash withdrawals.

So-called "captive bank accounts" are also used to launder the proceeds of crime, which are controlled by criminals without their owners' knowledge and used to transfer funds obtained through other criminal activities.

One indicator of the success of law enforcement agencies is data on the siphoning off of the proceeds of crime. The figures in the table below refer to total assets seized, not exclusively to assets seized in connection with organised crime.

Table 12 - Value of the secured assets and their contribution to the detected damage

	Value of the secured property	Proportion of secured property to the loss
2018	CZK 7 898 147 203	29,6 %
2019	CZK 5 310 099 539	40,1 %
2020	CZK 6 550 202 480	39,2 %
2021	CZK 7 043 768 081	32,9 %
2022	CZK 5 397 348 001	33,4 %
2023	CZK 8 835 014 914	48,8 %
2024	CZK 5 706 722 319	19,9 %

Source: statistics of the Police of the Czech Republic

In total, assets worth more than CZK 41 billion were secured between 2018 and 2024, with an average value equivalent to 35% of the detected damage. However, it should be noted that some of the secured property is returned to the original owners for various reasons.

Current status

Significant changes can be expected in this area in the near future, with the adoption of the so-called AML package³⁷ at EU level, whereby the area of measures against the laundering of the proceeds of crime will be partially regulated by directly applicable EU legislation from 2027. During 2025, an amendment to the Act on International Cooperation in Tax Administration (Parliamentary Print 781) is under discussion³⁸, which regulates the possibility to provide without further delay information obtained from another EU Member State if the purpose of the use is to exercise the competence of the competent authority in the area of money laundering and terrorist financing or the implementation of international sanctions. This may include in particular information obtained from automated information exchange (e.g. information from platform operators or cryptocurrency service providers).

Cryptocurrencies

Along with the increase in the number of crimes committed in cyberspace, **the use of crypto-assets, which continue to be an important tool for laundering the proceeds of crime, is also growing.** Over 2022, there has been a significant increase in a variety of scams related to the misuse of cryptocurrencies (e.g., "fake bankers," investment scams, reverse endorsement scams), into which fraudulently extorted funds are transferred to anonymize the proceeds of crime.

The problem with cryptocurrency investment fraud is that victims are very late in reporting this crime, as they initially find nothing suspicious about the trading. Typically, it is an offer to invest in a new or existing cryptocurrency promising high returns. However, the funds sent are not invested at all and only serve to generate profit for the perpetrators. They also use

³⁷ <https://fau.gov.cz/aml-balicek>

³⁸ <https://www.psp.cz/sqw/historie.sqw?o=9&T=781>

bitcoinmats to launder the funds for conversion into cryptocurrencies or to convert cryptocurrencies into cash.

Other forms of misuse of cryptocurrencies to launder the proceeds of crime include their use to pay ransoms, both in classic extortion and ransomware. Last but not least, they are also used to disguise the profits from illegal trades such as drugs, child pornography, illegal software, data stolen from corporate databases, personal data and hacking services on the Internet, but they are also used to pay for them. Cryptocurrencies provide a high degree of protection and anonymity for both buyer and seller.

In the last year, there have also been cases of "physical" theft of virtual currency, e.g. from various online applications or websites designed to manage virtual currencies, despite the fact that the value of virtual currency often fluctuates greatly.

The PČR currently has several licenses for tracing tools that partly enable the flow of these funds to be tracked. However, the possibilities of these tools are limited and with more sophisticated behaviour of the perpetrator, using the services of so-called mixers, further tracing is practically impossible. EU legislation already adopted and forthcoming should simplify the situation for law enforcement authorities to some extent. As with cryptocurrency tools and applications, the impact of legislation is limited by the very nature of their technological functioning.

Current status

From 2025, the area of virtual currency service providers should be regulated (need for authorisation) by the EU MiCA Regulation (No. 2023/1114), which is in the process of implementation in the Czech Republic at the beginning of 2025 (Parliamentary Document 694).³⁹

Straw men, non-contact trading companies and offshore destinations

For law enforcement authorities, the "visible" perpetrators of economic crime are often **persons who are set up as statutory bodies of purposefully established business entities** (e.g. employment agencies). In addition to Czech citizens from social classes directly threatened by poverty or living in poverty, they also include foreigners, mainly Slovaks, Hungarians and Romanians. Straw men are often equipped with forged documents, travel around the EU countries, where they set up new and new business companies used for tax fraud or bank accounts.

Dozens of new companies are registered every day, which **are used exclusively for tax fraud**, are non-contactable, do not disclose mandatory data, have fictitious headquarters, do not perform real economic activity, yet they immediately apply for VAT registration (the so-called straw men act as statutory bodies). The current legislation does not contain effective instruments to prevent the creation or further existence of such companies.

Criminal organisations also use '**ready-made companies**' (existing legal entities with little or no history of activity) to disguise their activities and avoid tax obligations. These companies

³⁹ <https://www.psp.cz/sqw/historie.sqw?o=9&t=694>

can be quickly transferred between members of organised crime, making it difficult to identify the real owners.

Also problematic is the so-called **office house**, where a single address is shared and listed as the headquarters of several different companies, giving organised crime the appearance that they are independent entities, but which are in fact functionally linked and used to manipulate financial flows and conceal tax evasion.

Organised crime continues to deliberately establish companies or relocate their headquarters to Prague, where the high number of established companies reduces the risk of control by the tax office, which does not have sufficient capacity to control all companies. For the same reasons, the Regional Police Directorate of the capital city is overwhelmed. The Prague Regional Police is overwhelmed with criminal proceedings related to tax offences.

The use of **offshore companies** with nominees has long been a problem in economic criminal cases. In many cases, it is quite difficult to prove to a particular person that it is he or she who manages an offshore company from the Czech Republic. It is necessary to obtain evidence through international legal assistance, where various written documents are required on the establishment of these companies, their bank accounts and the persons of their ultimate owners. However, there is generally little or no judicial cooperation with the jurisdictions where these offshore companies are based.

The year 2022 was the second year since the entry into force of Section 105a of Act No. 304/2013 Coll, on the public registers of legal and natural persons and on the registration of trusts, which allows for the dissolution of inactive business corporations (which do not file their annual reports in the collection of documents) without liquidation. More frequent application of this provision by regional courts can be observed, although problems of interpretation persist (especially as regards the scope of parties to the proceedings). This issue also has implications in the area of criminal law (prosecution of so-called "empty boxes"; i.e. commercial corporations which are formally headed by a citizen of a third country, or by an unidentified person proving himself with forged documents from another country). However, this instrument only works on existing business corporations that fail to comply with their obligations. It cannot prevent the purposeful creation of new entities.

Other tools of organised crime

With regard to those types of organised property crime that require at least a short-term presence of perpetrators on the territory of the Czech Republic, the mere sending of groups of perpetrators - foreign nationals in different time cycles to different regions of the Czech Republic (not their long-term presence here) and the rotation of members is a significant obstacle to the detection of crime. Similarly effective is the renewal of motor vehicles that are legally purchased by groups of perpetrators but not transferred to a new owner or stolen outside the territory of the Czech Republic. In several cases, the use of VHF radios has also been registered during the actual commission of crime. In the case of accommodation in the territory of the Czech Republic, the perpetrators use the services of "Airbnb" or operators of establishments that provide accommodation "under the table". The combination of these measures makes it very difficult for law enforcement authorities to detect and apprehend the perpetrators.

The use of IoT (Internet of Things) devices, smart vehicles and wearable electronics by perpetrators has seen massive growth. Hardware and software components and communication protocols are very diverse, so the Police have no choice but to respond to their occurrence with individual technical solutions.

Some of the more experienced criminal structures (both domestic and foreign) are able to use various measures against surveillance, especially in the form of third parties who accompany the person under investigation to or from the meeting and whose task is to detect possible surveillance. The perpetrators of the most serious organised crime use secure premises that are regularly searched by specialised companies. The aim is to gain the ability to communicate undisturbed about criminal activities in premises where it is difficult to place listening devices and record the content of meetings.

Organisers of criminal activity often hire lawyers as a professional "service", thanks to which they are able to exploit all the weaknesses and imperfections of generally binding legal regulations. Members of foreign criminal structures often use the services of third parties who already have permanent residence in the Czech Republic and sufficient knowledge of Czech law.

6. COOPERATION WITHIN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

In general, the cooperation between law enforcement authorities and other state bodies is at a very good level. To strengthen and formalise cooperation, cooperation and other agreements are concluded which greatly facilitate the coordination of procedures, including the sharing of information.

All involved entities evaluate very positively the Cobra cooperation method implemented in the fight against tax crime and detection of financial fraud. Thanks to this synergistic and professional cooperation, which includes the interconnection of the Police, Financial and Customs administrations, it is possible to effectively detect and prosecute tax crimes, not only at the national but also at the international level. Since its inception, the Tax Cobra has protected more than 15 billion crowns and has made a significant contribution to the protection of the financial interests of the state. Thanks to the effective concurrence of criminal proceedings with tax proceedings, and by setting up appropriate tactics for mutual procedures, it has been able to achieve results that would be unimaginable in the isolated activities of individual entities. Cooperation on legislative measures that further eliminate the possibility of tax evasion is also essential.

From the point of view of the Financial Administration, the joint processing of selected measures that implement the plans for the individual periods has proved successful. Joint processing spreads the burden (including material resources) over the various authorities involved, while allowing for the exchange and sharing of knowledge. Especially for the measures defined in the area of IT and cyber aspects, a high degree of synergy and transfer of best practice can be achieved and it would be desirable to strengthen this type of cooperation.

Furthermore, some new forms of synergies related to the development of online fraud and its variability over time should be highlighted. In addition to the cooperation between the Police of the Czech Republic and the Financial Analytical Office for the purpose of timely transmission of information on accounts that may be misused for the laundering of proceeds of crime, it was necessary to **develop cooperation with private entities.**

These include **AML departments of commercial banks**, which help the Czech Police with fast blocking of transactions, data-freezing and investigations under the AML Act. Other cooperating entities are some non-banking companies and crypto exchanges, operators of cryptocurrency deposit machines, .cz domain administrators, technical cybersecurity consultants, and email box operators. In order to prevent the spread of malicious content, the Czech Police also cooperates with mobile operators, both Czech and foreign. Anti-virus companies, for example, also help with the transmission of information on malicious domains.

As part of the prevention efforts aimed at the general public, the OČTŘ also cooperates with the operators of advertising portals and the **Czech Banking Association**. Furthermore, agreements have been concluded between the Czech Police and Google LLC, Meta Platforms Inc. and Apple Inc. However, it is clear that the list of non-state actors will undoubtedly grow in proportion to the way people's activities continue to move further and to an increasing extent into the online space.

Extensive cooperation with specialised entities also takes place in individual sub-issues of organised crime. Law enforcement authorities cooperate in this way with many control bodies, local governments, non-profit organisations, private entities and international organisations

operating in the Czech Republic. A description of all modalities of this cooperation is beyond the scope of this material.

A problematic aspect of cooperation at the national level is the **effort to penetrate the structures of the CID** (e.g., as recorded by the Police of the Czech Republic). The perpetrators of this crime were provided with "protection" from the threat of criminal proceedings, where important information was disclosed that allowed the perpetrators to react to the situation (modify the way of committing the crime, destroy or modify essential evidence, or continue to commit latent crime undisturbed). Cases have been recorded where various authorisations and institutes have been abused, such as the possibility of carrying out lustrations in police information systems or the abuse of the informant institute. Control mechanisms for the use of these institutes should be tightened in the future.

7. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The issue of international police and judicial cooperation is one of the agendas that has become of fundamental importance in recent years due to the growing number of organised crimes with a transnational dimension. This requires fast, high-quality and effective mutual communication.

In general, international police cooperation within EU agencies and international organisations and with neighbouring countries, with the exception of Poland, is very good. Cooperation with distant countries is more complicated.

From the point of view of the police authorities, in some cases, the negative features of international police cooperation are its lengthiness, the limited cooperation of some requested states or incomplete answers provided by them. Problems also arise in the case of partial overlap of requests into judicial cooperation. Lengthy processes are an obstacle to effective investigations.

The added value within the framework of international police cooperation is the expanded **network of Czech liaison officers** at embassies abroad and proactive activities in establishing direct contacts at the operational level in countries of interest, within the framework of strategic and operational cooperation, including in the area of search for wanted persons.

The main task within the framework of international cooperation in the customs area is to support customs law enforcement agencies in the exchange of information in the framework of criminal investigation and customs proceedings. It also promotes the interests of CS services within the Council of the EU Law Enforcement Working Party - Customs Section (LEWP Customs) and other international organisations and agencies such as the World Customs Organisation (WCO), Europol or the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).

Joint centres for police and customs cooperation, customs and police liaison officers and international institutions (e.g. Europol, Interpol, OLAF, Eurojust, etc.) are used for the exchange and sharing of information and the implementation of international cooperation abroad. **The establishment of the European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO)** is of great importance.

Cooperation within international organisations (Europol, Interpol, Eurojust, etc.)

In order to streamline international judicial cooperation in criminal matters, the **European Criminal Investigation Order Directive** (2014/41/EU) has been applied since 2017, which, with exceptions (e.g. joint investigation teams), applies to all investigative acts aimed at gathering evidence and has substantially replaced the treaties on international judicial cooperation in criminal proceedings in the European Union. In 2023, the so-called **e-evidence package** was finalised and adopted, on which more information is provided in chapter 7.3.

Information sharing is an essential part of international cooperation. National authorities across the EU do this through **extensive information systems**. However, EU information systems used by authorities and to fight crime have not been interconnected. They were fragmented and as a result there was a risk of information gaps. The EU is currently looking at ways to better collect and share information in order to, inter alia, improve the investigation and prosecution of crime. In May 2019, two regulations were adopted to provide a framework for interoperability between EU information systems in the area of internal security. This

interoperability should provide a single interface for search as well as a biometric matching service to facilitate identification.

In October 2023, Home Affairs Ministers confirmed a new timetable for the implementation of the interoperability programme for EU information systems used by Member States to fight crime, control external borders and manage migration flows. The timetable foresees, under a phased approach, the completion of the main systems of the interoperable architecture in 2026. However, the launch of these systems has been repeatedly delayed on the basis of a lack of readiness by some Member States.

The topic of organised crime is also raised in a number of EU platforms aimed at developing cooperation between law enforcement agencies within the EU - in particular the Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation in Internal Security (COSI) and the Council of the EU Law Enforcement Working Party (LEWP). In addition, this issue is also a topic of discussion in the European Network on the Administrative Approach (ENAA) and the European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN).

The activities of the newly established European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) are of fundamental importance for the fight against organised crime and internal security at EU and Czech level. In this respect, the EPPO has warned the citizens of EU Member States and EU and national institutions of the extraordinary scale of fraud against EU interests, in which organised crime is heavily involved. According to the EPPO Annual Report 2023, a total of 1,927 investigations were opened with an estimated damage of €19.2 billion (59% of which was thought to be linked to VAT fraud).⁴⁰

In practice, the EU states, including the Czech Republic, are facing an interconnected world of organised crime, where polycriminal groups of organised crime of drug traffickers, organised violence or organisers of illegal migration intermingle with the world of white-collar crime and state actors operating in the background. According to the EPPO's annual report, approximately EUR 4.1 billion is seized in the EU annually, which according to available estimates corresponds to only 2% of the profits of organised crime in the EU.

The National Headquarters against Organised Crime SKPV performs the tasks of the Czech Asset Recovery Office (ARO) in EU countries. It handles requests from departments and organisational units of the Czech Police for the tracing of criminal assets abroad and also processes requests from foreign ARO offices. In 2022, the NCOZ SKPV also took over from the Supreme State Prosecutor's Office **the role of contact point of the AFCOS network** (on damage to EU financial interests) for the necessary cooperation with the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) in the field of criminal proceedings.

In addition to liaison officers at diplomatic missions of the Czech Republic, the Police of the Czech Republic sends liaison officers and national experts to international organisations and their agencies (Interpol, Europol, Frontex), who thus become part of the network of police liaison officers and experts of all participating/member countries. Thanks to this, they can effectively mediate a rapid exchange of information and provide assistance according to the operational needs of the Czech Republic with the specific country of interest (involved).

The Justice and Home Affairs Council of the European Union approved the establishment of a European judicial organised crime network at its June 2024 working session, following a

⁴⁰ <https://www.eppo.europa.eu/en/documents>.

priority promoted under the Belgian Presidency. This network will bring together prosecutors and other equivalent actors dealing with drug trafficking and organised crime, with the aim of facilitating and strengthening cooperation between competent authorities. This will be a strategic activity going beyond investigation-based cooperation. The platform will be further developed.

Europol

Together with the CS, the Czech Republic is involved in the **EMPACT 2022+** initiative, in which Europol also participates at the level of individual analysis centres. Since the beginning of the initiative, the involvement of the Czech Republic has been steadily growing and gaining momentum. In the current four-year cycle, the Czech Republic participates in all 15 Operational Action Plans.

In recent years, a project has been developed under the auspices of Europol, which is linked to operational cooperation, in particular cooperation based on the Strategy of High Value Targets and the Operational Task Force. Its aim was not only to create an accessible platform for Europol analysts and analysts and investigators from Member States, but also to save financial and personnel resources for the States concerned. As a result, the effectiveness of joint investigations against so-called high-interest targets (i.e. organised crime which is complex, high-profile and semi-criminal and which has an increasing impact on the internal security of the EU) is to be enhanced. The purpose of the project is to give national experts at home on a specific case access both to the necessary national information and to the data processed in Europol databases.

Experts from the Czech Police were and are also involved in the cooperation with Europol at the operational level, regularly participating in seminars, meetings or training activities focused on specific areas of the fight against serious and organised crime and ensuring the internal security of the EU.

In the context of the growing importance of **crime committed in cyberspace**, it should be mentioned that the Czech Police has long been using the possibilities of the Cybercrime Contact Point established in accordance with the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime. However, as direct cooperation with the police forces of some countries is somewhat lacking, in 2024 a professional expert (a liaison officer of the Czech Police) was sent to the Joint Cybercrime Task Force (J-CAT) at Europol. This 24/7 expert is part of a close international team involved in the fight against organised cybercrime (sophisticated cyber-attacks, online fraud, online child sexual abuse and the tools used to commit this crime) in the EU and potentially worldwide.

Eurojust

Prosecutors cooperate directly with the Eurojust National Representation. Information on the functioning of Eurojust is available to prosecutors on the Prosecutor's Office Extranet, where contact details for the Czech Republic's national representation at Eurojust are also provided. Prosecutors make use of this cooperation in practice. The most beneficial is the possibility of conducting coordination meetings supported by Eurojust, which are attended directly by the supervising prosecutors. One of the powers of the national member of the Czech Republic in Eurojust is to conclude **an agreement on a joint investigation team**. Since 2008, when the first

such agreement was concluded, the Czech Republic has participated in 103 joint investigation teams. More than half of these joint investigation teams have been concluded by the Czech Republic's national representation at Eurojust.

The most frequent partners include Slovakia, but also Germany and the UK (for example in the Vrbětice case). The joint investigation focuses primarily on cases of serious tax offences, drug crime, but also on human trafficking, illegal migration and smuggling. Eurojust greatly facilitates judicial cooperation between countries with different legislation and is involved in coordinating the creation of teams. It also provides cross-border teams with facilities and financial support. The Police of the Czech Republic considers the establishment of Joint Investigation Teams (JITs) to be highly effective in detecting, investigating and prosecuting crime, especially in the rapid exchange of operational information. This is now a relatively common form of cooperation, but the role of Eurojust and the Czech national representation in this European agency is crucial. The JIT's activities have repeatedly resulted in the successful detection of perpetrators of crime on an international scale.

The new Regulation (EU) 2023/969 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 May 2023 on the establishment of a cooperation platform to support the functioning of Joint Investigation Teams provides the basis for the establishment of a platform to facilitate the day-to-day coordination and management of JITs, to provide more modern tools for the exchange of information and evidence, to ensure secure communication and traceability of evidence, and ultimately to strengthen the fight against organised crime and the protection of citizens.

Interpol

In 2021, the process of negotiating a comprehensive cooperation agreement between the EU and Interpol was launched. This agreement addresses, inter alia, access to Interpol databases, in particular travel documents of third country nationals, and interconnection with EU systems such as ETIAS and VIS⁴¹. The intended benefits are intended to contribute to enhancing internal security and supporting the fight against crime in the future.

Mutual cooperation is on the rise. The Czech Republic participates in various activities, including operations aimed at combating crime under 4 global programmes: terrorism, cybercrime, organised and emerging crime, financial crime and corruption. It has been involved, including repeatedly, in operations targeting e.g. auto-crime with overlap into illegal migration, drug crime and illegal arms trafficking, telecommunications fraud and social engineering, transnational Eurasian organised crime and illegal trade in (counterfeit) medicines. For example, in June 2023, the Czech Republic joined the regular counter-terrorism operation HOTSPOT aimed at detecting terrorists, extremists and other criminal persons among illegal migrants seized on the territory of participating states.

At the national level, selected departments of the Czech Police, CS, as well as other national authorities, e.g. the Czech Environmental Inspectorate, the State Veterinary Administration, are involved in cooperation in operations, working groups and analytical projects according to their competence and interest.

The information systems of the Czech Police are directly linked to many criminal databases of the Interpol organisation (e.g. nominal, travel documents, stolen property). The

41 European Travel Information and Authorisation System and Visa Information System

information on criminals and crimes contained therein can be mined in real time. At the same time, the Czech Republic is one of the leading users and contributors to Interpol's global databases. For example, the ICSE database is used to a large extent in the investigation of child sexual abuse cases.

In 2019, the Czech Police handed over to Interpol the management of **the RELIEF database**, a police tool for combating illegal drug trafficking, developed by its own resources for use by all Interpol member countries. With the handover, the RELIEF database became one of Interpol's main tools in the fight against drug crime. The number of seizures entered into the database, as well as the number of experts trained, has seen an exponential increase. **Through the Interpol General Secretariat, the PRC has succeeded in expanding the use of the database to all continents of the world.** In terms of the administration and further development of the database, the Czech Republic remains in very close contact with the staff of the Drugs Unit at the General Secretariat in Lyon.

Interpol is heavily involved in the search for internationally wanted persons suspected of serious crimes. To achieve this, it uses the Red Notice tool to request assistance in locating and apprehending these offenders. Thanks to the effective use of search mechanisms and close cooperation with the Interpol General Secretariat in Lyon and Interpol national headquarters around the world, the PČR can boast **a number of significant successes in targeted searches even in the most remote countries of the world.**

Within the Interpol organisation, the Czech Police is actively involved in the development of global cooperation between security forces at both operational and management levels. In 2019-2022, the Director of the Directorate for International Police Cooperation of the Police Presidium of the Czech Republic served as Interpol Vice President for Europe and in 2016-2021 she was a member of the Interpol European Committee. This has significantly increased the visibility and respect of the Czech Republic on the global stage.

Cooperation with neighbouring countries (Austria, Germany, Poland and Slovakia)

EU legislation, as one of the legislative instruments of international police cooperation, is very effectively complemented by bilateral police cooperation agreements with neighbouring countries. The Czech Republic has concluded police cooperation treaties with all neighbouring countries, with modernised versions coming into force in 2016 in the case of Germany and Austria. Both of these treaties are among the most modern in Europe and provide a wide range of tools to fight crime, including organised crime. In the context of the new police cooperation treaty and a joint project aimed at strengthening cross-border security cooperation, the foundations for a joint Czech-German police station were laid in Hrádek nad Nisou in 2022. Its objectives include, among other things, strengthening cooperation in the critical area of the Czech-German-Polish border region, in particular through targeted joint patrol activities aimed at combating illegal migration.

Expert negotiations on a new police cooperation treaty with Slovakia were launched in 2022 and with Poland in 2024. Both treaties should set the same standard of cooperation as in the case of Germany or Austria. The obstacles to cooperation in the case of Slovakia and Poland are currently caused by the narrow range of possible forms of cooperation, the territorial

limitations on the possibility of their implementation or the considerably reduced powers of police officers operating in the territory of the other state.

In the case of Poland, a long-standing key problem is the lack of bilateral legislation on cross-border surveillance, which is absent due to the completely different legal regulation of this instrument in the two countries. This problem has been included in the findings of the forthcoming treaty between the Czech Republic and Poland, where the first expert negotiations are already underway. The services of the Police are also encountering problems with judicial cooperation, in particular with regard to the length and quality of the processing of the European Investigation Order.

The topic of organised crime is also discussed within bilateral or regional platforms - the Enlarged Czech-German Steering Group, the Salzburg Forum and the Visegrad Group.

Cooperation with other European countries

International police cooperation within the EU and the Schengen area is based on instruments enshrined in EU legislation. In addition to the above-mentioned EU information systems, the **Prüm exchange of DNA, fingerprints and vehicle registration data**, for example, is regularly used to support the fight against organised crime and is currently being revised in order to extend it to other categories of data and to streamline the sharing of information in an automated manner. The newly adopted Directive on the exchange of information between law enforcement authorities then standardises the exchange of information across the EU.

In the **area of cross-border operations**, a Recommendation on operational police cooperation was adopted by the EU Council (2022/915 of 9 June 2022) in order to effectively combat crime and respond to new threats arising from crime. Cross-border pursuit, cross-border surveillance and joint patrols and operations are the basic instruments of police cooperation. The adopted Recommendation sets a number of standards for operational cooperation between police officers operating in another Member State or participating in joint operations. In particular, the Recommendation defines a set of principles for cross-border pursuit and surveillance, a list of offences for which cross-border pursuit and surveillance should be allowed and a framework for joint operations.

The TCA agreement between the EU and the UK only covered cooperation on a basic level (e.g. on the general level of information exchange or exchange of fingerprints, DNA, vehicle data). Efforts to strengthen cooperation through bilateral contractual arrangements resulted in March 2023 in the adoption of a Joint Declaration between the Czech and UK Home Office expressing the intention to cooperate in the fight against and prevention of terrorism, crime and illegal immigration.

Although the **EIO** is a very important and useful tool in the fight against organised crime, it has proved that even its implementation has not eliminated all problems. On the contrary, some elements of cooperation have become more complicated, not least because of the case law of the European Court of Justice, but above all because of the shortcomings of the Directive itself. According to its recital, the Directive does not apply to cross-border surveillance under the Schengen Implementing Convention, also known as cross-border police surveillance. However, if states have cross-border surveillance covered by judicial cooperation, a European

Investigation Order can be issued. The introduction of the EIO applies only to EU Member States, with the exception of Denmark and Ireland, which are not bound by this instrument.

Police cooperation agreements have entered into force with some post-Soviet states on the border between Europe and Asia, namely **with Armenia** (2018), **Georgia** (2021) and **Kazakhstan** (2018). Police cooperation agreements are being prepared with, for example, **Azerbaijan and Turkey**. The treaty with **Ukraine** was signed in Prague on 16 July 2024 and entered into force on 1 April 2025.

The network of liaison officers at Czech embassies abroad is an effective tool of international police cooperation, which enables the rapid transfer of information and mutual provision of assistance in solving operational tasks. It is therefore desirable to further develop this network in the future, either by opening new destinations for the deployment of liaison officers or by expanding the scope (accreditation) of existing liaison officers to other countries of interest.

In response to the deterioration in police cooperation with **Italy**, a liaison officer was sent to Rome in June 2022. The fundamental problem so far appears to be the **totally inadequate response time to routine/urgent requests from the Czech Republic**. It can be assumed that this is due to the inconsistency of the police force (compared to the Czech Republic) as well as the understaffing on the Italian side. On-site intervention by the liaison officer helps to speed up or additional response from the Italian side.

In the case of **the UK**, a liaison officer was also sent to London in April 2017 in response to deteriorating police cooperation with the UK. From the perspective of the liaison officer, **cooperation with the UK police authorities is at a very solid level**, with the vast majority of requests received from the UK side being dealt with relatively well and quickly. Cooperation in extraditing or arranging air escorts of wanted persons to the Czech Republic is very frequent. Some cases also concern organised crime (illegal migration, smuggling of narcotics and psychotropic substances, organised property crime, etc.). In terms of judicial cooperation, the situation is not so good, both in terms of the length of time taken to process legal aid and the willingness to comply with some Czech requests for legal assistance.

In Bulgaria and Romania in particular, operational cooperation is at a standard to very high level, including judicial cooperation. There is also a liaison officer of the Police and Crime Directorate in Romania with accreditation also for Bulgaria, Moldova and Turkey. **Romania** has a pro-European oriented police education and training, which is subsequently reflected in the qualifications of police officers dedicated to the fight against organised crime. Similarly, the Romanian prosecutor's office is very professional, with judicial cooperation being a normal part of its workload. The Czech Republic is still of interest to Romanian citizens as a favourable territory, background or operating area for illegal organised crime, which is mostly related to human trafficking, sexual and labour exploitation, drugs and anabolics.

In **Bulgaria**, the situation is more or less standard, but the level of qualification of the police authorities is generally lower. Colleagues working on organised crime issues are active in their cooperation. The Bulgarian prosecutor's office is often not so proactive in terms of judicial cooperation, which may be due to the language barrier. In recent years, Bulgaria has suffered from frequent changes in both the structure of the state administration and in management positions.

In the area of **cooperation with European countries outside the EU and the Schengen area**, it is important to draw attention to the impact of the war in Ukraine. When cooperating with

Russia, Belarus, but also Ukraine, wanted persons cannot be extradited, not even persons prosecuted for organised crime. These persons are then on the territory of the Czech Republic without the possibility of effective action against them.

Cooperation with the Ukrainian law enforcement authorities is effective and very intensive, despite the ongoing war conflict. The intensity of cooperation continues to increase significantly, one of the reasons being the arrival of a significant number of Ukrainian citizens to the Czech Republic as a result of the ongoing war. The presence of a liaison officer at the embassy in Kiev is clearly playing a positive role. The National Police of Ukraine and other Ukrainian authorities consider the CRP an important, stable and trustworthy partner. In the context of the conflict in Ukraine, to facilitate cooperation, the Supreme State Prosecutor's Office prepared the material "Assessment of the mutual criminality of acts committed in connection with **the** armed conflict in Ukraine" as a methodological aid for lower state prosecutors in 2022.

In order to mitigate potential security risks arising from Russian aggression against Ukraine, a **structured dialogue on internal security with the Ukrainian authorities** was launched in September 2022 on the initiative of the Czech EU Presidency. The dialogue is managed by the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, together with the European External Action Service (EEAS), with the involvement of the rotating Presidency of the Council of the EU under the Team Europe approach. The implementation of the agreed measures is supported by the EU agencies Europol, Eurojust and Frontex, as well as by EU civilian missions operating in Ukraine and Moldova.

The Dialogue has already yielded first concrete results, in particular in the area of prevention of **illicit trade in firearms**, for which the EU has prepared a list of measures to combat the diversion of weapons in Ukraine. Ukraine, which has been very proactive in this respect, has, for example, started sharing information on lost and stolen firearms with Europol and has also launched digital firearms register.

In the Western Balkans, relations with Kosovo, where the significant influence of organised crime on state structures persists, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, where there is a lack of a strong central authority, continue to be a problem. Albania has a certain level of preparedness in the fight against organised crime. Strong and fruitful cooperation with EU Member States, Europol and Eurojust has led to tangible results. Albania continues to demonstrate its determination to fight cannabis production and trafficking. Good progress has been made in seizing and confiscating assets linked to organised crime.

Moldova has had a pro-European tendency in recent years, which is reflected in the active pursuit of international investigations, including in the form of joint investigation teams. For colleagues working on organised crime, the language barrier can be a disadvantage. The Moldovan prosecutor's office operates in a standard way and handles all legal aid except that directed to the so-called Transnistrian region. In view of the political and economic situation, corruption in the public administration can also be discussed in the context of organised crime. Organised crime is related to trafficking in human beings and their labour exploitation on Czech territory.

In July 2022, at an informal meeting of Interior Ministers under the Czech Presidency of the Council, the **EU Platform for Supporting Internal Security and Border Management in Moldova** was formally launched. The Platform aims to deepen and broaden the security partnership between the EU and Moldova.

Turkey is heavily burdened by organised crime, especially smuggling, due to its location on the so-called Balkan route. Turkish colleagues work in a very strong police system, they are qualified, but the willingness to cooperate not only with organised crime seems to depend on the Turkish side's own assessment of its own interests, including the specific unit requested. Operational cooperation can then often take place without official feedback or without any response at all. In the case of judicial cooperation, the situation is much more complex, with political evaluation of requests, and often the Turkish authorities do not even respond to legal assistance. Processing times are much longer. **Overall, we can speak of a specific approach on the Turkish side, often applying its own style and way of dealing with things, even at the expense of international agreements.** Although personal contact often has a positive impact on a particular case, even the presence of a liaison officer on the ground does not always ensure the success of the case. A frequent question after establishing functional contact is why the PČR liaison officer is not based directly in Turkey.

Another instrument that enhances the effectiveness of international police cooperation and the fight against organised crime is the Security Development Cooperation Programme of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic ("BRS Programme"), which is aimed at strengthening the capacity of the security forces of partner countries of the Czech Republic, especially in the form of education, training and other forms of knowledge and experience transfer. The BRS Programme already serves, among other things, to establish direct contacts with partners in developing countries and to transfer know-how, which subsequently leads to more effective cooperation with the partner country and to accelerate the operational exchange of information with that country.

Cooperation with non-European countries

Establishing intensive cooperation with colleagues from non-European, or even non-EU, countries is made possible to a large extent by the Czech Republic's membership in Interpol. The Czech Police uses various Interpol meetings to organise bilateral meetings with representatives of countries of interest in order to deepen cooperation between the countries in the field of police cooperation, to establish new contacts and to address specific issues of cooperation, especially in the area of extradition of internationally wanted Czech citizens. For this purpose, delegations and foreign trips are also organised in relation to countries of interest, unfortunately to a limited extent due to insufficient financial resources.

On 10 March 2025, a police cooperation treaty was signed with Mongolia; the treaty will be submitted to the Parliament of the Czech Republic for approval and then to the President of the Republic for ratification. Police cooperation treaties are being prepared with, for example, Argentina, Egypt, the Philippines, Indonesia, South Korea, Kyrgyzstan (new treaty), Pakistan, Tajikistan or Uzbekistan (new treaty).

The level of effectiveness and quality of international judicial cooperation in criminal matters with non-European countries must be assessed in the context of the real conditions and capacity of the competent authorities in the third countries concerned. It always depends on whether the foreign counterpart is also affected by the criminal activity or organised group in question. If not, there is logically less willingness to cooperate. At the level of operational cooperation, personal contacts are generally used, so that the exchange of information is flexible and rapid. Judicial cooperation can be more problematic.

In 2019, the Czech Republic succeeded in acceding to **the Inter-American Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters** (Nassau, 23 May 1992) and its Optional Protocol. Thus, the Czech Republic can now cooperate in the field of legal assistance in criminal proceedings on a contractual basis with all states of the Americas. The Supreme State Prosecutor's Office and the Ministry of Justice of the Czech Republic can thus communicate directly with the central judicial authorities of these states, which has greatly facilitated cooperation.

At the EU level, cooperation has recently been developed with **the Latin American Committee on Internal Security (CLASI)**, which was established in 2022. It focuses on the fight against serious and organised crime, with a particular emphasis on combating illegal drug trafficking. In September 2023, EU interior ministers and CLASI agreed to strengthen information exchange, joint operations involving financial investigations and increased enforcement of drug policy measures.

There has long been very good cooperation with the **US** in the area of drug trafficking. It is conducted exclusively through the DEA office in Vienna. However, in the area of cybercrime and economic crime, cooperation with the US is assessed rather negatively - requests for information are handled very slowly or go completely unanswered. As far as international judicial cooperation in criminal matters is concerned, cooperation with the US is at a very high level. Between 2016 and 2022, a total of 8 extraditions from the United States to the Czech Republic were successfully carried out, including the extradition of a member of the Berdych gang who had been hiding abroad for many years. In addition, 5 other persons wanted by law enforcement authorities were deported from the United States to the Czech Republic during the period.

Among the countries of the Asian region, mention should be made of **Vietnam**, with which the Czech Republic has extensive experience in mutual cooperation in criminal matters, especially in the area of legal assistance in a narrower sense on the basis of an existing bilateral treaty. The situation should be further improved by the negotiation of the Treaty between the Czech Republic and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons, signed in Hanoi on 7 June 2017 and published under No. 33/2019 Coll, In addition, the ratification process of the new bilateral Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters between the Czech Republic and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, signed in Hanoi on 21 April 2023, which regulates modern forms of providing legal assistance in criminal matters, is currently underway.

Cooperation with China and some African and Arab countries cannot be considered satisfactory. These countries do not want to communicate with the Czech Republic for political reasons. At the same time, cooperation with the countries of the Arab peninsula is important for the Czech Republic, as there is evidence that funds related to criminal activities are being hidden in the technically advanced countries of this region. Similarly, improved cooperation with China would also help in dealing with cases of tax and customs evasion and the import of counterfeit goods.

8. FUTURE TRENDS IN ORGANISED CRIME

It can be assumed that the key activities and internal relations within domestic criminal structures will not undergo too many changes in the coming years. In response to pressure from law enforcement authorities, a further strengthening of the network element in domestic criminal structures and a possible increase in the fluctuation of criminal cooperation between different domestic actors cannot be ruled out.

The organisers will continue to target the creation of a corrupt environment in the state administration or public self-government so that they have preferential access to the state's or local authority's plans, can prepare for it, i.e. submit the lowest bid, offer free extra work, etc. and target the contract. Subsequently, as part of the corruption network, they will prepare an unjustified increase in the price of the tendered contract or fail to follow the established procedure for the execution or use of materials in the contract, when, however, due to corruption, the project will be accepted as faultless by the relevant control authorities.

Given that the potential domestic perpetrators of violence who could be used to carry out an exceptional violent action have passed the age when they were unquestioningly willing to carry out orders for violent activity, outsourcing of (rarely carried out) violent crime by domestic criminal structures towards foreign criminal organisations and the use of violence in the form of criminal service (Caas) cannot be ruled out in this period.

As far as the Vietnamese or Chinese criminal communities in the Czech Republic are concerned, their changes will probably not be significant in the coming period. We can expect a continuation of trends started in previous periods, e.g. a shift of the centre of gravity of production of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances from the Czech Republic to other countries.

In the case of Russian-language organised groups, a specific risk related to the war situation and the ongoing Russian aggression against Ukraine is their possible involvement in the physical liquidation of politically active persons or journalists (e.g. opposition representatives living in exile) on "contract". This risk is part of a broader spectrum of hybrid threats and is associated both with the Chechen minority, which in the Czech Republic consists mainly of persons supporting the regime of the autonomous Chechen President Ramzan Akhmatovich Kadyrov (hence Russian President Vladimir Putin) and having ties to this regime, and with traditional and newly arrived Russian-language criminal structures operating in the Czech Republic and the EU, which, according to foreign knowledge, are also beginning to engage in similar activities.

Within the framework of Ukrainian criminal activities, the importance of organised tax crimes committed through purpose-built chains of employment agencies employing the Ukrainian diaspora in the Czech Republic can be expected to further increase in the future. It cannot be ruled out that after the end of combat operations in Ukraine, there may be a significant increase in the smuggling of weapons into the territory of the Czech Republic from Ukraine, as well as an increase in violent crime associated with the infiltration of persons who have long participated in combat operations into the territory of the Czech Republic.

The dynamic development of information technology will further bring with it a shift of crime perpetration from real space to cyberspace. In the future, the police must pay increasing attention to defence against cyber-attacks. Investments will be necessary not only in material equipment but also in the development of human resources. The cyber environment is

becoming an operational space for the police comparable to the physical environment. Therefore, the police must be able to respond not only to pure cyber-attacks, but also to the digitisation and computerisation of the criminal environment in general and the use of information and communication technologies in the commission of crime. It is equally important to focus on adapting the legal framework to deal effectively with these modern risks, while ensuring the protection of fundamental rights and freedoms to the extent customary in a democratic state governed by the rule of law.

The increased use of new technologies may lead in the future to the impossibility of effective use of operational search means and to an increase in the volume of seized electronic evidence, which will not have the capacity to be accessed, analysed and evaluated in a reasonable time to be used as evidence in criminal proceedings.

The possibilities of virtual currencies or other new ways of decentralised financial flows will increasingly be used to launder the proceeds of crime. Organised criminal groups will increasingly make use of encrypted communications, tools and applications to ensure maximum anonymity in the commission of their criminal activities. Recruitment of junior members of organised crime groups will increasingly take place in cyberspace, minimising face-to-face contact.

With the continuation or further escalation of the war conflict in Ukraine, an increase in the number of crimes committed in the area of illegal employment of refugees from Ukraine can be expected. Given the large influx of women and children from Ukraine into the Czech Republic, there is a potential risk that their vulnerable position will be exploited and they may be used for labour or sexual exploitation. In addition to the risks mentioned above, cases of increasing illegal migration, the activation of Russian-speaking criminal groups, cases of illegal cash transfers, and an increase in trafficking in art and cultural objects can also be expected in relation to Ukraine. Continuing risks are predicted in the areas of compliance with international sanctions, proliferation of strategic commodities and trade in military material.

Organised crime will continue to be as flexible as possible in the ways it accumulates its profits and, in this context, will continue to exploit various gaps in national legal systems as well as new resources and opportunities, including the use of new technologies. Given the inevitable trend of the entire world moving to a digital environment and the associated dynamic development of technology, the exploitation of AI by organised crime is a medium-term risk.

The sub-trends for each issue are always given at the end of the respective chapters.

ANNEX 2 - EVALUATION OF THE STRATEGY TO FIGHT AGAINST ORGANISED CRIME UNTIL 2023

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INTRODUCTION

This material summarises the implementation of the Strategy for the Fight against Organised Crime until 2023 (hereinafter referred to as the "Strategy") and was prepared by the Security Policy Department of the Ministry of the Interior on the basis of Government Resolution No.325 of 23 May 2018 as amended by Government Resolution No.359 of 3 May 2022.

The Strategy identified a total of 7 strategic and 22 specific objectives, which were implemented mainly through two-year Action Plans (for the period 2018-2019, 2020-2021 and 2022-2023). All these Action Plans were approved by the Government and evaluated upon completion. They were also published on the MoI website.⁴² Many of the objectives were also implemented outside the Action Plans and their specific implementation is presented below. This material has been prepared on the basis of the outputs from each Action Plan and input from the partners involved.

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY

The implementation of the Strategy took place at a time of significant crisis situations strongly influencing the security environment and the capacities of the involved entities. These major crisis situations were the covid-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021 and the Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2022 with impacts up to the present day. These situations could not have been foreseen at the time of the preparation of the Strategy Note and it must be stated that they have had some negative impact on its implementation. At the same time, however, it is a fact that this could not have been avoided given the global impact of these situations.

The implementation of some of the measures of the Action Plan and therefore the objectives of the Strategy in 2020 and 2021 was negatively affected by the global pandemic covid-19. Many of the measures were affected by limitations in personal contact, impaired ability to hold personal meetings and also on the part of most of the gestors and co-leaders by the need to address the acute crisis situation. In particular, the ability to negotiate police and judicial cooperation agreements with foreign partners was significantly restricted, as was the management of seized property and some of the measures provided by the Security Policy Department of the Ministry of the Interior. Thus, some of the planned measures had to be addressed in the follow-up Action Plan for 2022 and 2023.

The Russian aggression against Ukraine had a negative impact in particular on the work to conclude an agreement with Ukraine to facilitate the application of the European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters of 20 April 1959, a measure that could not be fulfilled

⁴² <https://www.mvcr.cz/clanek/bezpecnostni-hrozby-337414.aspx?q=Y2hudW09Mg%3d%3d>

given the situation on the Ukrainian side. Another negative impact of this was the limitation of the capacity of the other promoters and co-promoters to pursue the planned measures of the 2022 and 2023 Action Plan.

Due to the high deficits of the state budgets, caused to a large extent by the measures related to the pandemic of the covid-19 disease (both on the side of reduced state budget revenues due to the reduction of economic activity and on the side of extraordinary expenditures), spending on internal security was reduced in the last years of the implementation of the Strategy. To some extent, this has led to a reduction in the capacity to implement the objectives of the Strategy. These tendencies towards austerity are still evident at the time of the preparation of this assessment and the preparation of the new Strategy Paper and may continue to negatively affect the security environment of the Czech Republic.

EVALUATION OF THE FULFILMENT OF INDIVIDUAL STRATEGIC AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The individual specific objectives are evaluated on a scale of met - partially met - not met. They also indicate the way forward in case it is appropriate to build on the activities already carried out or to continue their implementation. The extent to which the overarching strategic objective has been met is also assessed, including its further inclusion or non-inclusion in the follow-up strategic material. Specific actions from the Action Plans that have led to the fulfilment of the objectives are also listed. For clarity, the original 2018 versions of the strategic and specific objectives are also presented in italics to provide the necessary context for their assessment.

A) TO INCREASE THE EFFICIENCY OF CRIMINAL PROCEEDINGS AND TO REFINE THE DEFINITION OF PROBLEMATIC INSTRUMENTS

Original wording of the strategic objective: This strategic objective is intended to create conditions for law enforcement authorities that will reduce their administrative burden and enable them to devote themselves to the detection and investigation of crime. It is also intended to reduce duplication in criminal proceedings and to increase legal certainty in the use of operational means of investigation. The last area is to extend the possibility of applying institutes that have proved their worth in criminal investigations and to remedy partial perceived shortcomings.

Actions 2 and 3 of the 2022 and 2023 Action Plan were directly subordinated to this strategic objective.

Under Action 2, an analysis of the security aspects of asylum and residence legislation was carried out. This consisted of carrying out data collection and continuous evaluation of the results of administrative proceedings against foreigners at security risk. This process is very complex and lengthy and does not always lead to the results required by the security services. The knowledge available to the Police and intelligence services within this process is continuously passed on to the Ministry of the Interior as an incentive for the necessary amendments to the legislation and has been used in the preparation of the new Residence Act, which was submitted to the Government during January 2024 and is now being dealt with by the Chamber of Deputies as Chamber Print 782.⁴³

Under Measure 3, the question of a possible extension of the powers of customs authorities to investigate gambling tax offences was discussed. The working group meeting unanimously concluded that such an extension of the scope was desirable. Subsequently, as part of the consolidation package (Act No 349/2023 Coll., amending certain acts in connection with the consolidation of public budgets), a partial amendment to the Criminal Procedure Code was prepared, which, with effect from 1 January 2024, extended the CS's remit to investigate tax evasion from legally operated gambling, in the form of an amended wording of Section 12(2)(d) of the Criminal Procedure Code. The final effect will be better detection of tax evasion and more effective solutions in the field of law enforcement in the area of gambling operations in the territory of the Czech Republic. This area also appears to be optimal, with regard to the prediction of risks in the area of gambling in the Czech Republic, for the application of the Cobra method.

The long-term project to standardise bank account outputs is also aimed at increasing the efficiency of criminal proceedings, but because of its close relationship to economic crime, it is described in detail in the evaluation of strategic objective E).

In addition to the laws relating to individual specific objectives, the adoption of Act No.173/2023 Coll. was beneficial for the fight against organised crime, which expanded the object of the offences of forcible crossing of the state border, organising and facilitating the illegal crossing of the state border and facilitating unauthorised stay on the territory of the Republic to cover not only migration to the Czech Republic, but also to other Member States of the European Union and the Schengen area. The criminal offence of organising and facilitating the illegal crossing of the state border under Section 340 of the Criminal Code is often accompanied by inhuman or degrading treatment of migrants (exposing them, whether intentionally or negligently, to physical or mental suffering due to lack of food, liquids or inadequate sanitary conditions), and therefore a new circumstance has also been added to condition the application of a higher criminal rate if a larger number of persons are subjected

⁴³ <https://www.psp.cz/sqw/historie.sqw?o=9&t=782>

to inhuman or degrading treatment. This law entered into force on 1 July 2023 and allows the CID to better prosecute cases where a criminal group is detected that uses a route that does not cross the border of the Czech Republic or that exposes a larger number of migrants to inhuman or degrading treatment when illegally crossing the border. It therefore has a positive impact on the fight against organised illegal migration.

Evaluation and next steps

The strategic objective was partially met. A similar strategic objective will be included in the follow-up strategy document. A more general formulation, including non-criminal legislation, seems more appropriate for the future.

A1) Adoption of new criminal procedure and related legislation

Original wording of the specific objective: The new regulation should reduce excessive formalism and the administrative burden on law enforcement authorities when investigating organised crime.

No action has been taken under the individual Action Plans to meet this specific objective. Such a measure would be superfluous as the proposal for a new regulation of criminal procedure has been discussed for a long time within the framework of the Commission on Criminal Procedure established under the Ministry of Justice. On 1 June 2022, in order to secure political support, a paper summarising the main changes contained in the draft new Criminal Procedure Code was sent to the Chairmen of the Constitutional and Legal Committees (hereinafter 'CLC') of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate for discussion. However, as the discussion did not take place, in November 2022 the Minister of Justice again asked the Chairmen of both Constitutional Law Committees to discuss the sent Strategy of the new Criminal Procedure Code. Following this, the Constitutional Law Committee of the Senate then held a roundtable on the draft new Criminal Procedure Code on 17 January 2023, at which the Criminal Procedure Code was presented to the senators present. However, the discussion of the Strategy of the new Criminal Procedure Code by the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate did not take place until an exit meeting of both committees on 26 April 2023. Immediately after the meeting, the Committee of the Chamber of Deputies adopted a resolution on the draft of the new Criminal Procedure Code in which it appreciated the work of the members of the Committee, stated that the draft of the Criminal Procedure Code contains a number of positive and useful changes and recommended the Ministry of Justice to continue the recodification work in the current term of office, taking into account the current developments in opinion and the substantial comments made. In addition, he stated that the desired changes could also be made by way of an amendment. The Constitutional Law Committee of the Senate

did not adopt a resolution on the draft Criminal Procedure Code in a similar wording until 3 May 2023.

At the subsequent meetings of the recodification group, only partial agreement was reached on some of the issues raised at the aforementioned retreat of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, while no agreement was reached on the remaining issues.

In view of the stage of the election cycle, some elements of the intended new regulation have been incorporated into the current amendments to the criminal legislation⁴⁴ - for example, strengthening the opportunistic elements in the framework of the preparatory proceedings, streamlining the settlement, streamlining the information obligation on the ordered interception and recording of telecommunications traffic and on the discovery of data on telecommunications traffic, simplifying the presentation of the indictment, simplifying the pronouncement of the judgment, the scope of the appeal in the case of acceptance of a guilty plea or extending the possibility of correcting the drafting of the judgment. These amendments were approved by the Government on 30 September 2024 and 13 November 2024, respectively, and are being considered by the Chamber of Deputies as Document Nos. 854 and 861. The latter (Parliamentary print 861) also contains a renewed attempt to refine the legislative regulation of the institute of the agent contained in specific objective A2.

During the period of the Strategy's validity, a number of other changes in the area of criminal law were adopted, which directly or indirectly aimed at fulfilling strategic objective A and specific objective A1.

Act No. 333/2020 Coll. (in addition to the changes to the plea agreement and sentence mentioned below - see point A3), introduced a new procedural institution of plea bargaining, which facilitates the evidence in criminal proceedings in relevant cases, and also regulated the obligations of the cooperating accused. The institution of the co-accused is used specifically in cases involving organised groups of offenders, and it often happens that these cases are divided into several criminal proceedings for reasons of speed (some of the accused or the offences committed are excluded from separate trials). Therefore, in the past it often happened that the criminal case of a cooperating defendant ended in a final judgment before the criminal case of other defendants. The originally co-operating accused then already had the procedural status of a witness in the criminal case of the other accused, and it may have happened that he suddenly 'changed his mind' and refused to state in these criminal proceedings the facts which he had stated as a co-operating accused in the preliminary proceedings. The aforementioned amendment to the Code of Criminal Procedure took such cases into account and explicitly imposed on the cooperating accused the obligation to comply with his obligations in the proceedings against the other persons who were prosecuted with him, and a breach of this obligation may be grounds for a retrial against the accused.

44 <https://www.psp.cz/sqw/historie.sqw?o=9&T=854> and <https://www.psp.cz/sqw/historie.sqw?o=9&T=861>

The implementation of data freezing⁴⁵ in the Criminal Procedure Code (amendment to the Criminal Procedure Code by Act No. 287/2018 Coll.) can also be positively assessed.

Evaluation and next steps

The specific objective was partially met. Work will continue on streamlining the criminal procedure in the Czech Republic, including the continuation of the legislative processes of the submitted amendments.

A2) Clarification of the legislative regulation of the institute of the agent

Original wording of the specific objective: The aim of this amendment is to increase legal certainty in the use of this institute and to clearly define the conditions for the deployment of an agent.

Measure 1 of the Action Plan for 2018 and 2019 was aimed at the adoption of this specific objective. However, the strategic objective has not yet been met due to the failure to complete the consideration of the Chamber of Deputies' Bill 642 in the last term of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic. This proposal was again incorporated into the aforementioned amendment to the Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code (Parliamentary Document 861).

The draft legislation originally contained in the Parliamentary Press 642 from the 8th parliamentary term (2017-2021) and now in the above-mentioned amendment approved by the Government was duly discussed among all relevant actors, i.e. the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of the Interior, the Supreme State Prosecutor's Office, the chief state prosecutors and representatives of the supreme courts. The legislation contains a number of changes, in particular, instead of the substantive legal impunity of the agent, it comes with the definition of cases when the agent is unprosecutable. The proposed change is based in particular on the premise that it is legitimate, under certain conditions, for the interest of society in the investigation of serious crimes to be privileged over the punishment of a police officer who, as an agent, has been in an environment of interest and who, by his or her activities, has helped to bring such crimes to light. It is also in the interests of society and the State that such an agent, who takes considerable risks, should be able to rely on not being punished during his or her tenure if he or she does not commit excesses. Reference may be made to the explanatory memorandum to the proposal in question for details.⁴⁶ There is a consensus

⁴⁵ Data freezing is the temporary storage of electronic data that may be needed for criminal investigations. Data freezing prevents the destruction or disclosure of this data until it can be requested by law enforcement authorities.

⁴⁶ <https://odok.cz/portal/veklep/material/KORND3QJZZ3/>

among all stakeholders on the need for a change in the legislation and the way it should be implemented.

Evaluation and next steps

The specific objective was partially met. The legislative process to amend the criminal legislation addressing this issue will continue.

A3) Evaluation of the application of the plea agreement

Original wording of the specific objective: This institute has great potential for uncovering complicated cases and speeding up the prosecution process. The amendment should allow its application also to particularly serious crimes, as the activities of organised criminal groups are usually classified as such.

No action has been taken under the individual Action Plans to meet this specific objective. Practical findings on the application of the institute of plea bargaining are published in the annual reports on the activities of the prosecutor's office.⁴⁷ On the basis of the knowledge gained, changes were made to the legal regulation of this institution by Act No 333/2020 Coll., which entered into force on 1 October 2020.

The main changes made by this Act in relation to the plea bargain can be summarised as follows:

- It is now possible to negotiate a plea bargain for all offences, i.e. even for particularly serious crimes (the restriction on juveniles remains unchanged). The main obstacle to the greater use of the institution of plea bargaining was seen primarily in the limited range of offences for which plea bargaining was possible, while the absence of the possibility to use this institute, for example, in proceedings before regional courts for serious property and economic crimes (typically with large-scale damage), the investigation of which is very demanding in terms of evidence, was seen as unjustifiably limiting.
- Negotiation of a plea bargain is to be taken into account in the consideration of the type and amount of the sentence, and may possibly lead to the imposition of a sentence below the lower limit of the penalty. Following the extension of the applicability of the plea bargain to criminal proceedings for all offences, the plea bargain is now also listed as a special ground for (optional) mitigation of the sentence, provided, of course, that it can be considered that, given the offender's circumstances and the nature of the offence, his rehabilitation can be achieved by a shorter sentence.

⁴⁷ <https://verejnazaloba.cz/nasz/cinnost-nejvyssiho-statniho-zastupitelstvi/zpravy-o-cinnosti/zprava-o-cinnosti-za-rok-2023/>

- Negotiating a plea bargain is no longer a special ground of defence (this does not affect the other grounds of defence, which also apply in the case of negotiating a plea bargain).
- The agreement on guilt and punishment should continue to be negotiated in principle in the pre-trial proceedings, however, based on the requirements of practice, it is also possible to negotiate such an agreement in the trial phase. Even in such a case, a plea bargain can considerably simplify the entire criminal proceedings, eliminating the need to question a large number of witnesses, eliminating the cost of expensive evidence at the main trial and saving time. In view of the common consensus on the outcome of the criminal proceedings, the higher courts will not be burdened with appeal proceedings either, which will lead to further cost savings and a reduction in the burden on these courts.

Further changes to the institution of plea bargaining are contained in Act No. 166/2024 Coll., which will enter into force on 1 January 2025. Under this Act, the victim's right to be "heard" in criminal proceedings is strengthened. It is now stipulated that if the victim (or any victim) expresses his or her views on a negotiated plea agreement, these views will be included directly in the negotiated plea agreement. If the victim does not agree to the plea bargain, the judge will be informed in due course and, in particular in such cases, should review whether approval of the plea bargain is appropriate.

In general terms, it can be stated that the significant increase in the number of persons in respect of whom the institution of plea bargaining was applied in 2021 and 2022 is clearly the result of the amendment introduced by Act No 333/2020 Coll. The conclusion of plea bargains gives prosecutors the opportunity to participate to a greater extent in determining the type and amount of the sentence. Even in the case of plea bargaining, Section 58 of the Criminal Code may be applied, allowing for an exceptional reduction of the prison sentence (especially in criminal cases with regional jurisdiction).

However, not only the circumstances of the crime, its stages and its consequences are always taken into account, but also the approach of the perpetrators to the detection of the crime, their remorse and their approach to possible compensation for material or non-material damage. The timing of the conclusion of the plea bargain also plays an important role. The prosecutors base their decision on the principle that the earlier the plea bargain is concluded, the lower the sentence the accused may receive. In order to unify the procedure of prosecutors, the Supreme State Prosecutor's Office issued a methodological recommendation: the Methodology on the Procedure of Prosecutors in Negotiating Plea and Sentence Agreements of 27 January 2023.

The changes in the institute of the agreement on guilt and punishment are also positively evaluated in cases where the Czech Republic, represented by the tax administrator, is the victim. However, it is considered problematic by the tax administrator if the penalty imposed does not reach the amount of the assessed and proven damage in the given cases. From the point of view of practice, specifically according to the High State Prosecutor's Office in Prague,

there is still room for further refinement of the institute of the agreement on guilt and punishment.

Evaluation and next steps

The specific objective has been met. The application of the plea bargain will be further monitored.

B) STRENGTHEN INFORMATION SHARING AND COOPERATION IN DEALING WITH ORGANISED CRIME CASES

Original wording of the strategic objective: The aim is to improve cooperation between the relevant authorities in order to achieve maximum synergy in the fight against organised crime. Cooperation should be based on a contractual principle that clearly defines the rights and obligations of the various actors and should lead to the creation of cross-cutting and ad hoc teams for individual issues, similar to the Tax Cobra. Access to data retrieval in the basic registers should be regulated for the needs of public authorities and they should have a clear overview of the data available and the possibilities to obtain it.

Evaluation and next steps

The strategic objective has been met. Further cooperation and information sharing between relevant authorities will continue to be promoted. In the framework of the next strategic material, the possibility of extending cooperation to the field of academia, private entities, local government and non-profit organisations is offered where justified.

B1) Contractual anchoring of cooperation between entities

Original wording of the specific objective: Although cooperation between individual entities can take place on the basis of mutual trust, the contractual treatment of this cooperation sets procedural steps for the exchange of information and the provision of cooperation, thus preventing potential disputes. Contractual cooperation is also more stable in the long term than mere personal ties, and leads to an increase in the volume of shared communication.

To meet this specific objective, Action 4 of the Action Plan for 2022 and 2023 was adopted. Within its framework, efforts were made to expand contractual cooperation between law enforcement authorities (represented by the Customs Administration and the Police) and freight forwarding companies in order to eliminate the risks of transporting dangerous shipments, especially drugs. Although the cooperation could not be formally anchored, satisfactory cooperation was achieved with individual service providers. This measure has also led to the harmonisation of procedures in cases where postal confidentiality is breached for

legal reasons. Cooperation with forwarding companies has also been used to optimise the relevant security research project to further increase the likelihood of catching illegal consignments.

As a successful example of expanding contractual cooperation and related information sharing, the conclusion of a trilateral memorandum between the NSZ, NCOZ and NUKIB, which sets clear rules for effective cooperation between these institutions in the fight against cybercrime and ensuring cyber security, can also be mentioned. Further updates to the contractual cooperation were also made for the Tax Cobra (see below).

Evaluation and next steps

The specific objective has been met. The expansion of contractual but also informal cooperation between relevant actors will continue to be supported.

B2) Establishment of central and regional cross-cutting and ad hoc crime fighting teams

The original wording of the specific objective Tax Cobra is one of the outcomes of past strategic documents for the fight against organised crime and is also an example of effective cooperation in the fight against crime. Nevertheless, its regional structure needs to be further strengthened. Similar teams should be set up in other areas. This form of cooperation does not require a change in legislation or financial costs and is therefore the most effective form of response to emerging forms of organised crime.

To meet this specific objective, actions have been taken in all the Tax Cobra Development Action Plans as well as 21 actions from the 2018 and 2019 Action Plans.

The development and support of the Tax Cobra was one of the key topics addressed in the Strategy for the Fight against Organised Crime, which is why these measures were represented in all Action Plans. The Tax Cobra continues to be one of the most effective and efficient tools for detecting organised crime and is an exemplary project of cooperation between law enforcement authorities across departments.

In the course of the Strategy's validity, attention was paid in particular to the development of the Cobra method of work in the regions, including an evaluation of the effectiveness of this cooperation and addressing the identified shortcomings. Representatives of the central Cobra gradually took part in joint meetings in the regions concerned. From the point of view of the PČR, the active involvement of police officers from the individual NCOZ SKPV expositions, who are already regularly present at the regional Cobra meetings, has also been of great help. In many cases, the coordinated action of the tax authorities and the police has been taking place from the very beginning of the search for illegal activity and has lasted until the conclusion of

the case. Even the Cobra method of cooperation has been negatively affected by the limitations imposed by the coronavirus epidemic in 2020 and 2021, in particular by the decrease in mutually implemented meetings and training activities.

A significant milestone was the revision of the contractual basis of the Tax Cobra in the form of an amendment to the Agreement on Cooperation, Exchange of Information and Coordination between the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Finance was approved and signed by representatives of all parties in 2022. The main changes are the inclusion of two new areas in the subject of the agreement, namely the area of training and the performance of lecturing activities, as well as the initiation and formulation of legislative proposals in the field of combating tax evasion and tax crime. The amendment was set to take effect on 1 June 2022. As regards the implementing protocol to the original agreement, it was decided at working group level to leave it unchanged.

On the basis of the already established cooperation in the area of tax crime, in recent years there has also been a significant extension of mutual cooperation to other areas of crime in which individual entities have competence. Specifically, this has involved cooperation on cases of illegal employment of foreigners, theft of personal and corporate income taxes, as well as the theft of related mandatory payments, i.e. health and social insurance, and the abuse of compensation payments related to the covid-19 disease epidemic. The cooperation also focuses on cases of imports of goods from third countries (customs regimes 40 and 42), where the imports are not declared by the entities or the goods are subsequently formally declared to customers in the Member States and ultimately the tax is not properly paid in the Czech Republic. The Cobra platform also identifies risks in the area of e-currency transactions and gambling tax evasion.

The possibilities of communication and information sharing within the Tax Cobra have also been expanded. The CS published the file sharing portal to the Central Service Point environment. This portal (web application) serves as a place for temporary storage of files and their subsequent retrieval, thus enabling their secure sharing among Tax Cobra members. The possibility of sharing a unified communication tool for video conference calls or other modern methods of sharing data and information was explored by the Central Cobra representatives. Joint activities are also underway in the area of security research focused on the analysis of bank account information.

As part of Measure 21 of the Action Plan for 2018 and 2019, the STRATAKAMs platform was established for the cooperation of the PČR and DGC in combating crime in the area of strategic materials and sensitive commodities, which threatens the interests of the Czech Republic and its allies and requires a comprehensive approach and a high level of cooperation between the involved security forces. It also involves mutual coordination in the operational action plans of the EMPACT 2022+ platform, i.e. in relevant operational actions, and sharing of best practices in specific cases.

Evaluation and next steps

The specific objective has been met. Cooperation within the Tax Cobra, as well as other similar teams, will continue to be supported and developed. A challenge for this cooperation will be the expected change in the structure of the CS authority, which will also affect the interaction between the cooperating authorities.

B3) Creating a method for searching across information systems

Original wording of the specific objective: The system or software tool, as appropriate, will ensure greater accessibility of information for the relevant state authorities and will make searches in defined information systems more efficient. This will improve the use of already available data for criminal investigations.

A national system or software tool that would make information more accessible to the relevant government authorities was not developed during the reporting period. Therefore, the Police of the Czech Republic (hereinafter referred to as "the Police") establishes remote and continuous access to its selected information systems for employees of partner state administration bodies. Similarly, other authorities allow the police access to their systems. The sharing of information takes place on the basis of bilateral agreements concluded with, for example, the Customs Administration of the Czech Republic, the Prison Service of the Czech Republic, the Military Police, the General Inspectorate of Security Forces and many other authorities. The technology used to link the agency information systems is the shared service information system. Another form of information sharing is the use of systems of international organisations such as Interpol, Europol and the EU, both for reading and entering data.

On behalf of the Ministry of Justice, it can be noted that the project "Linking Crime Statistics" is currently underway, which is also a government task. The aim of this project is to link the statistics of the Police of the Czech Republic, courts, prosecutors, the Prison Service of the Czech Republic, the Probation and Mediation Service and other bodies involved in criminal proceedings. The result should therefore be the analytical tool mentioned in the Strategy. It should be noted, however, that the linking of statistics appears to be very complicated (other systems, problems with data anonymisation, etc.) and therefore the project cannot be expected to be completed in the near future.

Evaluation and next steps

The specific objective was partially met. In view of the progressive digitisation of public administration processes and the above-mentioned projects already underway, the inclusion of this objective in the next strategic material will be considered. The efforts of the

CSTD to develop analytical tools and further advance the digitisation of all processes will continue to be supported.

B4) Setting up a system for law enforcement access to information

Original wording of the specific objective: the Police of the Czech Republic, as well as other law enforcement authorities, lack a clearly defined catalogue of available information that can be used for criminal investigations, or access to this information is limited to too narrow a range of persons or burdened with complex administration. The aim is to verify what information is available in specific situations and to create a manual for obtaining this information.

Action 3 of the 2018 and 2019 Action Plan was aimed at the adoption of this specific objective. Two main lines of work were pursued in the implementation of this action. An investigation was conducted to determine whether there is an inventory or database of all available data recorded by state entities that could be used in criminal investigations. Such a complete database did not exist at the time of the task; however, three partial information sources were identified that approached such a database. Unfortunately, none of them represented a complete answer to the question at hand. These were the National Catalogue of Open Data,⁴⁸ List of Agendas of the Register of Rights and Obligations⁴⁹ and the Information System on Public Administration Information Systems (ISVS),⁵⁰ which was replaced in 2019 by the registration of ISVS in the Agency Information System of Competence. However, neither of them is very user-friendly. The Connected Data Pool and Public Data Pool projects have contributed to wider accessibility of information, increased awareness of its existence and also to the objective of this measure.

The second approach to fulfilling this measure was to identify data sources that are not accessible by law enforcement agencies in an appropriate manner, thus causing complications in requesting the necessary information. In the first phase of data collection, the Police, the GRC and the GIBS were contacted. Some of the identified requests were further addressed through legislative or other means.

However, it should be noted that neither the catalogue of available information nor the related manual envisaged in the Strategy has yet been established. The information obtained on information resources is passed on within the police through methodological activities and within the professional training system. The information systems for which it appears

48 <https://data.gov.cz/datové-sady>

49 <https://rpp-ais.egon.gov.cz/gen/agendy-detail/>

50 <https://rpp-ais.egon.gov.cz/AISP/verejne/isvs/zobrazeni-isvs>

appropriate to make them available to the police are made available remotely and continuously after action by the responsible authority.

A significant contribution in this area was the introduction of the central accounts register as a new information system. This system is currently one of the most used tools of the law enforcement agencies, facilitating and speeding up the work in the fight against organised crime not only for law enforcement authorities.

Evaluation and next steps

The specific objective was partially met. The progressive digitisation and interconnection of information systems throughout the public sector has had a major impact on this area. It is therefore worth considering whether the original idea contained in the Strategy has been overtaken by current developments.

C) TO INCREASE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION WITH SELECTED COUNTRIES AND WITHIN THE EU

Original wording of the strategic objective: This strategic objective aims to improve the availability of information obtained through international police and judicial cooperation in the investigation of cross-border organised crime cases. In order to achieve this, the contractual basis for this cooperation needs to be broadened and the language skills of the actors involved need to be improved. Effective cooperation tools, such as the deployment of liaison officers to countries of concern and cooperation within the EU-level Justice and Home Affairs Focal Point Networks, should be promoted. Awareness of the benefits of joint investigation teams for securing evidence for criminal proceedings from abroad will also be encouraged.

This strategic objective was mainly implemented through the measures in the Action Plans for each specific objective. For many of them, these were issues addressed across the entire period of the Strategy. It can be stated that all the entities involved perceive the necessity of international cooperation and its development to effectively combat organised crime, which very often has an international dimension.

Evaluation and next steps

The strategic objective has been met. Activities aimed at developing international cooperation in the fight against organised crime will continue. However, not all of the specific objectives previously included will be included in the following strategic material.

C1) Development of language skills of law enforcement officers

Original wording of the specific objective: Knowledge of foreign languages (at least English) is a prerequisite for effective international cooperation. Cooperation through interpreters and translators is not only significantly more time-consuming and costly, but also less effective and does not foster mutual trust. Law enforcement authorities must therefore ensure adequate language training for officers and take this criterion into account in recruitment wherever possible.

No measures were taken to meet this specific objective within the framework of individual Action Plans; the specific objective was implemented continuously within the framework of the activities of individual law enforcement agencies.

Language training for members of the Police of the Czech Republic takes place in departmental training facilities, within the e-learning platform and also by sending officers to language courses abroad. A total of 37 English, German and Russian language courses organised by the Police Education and Service Training Unit were attended by more than 150 officers between 2018 and 2023. In addition to the general courses, there are also courses oriented to the specific language needs of members of the riot and traffic police and the weapons and security material service. In addition, almost 290 officers have undergone the English, German and Russian language training system. More than 150 officers participated in the e-learning courses during the reporting period, all of them focused on English language training. Several dozens of officers also participated in German and English language courses abroad.

As far as police officers assigned to the Criminal Police and Investigation Service of the Police Presidium of the Czech Republic and units with national competence are concerned, the importance attached to language skills corresponds to the high probability that they will use the language in their work. Within the National Drug Control Centre of the Criminal Police and Investigation Service, more than 40 officers have undergone language training between 2018 and 2023, representing approximately 20% of the current staffing level. At the National Criminal Police and Investigation Service's National Headquarters against Organised Crime, language skills are continuously strengthened through basic and refresher courses organised by departmental training facilities. In terms of languages, English is the predominant language, particularly with regard to its application in areas of international police and judicial cooperation. German is the second most frequently used language. Many of the newly arrived officers are already equipped with the language.

As regards the National Counter Terrorism, Extremism and Cybercrime Centre of the Criminal Investigation and Police Service, some knowledge of English language at least at A2 - B1 level is a prerequisite for participation in the selection procedure. Units equipped with language skills at the level of advanced to very advanced speakers assist colleagues with lesser language skills.

Each year, the Judicial Academy offers a range of national seminars and international language seminars, courses and other activities for the justice sector in accordance with the needs analysis. Each year, as part of its Training Plan, the Judicial Academy organises both face-to-face and online professional language training based on a sophisticated Strategy designed primarily to enable those interested in the justice system to develop professional foreign language competences and professional language training so that they can effectively perform their duties in their professional lives. The Judicial Academy currently offers the judiciary 40-50 professional language courses each year, primarily in the foreign languages of English, German and French, with additional languages currently on offer, namely Spanish and Italian. The professional language courses and seminars are intended mainly for judges and prosecutors, while some courses are also aimed at middle-level judicial staff, always in accordance with a needs analysis in the justice sector.

Improvements in the language skills of law enforcement authorities are also taking place in connection with the renewal of personnel. For the younger generation, knowledge of at least English at a basic level of communication tends to be the norm, thus increasing the overall level of language skills of the CID.

Evaluation and next steps

The specific objective has been met. Further development of the language skills of law enforcement officers remains desirable. In view of the ongoing nature of these activities and the progressive generational change, this specific objective will no longer be mentioned in the follow-up strategic material.

C2) Conclusion and updating of agreements on police and judicial cooperation with selected countries

Original wording of the specific objective: similar to national cooperation, it is more effective in the long term to have international cooperation based on contracts. In the case of some countries, no other form of cooperation is possible. Individual treaties must respond to the current needs of organised crime investigations.

A total of 14 actions across the Action Plans were aimed at adopting this specific objective. For the sake of clarity, the international treaties addressed are divided into police cooperation treaties and judicial cooperation treaties.

Police cooperation agreements

The process of negotiating police cooperation agreements is quite time-consuming. In addition to agreement on the text of the treaty itself, ratification by both parties is also required. In particular, the following police cooperation agreements were dealt with during the period of the Strategy's validity:

- The Treaty between the Government of the Czech Republic and the Government of the Republic of Kazakhstan on cooperation in the fight against crime was signed in Astana on 23 November 2017. The Treaty entered into force on 1 September 2018 and was published in the Collection of International Treaties under No. 41/2018.
- The Agreement between the Government of the Czech Republic and the Government of the Republic of Armenia on cooperation in the fight against crime was signed in Prague on 30 January 2014. The Agreement entered into force on 7 December 2018 and was published in the Collection of International Treaties under No 9/2019.
- The Treaty between the Government of the Czech Republic and the Government of the Republic of Vietnam on cooperation in the fight against crime was signed in Hanoi on 7 June 2017. The Treaty entered into force on 12 February 2019 and was published in the Collection of International Treaties under No. 8/2019.
- The Treaty between the Czech Republic and Georgia on cooperation in the fight against crime was signed in Tbilisi on 10 July 2019. The Treaty entered into force on 1 March 2021 and was published in the Collection of International Treaties under the number 14/2021.
- The Treaty between the Government of the Czech Republic and the Government of Ukraine on cooperation in combating crime and maintaining public order and security was signed in Prague on 16 July 2024 and entered into force on 1 April 2025.
- The Treaty between the Government of the Czech Republic and the Government of Mongolia on cooperation in the fight against crime was signed on 10 March 2025. The Treaty will be submitted to the Parliament of the Czech Republic for approval and then to the President of the Republic for ratification.

In all cases, this is a standard regulation of police cooperation with a state that is not neighbouring the Czech Republic. It regulates cooperation in the prevention and detection of crime, in particular through the exchange of information. Negotiations on other police cooperation agreements were affected by the Covid 19 pandemic, where no face-to-face expert meetings could be held, especially in 2020 and 2021. Negotiations on agreements were held by correspondence with, for example, **Indonesia, India and Turkey**, and expert meetings on a new police cooperation agreement with **Slovakia and Poland** were held. Due to the UK's lack of interest in negotiating a legally binding treaty, a joint declaration of intent to cooperate

in the fight against and prevention of terrorism, crime and illegal immigration was signed instead.

Although the Czech Republic has long sought to contractually regulate international police cooperation with China, no substantial progress has been achieved in this matter. The Czech side sought to conclude a full-fledged treaty, while the Chinese side proposed only to conclude a Memorandum of Understanding, which would not sufficiently address the situation. The Chinese side also demanded that the Memorandum of Understanding should cover not only the fight against transnational organised crime but also cooperation in the investigation of such crime, including the collection of evidence and the transfer of suspects. The Chinese Ministry of Public Security has competence in all these areas. These forms of cooperation are considered judicial on the Czech side and are the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice. The Ministry of Justice did not agree in principle to the inclusion of judicial forms of cooperation in the Memorandum.

Justice cooperation agreements

As in the case of police cooperation agreements, this is a time-consuming process, dependent on the agreement of the parties, which may also be influenced by the political situation in the partner countries.

During the period of the Strategy's validity, the following agreements on judicial cooperation were dealt with in particular:

- Treaty on Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters with the Socialist Republic of Vietnam

The Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters between the Czech Republic and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam (Hanoi, 21 April 2023) entered into force on 17 March 2024.

- Extradition treaty with Argentina

Negotiations were ongoing with the relevant Argentine authorities to negotiate this agreement. The Government of the Czech Republic consented to the negotiation of the Treaty by its Resolution No. 1176 of 19 December 2016. The Treaty was signed on 25 November 2019 in Prague. Following the consent of both chambers of the Parliament of the Czech Republic to the ratification of the Treaty, the instrument of ratification was drawn up in July 2021 for the purpose of the entry into force of the Treaty, thus completing the ratification process of the Czech Republic. However, the ratification process is still ongoing in Argentina, so the treaty has not yet entered into force.

- Accession of the Czech Republic to the Inter-American Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters

The Czech Republic has acceded to the Inter-American Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters negotiated within the framework of the Organisation of American States. The Government of the Czech Republic agreed to the Czech Republic's accession by its Resolution No. 758 of 23 October 2017. On 16 November 2019, this Convention, including its Protocol, entered into force for the Czech Republic.

Furthermore, expert negotiations with the People's Republic of China and Malaysia on specific draft treaty texts have been ongoing, but some provisions of the draft treaties have not yet been resolved. In relation to the People's Republic of China, it was decided in April 2024 to terminate the negotiation of the legal aid treaty due to open areas of the proposed regulation which have a fundamental impact on the absolute obligations of the Czech Republic in the area of protection of fundamental human rights, where the Chinese side has not shown any flexibility in addressing them in the text of the treaty (e.g. (in)possibility of serving a summons to the accused and conducting his interrogation, or the refusal to include grounds for refusal of a request for legal assistance taking into account human rights requirements (death penalty, inhumane treatment of the person concerned), or the whole issue of protection of personal data transmitted under the treaty). With regard to Malaysia, some areas of the draft treaty could not be resolved, but negotiations have not yet been concluded.

Preliminary negotiations on the possibility of negotiating a treaty were held with the United Arab Emirates at the expert level, and in November 2024 the Czech Republic formally notified the United Arab Emirates of its interest in negotiating a legal assistance treaty, but no expert negotiations on the draft treaty have yet taken place.

With regard to the possibility of negotiating an extradition treaty with Belize, information has been obtained through police cooperation on the deterioration of the legal and security situation in Belize, which does not support the intention to negotiate an extradition treaty with that State, since its possible negotiation would not achieve the purpose of extending cooperation. As a result, steps to negotiate an extradition treaty with Belize were abandoned.

As a result of the launch of the Russian aggression against Ukraine in February 2022, no steps have been taken to negotiate an agreement with Ukraine to facilitate the application of the European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters of 20 April 1959.

Evaluation and next steps

The specific objective was met in the area of police and judicial cooperation. Efforts to expand police and judicial cooperation agreements with relevant countries will continue.

C3) Secondment of liaison officers to countries of interest

Original wording of the specific objective: Given the high effectiveness of this instrument of international cooperation and the very positive evaluation of the work of Czech liaison officers abroad (e.g. Moscow, Belgrade, Bucharest and others), further expansion of the network of liaison officers to other necessary destinations of international cooperation is necessary for further development.

All three Action Plans (for the period 2018-2019, 2020-2021 and 2022-2023) have taken action towards the adoption of this specific objective. In addition, an updated internal management act was issued - Instruction No. 243 of the President of the Police dated 11 December 2019, regulating the activities and tasks of the Liaison Officers (also referred to as "LOs") and Seconded National Experts. The system of initial training of LOs was also updated and their pre-departure training was extended to include language training and short-term internships with Interpol, Europol and Frontex. In June 2021, a new Agreement was signed between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of the Interior, the Czech Police and the Fire Service of the Czech Republic on the conditions for providing mutual cooperation in the deployment of migration and document experts, Police Liaison Officers to the Czech Republic's OC, Fire Service Liaison Officers to the Permanent Delegation of the Czech Republic to NATO in Brussels and to the Czech Republic's OC in Bratislava.

- **Liaison Officers of the Czech Republic at Czech Embassies abroad**

In 2019, two new Police Liaison Officers for International Police Cooperation were deployed abroad, namely to Poland (as of 1 July 2019) and to Austria (as of 16 September 2019). In connection with the deterioration of diplomatic relations with the Russian Federation, in April 2021 the activity of the Police Liaison Officer of the Czech Republic at the Czech Foreign Office in Moscow was terminated - the officer was expelled from the country together with other diplomats. In June 2022, a new liaison office was established at the embassy in Rome.

Steps have also been initiated to cover other countries of interest in 2023, namely Croatia and Slovenia. This need was subsequently fulfilled in September 2024 when the accreditation of the liaison officer at the embassy in Vienna for cooperation with Croatia and Slovenia was extended. At present, there are a total of 11 Liaison Officers of the Czech Republic accredited for a total of 22 countries.

- **Liaison Officers of the Czech Republic at the Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU in Brussels**

In September 2021, a second Czech Police Liaison Officer was seconded to the Permanent Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU in Brussels to strengthen the representation of the Czech Police in the Justice and Home Affairs Department, in particular in order to increase the agenda in connection with the Czech Presidency of the EU Council in 2022. At the end of 2023, the secondment of the Czech Police Liaison Officer to the Permanent

Representation of the Czech Republic to the EU in Brussels was terminated, so the number of Czech Police Liaison Officers in Brussels dropped again from two officers to one.

- **Europol liaison officers**

In February 2021, a third police officer was seconded to Europol as a liaison officer. In March 2022, the planned secondment of one national expert from the Police to Europol was implemented. As part of the expansion of the liaison officer network, steps were initiated in 2023 to deploy a cybercrime liaison officer to Europol (J-CAT). The deployment was implemented in September 2024. Currently, there are a total of 4 Police Liaison Officers (PLOs) working at Europol.

- **Frontex liaison officers**

The Police Liaison Officer of the Czech Police started to work for Frontex on 15 April 2025.

- **Experts for migration and documents at Czech embassies abroad**

Between 2018 and 2023, it was possible to deploy migration and document liaison officers from the ranks of members of the Czech Republic or MoI employees for shorter or longer stays to a total of 15 embassies with the highest incidence of forged personal documents and supporting documents for applications. These were embassies in the post-Soviet space (Ukraine), in Africa (Egypt, Ghana, Nigeria, Tunisia), in the Middle East (Lebanon, Saudi Arabia), in Central Asia (Mongolia, Uzbekistan) and in other Asian countries (China, India, Vietnam), but also in Europe (Slovakia). Currently, two migration and document experts are being prepared for deployment to the international airport in the Hellenic Republic.

In addition to the standard work at embassies, based on longer-term analyses prepared by immigration liaison officers, it was possible to describe trends in the abuse of residence titles and subsequently to introduce new systemic measures in the performance of visa and residence permits at embassies abroad, but also on the territory of the Czech Republic (see Student regime, labour migration programmes, etc.).

- **Other members of the Czech Police sent to international organisations**

With regard to the possibility of establishing bilateral cooperation with police forces abroad through the LOs of these countries sent to international organisations, or through LOs of third countries accredited for the Czech Republic, we also mention here for completeness the representation of national experts from the ranks of the Czech Police in EU structures and Interpol.

Within the EU structures, the secondment is to **Europol**, where 52 countries are represented through 256 LOs, including the Balkan states, North and South America, Australia and New Zealand. The agency currently (2022-2026) has one member of the Czech Republic as a national expert in the EU Drugs Unit and there has also been one recurrent short-term

secondment to the LIMIT Operational Task Force in 2022 and 2023. In addition, one police officer is currently (2021 to 2025) seconded to the European Anti-Fraud Office (**OLAF**).

Another international organisation to which the Czech Police sends representatives is **Interpol**, which brings together 196 countries around the world. In this context, from the point of view of the Czech Police, this is the preferred way of cooperation with the countries of Africa, post-Soviet republics, Latin America and Asian countries where the Czech Police does not have an LO. The reduction in the number of seconded national experts from the ranks of the PRC in the context of austerity measures has also affected the secondment to Interpol, where the secondment of 2 national experts to this organisation was terminated in 2023. The deployment of the last national expert was terminated in 2025. Thus, for the first time in a long time, the Czech Police has no representative in INTERPOL.

Evaluation and next steps

Until 31 August 2026, the deployment of the Czech Police Liaison Officers at the Czech Republic's foreign offices is largely financed through EU funds, but there is a limit to increasing the number of the Czech Police Liaison Officers abroad due to the fact that the deployed police officers are sent abroad at the expense of the existing systemised table positions of the Czech Police Directorate of the Police.

The specific objective has been met. The deployment of liaison officers as well as migration and document officers to relevant countries will continue to be supported, while at the same time emphasis will be placed on increasing the effectiveness of cooperation through national experts deployed to EU and Interpol structures, or third country LOs deployed to the Czech Republic.

In order to evaluate the current status of the secondment of ministry experts and the effectiveness of these secondments in terms of fulfilling the tasks of the ministry, as well as to identify problems and opportunities for further development, the Medium-Term Strategy for Secondment of the Ministry of the Interior abroad was approved in December 2024.

C4) Establishing and coordinating an inventory of contact points for justice and home affairs communication within the EU

Original wording of the specific objective: The exchange of information and best practice through networks of contact points and other similar initiatives in the field of justice and home affairs at EU level is a useful tool for cooperation with other Member States. The Czech Republic should not only actively participate, but in particular coordinate its representation in such networks and keep an up-to-date overview of the involvement of its authorities.

Measure 11 of the Action Plan for 2018 and 2019 was aimed at the adoption of this specific objective and addressed the establishment of a national focal point for firearms. Its activities are ensured by the Weapons and Hazardous Materials Department of the NCTEKK in cooperation with other entities. The implementation of the measures consisted in maintaining and deepening contacts within the EU and in the operational transfer of information and the facilitation of requests for cooperation to other departments and authorities within the Czech Republic in the field of illegal weapons within the EU. Specifically, this involved the investigation and tracing of all weapons of interest throughout the EU and the subsequent tasks arising from this.

It is also worth noting that the list of contact points and national experts within the EU structures under the LEWP Committee is kept and updated annually by the LMTEF.

Evaluation and next steps

The specific objective has been met. Cooperation in this area will continue to be strengthened.

C5) Improvement of the contractual framework for the labelling of exchanged information between the Czech Republic and partner countries

Original wording of the specific objective: It is necessary to streamline the contractual arrangements for the marking of the information transferred so as not to restrict their usability between the Czech Republic and other countries.

Action 12 of the 2018 and 2019 Action Plan addressed an identified problem with certain types of information provided by the German side and led to the adoption of this specific objective. Due to different legal regulations in the Czech Republic, German ordinary service documents were classified as Restricted Information. This caused complications in mutual cooperation. The problem has already been partially solved by installing information systems for working

with classified documents (the Vážka information system) at the Joint Czech-German Police Cooperation Centres Schwandorf and Petrovice. This information system has also been installed at the Police Presidium to facilitate the transfer of information within the Police of the Czech Republic. In the framework of cooperation with the German side (especially with the police forces of the neighbouring federal states of Bavaria and Saxony), the number of documents required for mutual cooperation and subject to the classification level has also been reduced - if possible, the German side does not classify these documents. The Czech Republic has long sought to resolve this problem by, for example, adding to the agreement a mutual option to reconsider the classification level of the specific information transmitted, with the same level of protection as would be provided by the transmitting state.

Evaluation and next steps

The specific objective was partially met. On the basis of the available information, there is no need for its continuation in the follow-up strategic material.

C6) Full use of all functions of the Schengen Information System

Original wording of the specific objective: Sufficient technical and staffing conditions should be ensured to fully exploit all the functionalities of the Schengen Information System II, including the SIS II AFIS application, which allows for fingerprint-based vetting.

No measures were taken to meet this specific objective within the framework of individual Action Plans; the specific objective was implemented continuously within the framework of the activities of individual law enforcement agencies.

On 7 March 2023, the entire EU and associated countries, including the Czech Republic, switched to the new generation Schengen Information System (SIS), which replaced the existing SIS II mentioned in the Strategy for Combating Organised Crime. This was an unprecedented operation in terms of scope and complexity. On the one hand, it should be positively evaluated that the use of SIS by the Czech authorities is constantly growing, which is reflected, among other things, in the number of interventions (searches for persons and things, or interception of foreigners with a travel order or unwanted) on Czech records abroad. In 2023, the SIRENE National Headquarters, whose tasks are performed by the Directorate for International Police Cooperation, dealt with 12,500 such interventions, which is a 37% year-on-year increase. These included, among others, more than 400 persons wanted for arrest, 2,670 unwanted foreigners, almost 200 missing persons, including children, and almost 3,000 interventions on persons and things of interest in connection with serious organised crime. Almost 7 thousand hits on foreign records in the SIS were carried out in the Czech Republic, an increase of 18% year-on-year. More than 200 million queries were made to the SIS by the Czech

authorities, 24% more than in 2022. The transition of the national SIS to a new internal police cloud solution can also be considered a positive development.

On the other hand, it should be noted that there is still room for improvement in the area of technical and staff support for the full use of all SIS functions. The capacity of the police to manage and develop information systems (SIS source and query systems, SIRENE EVIN) is limited and therefore some SIS functionalities can only be used in a limited or user-unfriendly way. In the case of externally supplied systems, including the national SIS itself, it is an ongoing and permanent task to ensure the financing of the necessary modifications and long-term development. For example, we can mention the issue of fingerprint and dactyloscopic trace checks, where fingerprint checks are actually carried out only by the Foreign Police Service and dactyloscopic trace checks are not carried out at all.

In order to move forward in this area, it is necessary to continue the development of the cBIS biometric system and the relevant query tools and to prioritise these requirements in line with the importance of the proposed changes.

Emphasis should also be placed on the implementation of impacts resulting from the development of the SIS legal basis, such as the introduction of the so-called information alert under EU Regulation 2022/1190 amending EU Regulation 2018/1862 on the SIS. According to the added Article 37a, Member States will be able to enter information alerts on third-country nationals in the SIS in the interest of the European Union, following a proposal by Europol to enter an information alert on the basis of information received from third-country authorities or international organisations.

In general, it is then necessary to ensure sufficient capacity - personnel, technical and financial - for the national SIS as such, including the IS EVIN (SIRENE) system, and for the national source and query systems, so that the Czech Republic not only fulfils its obligations within the EU and Schengen cooperation, but also so that its authorities can fully use the capabilities of the SIS to ensure the security of the Czech Republic and to combat cross-border and organised crime and illegal migration. The above figures clearly demonstrate the effectiveness of the resources spent on the SIS.

The creation of technical and staffing conditions, including the development of internal regulations and training, is part of the eu-INIS Programme project, which is regularly submitted to the government. The results of the Schengen evaluation carried out in the fourth quarter of 2024 also provided important information on the state of functioning of the SIS in the Czech Republic.

Evaluation and next steps

The specific objective has been partially achieved and is being met on an ongoing basis. The allocation of the necessary financial, technical and personnel resources to the development of the national SIS itself and to the development of the information systems integrated with

it must continue to be supported. The continuation of this specific objective will be considered in the forthcoming strategic material.

D) STREAMLINE THE COSTS OF MANAGING SECURED ASSETS

Original wording of strategic objective: This objective aims to reduce the cost and administrative complexity of managing assets seized in criminal proceedings and to maintain the value of seized assets. The long-term objective is to relieve law enforcement agencies from activities not directly related to the fight against crime. The eventual disposal of these assets must be carried out quickly and efficiently.

Evaluation and next steps

The strategic objective has been met. Continued attention will be paid to this area and its inclusion in the follow-up strategic material will be considered.

D1) Transfer of most of the processes related to the management of seized property from law enforcement agencies to property managers and possible implementation of necessary legislative changes

Original wording of the specific objective: the management of the assets of the Ministry of the Interior's CenZA components (the Centre for Seized Assets) is proving to be more efficient than management by law enforcement agencies. The aim is to further expand the administration within CenZA. For effective administration, it is necessary to evaluate the internal rules for the disposal of seized assets and adjust them accordingly, introduce electronic tools to facilitate asset management and promote new methods of sale through modern electronic tools. At the same time, it is necessary to continuously collect information from the executive and to assess, with sufficient time lag since the last successful amendment of the relevant legislation, whether it should lead to further legislative changes.

To adopt this specific objective, measures have been taken to develop CenZA in all Action Plans. As the development of the CenZA was not anchored in other government materials, the Strategy Paper became the basis and starting point for the implementation of changes in the system of secured asset management. The individual Action Plans have met the needs necessary to achieve truly effective seized asset management, not only at the Seized Asset Centre but across all law enforcement agencies that manage seized assets to a greater or lesser extent.

The activities described below, implemented within the framework of the individual measures, form the main axis of the functioning of today's workplace of the Centre for Secured Assets.

Changes to internal acts of the Police of the Czech Republic

Just as for the area of financial investigation and seizure of property there are internal acts of management of the Police of the Czech Republic, an internal act of management was also adopted for the area of administration of seized property - the Instruction of the President of the Police of 11 February 2022 on the administration of property seized in criminal proceedings (Instruction No. 23/2022). This Instruction **clearly defines the management standards and procedures for the management of various types of assets**, in the case where the Police of the Czech Republic is in charge of such management. At the same time, **it establishes the function of a Seized Asset Management Coordinator** and a Seized Asset Management Group to coordinate the management within each region and to communicate with the authorized custodian of the seized assets throughout the seizure process. The Centre for Seized Assets trains the administration coordinators at regular intervals and participates in the meetings of the seized assets management groups and provides methodological support for the administration in the regions. This is in line with the intention to make governance part of the asset relief process. An integral part of Instruction No 23/2022 is the **obligation for the police authority to assess the possibility of selling seized assets** at regular three-monthly intervals.

Creation of conditions for the proper registration of secured assets (information system) and for the sale of secured assets (portal, e-shop) at the Secured Assets Centre

A database information system based on the MS SQL Server database was created, and this database is also usable for individual directorates. A portal for the offer and sale of property was established - www.cenza.cz, www.kupsilup.cz. In addition to these possibilities, the property is also sold in the shop in the centre of Prague.

Comprehensive logistics solutions

Logistics processes are the most significant cost item for any asset manager. For this reason, an audit of the logistics processes was first carried out at the Seized Assets Centre with a view to proposing possible changes and measures, followed by a proposal for the provision of transport and handling equipment. Among other things, a covered transporter for 4 motor vehicles was purchased, which can also be used for the transport of palletised and non-palletised goods. The audit findings were implemented and **the CenZA site now has adequate equipment to deal with most logistics needs**. Unfortunately, due to inflationary pressures and problems in the supply chains, it has not been possible to purchase all the recommended equipment, especially the equipment for the presentation of assets for sale. This issue remains

open for the future as the current economic situation of the State budget does not allow for further expenditure.

Amendment to Act No. 279/2003 Coll. - Act No. 326/2023 Coll.

This amendment anchored the **position of the Ministry of the Interior as the central administrator of seized property in the Czech Republic**. The Organisational Regulations of the Ministry of the Interior make the Centre for Secured Assets responsible for the administration of secured assets. At the same time as carrying out the administration, the Centre is a methodologist for the Ministry of the Interior in the field of administration of seized assets. The amendment also contains other important provisions, namely the participation of the administrator in the preparation of the seizure (§ 8b - the so-called planning of the administration of the seized property, thus fulfilling the intention of making the administration an integral part of the seizure process), the reduction of the administrative complexity for the police and the authorized administrator (§ 11), the establishment of clear conditions for the refusal of the administration by the authorized administrator and the further procedure in such a situation, and finally the conditions for the entry of the authorized administrator into the premises where the seized property is located.

The measures adopted during the period of the Strategy's validity led to a gradual increase in the volume of collateral assets under management and to an increase in their sales. In 2023, the highest volume of stored goods and sales to date was achieved. As at 31 December 2023, 100 motor vehicles had been sold for EUR 39,5 million. CZK and 9,240 items of small movable property (textiles, footwear, electronics, watches, etc.) for CZK 1.6 million. CZK. On that date, 316 motor vehicles and about 400 pallets of goods were under administration. However, the main result is that the conditions have been created for continuous improvement in the quality of administration, increasing revenue and cost efficiency.

Evaluation and next steps

The specific objective was met in a way that makes it one of the most successful activities implemented under the Strategy. Support for further streamlining of activities in the area of secured asset management will continue.

D2) Streamlining the current method of disposal of items seized in criminal proceedings

Original wording of the specific objective: To reduce waiting times for the disposal of seized items (especially drugs), to ensure sufficient workplaces and persons authorised to dispose of such items. To optimise the system of seized items so that there is no unnecessary transfer of property between regional police directorates and the Police Presidium of the Czech Republic, when the already high costs associated with disposal are increasing.

Action 14 of the 2018 and 2019 Action Plan was aimed at adopting this strategic objective.

After an analysis of the available options, the procedure according to the provisions of Section 81b of the Criminal Procedure Code, which allows for the destruction of a legally defined range of objects already in the preliminary proceedings, was evaluated as the most operational and practical way to address the issue of disposal of seized traces in methamphetamine breweries and cannabis cultivation plants.

In order to speed up the disposal of seized property (drugs), a new Instruction of the President of the Police No. 151/2024 on the procedure for the disposal of addictive substances and items obtained in connection with the disposal of addictive substances was issued, which responds to many years of experience gained in the previous practice in the disposal of addictive substances and items obtained in connection with their disposal. This new internal regulation has simplified and thus accelerated the whole process of handing over, storing and disposing of addictive substances, in particular reducing the administrative burden on the part of the regional police directorates and the Directorate of Logistic Security of the Police Presidium of the Czech Republic.

Compared to the current regulation, a change has been made in that a protocol on the change of competence to manage addictive substances forfeited or confiscated in criminal (misdemeanour) proceedings is no longer concluded between regional police directorates and the Directorate of Logistics Security of the Police Presidium of the Czech Republic, but the relevant regional police directorate hands over the addictive substances stored with it to the Directorate of Logistics Security of the Police Presidium of the Czech Republic for safekeeping and disposal in the form of a protocol with instructions for disposal. The latter shall ensure the storage of the handed over addictive substances in accordance with the legislation until their disposal, the disposal itself and the issue of a certificate of disposal. On the basis of the certificate of disposal, the Regional Police Directorate shall remove the property from the register.

The National Narcotics Headquarters of the Criminal Police and Investigation Service pays increased attention to the use of the provisions of Section 81b of the Criminal Procedure Code, e.g. it has long been conducting awareness-raising towards the members of the Criminal Police and Investigation Service along the TOXI line and prosecutors. It also monitors data on the use

of this institute by the Criminal Police and Investigation Service in relation to cultivation and brew houses. From this data it can be concluded that the possibilities of the provisions of Section 81b are currently being used more frequently than in the past.

As part of the methodological activities, a joint methodological recommendation of the National Headquarters against Organised Crime of the Criminal Police and Investigation Service and the Ministry of Internal Affairs CenZA on the definition of the term "worthless property" under Sections 80 and 81 of the Criminal Procedure Code was issued in May 2022.

It can be stated that the situation in the area of the use of Section 81b of the Criminal Procedure Code by regional police directorates has improved significantly in recent years, and prosecutors are using this institute more and more frequently in pre-trial proceedings.

Further improvements should be brought about by the aforementioned amendment to the Criminal Procedure Code (Parliamentary Print 854), which amends Section 81b of the Criminal Procedure Code so that it also applies to items whose possession is contrary to other legal regulations and whose custody requires special conditions or special expertise, which can only be secured with unreasonable difficulty, or whose custody is associated with unreasonable costs. Furthermore, according to the amendment, "object endangering the safety of persons or property" also explicitly means any other object intended for the illicit manufacture of a narcotic or psychotropic substance or a preparation containing such a substance or poison. It should thus be possible to have such items destroyed during criminal proceedings, provided the conditions of the provision are met.

Evaluation and next steps

The specific objective has been met. The disposal of items seized in criminal proceedings will continue to receive attention.

E) STRENGTHEN THE CAPACITY OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AUTHORITIES TO INVESTIGATE ECONOMIC CRIME

Original wording of the strategic objective: This objective will lead to better staffing in the area of economic crime. The objective is to ensure that financial investigations are carried out thoroughly in all necessary cases, which will be made possible by increasing the number of financial investigation specialists and reducing the amount of other work they do. This will result in a higher total of seized proceeds of crime. The rules on intra-Community cash movements and the authorisation to control them will be amended. The functioning of the commercial register and the penalties attached to it will be analysed.

Action 1 of the Action Plan for 2020 and 2021 and 2022 and 2023 was directly under this strategic objective and was a continuation of the measures aimed at more effective use of

bank account information, which is a prerequisite for successfully combating economic crime. These measures involved intensive cooperation between the agencies involved. The required items of bank statements were repeatedly defined and their data format specified. The technical specifications respected as much as possible the already established standards for bank statements used in the Czech Republic. There was an agreement between the researchers of this measure and the CBA to start cooperation on the use of CBA standard No. 17, respectively international standards camt_052 and camt_053 and data format. xml.

At the same time, it builds on the already existing methods of automatic exchange of information in which banking institutions are involved, i.e. the Central Account Register, communication with bailiffs, territorial offices of financial authorities, customs offices and the Financial Analysis Office.

There was also intensive communication between the GFD, as the main implementer of this measure, and the Czech Banking Association, individual banking institutions and software companies developing information systems for the banking sector.

A problematic aspect of this measure is the need for cooperation on the part of private entities, which often do not see the added value in changing current procedures and are unwilling to make changes to their information systems because these changes represent a financial cost to them. Furthermore, different banking institutions use different information systems, including different systems within some larger institutions. There has been a recurring request from banking institutions to send government inquiries in a uniform manner to avoid increasing the administrative burden of processing these inquiries by banking institutions.

It was agreed that individual banking institutions should, on a voluntary basis, begin to adapt their systems to ensure that the output in this standard is transmitted. The essence of the alignment is the gradual replacement of the practice of transmitting large lists and printed reports with a more efficient electronic form of data exchange that creates the prerequisites for automating the processing of queries and the generation of responses, preferably in electronic and machine-processable form.

Furthermore, there was a consensus on the need to modify the existing CBA Standard No.17 ("Standard for a query to provide a standardised output from a bank account") to include new types of queries. The CBA gathered suggestions for modifying the standard from other parties (notaries, bailiffs) who also use the query and secured a supplier to incorporate the suggestions. The incorporation was done in a way where a new standard was drawn up. This draft standard was circulated for comment in December 2023. In parallel with the implementation of this non-legislative measure, the PP, FAU and GFD are working together to prepare input to the Europol Working Group on the amendment of Directive (EU) 1153/2019 of the European Parliament and of the Council, which would oblige Member States to provide a standardised output from bank accounts for the performance of activities of selected authorities and thus address this issue at EU level.

In parallel, activities were carried out in the area of preparing applications that would use the standardised outputs from bank accounts for the analytical activities of the entities involved (the BIFITO information system). Thanks to the standardisation of all information, the BIFITO information system will enable automated and manual analysis of all data, which will make it much easier for the entities involved to work with the processed data.

Due to the complexity of the implementation of the measure, which is based on the fact that banking institutions have to incur costs of millions to tens of millions of CZK to adapt the systems and create a data set that will enable standardised output, the implementation of the plan in the operating environment of these private entities is slow due to the combination of the non-legislative aspect of the measure, the high costs and the technical complexity of the solution. Some of the banking houses have also expressed reluctance to engage in the solution based on the increased cost of implementing the new procedures.

Evaluation and next steps

The strategic objective was partially met. Although several beneficial measures have been taken, economic crime continues to represent one of the main areas of activity of organised crime. Its investigation remains a challenge for law enforcement authorities due to the high sophistication of the cases solved.

E1) Reducing the burden on economic crime specialists

Original wording of the specific objective: In order to thoroughly investigate economic crime cases, it is necessary to reduce the burden on case handlers. This can be achieved through a combination of measures - increasing the number of them, strengthening the administrative capacity of law enforcement authorities or clearly defining the local jurisdiction for tax crimes. These measures will allow for more rigorous financial investigations, thereby preventing further damage and eliminating the profits of criminal groups. The involvement of other experts with a background in tax law and economic analysis also seems desirable.

Measure No. 15 of the Action Plan for 2018 and 2019 was aimed at the adoption of this specific objective. Within its framework, an analysis of the current state of economic crime investigation in the conditions of the Police of the Czech Republic was prepared. The text of the analysis of the current state of affairs was prepared by the Security Policy Department of the Ministry of the Interior on the basis of documents from the Police of the Czech Republic and using the opinions and views of their guarantors of economic crime issues. It provides a basic analysis of the current state of economic crime investigation in the environment of the Police of the Czech Republic. It shows the main development trends in recent years by looking at statistical data. On the basis of knowledge from practice, it identifies the specifics of economic crime investigation, which make it one of the most difficult police activities. This

situation leads to overloading of its investigators and insufficient operational activity, which causes damage to public budgets.

The text also points out the main shortcomings in this area, which are the cause of the given overload and insufficient capacity of the Czech Police in this area. A range of measures are briefly presented which are proposed to remedy the current unsatisfactory situation. The text of the analysis has been sent to the management of the Police for further action. Implementation of some measures is already underway, partly within the framework of other measures of this Action Plan, partly due to the Police's own activities.

A fundamental and positive impact on the activities of the police authorities, and therefore also on the fight against organised crime, was brought about by **the amendment to the Criminal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code** published as Act No. 333/2020 Coll. In practice, this change brings about a certain de-emphasis of the police authorities from petty crime and allows them to focus more attention on detecting and investigating organised crime. The greatest positive impact can be expected in areas where police authorities have been overburdened for a long time, e.g. in the fight against tax crime at the level of regional economic crime departments of the Police of the Czech Republic. **The adoption of this change therefore also partly fulfils specific objective E1 of the Strategy.**

Evaluation and next steps

The specific objective was partially met. Work will continue on improving the conditions in which investigations of economic crime are carried out in the Police of the Czech Republic.

E2) Modification of cash handling rules

Original wording of the specific objective: Cash is still the most common means of laundering the proceeds of crime, according to available information. At the same time, the current rules governing the transport of cash are relatively benevolent and allow it to be easily misused. In many situations, suspiciously large amounts of cash are found to be carried without any legal justification but which cannot be secured.

No action has been taken under the individual Action Plans to meet this specific objective. However, it has been effectively resolved by the adoption of Bill No 280/2024 Coll., amending Act No 253/2008 Coll., on Certain Measures against the Legalization of the Proceeds of Crime and the Financing of Terrorism, as amended, and other related acts. This Act contains, among other things, a modification of the long-standing problematic issue of control authorisation in relation to intra-community (i.e. intra-EU) cash transfers. The Act also includes simplification of procedures for the seizure of cash in cases where there is a suspicion of a breach of the legislation, not only in relation to the newly regulated obligations in relation to intra-EU cash transports, but also in relation to existing obligations in relation to cash transports with third

countries. It introduces controls on the transport and dispatch of cash within the internal border of the Czech Republic, strengthens the power of the customs administration to seize such cash and, in this context, establishes the obligation to notify the transport and dispatch of cash in the amount of EUR 15 000 or more. If the person concerned fails to provide the information, he/she commits an offence and may be fined up to EUR 10 million. CZK 10. The law comes into force on 30 December 2024.

Evaluation and next steps

The specific objective has been met. No further action is required due to the completion of the legislative process.

E3) Analysis of the functioning of the commercial register and related sanctions

Original wording of the specific objective: In the area of economic crime, legal entities that do not fulfil their obligations to the commercial register and are not contactable are often used to commit crimes. Legislation will be tabled to extend the possibilities for enforcing compliance with this obligation.

No action has been taken under the individual Action Plans to meet this specific objective. Nevertheless, this objective has been effectively fulfilled within the framework of the legislative activities of the Ministry of Justice. A number of measures have been taken to facilitate the liquidation of commercial corporations or, in the case of inactive associations, to grant inactive status, as well as measures contributing to a more complete collection of documents in the Commercial Register. Measures have also been taken to strengthen the transparency of legal persons and legal arrangements in general, including their ownership structures, through the registration of beneficial owners.

New Section 105a of Act No. 304/2013 Coll., on the Public Registers of Legal Entities and Natural Persons and on the Registration of Trusts (hereinafter referred to as the "Registry Act"), allows the registry court to dissolve inactive business corporations without liquidation and subsequently delete them from the public register. The aim of the amendment is to prevent the existence of commercial corporations that do not carry out any economic activity and exist only formally. The main reason for sanctioning and liquidating inactive business corporations is the danger that they may be used for financial fraud (especially tax fraud); in fact, existing business corporations are easier to use for illegal activities. In general, the aim of this regulation is to increase the transparency of the business environment and reduce the risk of fraudulent behaviour.

Business corporations that have not filed regular or special financial statements in the collection of documents for at least two consecutive accounting periods are considered inactive. Upon discovering this fact, the registry court shall invite the business corporation to remedy the defect (i.e. to submit all the missing financial statements) within one month from the delivery of the invitation.

The court may only initiate steps to dissolve the corporation without liquidation if the corporation cannot be served with the summons. If the summons is successfully served, the court may use the existing procedure, i.e., impose a fine or dissolve the corporation with liquidation. The fact that a proceeding to dissolve the corporation has been commenced shall be entered in the public register. The actual decision on the dissolution of the corporation may be issued no earlier than one year after the date of registration of this fact.

In this context, we can also mention some of the findings of a questionnaire survey conducted by the Ministry of Justice in 2018 among the courts of record. According to the answers of the courts, the reasons for non-compliance with the obligations towards the collection of documents of the public registry vary. The mere fact that a limited liability company does not have its financial statements stored in the collection of documents does not, without more, mean that it is inactive. However, according to the estimates of the courts of registry, in most cases (approximately 60 %) the failure to file financial statements is due to the de facto inactivity of the registered persons. In the remainder, the courts consider that the reason is mainly due to laxity or ignorance (35%) and, to a limited extent, deliberate infringement (5%).

As of 1 June 2021, the registration of beneficial owners is comprehensively regulated by the new Act No. 37/2021 Coll, The ZESM regulates in particular (1) a detailed definition of the beneficial owner, (2) the method of access to the data in the register, (3) the process of registration of data on the beneficial owner (registration in court proceedings or through a notary), (4) automatic transcription of certain data from public registers, (5) the method of resolving incorrect or missing data in the register, and (6) penalties for breach of obligations related to the registration of beneficial owners.

The ZESM is a transposition of the AML Directive in terms of its beneficial owner requirements. The direct source of inspiration for the transposed Directive was the 2012 FATF (Financial Action Task Force) Recommendations 24 and 25 and the FATF's Beneficial Ownership Methodology in relation to beneficial ownership.

The register of beneficial owners is a public administration information system and is maintained electronically by the competent courts. The information system is centrally managed by the Ministry of Justice. The Register of Beneficial Owners is used to record the statutory data on the so-called beneficial owners of legal entities with their registered office in the Czech Republic and legal arrangements (Section 12 of the Law on Legal Entities).

Beneficial ownership registration generally promotes transparency of legal persons and legal arrangements. The introduction of the registration obligation strengthens the transparency of

the organisational and personal structure of legal persons, i.e. how it is managed, where its funds flow and which natural person manages it or receives its funds. The functioning of the beneficial ownership register in 2023 has been the subject of an analysis published on the website of the Ministry of Justice .⁵¹

The GFD, in cooperation with the Ministry of Finance, developed an automated mechanism for transferring data (financial statements) to the collection of documents of the Commercial Register. The data contained in the financial statements (financial statements filed with the tax administrator as a compulsory attachment to the tax return) are therefore transferred by the Financial Administration to the Commercial Register in cases of a request by the tax entity (reduction of the administrative burden) or in cases where the entity fails to fulfil its obligation and does not file the data with the relevant registry court, although it has made a submission to the tax administrator. This mechanism leads to a better filling of the Collection of Deeds of the Commercial Register.

In spite of the above measures, commercial corporations that do not fulfil their obligations to the Commercial Register, that are non-contactable and that are transferred to non-contactable persons (straw men) continue to be abused to commit crimes. This is, among other things, because the activities of the so-called "shell" companies, whose activities are covered by straw men, are limited to a relatively short period of time, after which the perpetrators move on to use another similar company, so that longer-term cooperation with a non-contact company is not too obvious to the public authorities. It has not been noted that the courts systematically fulfilled, for example, their obligations under Section 105a (1) of Act No. 304/2013 Coll. on the Public Registers of Legal and Natural Persons and on the Registration of Trusts, as amended, and that there was a systematic ex officio dissolution of corporations within the meaning of paragraph 3 of the same provision.

Evaluation and next steps

The specific objective was partially met. The functioning of public registers will continue to receive attention in the framework of the fight against organised crime.

F) THE ADOPTION OF A CONSENSUS APPROACH ON ENVIRONMENTAL CRIME

Original wording of the strategic objective: this objective should remedy the deficit in the field, where there is no shared vision on how to proceed and the involved state authorities do not

⁵¹ [https://korupce.cz/partnerstvi-pro-otevrene-vladnuti-ogp/narodni-akcni-plany-nap/sesty-akcni-plan-2023-2024/faze-
implementace/4-8-posileni-kvality-udaju-v-evidenci-skutecnych-majitelu-analyza-a-navrh-opatreni/](https://korupce.cz/partnerstvi-pro-otevrene-vladnuti-ogp/narodni-akcni-plany-nap/sesty-akcni-plan-2023-2024/faze-implementace/4-8-posileni-kvality-udaju-v-evidenci-skutecnych-majitelu-analyza-a-navrh-opatreni/)

perceive the urgency of the issue with the same intensity. This is one of the last sub-issues of organised crime that does not have a separate strategic document.

Evaluation and next steps

The strategic objective has been met. Due to the adoption of new strategic materials for this area, in the case of waste-related crime even beyond the original intention of the Strategy, this area will no longer be addressed in the follow-up strategic material for the fight against organised crime. However, the topic must continue to receive the attention it deserves from law enforcement authorities in order to effectively detect and combat this crime.

F1) Preparation of a Strategy paper for the detection of environmental crime

Original wording of the specific objective: the absence of a binding strategic plan prevents further targeted action against environmental crime. Its adoption will improve this situation.

Measure 16 of the Action Plan for 2018 and 2019 was aimed at the adoption of this specific objective. Within its framework, an action plan for combating illegal trade in endangered species of animals and plants by 2023 was adopted.⁵² This was prepared in close cooperation between the Ministry of the Environment and the Ministry of the Interior with an appointed working group. It is based on suggestions from the practice of law enforcement authorities in the field of this serious crime and aims to combat this often underestimated phenomenon more effectively.

The Action Plan reflects the requirements of the international CITES Convention and the individual priorities of the EU Action Plan to Combat Illegal Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, as well as the Council Conclusions on this plan adopted on 20 June 2016, while taking into account the specific situation and needs in the Czech Republic. It deals with strengthening the cooperation of competent authorities, improving their working conditions, raising awareness of this crime and developing international cooperation.

This Action Plan was approved by Government Resolution No. 61 of 20 January 2020. In 2024, the Report on the implementation of the Action Plan for Combating Illegal Trade in Endangered Species of Fauna and Flora until 2023 was approved by Government Resolution No. 564 of 21 August. Most of the 14 measures have been implemented or partially implemented. Only 2 measures were not fulfilled. The revision of the Action Plan is to be submitted to the Government for approval by 31 January 2025 and will also take into account changes adopted

⁵² <https://www.databaze-strategie.cz/cz/mzp/strategie/akcni-plan-pro-potirani-nelegalniho-obchodu-s-ohrozenymi-druhy-zivocichu-a-rostlin-do-roku-2023-2020?typ=struktura>

at EU level (in particular the revision of the EU Action Plan and the Environmental Criminal Law Directive).

Furthermore, on 5 October 2020, the Government Resolution No. 984 adopted **the Strategy for the Prevention and Combating of Waste-related Crime for the period 2021-2023**.⁵³ The creation of this material covered another area of crime in which organised criminal groups are active and in which a strategic view was previously rather absent. The measures included in the strategy aim to improve inter-agency cooperation, deepen and broaden the training of law enforcement authorities in this area, analyse the legislation in force and educate the public. On 21 August 2024, the Strategy was amended by Government Resolution No 558 to extend its validity until 31 July 2026 and to amend one of the measures in view of the adoption of the EU Directive referred to above. As part of the partial evaluation of this strategy, three measures were assessed as met, three as partially or progressively met and three as not met.

Evaluation and next steps

The specific objective has been met. Strategic materials have been prepared, approved by the Government and implementation is underway. By May 2027, the Czech Republic has to fulfil the condition of Article 21 of Directive (EU) 2024/1203 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 April 2024 on the criminal protection of the environment and replacing Directives 2008/99/EC and 2009/123/EC, i.e. to have an appropriate strategy developed at national level.

G) ADAPTATION OF LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES TO NEW METHODS OF ORGANISED CRIME

Original wording of the strategic objective: the implementation of this objective is directly forced by the changes that are taking place in the organised crime environment. Criminal activity has become more sophisticated and uses professionals in related fields. The structure of the law enforcement agencies' activities needs to reflect these changes in a flexible way. The new tools used (anonymous safe deposit boxes, cryptocurrencies, anonymous bank cards...) must be regulated in a way that eliminates the possibility of their misuse. Law enforcement authorities must be prepared for a massive increase in cybercrime and cyber incidents and have adequate financial resources to cover new forms of crime.

Action 8 of the 2020 and 2021 Action Plan, as well as Actions 13, 14, 15 and 16 of the 2022 and 2023 Action Plan, were placed directly under this strategic objective.

⁵³ <https://mv.gov.cz/clanek/prevence-a-potirani-trestne-cinnosti-souvisejici-s-odpady.aspx>

Area of abuse of residence permits

Under Action 8 of the 2020 and 2021 Action Plan and the follow-up Action 15 of the 2022 and 2023 Action Plan, organised crime related to applications for residence permits was addressed. Given the specificities of the visa agenda in Vietnam, which was highlighted by the National Security Council, the role of the Police Liaison Officer at the Embassy in Hanoi was highly appreciated by the MFA. Uncovering the security background of the visa agenda and the practices used to circumvent the government-imposed quotas in Vietnam is key to assessing visa and residency applications and setting embassy practices. The deployed police liaison officer has been very instrumental in exposing fraudulent practices by applicants for long-term residence permits and has also contributed greatly to the review of visa priority processing programmes, particularly in the area of student migration.

In the first months of 2020 (before the outbreak of the covid-19 pandemic), a suspected cyber-attack on the email ordering box resulted in several cases in which the registration method was changed from email to lottery. From mid-March 2020 until the end of September 2021, only a very limited range of applications for long-term visas and stays, strictly defined by the protective measures of the Ministry of Health of the Czech Republic, could be accepted at the embassies of the Czech Republic in most third countries (except those with a low risk of infection). Thus, the busiest and potentially most risky registration systems from the security point of view were practically not used by embassies in the Czech Republic at all.

The busiest and potentially riskiest ordering from a security perspective in 2022 and 2023 was done through an electronic lottery conducted at the MFA headquarters under the responsibility of the department responsible for cybersecurity. Registration for the lottery is subject to a fee and is also subject to verification of the applicant's identity directly at the embassy, which has prevented the creation of fictitious registrations in order to overwhelm and discredit the system. In this way, the functionality and transparency of the ordering process has been ensured in selected embassies, while the whole process is completely anonymous.

Given the frequent excess of demand over the capacity of embassies, there was also a need to modify the commonly used e-mail ordering. Following the case law of the Supreme Administrative Court, the MFA is currently addressing the possibility of introducing a random selection element directly into the e-mail registration. The planned modification should also correspond to the criteria for the introduction of a new 'secure' email format at the MFA. The forthcoming amendments to the Aliens Residence Act, the planned digitisation of the alien procedure and the creation of the new MoI ICAS (Integrated Alien Agenda System) will also have a major impact on the further development of the registration to obtain the deadlines for the submission of applications for long-term residence permits. Given the continuing need to pay attention to this issue, the implementation of the measures will continue.

Assessment of the situation in the field of organised crime

In the framework of Measure 13 of the Action Plan for 2022 and 2023, a comprehensive assessment of the situation in the field of organised crime in the years 2016-2023, i.e. since the previous similar assessment, was prepared by the Security Policy Department of the Ministry of the Interior in cooperation with a wide range of security partners. The material addresses all relevant areas of organised crime activity, the tools used by criminal groups, the development of relevant legislation, the impact of recent crisis situations on organised crime, and the outlook for the next period. It also summarises the available statistical data on organised crime, identifies the obstacles to combating this phenomenon and describes the state of international cooperation. After incorporating all comments received, the material was finalised and approved by the Minister of the Interior in December 2023 and subsequently circulated to all partners involved for use. Its findings have been used to prepare the follow-up strategic material for the fight against organised crime and, once approved, will also be shared with the public in an appropriate form.

Investment fraud issues

As part of Action 14 of the Action Plan for 2022 and 2023, an analytical paper describing the issue of long-term investment fraud was prepared as part of the work of a broad working group. The material describes the principle of perpetrating investment fraud, usually based on a Ponzi scheme, including all the usual steps in its preparation, as well as the mechanism of recruiting victims and the causes that lead to people falling victim to these frauds in large numbers (in some cases up to 8,000 victims). Attention is also paid to the issue of regulation of collective investment with regard to Section 15 of Act No. 240/2013 Coll., on Investment Companies and Investment Funds, as amended, which has been abused in some cases in the past. In this context, the amendment to this Act is essential, which significantly limits the possibilities of abuse of this institute. This amendment has been adopted as Act No. 163/2024 Coll. amending Act No. 240/2013 Coll., on Investment Companies and Investment Funds, as amended, and other related acts, and significantly limits the possibilities of abuse of Section 15.

The material also briefly summarizes the issues of investigating these investment frauds and the preventive activities of all involved entities in this area. The material also contains suggestions for improving the current situation, which consist in particular in continuing the current good practice in the area of developing financial literacy, awareness-raising and preventive action by the entities involved. After incorporating all the comments, the material was finalised in November 2023, approved by the Minister of the Interior and sent to all involved entities for further use.

In relation to the public, NCOZ SKPV launched a prevention campaign aimed at preventing investment fraud called "DON'T BE A LIAR!" at the turn of 2022 and 2023.⁵⁴ Its aim was to raise general awareness among the general public about this type of crime, to warn of the rapid increase in investment fraud cases and to appeal for increased caution on the part of citizens when considering offers to invest. This awareness-raising promotional material was widely distributed in cooperation with entities dealing with crime prevention and published on the websites of the Ministry of the Interior and the Czech Police, and last but not least, it was also sufficiently publicised via radio and television. In a broader context, it is also worth mentioning the "#nePINdej!" campaign, which targets the prevention of phishing incidents and the reinforcement of safer behaviour in cyberspace.⁵⁵

For the needs of law enforcement authorities in the event of suspected investment fraud, the NCOZ SKPV has developed an internal manual - FAKE "INVESTMENT COMPANIES" - together with interested regulatory bodies and relevant representatives of the academic and non-profit sectors. The manual is based primarily on the findings of law enforcement agencies across the country.

Adaptation of the structure of the Criminal Police and Investigation Service

Measure 16 of the Action Plan for 2022 and 2023 addressed the adaptation of the structure of the Criminal Police and Investigation Service to changes in the structure of registered crime and new challenges. The activities of the Police Task Force REFORMA resulted in the separation of the issues of cybercrime and terrorism (including trafficking in weapons and dangerous materials) from the competence of the National Headquarters against Organised Crime of the SKPV and in the establishment of a new unit with national competence - the National Headquarters against Terrorism, Extremism and Cybercrime of the SKPV as of 1 January 2011. The aim of this organisational change was to provide sufficient space for the fight against the above-mentioned areas of crime, the importance of which continues to grow given the changing security situation.

In response to the shift of common crime to cyberspace and the fact that it is often a crime committed by members of an organised group, the leadership of the Police Department considered whether to establish specialized workplaces at the level of territorial departments and departments of the Regional Police Directorate. After an analysis, it was decided that ordinary police officers had to be prepared to deal with this increasingly frequent crime, but that sufficient conditions had to be created for this.

54 <https://www.policie.cz/clanek/nebud-labut-preventivni-kampan-proti-investicnim-podvodum.aspx>

55 <https://www.policie.cz/clanek/nepindej.aspx>

Therefore, a continuously updated methodological portal on the issue of so-called other crimes committed in cyberspace (common crimes, but committed with significant use of information or communication technologies) was created with the aim of educating police officers and unifying practice, especially when requesting data from online space. In addition to police officers, prosecutors also have access to it. In addition, a basic e-learning course focusing on other crimes committed in cyberspace has been implemented since August 2024, which is intended for all members of the police regardless of their rank.

A trial operation of the SÉRIE information system was also launched, which will facilitate the search for partial acts of ongoing crime committed in cyberspace by automated search for identical attributes. It will replace the existing interim system, the proper functioning of which has been very time-consuming and administratively demanding.

The division of the original Strategy of cybercrime into so-called "pure" cybercrime and the aforementioned other crimes committed in cyberspace, and the associated division of responsibility for methodological and coordination activities, can also be described as a kind of change in the structure of the Criminal Police and Investigation Service. For the area of cybercrime, the NCOZ SKPV has been designated as the coordinator, or as of 1 January 2023, the newly established National Headquarters for Counter-Terrorism, Extremism and Cybercrime SKPV. For the area of other crimes committed in cyberspace, the Police Headquarters has been designated as the focal point of the CCDC.

The overload of the Economic Crimes Department of the Capital City Police. The Prague Police responded by redistributing the tax crime cases investigated by the customs authority to other DGCs in order to achieve an even load of the economic crime departments of the DGCs. This measure has resulted in a more efficient use of the forces and resources of the CPC and has been positively received by both the Capital City Police Department and the Police Headquarters. It is welcomed by the Prague City Police and by the DGCs to which the tax crime idea is redistributed.

Strengthening the performance of operational search activities, not only in the area of economic crime, is one of the long-term priorities of the management of the Police of the Czech Republic and is therefore strongly promoted throughout the period under review. A system of objective evaluation was created to monitor the development of operational search activities, which allows for inter-departmental comparison. It shows that improvements can already be observed in some regions. At the same time, a unit has been set up to obtain information from the environment of interest through informants on both a practical and methodological level, which should improve the ability of the Police to obtain information before the initiation of criminal proceedings and during the investigation phase, thereby contributing to the detection of latent crime.

As regards environmental crime, it has not yet been concluded that there is a need for a separate unit dedicated exclusively to this type of crime. The matter continues to be dealt with by a network of specialists at the Regional Police Headquarters and their subordinate

territorial departments, or municipal and district directorates of the Police, which are methodologically covered by the Economic Crime Department of the ÚSKPV PP CR. However, in March 2023, the ENVIRO working group was created within the Capital City Police. Prague and at the beginning of 2025 an evaluation of the results of the work of this working group should be carried out (both by the management of the Prague City Police Department and the Prague City Police Department). Prague and the aforementioned methodological workplace) and the determination of further possible steps in the field of environmental crime. The NCOZ is now also focusing on this area to a greater extent (especially in the area of illegal waste management). The above-mentioned multi-tiered network of specialists was formalised in October 2024 by order of the President of the Police in the form of a permanently established ENVI Working Group, whose task is to streamline the development of methodology and coordination of detection, screening and investigation of environmental crime. In addition to specialists from the regional directorates of the Police, its members are also employees of the Criminalistics Institute, NCOZ and NPC and it is managed by the ÚSKPV PP CR.

With regard to the specific nature of crime related to illegal migration, organisational changes have been made within the Directorate of the Foreign Police Service, whose operational department, established in 2024, is authorised under the internal regulations of the Police Department to use operational search support resources (Section 72 of Act No. 273/2008 Coll., on the Police of the Czech Republic), the use of which was previously reserved only for the Criminal Police and Investigation Service. This change is expected to increase the ability of the Police to detect this organised crime and to identify its perpetrators.

Evaluation and next steps

The strategic objective has been met. It was a strategic objective under which a large number of actions from the Action Plans were included, which demonstrates its high impact. It will therefore continue to be included in the relevant strategic material.

G1) Strengthening the professional teams of law enforcement agencies

Original wording of the specific objective: In view of the increasing complexity of the crimes committed, it appears necessary to establish new specialist teams to support investigations within law enforcement agencies. These teams must have experts in economic fields (forensic accounting, tax consultancy, etc.).

Measure 17 of the 2018 and 2019 Action Plan was aimed at the adoption of this specific objective. Within the framework of the Action Plan, 14 posts for analytical specialists at grade 14 were created in the prosecution system by the end of 2019. Three posts were created and filled at the High State Prosecutor's Office in Olomouc, which are still fully used today. The

analysts are mainly involved in the activities of the Serious Economic and Financial Crime Unit of the Olomouc High State Prosecutor's Office and their performance is highly appreciated. There has been no increase in the number of analysts at the High State Prosecutor's Office in Prague since 2019 and 10 posts continue to be established there. At the Supreme State Prosecutor's Office, one position was established for an analytics specialist, which is still actively used today.

Evaluation and next steps

The specific objective has been met. Its continuation is not necessary.

G2) Audit of service requirements of law enforcement agencies

Original wording of the specific objective: Changes in crime also require changes in the scope of services provided by the service units of law enforcement agencies. These changes must be based on practical requirements and reflect anticipated future developments and must first be correctly identified.

In order to adopt this specific objective, actions across all Action Plans have been directed towards auditing the activities of the Special Activities Unit of the CAPS and the subsequent implementation of its recommendations. The aim of the audit was to map the situation in meeting the needs of law enforcement authorities and to analyse their requirements resulting from the findings on the change in methods used by perpetrators of organised crime. The audit analysed the concentrated findings and identified the most significant requirements in the legislative, organisational, technical and personnel areas. More detailed information on individual points is provided in the Report on the audit of the requirements against the CPCU.

Based on the audit, organisational, technical and personnel measures were subsequently implemented in the period 2020-2023. These included the following measures:

- A new organisational cell has been established within the unit to coordinate the activities of the contact tracing section in order to make the most effective use of the available staff capacity. There has also been an increase in capacity for this activity.
- A new team of cooperating specialised staff has been created for the area of cyberspace, darknet, WEBINT and OSINT⁵⁶ across the Police of the Czech Republic departments to define possible and appropriate areas of activity and suitable technical tools.

⁵⁶ Obtaining information from open sources (OSINT) or via the Internet (WEBINT)

- Funds were secured for the construction of a central data repository with appropriate redundant backup. As of January 1, 2023, most of the technology for the central repository of the ÚZČ SKPV was launched. After its trial operation, routine operation began on September 1, 2023.
- The web portal of the CIDC was rebuilt for the officers of the requesting units to provide up-to-date information on the service activities offered by the CIDC, including procedures and instructions for requesting them, all with regard to the overall Strategy of detecting and clarifying crime in cyberspace.
- Educational activities of initial specialisation courses and additional improvement courses were developed, as well as educational activities in cooperation with the Judicial Academy.
- Cooperation with academia is being expanded in the areas of automatic speech processing, cryptocurrency tracing, deanonymisation in the TOR network environment and other areas relevant to the originality of the SKPV. New technologies are also implemented in the information systems of the CRC.
- In terms of technological development, the status of the yet delayed implementation by telecommunication service providers in the area of 5G is continuously monitored with a view to launching the 5G network in standalone mode,⁵⁷ so that the SKPV Office is able to launch tests of the necessary technology and provide the basis for its financing in time to maintain all service activities.
- In the context of criminal activity involving spoofing,⁵⁸ the ÚZČ has implemented measures aimed at eliminating the misuse of police telephone numbers, and furthermore, on the basis of negotiations between the Czech Telecommunications Office and telecommunication service providers, a solution has been chosen aimed at eliminating the misuse of all fixed lines, and the same will be addressed in the future in relation to mobile telephone numbers.

Evaluation and next steps

The specific objective has been met. The activities of the Office of the Criminal Investigation Department aimed at further development of service activities for the fight against organised crime will continue.

⁵⁷ That is, without using legacy 4G network elements.

⁵⁸ Spoofing is a technique in which a telephone number is spoofed to make it appear that a call is made from a different number than it actually is.

G3) Strict regulation of newly available tools and the response of the law enforcement to their emergence

Original wording of the specific objective: If a new instrument with a high potential for misuse for criminal activity emerges, careful consideration should be given to its possible regulation to remove this risk or to allow law enforcement access to information needed for investigations. At the moment, such exploitable tools include, but are not limited to, various payment instruments including virtual currencies, encryption or communication tools including the darknet or anonymous escrow boxes. Adequate funding must be ensured for the detection and investigation of crimes committed using the new tools.

Actions 19, 20 and 22 of the 2018 and 2019 Action Plan, as well as Action 10 of the 2020 and 2021 Action Plan, were aimed at adopting this specific objective. Action 19 of the 2018 and 2019 Action Plan addressed the issue of anonymous safety deposit boxes. From the perspective of the Police, these services are problematic as they have been used by perpetrators in investigated cases to commit crimes and also as a method of hiding assets. Assets hidden in unbanked safe deposit boxes are difficult to trace in financial investigations, which also makes it difficult to seize them. According to the Financial Analysis Office, these services fall within the category of obliged persons under Section 2(1)(b)(14) of Act No 253/2008 Coll. as a person providing custody services for valuables. They therefore have all the related obligations, consisting, inter alia, of identifying and controlling the client, keeping information and reporting suspicious transactions. In addition to the normal obligations of obliged persons, there is an obligation to identify the client from the zero value of the transaction. In connection with the transposition of Directive 2015/849, an amendment to Act 300/2016 Coll. on the central register of accounts has been prepared. This has extended the registration also to safety deposit boxes provided by credit institutions. Furthermore, in the framework of the amendment to Act No. 253/2008 Coll., the service of renting safety deposit boxes was explicitly included in Section 2(1)(b)(14) in order to remove doubts in interpretation.

The Financial Analytical Office has carried out audits of selected companies providing these services in recent years. Only minor irregularities were found and no sanctions were imposed. The provision of safekeeping of valuables is a free trade under the Trade Act and no special authorisation is required. There is also no specific regulation of this business.

Measure 20 of the Action Plan for 2018 and 2019 addressed the issue of the darknet and virtual currencies. A broad working group has been established to implement this measure. This working group met a total of five times during 2018 and 2019. As a result of the meetings of this working group, material was prepared and subsequently submitted to the leadership of the Ministry of the Interior for consideration and a decision was made to submit it to the Committee on Internal Security and the National Security Council. The material was also supplemented with a descriptive part, which introduces the basic principles of the functioning of virtual currencies and the darknet, in order to make the text accessible to a wider audience.

The material is accompanied by a list of relevant security research projects that have been carried out in related areas.

The output of the working group, entitled "Analysis of the situation in the area of darknet and virtual currencies", was approved by the Committee on Internal Security on 3 September 2019 and submitted to the National Security Council for information on 16 September 2019. Subsequently, the measures proposed in the material were implemented.

This measure was followed up by measure 10 of the Action Plan for 2020 and 2021, the implementation of which was negatively affected by the covid-19 pandemic, which complicated the work of the established working group. Contrary to the original assignment, the group did not explicitly address the issue of unifying procedures for documenting crime in the darknet environment, but rather the issue of educating law enforcement officers, prosecutors and judges about crime committed in cyberspace, as well as the issue of international police and judicial cooperation procedures in such cases. Representatives of the Judicial Academy were also involved in the working group. It should be noted that the expectations associated with this measure could not be fully met due to a number of other tasks.

Measure 22 of the Action Plan for 2018 and 2019 addressed the issue of financial security in the fight against organised crime. From the perspective of the law enforcements agencies, it is difficult to specify the expenditure specifically related to the fight against organised crime, as this is one of the main activities of these authorities. At the same time, organised crime can take many forms and various items of equipment or information systems, for example, are necessary to fight them. It can thus be stated that a significant part of the budget of the law enforcements agencies is used to ensure the fight against organised crime, starting, for example, with the provision of ballistic equipment and weapons to officers.

In the area of extra-budgetary financing of the Police, several projects were implemented in this area, such as the provision of equipment for combating cybercrime, the establishment of an information system for processing air passenger data, the creation of mobile analytical laboratories and the modernisation of a specialised workplace for detecting irregular documents. In addition, the budgets of the law enforcements agencies allocate funds for the provision of equipment or maintenance of technical means related to the fight against organised crime. The most important of these are, for example, the development and operation of information systems, the retrofitting of individual units, etc.

Evaluation and next steps

The specific objective has been met. The issue of new tools and technologies, their regulation and the relevant procedures of law enforcement authorities will be addressed in the follow-up strategy document.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ACTION PLANS

The Action Plan for 2018 and 2019 contained 22 tasks, of which 13 were completed, 9 were partially completed and no task was recorded as not completed. The 2020 and 2021 Action Plan contained 10 tasks, of which 5 were completed, 5 were partially completed and no task was recorded as not completed. The 2022 and 2023 Action Plan contained 17 tasks, of which 10 were completed, 6 were partially completed and one task was recorded as not completed.

Overall, therefore, of the 49 measures across the Action Plans, 28 were completed, 20 were partially completed and only one task was not completed. The unfulfilled task concerned an international treaty with Ukraine, which could not be objectively negotiated after the start of the Russian aggression. The implementation of the individual Action Plans can thus be assessed positively.

The largest number of actions from the Action Plans (19 in total) was in the area of international cooperation under Strategic Objective C, but often involving ongoing actions linked to international treaties (14 actions). Strategic Objective G covering adaptation to new trends was also a very important area with 13 actions. Conversely, strategic objective F on environmental crime was quite narrowly defined with one measure that fully met it but also embedded a strategic solution to the new area of organised crime. No action was taken on some of the specific objectives in the Action Plans (specific objectives A1, A3, B3, C1, C6, E2 and E3), but these specific objectives were nevertheless satisfactorily met by legislative or other means.

Many actions continued across all Action Plans, including the development of the Tax Cobra, the building of the CenZA, the deployment of liaison officers and the development of the activities of the JCPOA. Other actions were linked between two of the three Action Plans.

OTHER ACTIVITIES TO SUPPORT THE FULFILMENT OF THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STRATEGY

Here it is appropriate to mention other materials and activities that contributed to the global objective or otherwise supported the efforts of the Czech authorities in the fight against organised crime at the time of the Strategy's validity. Given the number of these materials and activities, this chapter is deliberately very brief.

Government and departmental materials

Although the Strategy itself reacted to the long-term existence of other strategic materials for individual sub-areas of the fight against organised crime (e.g. the area of human trafficking,

corruption, drug trafficking, etc.) and did not duplicate the activities contained therein, the measures contained in these and similar materials often had a useful overlap with other areas of the fight against organised crime, and therefore it is appropriate to mention these materials here, if they were adopted during the period of implementation of the Strategy, at least briefly. In very general terms, the issue of organised crime is also mentioned in the Security Strategy of the Czech Republic of 2023.

In 2019, the **National Strategy for the Prevention and Reduction of Harm Associated with Addictive Behaviours 2019-2027** was adopted, which, together with its Action Plans, provides the basis for the fight against addictive substances. The objectives of the Strategy are mainly to prevent and reduce the health, social, economic and intangible harms resulting from substance use, gambling and other addictive behaviours and from the existence of legal and illegal markets for addictive substances, gambling and other products with addictive potential.

In 2020, the **National Strategy to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings in the Czech Republic for the period 2020-2023** was adopted. It addresses measures aimed at preventing and assisting victims of trafficking in human beings, strengthening cooperation at national and international level and strengthening the identification of victims.

An important strategic material that contributes to improving the Czech Republic's ability to fight organised crime is the **Strategy for the Development of the Police of the Czech Republic until 2027**, which was adopted by Government Resolution No. 262 of 8 March 2021. This material is a basic prerequisite for the all-round development of the Police of the Czech Republic, which responds to current changes in the security environment. In particular, measures aimed at developing the capabilities of the Police in the fight against corruption and economic crime, the fight against drug trafficking, the development of police analytics and related information support, and the general modernisation and digitalisation of the tools and processes of the Police are essential for the organised crime area.

Organised crime committed in cyberspace is addressed in the **Action Plan for the National Strategy for Cyber Security of the Czech Republic for the period 2021-2025**, which was approved by Government Resolution No.675 of 26 July 2021 and contains in particular measures to develop the capacity of the Police of the Czech Republic in this area and to expand cooperation with partners in the field of prevention.

The Strategy for the Development of the Capabilities of the Police of the Czech Republic in the Field of Crimes Committed in Cyberspace 2021-2025, which was approved by Government Resolution No. 106 of 23 February 2022, is the main Strategic material of the Police of the Czech Republic for this dynamically developing component of crime. In its content, it builds on a similar successful material from 2016. It deals with the development of the personnel capacities of the Police of the Czech Republic and its structure in this area, training of the Police of the Czech Republic, standards of material equipment, international cooperation and the area of prevention. It also describes the security situation in this area in detail, methodically

defines the activities of the Police of the Czech Republic in cyberspace and provides an overview of the development of this area in recent years.

In 2024, **this Strategy** was **updated** to take into account the change in the structure of the relevant Police of the Czech Republic and the rapid development in this area. This update was approved by the Government by its Resolution No 216 of 3 April 2024. The problematic aspect here remains the failure to allocate sufficient financial resources for the implementation of this Strategy.

A key event in the fight against money laundering is the adoption of **the Report on the second round of the National Risk Assessment (NRA) process**. This material was approved on 12 July 2021 by Government Resolution 616 and contains a comprehensive analysis of the situation in the area. The identified vulnerabilities and the proposed ways of addressing them are essential for the fight against organised crime, as without the laundering of the proceeds of crime, the activities of organised crime groups would not achieve their intended goal, i.e. the gain of funds applicable in the mainstream economy.

This material contains, among other things, measures to mitigate the threats of foreign laundering, professional and stand-alone money laundering and to address the related issue of so-called flow-through or transit accounts typically associated with laundering the proceeds of crime without a known source offence. The measures resulting from the national risk assessment process were specified in the follow-up Action Plan for the Prevention and Combating of Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing, which was approved on 14 July 2022 by Government Resolution 598. Its evaluation was then submitted to the Cabinet meeting in August 2024.

In 2021, the evaluation of measures from the Organised Crime chapter of the National Security Audit Action Plan was also completed. Of these measures, the project aimed at creating a system that would include both the statistics of the Police of the Czech Republic and the statistics of the judicial authorities and thus enable better evaluation of the functioning of the criminal justice process in the Czech Republic is still ongoing.

In 2023, a new **Government Strategy for the fight against corruption for the years 2023 to 2026** was adopted, **as well as a follow-up Action Plan for the fight against corruption for the years 2023 and 2024**.⁵⁹ The main thematic areas of these materials are, as in previous years, executive and independent public authority, transparency and open access to information, economic use of state property and the development of civil society. Corruption is one of the main tools used by organised crime to conceal its own activities, strengthen its influence and gain access to public funds. Therefore, a successful fight against corruption is a necessary condition for an effective fight against organised crime.

⁵⁹ <https://korupce.cz/protikorupcni-dokumenty-vlady/na-leta-2023-az-2026/>

In 2023, the Department of Justice, in cooperation with a broad-based working group, completed an **Analysis of the Possibilities for Siphoning Illegally Acquired Assets**,⁶⁰ which aims, among other things, to address the issue of so-called "transit accounts." This analysis has resulted in three possible ways of dealing with the situation in the Czech Republic, in the form of civil, administrative and criminal options. On 23 August 2023, the Government, by Resolution No 621, decided to develop a criminal solution. The Minister of Justice is to submit a relevant bill to the Government by 31 December 2024. If adopted, this regulation can be expected to make a significant contribution to the reduction of money laundering through the territory of the Czech Republic, as it will make it possible to siphon off even such laundered funds (often amounting to tens or hundreds of millions of crowns) which have not been possible so far, provided that the conditions are met.

Research activity

Activities carried out within the framework of security and criminological research also play an important role in the fight against organised crime. The Institute for Criminology and Social Prevention (hereinafter also referred to as "IKSP"), which contributes to the fulfilment of the objectives of the Strategy primarily through its research activities, has long played a fundamental role in the field of criminology. It is probably the only Czech institution that has been consistently engaged in research on various aspects of organised crime in the Czech environment. The outputs of the IKSP are available on its website.⁶¹

Security research contributed to the implementation of the Strategy of the Fight against Organised Crime by fulfilling the global objective, i.e. by implementing innovative processes and developing new technologies and procedures in the field of the fight against organised crime. Their funding through security research, development and innovation programmes is ensured on the basis of the Interministerial Strategy for Supporting Security Research in the Czech Republic 2017-2023 with a view to 2030,⁶² approved by Government Resolution No. 509 of 2017. The Strategy of Support for Security Research in the Czech Republic 2017-2023 with a view to 2030 also provides for targeting security research on the security threat of organised crime.

Within the supported projects across the security research programmes, **31 projects with a total financial allocation of approx. CZK.** These projects focus on speech and text data analysis, visualisation of financial flows, development of forensic investigations, new

⁶⁰ This analysis has been prepared in connection with the Report on the second round of the national risk assessment process for money laundering and terrorist financing approved by Government Resolution No. 616 of 12 July 2021 and the subsequent Action Plan for the Prevention and Combating of Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing approved by Government Resolution No. 598 of 14 July 2022.

⁶¹ <https://www.iksp.cz/publikace>

⁶² <https://www.mvcr.cz/vyzkum/clanek/koncepce-meziresortni-koncepce-podpory-bezpecnostniho-vyzkumu-cr.aspx>

technologies, analysis of crypto-assets and other areas. A list of all supported projects is available on the MoI website.⁶³

Other activities

One of the tools that the Czech Republic can use to respond to a specific form of threats related to organised crime is the mechanism for screening foreign investments (based on Act No. 34/2021 Coll., on screening foreign investments). This allows for an effective response to risks associated with foreign investment in a Czech target company if it is necessary to protect the security of the Czech Republic or internal or public order, e.g. even if the investor might be involved in organised crime. The Ministry of Industry and Trade, as the coordinator of this agenda, may use information on potentially risky investments in the framework of the proceedings.

A very important activity that has fundamentally reduced the possibilities of misusing telephone numbers for committing fraud (so-called spoofing, when a different telephone number is displayed than the one from which the call actually comes) is the change in the terms of the general authorisation setting out the conditions for the provision of public communications networks and associated resources, introduced by the Czech Telecommunications Office during 2024. The first novelty is the blocking of such calls that come to the Czech Republic from abroad, but the caller is identified by a number that should not come from abroad (for example, a landline number associated with a financial institution or law enforcement authorities. The second change is to identify the calling subscriber with the actual telephone number associated with that subscriber and service in the call signalling message. More information is available on the website of the Czech telecommunications authority.⁶⁴ Other anti-spoofing measures have also been taken on the part of mobile operators and are supported by the ongoing amendment to the Electronic Communications Act.⁶⁵

EVALUATION OF THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE GLOBAL OBJECTIVE

The original wording of the Global Objective: The aim of the Strategy is to achieve a state where organised crime is effectively detected and investigated. State authorities have sufficient material, information and personnel to effectively combat all forms of organised crime,

⁶³ <https://www.mvcr.cz/vyzkum/clanek/podporene-projekty.aspx>

⁶⁴ <https://ctu.gov.cz/vyzva-k-uplatneni-pripominek-k-navrhu-zmeny-vseobecneho-opravneni-c-vo-s2xx.2024-y-kterym-se-meni>

⁶⁵ <https://www.psp.cz/sqw/historie.sqw?o=9&t=774>

including international crime. The powers of law enforcement authorities, as enshrined in legislation, are both sufficient and balanced in terms of the relationship between the interference with human rights and the public interest in combating organised crime. The profits of organised crime are effectively secured and siphoned off.

The Global Objective was deliberately formulated as an ideal state that in practice could never be fully achieved. Nevertheless, the Czech Republic has come substantially closer to this objective through the implementation of measures and other activities of all the institutions involved, as is evident from the entire preceding text. Even in the highly volatile security environment of recent years, it has been possible to maintain organised crime as one of the Czech Republic's internal security priorities and to pay appropriate attention to it.

Nevertheless, it is very likely that a similar global objective will be formulated in the next strategic material, as attention to the fight against organised crime must be continuously paid in view of its dynamic development and the threat it still poses to the proper functioning of the Czech state and society as a whole.

THE IDENTIFIED WEAKNESSES OF THE STRATEGY AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION AND POSSIBLE LESSONS TO BE LEARNT FROM THEM

Given the fact that for the first time in the history of strategic materials fighting organised crime such a robust material has been prepared, it is appropriate to identify the weaknesses of the current Strategy and draw lessons from them for the preparation of the next strategic material. These weaknesses are not hierarchical.

- **Some strategic and specific objectives were not fully met**

Problem description: Some specific objectives (e.g. B3) could require the construction of a robust information system for their actual implementation, the cost of which could reach tens or hundreds of millions of CZK. Such a solution is not currently feasible, nor is the capacity available for it.

Lesson: While it is not always possible to achieve 100% achievement of all the objectives set, some objectives can be better or more deeply discussed with all stakeholders involved or subjected to a more critical view. It may also be possible to formulate some objectives less ambitiously. However, this should not lead to a resignation to strive for positive results.

- **Too many measures in the 2018 and 2019 Action Plan and concentration of the gestors**

Problem description: The Action Plan for 2018 and 2019 contained a total of 22 measures, 9 of which were under the responsibility of the Ministry of the Interior's OBP. The concentration of responsibility in the hands of the Security Policy Department of the Ministry of the Interior is also linked to the fact that, due to staff and structural changes in the Security Policy Department, the vast majority of the measures were handled by a single employee along with many other work tasks. This also led to the transfer of some activities to the follow-up Action Plans, although with greater capacity it would have been objectively possible to complete them earlier.

Lesson: The ideal number of measures in the Action Plan for two years seems to be 10-15, depending on their scope and distribution of responsibilities. Some measures can also be implemented later or outside the Action Plan. The number of measures to be addressed must be in line with the staffing capacities of the individual coordinators and there should be no situation where measures are included in the Action Plan even though there is no clear idea of the conditions for their implementation.

In this context, it also seems desirable to set a longer time for the evaluation of the Action Plans and the submission of new Action Plans. This means adjusting the deadlines for their submission to the Government to 30 June of the following year.

- **Some of the objectives (as well as the actions of the Action Plans) were too specific and only dealt with partial problems**

Problem description: Some measures - for example, measure 12 of the 2018 and 2019 Action Plan and the related specific objective C5, or measure 19 of the 2018 and 2019 Action Plan - were based on insufficient evidence. In the course of their implementation, it turned out that this was not a substantial problem that required addressing at the level of the Government's strategic material. Rather, it was a sub-problem consisting of a lack of information sharing or awareness among some actors, or a problem that was already substantially resolved at the time the material was adopted.

Lesson: Pay more attention to the formulation of individual measures and specific objectives and better discuss their necessity with the actors involved.

- **It was not possible to find an appropriate specific objective for some of the measures needed in the Action Plans**

Problem description: These were mainly measures from the last two Action Plans, where beneficial measures were proposed by the cooperating entities in areas not foreseen in the original Strategy. The situation was then addressed by subordinating them directly to the related strategic objective or strategic objectives with a higher level of generality.

Lesson: Set more general strategic and, if necessary, specific objectives, or set a "residual" strategic or specific objective for new measures that could not be foreseen at the time of the preparation of the Strategy. Alternatively, clearly state that some measures may not fall under

a specific objective if they are cross-cutting in nature or for which no specific objective is appropriate.

- **Challenging preparation of the Strategy, Evaluation and Action Plans**

Problem description: A lot of time had to be devoted to the preparation of the Strategy, the evaluation and the Action Plans, which was not used in favour of actual solutions to specific problems. The subsequent approval processes in the form of comment procedures, discussions by the Committee on Internal Security, the National Security Council and the Government are time-consuming and administratively demanding.

Lesson: Although the preparation of strategic documents and their evaluation is an essential part of an informed approach to the fight against organised crime, it is advisable to use already proven procedures, to maintain the basic structures and principles of the Strategy for the following period and to limit the related administration, especially in times of insufficient staff resources, to the minimum necessary.

OVERALL EVALUATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGY

In total, 14 of the 22 specific objectives were met, and a further 8 objectives were partially met. No specific objective is recorded as not met. There were a total of 7 strategic objectives. Of these, 4 were met and 3 were partially met. Overall, therefore, the overall implementation of the Strategy can be assessed very positively in terms of the fulfilment of individual objectives.

As far as the implementation structure of the Strategy is concerned, it has been fully respected. Through the Security Policy Department of the Ministry of the Interior, the biennial Action Plans and their evaluations were submitted to the State Security Council and the Government, and these materials were also approved without any problems. The individual measures within the Action Plans were clearly evaluated and followed up, if necessary, with other necessary measures. The Biennial Action Plans have proved to be an appropriate compromise for the long-term fight against organised crime, but at the same time they must respond to new needs and findings.

The risks foreseen in the Strategy have partially materialised. A certain complication for the implementation of individual measures and related objectives was the legislative process itself, where some prepared measures were not discussed due to the end of the term of the Chamber of Deputies of the Parliament of the Czech Republic and others did not receive the necessary political support. The amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code are particularly sensitive in this area. It cannot be stated unequivocally that the implementation of the objectives of the Strategy has been hampered by a lack of financial resources, but the efforts

to make savings have had a negative impact on the staffing capacity of some of the coordinators.

Also due to external influences, there were delays in the completion of individual measures in the Action Plans. However, such delays were unavoidable and also contributed to the significantly evolving security situation in the Czech Republic and the world, which required the allocation of available resources to topics other than the fight against organised crime. However, this was a relatively common problem. On the other hand, it cannot be said that the implementation of the individual objectives and measures was approached by the coordinators in a negligent manner.

In line with the original intention of the Strategy, the follow-up strategic material will be very close to the 2018 Strategy in its structure and content. It can therefore be concluded that the system set up in 2018 continues to prove functional and effective. The Strategy itself and its implementation are also very positively evaluated by many of the cooperating entities.

CONCLUSION

The evaluation of the Strategy concludes a six-year period of its implementation. During this time, many beneficial changes have been achieved which have had a positive impact in the fight against organised crime. At the same time, however, it is also necessary to state that there are always further necessary steps to be taken and unfinished challenges for the years to come.

We can only strive for further progress in this area in the follow-up strategic material and for the Czech Republic to continue to strengthen its ability to fight organised crime in all its forms.

After the approval of the follow-up strategic material, this evaluation will be published as an integral part of it on the website of the Ministry of the Interior so that the general public will be fully and transparently informed about the implementation of the Strategy and other related activities.

ANNEX 3 - OTHER RELEVANT NATIONAL MATERIALS IN THE FIELD OF ORGANISED CRIME

INTRODUCTION

In addition to the Strategy Paper, other government and departmental materials deal with this topic. An indicative list of these is given in this annex and is up to date as of the end of 2024. The Strategy Database,⁶⁶ , also provides some overview, but situation reports and annual reports are not stored there. In order to make this Annex more readable, the material is organised into three groups - situation reports, thematic material and other documents, usually covering more than one topic. To be included in this overview, material must be closely related to the issue of organised crime (e.g. material focused primarily on terrorism, extremism or prison issues is deliberately not included). Only unclassified materials that have already been completed and produced by the Czech state authorities are listed. If they are publicly available, the information about them includes a link to their actual wording or information about their approval by the government or other competent authority.

Situation reports and annual reports

Reports on the situation of internal security and public order in the Czech Republic

These Reports summarize the findings of the Ministry of the Interior, the Police of the Czech Republic, departments and relevant institutions working in the field of internal security and public order. It provides information on the state and development of crime in the Czech Republic and on measures to reduce it, as well as on the activities of state bodies involved in the system of protection of internal security of the Czech Republic. The report has been prepared and published for more than 20 years and is always approved by the Government.

Report on the second round of the National Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Risk Assessment process⁶⁷

Between 2019 and 2021, the second round of the National Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Assessment process took place in the Czech Republic. The national risk assessment procedures follow the FATF methodology.⁶⁸ Beyond the scope of the methodology, the formulation of mitigation measures to address the identified and assessed risks was an integral part of the process. The report, which summarises the most significant outputs from this process, therefore contains an extensive list of specifically formulated measures. These

66 <https://www.databaze-strategie.cz/>

67 <https://fau.gov.cz/informace-o-druhem-kole-narodniho-hodnoceni-rizik>

68 <http://www.fatf-gafi.org>

measures cut across all private and public sector stakeholders and cut across the whole system of prevention and prosecution of money laundering and terrorist financing. The report on the second round of the National Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Risk Assessment has been approved by the Government.

News about illegal drugs in the Czech Republic

Reports on the drug situation in the Czech Republic are published by the National Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Addictions. The text deals almost exclusively with illegal or street drugs, not primarily with alcohol and tobacco. It contains chapters on prevention, estimates of the number of drug users, and the health and social context of drug use, among other topics.

Reports on the state of trafficking in human beings in the Czech Republic⁶⁹

Traditionally, reports on the state of trafficking in human beings focus on trafficking in human beings, especially in the sense of the facts of the provisions of Section 168(2) of Act No.40/2009 Coll., i.e. trafficking in persons over 18 years of age and also crimes committed against persons under 18 years of age. The report, as in previous years, also focuses on phenomena accompanying and closely related to trafficking in human beings. The reports are compiled by the Ministry of the Interior.

Annual Reports

Relevant information on organised crime is also contained in the annual reports of the relevant organisations fighting organised crime. These include, for example, the **annual reports of the National Headquarters against Organised Crime of the Criminal Police and Investigation Service**,⁷⁰ the **Financial Analytical Office**,⁷¹ the **National Drugs Headquarters of the Criminal Police and Investigation Service**,⁷² the **Report on the Activities of the Public Prosecutor's Office and the relevant National Intelligence Officers**⁷³ and the **annual report of the Security Information Service**.⁷⁴

Thematic materials

National Strategy for the Prevention and Reduction of Harms Associated with Addictive Behaviours⁷⁵

69 <https://www.mvcr.cz/clanek/obchod-s-lidmi-dokumenty-924305.aspx>

70 <https://www.policie.cz/clanek/vyrocní-zprava-ncoz-2023.aspx>

71 <https://fau.gov.cz/vyrocní-zpravy/>

72 <http://www.policie.cz/clanek/vyrocní-zpravy-annual-reports-jahresbericht.aspx>

73 <https://verejnazaloba.cz/nsz/cinnost-nejvyššího-statního-zastupitelství/zpravy-o-cinnosti/>

74 <https://www.bis.cz/vyrocní-zpravy/>

75 <https://www.drogy-info.cz/nms/politika-v-oblasti-zavislosti/narodni-strategie-prevence-a-snizovani-skod-spojonych-se-zavislostnim-chovanim-2019-2027/>

The national strategy was developed on the basis of the conclusions of the evaluation of the success of the previous strategy and reflects the experience gained and the current state of scientific knowledge on the phenomenon of drug use. It defines the basic premises of the Government's drug policy, the directions for addressing the problem of drug use and the principles and approaches on which the Czech Republic's drug policy is based. The more detailed definition of the sub-objectives, instruments and activities to achieve the strategic goals and the definition of the priorities of the drug policy for the near future is the task and content of the three follow-up Action Plans for the period of validity of the Strategy, each lasting 3 years.

Government's Strategy of fighting corruption⁷⁶

The current Government Strategy for the fight against corruption for the years 2023 to 2026 emphasizes the enforcement of those anti-corruption measures that the Czech Republic has committed to at the international level, or that have been imposed on it by international organisations, evaluation mechanisms or platforms, as well as those anti-corruption measures that the government has committed to enforce in its official program documents. One of the objectives of this approach is to redefine anti-corruption policy in such a way that the content of the fight against corruption is not emptied and important anti-corruption norms are consistently enforced in the Chamber of Deputies. The emphasis is therefore not on the quantity of measures, but on their effective implementation with the aim of achieving a significant qualitative shift.

National Strategy to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings in the Czech Republic⁷⁷

The National Strategy for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings in the Czech Republic for the period 2020-2023 sets out the policy for combating trafficking in human beings at the national level. The measures contained therein focus primarily on combating trafficking in human beings for labour exploitation and combating trafficking in children, with a specific focus on the protection of particularly vulnerable groups as a cross-cutting priority.

Crime Prevention Strategy in the Czech Republic⁷⁸

The Crime Prevention Strategy in the Czech Republic shapes and develops the crime prevention system at the national and local level and develops the approaches and procedures of the state administration and local governments in a preventive approach to dealing with individual types of crime (crimes and misdemeanours) and criminally risky phenomena, to dealing with the complex security situation in threatened localities, and to dealing with victims and perpetrators of crime. Cooperation and coordination between partners in the field of crime prevention is being strengthened.

⁷⁶ <https://korupce.cz/protikorupcni-dokumenty-vlady/>

⁷⁷ <https://www.mvcr.cz/clanek/obchod-s-lidmi-dokumenty-924305.aspx>

⁷⁸ <https://www.mvcr.cz/clanek/nova-strategie-prevence-kriminality-v-cr-na-leta-2022-2027-byla-schvalena-vladou.aspx>

National Cyber Security Strategy of the Czech Republic⁷⁹

The strategy is structured into three basic visions - confidently in cyberspace, strong and reliable alliances and a resilient society 4.0, corresponding to the future strategic direction of the Czech Republic with a time span into the next years. It is further elaborated through a follow-up Action Plan.

Action plan to combat illegal trade in endangered species of animals and plants⁸⁰

The Action Plan is based on suggestions from the practice of law enforcement authorities in the area of this serious crime and aims to combat this often underestimated phenomenon more effectively. The Action Plan reflects the requirements of the international CITES Convention and the individual priorities of the EU Action Plan to Combat Illegal Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, as well as the Council Conclusions on this plan adopted on 20 June 2016, while taking into account the specific situation and needs in the Czech Republic. It deals with strengthening cooperation between the competent authorities, improving their working conditions, raising awareness of this crime and developing international cooperation.

Strategy for the prevention and combating of waste-related crime for the period 2021-2023⁸¹

The measures included in the strategy aim to improve inter-agency cooperation, deepen and broaden law enforcement training in this area, analyse the legislation in force and raise public awareness. On 21 August 2024, the Strategy was amended by Government Resolution No 558 to extend its validity until 31 July 2026.

Other documents

Security Strategy of the Czech Republic⁸²

The Security Strategy of the Czech Republic presents basic values, approaches, tools and measures to ensure the security, defence and protection of citizens and the state. The new Security Strategy was created because of the need to respond to the deteriorated security environment, and the need to strengthen the involvement and participation of all levels of public administration, civil society and individuals in ensuring their own and shared security. It is a reminder that security needs to be invested in at all levels: from sufficient defence spending, to prudence in business relations or vigilance against disinformation, to personal computer security.

⁷⁹ <https://nukib.gov.cz/cs/kyberneticka-bezpecnost/strategie-akcni-plan/>

⁸⁰ <https://www.databaze-strategie.cz/cz/mzp/strategie/akcni-plan-pro-potirani-nelegalniho-obchodu-s-ohrozenymi-druhy-zivocichu-a-rostlin-do-roku-2023-2020?typ=struktura>

⁸¹ <https://mv.gov.cz/clanek/prevence-a-potirani-trestne-cinnosti-souvisejici-s-odpady.aspx>

⁸² <https://www.vlada.cz/assets/ppov/brs/dokumenty/bezpecnostni-strategie-2015.pdf>

Strategy for the Development of the Police of the Czech Republic⁸³

This fundamental strategic document contains a description of the development and current state of the Police of the Czech Republic, assesses the current security situation, including forecasts for the future, and above all presents a vision of the functioning of the Police of the Czech Republic in the conditions of social development in the medium term. It builds on the previous similar material limited to the year 2020 and focuses on all activities that the Police of the Czech Republic is engaged in.

Strategy for the Development of the Capabilities of the Police of the Czech Republic in the Field of Crimes Committed in Cyberspace⁸⁴

The Strategy includes a description of the current organisational structure of the Police of the Czech Republic in the field of cybercrime investigation, including support and expert workplaces with a vision of future development, the area of personnel and material and technical security, training issues, cooperation with other entities and a list of possible legislative changes.

Interdepartmental Strategy of Support for Security Research in the Czech Republic 2017-2023 with a view to 2030⁸⁵

This Strategy defines organised crime as one of the most serious threats to the Czech Republic, along with illegal migration and terrorism, and the priorities of security research respond to the requirement for long-term stabilisation and emphasis on security gains in the above-mentioned areas. The material reflects the specific link between state security and the rational use of existing research capacities through complementary public support programmes.

83 <https://www.policie.cz/clanek/dokumenty-policie-ceske-republiky.aspx>

84 material has not been published

85 <https://www.mvcr.cz/vyzkum/clanek/koncepce-meziresortni-koncepce-podpory-bezpecnostniho-vyzkumu-cr.aspx>

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviations are given only if they are not introduced directly in the text, or if they are introduced and occur in several chapters and their explanation is necessary for a better understanding of the text.

AML	Fight against money laundering
CaaS	Crime as a service
CBA	Czech Banking Association
CC	Act No. 40/2009 Coll., Criminal Code, as amended
CenZA	Secured Assets Centre of the Ministry of Interior
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora
DGC	Directorate General of Customs
EMPACT 2022+	The European Union's permanent policy to combat organised and serious international crime - EMPACT 2022+ (European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats)
EU	European Union
GFD	General Financial Directorate
GIBS	General Inspectorate of Security Forces
IKSP	Institute for Criminology and Social Prevention
LO	Liaison Officer
MFA	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
NCOZ	National Organised Crime Agency
NCTEKK	National Counter Terrorism, Extremism and Cybercrime Agency
NPC	National Drug Control Centre SKPV
NSZ	Supreme State Prosecutor's Office
OBP	Security Policy Department of the Ministry of the Interior
PČR	Police of the Czech Republic
PP	Police Presidium of the Czech Republic
SIS	Schengen Information System
SKPV	Criminal Police and Investigation Service of the Czech Police
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
ÚSKPV	Criminal Police and Investigation Service of the Police Presidium of the Czech Republic
ÚZČ	Special Activities Unit SKPV
VAT	Value added tax

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