Mr. Chairman, Excellencies, Distinguished delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The globalization of crime presents an extremely dangerous threat to our societies at the beginning of the new millennium.

Trans-border organised crime undermines and destabilizes the political, economic and social system. These new crime syndicates take advantage of the opportunities arising from increasing globalization. Effective steps have to be taken to ward off this danger. As no country in the world is able to cope with this problem on its own, cooperation is necessary at all working levels.

The community of nations has responded to these negative developments. The successful conclusion of the negotiations regarding the proposal of a UN-Convention against transnational organised crime is of particular significance. This convention will provide the framework needed to efficiently combat the world-wide threat posed by organised crime.

Austria wants to emphasize the importance of the negotiations of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime and the three Protocols on Trafficking in Human Beings, especially women and children, firearms and migration, which we consider an integral part of the Convention.

Mr. Chairman, as to the Protocols, which, I repeat, should be viewed as integral part of the instruments against organised crime, I am pleased to state with satisfaction that the Austro-Italian initiative to elaborate an International legal instrument against the smuggling of migrants – which Austria presented to the General Assembly three years ago – has gathered so much support among UN member states.

Bearing in mind the human tragedies caused by the smuggling of migrants and the substantial profits criminal organisations derive from committing this crime, an urgent and effective response by the international community is very important. In order to fill the still existing legal lacuna in this field, the international community should focus its efforts on providing for an early adoption of the protocol on migrants.
I also want to emphasize that Austria highly appreciates the work of the CICP - Centre for International Crime Prevention - located at the United Nations in Vienna, in particular in the field of juvenile justice.

Organised crime is mainly driven by greed for financial profits, which entails attraction of numerous additional sectors providing opportunities to commit crimes on the one hand, and creates the necessity to launder the criminal proceeds on the other hand.

Organised crime is becoming more refined and able to respond swiftly to political and economic changes and legislative measures. Excellent experts, providing advice and relentlessly exploiting every loophole in the laws, work for organised crime. If the community of nations is to further develop in an area of freedom, security and justice, better organisational measures have to be taken, and we must be ready to meet this challenge by taking strategic and tactical action.

Organised crime must be fought with all possible means, without compromise, but at all times with legitimate methods, observing the principles of a state of law, of democracy and human rights. The community of nations must fully exhaust its potential by creating the prerequisites for a maximum of mutual commitment of those who prepare new legislative provisions at international level, and those who have to enforce these provisions at police, customs and justice level.

There must be close cooperation between the individual law enforcement and prosecution authorities, as well as those responsible for crime prevention.

It is of utmost importance to keep on eliminating all obstacles to international cooperation and to further enhance all existing instruments. There must not be a standstill. We can only be successful through close cooperation between European police forces and law enforcement authorities of other continents.

Organised crime has proven very skilful in taking advantage of the speed and anonymity of modern means of communication for their own purposes. This fast changing sector requires permanent attention on the part of the legislator as well as law enforcement and prosecution. Austria has already responded to many of these new types of threats.