

Given the geographic position of the Czech Republic in the center of Europe and international character of organized crime, it is absolutely imperative to secure appropriate international cooperation in criminal matters between the representatives of the Czech Republic and competent foreign authorities involved in criminal proceedings. In the last years we have also witnessed an accelerating rate of harmonization of criminal law and increased demands on legal cooperation in criminal matters between the Member States of the European Union.

The International Affairs Department is chaired by the Director, who in her absence is represented by the Deputy Director. There are four other public prosecutors working in the International Affairs Department. As of January 1, 2002 the International Department has been transferred from Prague to the seat of the Prosecutor General's Office in Brno and at the same time there was a complete personal change.

Based on the declarations of the Czech Republic especially to the Council of Europe conventions related to international legal cooperation in criminal matters and on the basis of bilateral agreements, the Prosecutor General's Office is one of two central judicial authorities securing cooperation of the Czech Republic in this area. Within the Prosecutor General's Office, it is the International Affairs Department that is responsible for legal cooperation in criminal matters, as it provides methodical assistance to public prosecutors within the Czech Republic in the area of extradition proceedings and it also secures forwarding of requests for legal assistance of public prosecutors, consisting wither in requests for legal assistance or transfer of criminal proceedings to abroad. In relation to foreign countries it accepts requests for legal assistance and coordinates their execution in the Czech Republic, and decides on takeover of criminal proceedings from abroad (un cases where international treaties do not allow public prosecutors to make direct contact with foreign authorities). Each year the Department processes over 1000 new cases of international legal cooperation. The total number of pending cases exceeds 2000, whereas an inconsiderable part thereof is formed by cases from before January 1, 2002.

The International affairs Department also drafts instructions of general nature, which concern international legal cooperation in criminal matters, opinions of the Prosecutor General's Office on international treaties regulating this area, and in cooperation with other departments of the Prosecutor General's Office it provides other states with information on the legislation of the Czech Republic. It also elaborates opinions of the Prosecutor General's Office on legislation of the EU concerning criminal law or international legal cooperation in criminal matters, in cooperation with other departments it provides the European Union with information on Czech legislation and closely cooperates with state authorities, which secure implementation of EU legislation concerning criminal proceedings to the law of the Czech Republic.

In this respect the International Affairs Department of the Prosecutor General's Office had a decisive influence on preparation of the draft of Chapter 25 of the CPC regulating legal cooperation with foreign countries and on the new Act on International Legal Cooperation, which codifies this area complexly, and thus became another significant relatively independent enactment in the area of criminal law.

Public prosecutors of the International Affairs Department also regularly participate in projects of the EU organized within [EUROJUST](#) and [European Judicial Network](#) , as well as a number of international conferences and seminars concerning in particular international legal cooperation in criminal matters, where they present their contributions or engage in the activity of workgroups dealing with individual issues in this area.

The International Affairs Department of the Prosecutor General's Office plays an important role in educational activities in the area of international legal cooperation in criminal matters, on one hand in the form of giving lectures within the Judicial Academy of the Czech Republic and in other forums, and on the other hand by publishing activities. In 2009 the public prosecutors of the International Affairs Department have actively participated on securing the Czech Presidency in the Council of EU and in 2010 on securing Czech Presidency within the CARIN network.

Given the fact that international legal cooperation in criminal matters is an area currently experiences very dynamic development, the International Affairs Department continues to strive not only to keep up with this development, but also to actively participate in its directing within the limits of its powers.