69th Session of the Commission
Promoting circular economy and sustainable use of natural resources in the UNECE region
20 – 21 April 2021

Day 1 – 20 April – Agenda Item 2: High-level dialogue

10:50 – 13:00 – Interventions by Heads of delegation

Intervention by Deputy Minister of Environment of the Czech Republic Vladislav Smrž

Excellencies,
Ladies and gentlemen,
Dear colleagues,

The Czech Republic would like to express its gratitude to the UNECE secretariat for organizing 69th UNECE session. The Czech Republic is proud of its traditional engagement in UNECE environmental issues, namely the Environment for Europe process which started at Dobřiš Castle in former Czechoslovakia in 1991 – the thirtieth anniversary of this process is commemorated just this year,

Therefore, our ministry closely follows developments in the Committee on Environmental Policy as well as in the Regional Forum on Sustainable Development. We are also continuously involved as a Party to the UNECE environmental conventions and protocols.

The topic UNECE has chosen for the high-level segment, namely circular economy, is extremely important. The importance is evident as circular economy is a topic discussed also in other international fora.

For instance, we are working on the OECD project called “Preparation of New National Circular Economy Strategic Network for the Czech Republic 2040 (Circular Czechia 2040)”. It should bring a new strategy for the circular economy in our country, which would be a useful instrument to implement the circular economy as one of the priorities for the Czech Republic.

Currently we are finalizing a draft of the strategic framework to be sent to the public consultation. The strategic framework is supposed to be adopted by the government in the autumn this year. The strategic framework should focus on priorities such as waste management, water reuse and recycling, design of the products, bioeconomy and prevention of the food waste, and more.

As an EU member state, we support the steps towards circular economy that are being taken at the EU level, such as the EU’s new Circular Economy Action Plan for a cleaner and more competitive Europe.
As there is already an EU framework on circular economy, we are not planning to set national voluntary commitments, however we are supporting positive initiatives at the national level. For example, we launched an initiative called “Enough with the plastics” aiming at reducing the use of single-use plastic 3 years ago. The subsidy of 2.3 mil. euro was directed to 23 projects of cities and towns, to prevent overconsumptions of single use products and replace them with reusable ones.

Currently we are trying to extend this project with a follow-up initiative based on measures contained in the Strategic Framework Czech Republic 2030, consisting in accepting voluntary commitments by enterprises, public administration and individuals.

I thank you for your attention.