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European Union

To the attention of:

Mr. Andrej Babiš

Prime Minister of the Czech Republic

Governmental and Parliamentary Affairs

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Brussels / Madrid, May 28, 2026

SUBJECT: Formal protest against the dismantling of the multidisciplinary and interministerial model for addictions in the Czech Republic.

Dear Prime Minister Mr Babiš:

I am writing to you on behalf of the European Observatory on the Consumption and Cultivation of Cannabis, an organisation of experts in drug policies at European level, specialised in collaboration with Governments for the design of rigorous public policies relating to Cannabis. We wish to express our strongest protest against the changes in addiction policies planned by your Government, in seeking to stop treating addiction policy in a multidisciplinary way, and instead have it carried out exclusively by the Ministry of Health. This will lead to less effective drug policies, since many aspects of this problem are not medical in nature, such as everything relating to risk prevention, harm reduction, public safety or human rights.

We receive with deep concern this intention to transfer the coordination of addiction policies from the central Government Office to the Ministry of Health, which is intended to take place on 1 July. Furthermore, we consider it alarming that a decision of such institutional importance has been processed with total opacity, without establishing channels for prior dialogue with experts and civil society. A party such as yours, which

claims to represent discontented citizens, must be consistent and establish prior consultations with these people. We can assure you that in the Czech Republic there are many citizens discontented with prohibitionist drug policies.

As was stated on the poster of the World Marijuana March in Madrid in 2004, drug matters are social matters, since it is impossible to address such a complex matter from a solely medical perspective, as drug policies must be designed with human rights as the main criterion, in order to benefit society as a whole, rather than orienting them towards the economic benefits of the pharmaceutical industry.

For decades the Czech Republic has been a reference point thanks to its interministerial and multidisciplinary model. Its current approach makes it possible to address complex issues influenced by many factors. International experience clearly shows that multidisciplinary strategies with the presence of risk prevention and harm reduction save lives, while policies based on criminalisation and medicalisation fail, since they do not even manage to reduce the availability of drugs or their consumption.

We are in total disagreement with the manichaeian discourse that harm reduction and risk prevention services are pro-drug, since they are supported by empirical scientific evidence, as well as by their excellent results. These programmes do not encourage consumption, but rather defend public health, public safety and human rights. We also consider the way in which the current National Drug Coordinator, Pavel Bém, was dismissed by a simple SMS to be highly inappropriate, while the Government Council for the Coordination of Addiction Policies is ignored, precisely the place where these issues should be addressed in an interdisciplinary manner. A decision that has already drawn criticism from key figures in the field, such as former coordinator Jindřich Vobořil. Deliberately ignoring the Government Council for the Coordination of Addiction Policies weakens the democratic foundations of this measure.

For all these reasons, within the framework of the improvement of drug policies in Europe and in support of the excellent social services of the Czech Republic, we urge your Government to reconsider its decision immediately. We ask you to halt the transfer of powers scheduled for 1 July, while establishing channels for dialogue with experts and civil society.

We will remain attentive to your decisions and we announce our intention to convey our concern through the various channels we maintain with Governments and institutions.

Sincerely,

Lawyer Sierra, European Observatory on the Consumption and Cultivation of Cannabis (OECCC)