

Commission on Narcotic Drugs

59<sup>th</sup> session

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Statement by Slovenia on UNGASS2016

Mr Chairman / Madam chair/, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentleman,

Let me begin my contribution to this important discussion on UNGASS on the world drug problem by fully **aligning with the EU statement** delivered on the first day and would like to share with you the following observations in my national capacity.

In Slovenia we are committed to the balanced implementation of the pillars of demand and supply reduction and international cooperation under the principle of common and shared responsibility. We believe that the **three UN Drug Control Conventions together with the universal human rights instruments** provide good basis for such a policy. We are convinced that the world needs comprehensive and humane drugs policy.

The factors that place people at risk of using drugs are diverse throughout the world, as are the structures and resources available to protect the wellbeing and health of the individuals, families and societies. We know that there are **policies and interventions** which have been proven effective in preventing people from starting to use drugs or in treating their drug problem.

When we speak about the treatment of drug addiction, **opiate substitution treatment** should be underlined as one of the most evaluated and successful treatment programs. Medical doctors prescribe four different substances as substitute drugs in Slovenia. Substitution treatment programme in our country is fully covered by the Health Insurance System and is implemented since the very beginning, more than twenty years ago, without any waiting list.

**Drug programmes** should be evidence based, evaluated and accessible to all people with drug use disorders. These services should include all evidence based interventions to reduce drug related risks of transmission of HIV and other infections and they should provide a recovery oriented continuum of care, matching the needs of dependant drug users and resulting in opportunities for rehabilitation and reintegration into society.

In this context we believe that **harm reduction measures**, which have in Slovenia and in many other countries a long tradition, are an urgent policy for successful solving of drug problem, including for prevention of the transmission of infections such as HIV and hepatitis. These programmes, which are based on the principles of the respect for human rights, human dignity and human life, have been rigorously evaluated many times, in Slovenia and elsewhere, and their results show their effectiveness.

We are of firm believe that availability and **accessibility of controlled medicines** for medical purposes is indispensable for the public health and we would like to encourage member states to approve the relevant legislation to provide for that.

For a number of years Slovenia has been systematically developing drug legislation and policy. As early as in 1999 Slovenia **decriminalised** possession of a small quantity of any drug for personal use, with the aim to encourage treatment instead of penalisation. Since the early stages of our national drug policy greatest emphasis has always been given to **public health aspects** including harm reduction programmes and substitution treatment. Ministry of Health is in charge of drafting drug legislation as well as of Governmental Coordination of drug policy.

Slovenian operational Action Plan on Drugs, which is based on the **National Drug Strategy**, has been drafted by a working group composed of representatives from all ministries with responsibilities in the area of drugs, representatives of the scientific community and representatives of non-governmental organisations. We are convinced that **civil society** organisation have important role to play in this area.

We believe we have some positive experience to share, so we are actively participating in international organisations, striving also for an **enhanced regional cooperation**, particularly in the **South East Europe**. The programme of bilateral technical assistance for countries of the South East Europe was set up by Slovenia five years ago. One of the programme's main priorities is to promote balanced measures in the area of drug policy among the countries in the region.

To conclude, in Slovenia we see drug problem as a global problem, which may only be solved through **cooperation**, within the United Nations, in bilateral cooperation with other countries and in broad dialogue between all stakeholders.

Let me express our hope that our joint efforts will lead to minimazing the world drug problem.

Thank you, Mr Chairman / Madam Chair