

Poland
Statement on the occasion of the 59th Session
of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs
Vienna 2016

Ms/Mr Chairman,
Your Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our country sees a great opportunity which is provided for the international community interested in modern, human needs-oriented and effective drug policy through the participation in an international debate, held *inter alia* during this session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), which is going to culminate in the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS).

Here, Poland expresses its appreciation for the structured, flexible and open style of work which was proposed and implemented by the UNGASS Board. We hope that the results achieved by the UNGASS Board and Member States, during preparation process, will be the key elements of success of both this CND session as well as the UNGASS meeting in New York.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Poland fully sympathizes with the drug policy priorities which were defined in the official position expressed by the representative of the Netherlands, speaking on behalf of the European Union.

In this statement we wish to emphasise issues important from the perspective of our understanding of current challenges for drug policy at the international, national and local level.

Poland strives to reinforce the essential role of health, humanitarian aspects and human rights in anti-drug measures. Therefore, we emphasize the importance of public health and maintain our objection against imposing penalties out of proportion to the gravity of the offence and most of all we remain steadfast in opposing the death penalty for committing any crimes including the drug-related ones. We believe that designing measures should go beyond the rigid division of drug policy into drug supply and demand reduction. Drug policy should fit into the broadly understood social policy based on scientific and legal foundations, ideally as far away from ideological or political context as possible.

Anti-drug initiatives should also become an element of the broad understanding of addiction and involve general institutions concerned with health, social policy and public security, not only specialist anti-drug agencies. Reducing public stigmatisation of controlled substance users and consequently overcoming barriers to access to effective forms of drug prevention, treatment, harm reduction and social reintegration is becoming an added value of this approach.

At present, we are observing a rise in the significance of two trends. On the one hand a number of countries or regions are seeking innovative solutions to their drug problems (frequently in ways which are hardly acceptable or dismissed by other countries), on the other hand, with global processes gaining momentum, there is a growing for collaborative and coordinated actions.

From the Polish perspective, an excellent example of this development can be New Psychoactive Substances (NPS). The Republic of Poland systemically combats NPS through imposing regular bans on the manufacture and introduction to trade of chemical substances and products containing NPS. Despite the NPS store closure in Poland, legislative works, for example, are still

under way as we consider this issue a serious challenge for the public health for years to come. We also share a conviction that in order to effectively respond to the cross-border and global nature of the NPS problem it is necessary to take collaborative and coordinated action at the UN level. Combating NPS producers, suppliers and traffickers often fails to produce the desired effect because our adversaries are professional chemical labs, marketing companies and law firms that specialize in circumventing the law.

In addition, the experiences of many countries and international institutions in combating NPS teach us that the traditional methods and programmes are not sufficiently effective due to their passive, reactive character as well as prolonged procedures.

Consequently, we need to increase spending on public education and prevention. Developing individual and public responsibility for mind-altering substance use is virtually impossible without reinforcing and extending the social base, which is informed by civic society, local authorities and non-governmental organizations.

We therefore believe that in thinking of effective response to substance addictions we should, while never losing sight of the international and global context, invest more efforts in building local drug policy standards as they are closest to the citizens and are likely to respond to the changing drug scenes and conditions swiftly and effectively. An example of such standards can be the provisions of the Warsaw Declaration, which was worked out during the second international Urban Drug Policies Conference. The provisions emphasise the need to develop and improve urban and local drug prevention programmes.

We believe that the successful delay, reduction or eradication of problems caused by substance use and addiction-related behaviours in the contemporary world is practically impossible without the presence and involvement of representatives of civic society, including individuals voicing the opinions of

mind-altering substance users. Moreover, it cannot be done without active technical and financial support of authorities at various levels as well as non-governmental organizations.

Poland welcomes the fact that most of the solutions proposed by the international community, which aim at improving the effectiveness of drug policies, focus on the realistic assessment of the situation and available potential, respect the diversity of measures and at the same time recognize the need to coordinate actions taken by institutions and international community.