

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

62. Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)

Ministerial Segment

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Statement by H.E. Herbert KICKL

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(Working translation from German original)

Distinguished Chairman,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As representative of UNODC's host country, I would like to welcome you all wholeheartedly in our capital.

We are meeting here in the **Vienna International Center (VIC)**, which is celebrating its **40th anniversary**:

- In 1979, Austria has handed over this building to the United Nations as their **Vienna Headquarters**
- With the inauguration of the VIC, Vienna has become the **“capital” of international cooperation** against the drugs trade

- and of efforts to proactively tackle the world drug problem
- something we are really proud of.

In 2016, we managed, all of us together, to decisively set **international drugs policy** on a new course

- in the form of the **Outcome Document** of the UN General Assembly Special Session on Drugs.

Important elements of it are:

- Strengthening national and international efforts in the interest of the **health, security and wellbeing** of our people, especially also in the field of prevention;
- The necessity for effective tools of prosecution to take into account the linkages between **drug-related crime, corruption, human trafficking and terrorism**
- and due regard being given to aspects of **development cooperation**

Taken all together, this requires an **effective coordination** of global drugs policy:

- I therefore **appeal** to all to commit themselves to providing the necessary **financial resources** for all relevant bodies to be able to work effectively
- Furthermore, I express my appreciation to all states, who – like Austria – support the implementation of international drugs policy through **voluntary contributions**, especially to UNODC

The **Ministerial Declaration** before us is an important step in our common policy on drugs:

- **Main pillars** of our engagement in this context are:
 - Countering the **illegal cultivation and production** of drugs and the illicit transnational **trade in drugs** AND
 - A holistic solution of the global drugs problem in all its ramifications

In order to achieve this, we need **appropriate instruments** to analyse the status quo and to foresee future developments

- The **EU and its Member States** have a **leading role** in this field.
- For instance, **Austrian authorities** have very good capabilities for the identification and evaluation of data, statistics and trends.
 - ➔ We **actively contribute** with our expertise to **improve the data collection and processing instruments** of UNODC.

For me as Minister of the Interior, UNODC is a central partner in **countering global drugs-related crime**:

- I want to thank UNODC for their longstanding, excellent cooperation!

- Together with our **international partners**, we have been able to achieve great successes,
- for instance 2018 in the framework of the successful “JIFTdrugs/fair” project to counter organized **drugs and arms smuggling**,
- resulting in 150 arrests and the confiscation of 2,5 tonnes of drugs.
- This is an excellent example for the **national and international concentration of the resources** of police and customs authorities.

In the face of **new and dynamic phenomena** like the **drugs trade in the darknet**, one thing is absolutely clear to me:

- ➔ In the future, we must rely even more on a close and integrated **cooperation on national, European and international level**.

However, the problem of drug addiction as a whole cannot just be reduced to **aspects of criminality**:

- We are dealing with a **chronic disease** and its consequences for its **victims and society as a whole**.
- Therefore, it is necessary to take into account the **medical and social dimension as well as aspects of health economics**

In general, we put a strong focus on **intensive prevention** efforts, given that one thing holds true also in this sector:

- **Health-related action** is most effective if undertaken at an **early stage**.
A speedy reaction by health authorities can also contribute to avoiding the criminalisation of drug users.
- In Austria, we put a special emphasis on the **protection of children and adolescents** in this context.

Before I close, I want to pay tribute to the **commitment of all those** around the globe who dedicate themselves every single day to countering drug abuse and to assisting its victims,

- in the security forces,
- in the judicial authorities,
- people working in the health system
- as well as volunteers in civil society

What they accomplish, regardless of adversities of every kind, is extraordinary and many of them have to take **great personal risks** upon themselves in their work.

Also because of this, it is our **common responsibility** to provide the **necessary framework**, on national as well as international level, for their efforts to be successful.

