



European Union
Statement on the occasion of the Opening of
the Ministerial Segment of the 62nd session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs
Vienna, 14 March 2019

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to be here today with you and to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. The following countries align themselves with this statement: North Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia*, Albania*, Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Iceland+, Andorra, Armenia, Georgia and San Marino.

10 years after the UN Political Declaration and the Plan of Action on drugs and 3 years after the adoption of the Outcome Document of the Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Drugs, the EU and its Member States welcome the opportunity provided by our meeting today to address the world drug problem.

We cannot ignore this longstanding and continuously evolving threat affecting the life of millions of citizens around the world. The human, social but also economic costs of drug addictions are very high.

In a constantly evolving drugs market, reducing drug use and demand as well as drug supply requires an adequate and effective response through coordinated actions at international level. The international community needs to strengthen its action, reinforce cooperation and accelerate the implementation of our joint commitments to address and counter the world drug problem.

The drug situation is worsening in most parts of the world. The 2018 World Drug Report published by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is clear: both the range of drugs and drug markets are expanding and diversifying as never before. The drug problem is a health and security concern, with increased risks for people who use drugs and heavy challenges for law enforcement.

* Candidate Countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania as well as potential Candidate Country Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

+ Iceland is a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area

The illicit supply of drugs worth billions of euros each year and is a catalyst for organised crime groups. It forms one of the most lucrative parts of their profit generating activities linked also to violence, corruption, money laundering, exploitation of people, trafficking of firearms and other forms of serious crimes.

To tackle effectively this immense challenge, it is imperative that we all develop policies based on evidence and best practice, supported by objective monitoring and evaluation systems.

This approach, which is already at the heart of EU action on drugs, has not only proven to be most effective for addressing the drug phenomenon, but also the best for designing responses to new trends and developments including new psychoactive substances and online markets.

The EU and its Member States would like to recall the importance of the UNGASS Outcome Document, with its seven chapters; the Outcome Document better reflects the complexities of the drug situation and enables all countries to address a broader range of policy issues.

At the same time, it reaffirms the unwavering commitment to supply reduction and related measures, including effective law enforcement, countering money-laundering and promoting judicial cooperation.

Therefore, the EU and its Member States consider the UNGASS Outcome Document as a milestone.

Its implementation requires essential conditions to improve the current situation in international drug policy by:

- enhanced cooperation among us,
- further involvement of the civil society, the scientific community and academia,
- and anchoring drugs policy in a wider socioeconomic context, in line with the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The EU has a longstanding commitment to all these issues.

The EU Action Plan on Drugs for the period 2017 to 2020 enhances and updates existing actions while it identifies new priority areas such as:

- online awareness raising activities, targeting young people in particular, and
- evidence gathering on the potential connection between drug trafficking and financing of terrorist groups, migrant smuggling or trafficking in human beings.

As regards precursor control, the EU is taking a leading role in developing new approaches.

In addition to that, with the implementation of the EU Policy Cycle for organised and serious international crime, we have been successful in dismantling a number of organised crime groups active across all crime areas, including drugs trafficking.

The EU is also very active in the worldwide fight against the illicit supply of drugs together with our global partners.

We have reviewed our approach to Alternative Development as an important strategy to address the underlying root causes of illicit drug economies.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

A few months after the celebration of the 70 years of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948, the EU and its Member States would like to reiterate our commitment to respecting, protecting and promoting human rights, fundamental freedoms and the inherent dignity of all individuals and the principles of rule of law in the development and implementation of drug policies.

Moreover, we would like to recall, once more, that the death penalty should be abolished globally, and we condemn the use of capital punishment in all circumstances and in all cases.

Mr. President, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

A firm commitment to accelerate the implementation of all the recommendations contained in the UNGASS Outcome Document is essential to embrace an effective and sustainable drug policy towards 2030.

We all want to achieve substantial progress by the mid-term review in 2024.

The international community needs to step up its responses to cope with the challenges at stake.

The EU and its Member States will continue working relentlessly on addressing the drug problem, using all the instruments at our disposal: legislation, operational action, and cooperation with the international community.

We have no time to spare: we need to show determination and commitment.

Thank you!

