



European Union
Statement on the occasion of the
1st Intersessional Meeting of the 62nd Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs
Vienna, 16 January 2019

Preparations for the Ministerial Segment to be held during the 62nd session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on 14 – 15 March 2019

Distinguished Chairman, Distinguished Facilitator,

The EU and its Member States would like to thank you for guiding our work towards a successful Ministerial Segment of the 62nd CND session. First of all, allow me to express our sincere appreciation for the ambitious and speedy manner in which you are conducting the consultation process. The informal brainstorming that you have organised and the draft skeleton of the ministerial document that you have kindly shared with delegations have been particularly helpful and have enabled our collective work to start on a positive track in the beginning of this new year.

We strongly believe that our joint efforts, in line with the principle of common and shared responsibility, should be focused on achieving a balanced ministerial outcome document, to address the world drug situation in an effective and sustainable manner by 2030.

We, the EU and its Member States, are glad to see that a number of important issues are covered by the zero draft. We are looking into it carefully and will be actively contributing to the consultations. For the time being, the EU and its Member States would like to reiterate the elements that we believe shall be the foundations of the outcome document of the Ministerial Segment.

First, the EU and its Member States fully support the principal role of the CND and UNODC as the policymaking bodies and leading entities for addressing and countering the world drug problem. It is key for the CND and UNODC to further engage with all relevant UN entities, including the WHO, UNDP, UNAIDS, UN Women and OHCHR.

Second, it is important to commit to implementing the UNGASS Outcome Recommendations in order to obtain concrete improvements and measurable progress by 2030. UNGASS broadened global drug policy, through putting an adequate focus on both demand reduction and supply reduction. We strongly believe that equal efforts shall be invested in all areas of drug policy, in full respect of the UN Drug Conventions. Building on evidence on their effectiveness, we commit to minimize the adverse public health and social consequences of drug use by effectively implementing harm reduction policies. These policies represent a key measure in reducing the incidence of HIV, hepatitis, tuberculosis and other blood-borne diseases. At the same time, they promote the respect of human rights of people affected by drug problems. The UNGASS Outcome Document addresses the health side of the drugs problem: effective access to and availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, vulnerable members of society, emerging and persistent challenges and threats, and the link to human rights and the relevant Sustainable Development Goals. At the same time, the UNGASS Outcome Document also reaffirms the unwavering commitment to the UN drug conventions, supply reduction and related measures, including a call to implement effective law enforcement, to counter money-laundering and to promote judicial cooperation. Therefore, the UNGASS Outcome Document is the most recent consensus and the most comprehensive agreement of the international community in the field of drugs. It is a milestone and a progressive step towards the improvement of the current situation on international drug policy.

Third, the EU and its Member States uphold the principle of adequate, proportionate and effective response to drug-related offences, as highlighted in all UN documents on drug policy. We have a strong and unequivocal opposition to the death penalty in all circumstances and we consider that the death penalty undermines human dignity.

Fourth, CND's commitment to contribute to the attainment of the drug-related Sustainable Development Goals should be reaffirmed. It is important to implement the UNGASS Outcome Recommendations in line with the relevant SDGs of the 2030 Agenda, bearing in mind that the efforts to effectively address the world drug problem and to achieve the relevant SDGs are complementary and mutually reinforcing.

Fifth, the EU and its Member States advocate for an integrated, balanced, and evidence-based approach. Collecting relevant and reliable data is essential to get a better overview of the drug situation worldwide, and to allow for evidence-based policy-making. Improving the quality and effectiveness of the Annual Report Questionnaire (ARQ) and enhancing the capacity of countries to report data is crucial, as the ARQ is the necessary tool to report on the implementation of the international commitments to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem. This is why the document to be adopted by the Ministers in March 2019 shall prioritize to enhance data collection, improve capacity building, and strengthen and streamline the ARQ.

Sixth, it is important to commit to the continued involvement of civil society, academia, scientific community and all relevant stakeholders in the deliberations on the international drugs policy, as they play a crucial role in providing knowledge, hands on experience and scientific evidence, respectively in support of the evaluations of drug control policies and programmes, and therefore in assessing and addressing the world drug situation. Through their efforts on raising awareness on the harmful effects of drugs and drug use and through the provision of treatment and rehabilitation services for people who use drugs, civil society demonstrates its important role in preventing drug use.

Distinguished Chairman, Distinguished Facilitator,

The EU and its Member States are pleased to continue to support you in the efforts of preparing a meaningful and action-oriented ministerial document, which broadly reflects the aforementioned elements. We are pleased to continue to work closely with you in the challenging task of defining a ministerial document which reflects a balanced, comprehensive and evidenced-based approach.

Thank you very much, Distinguished Chair and Distinguished Facilitator.