



European Union
Statement on the occasion of the
Intersessional Meeting 22-25 October 2018, Commission on Narcotic Drugs 61st session

Vienna, 25 October 2018

Preparations for the ministerial segment to be held during the 62nd session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in 2019

Madam Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. The following countries align themselves with this statement: the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia*, Albania*, Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Norway+, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia.

We consider our deliberations during the intersessional as important steps on the path leading us to an agreement on an outline document and finally to a successful CND high level segment next year. In our view, the outline to be presented at the reconvened 61st session of the CND in December shall contain elements for the document to be adopted during the high level segment of the 62nd session of the Commission next March. Reaching an overall agreement on that outline and its elements under your chairmanship will be important to facilitate our further work towards a document that will cater for the needs of all countries in the international drug policy for the next ten years. We are interested to continue to listen to the different opinions of other delegations on the Outline document and we look forward to the deliberation of the Commission, guided by your work as the chair, about all the necessary elements to be included in the outline to be submitted at the reconvened session in December.

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

+ Norway is a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

The EU and its Member States are strongly committed to the ongoing preparations. The traditionally inclusive and consensus-based process of our work in the CND shall be maintained. We therefore welcome your commitment to reach out and consult with regional groups. We are looking forward to a meeting with you.

We welcome the interactive panels discussions we have witnessed in September and over the last days. For the EU and its Member States the forthcoming Ministerial Segment is an important moment for the international community to have a general debate about international drug policy and to reflect upon the future.

Madam Chair,

The EU and its Member States would like to reiterate five elements, linked to our view of a holistic international drug policy, based on respecting, protecting and promoting human rights in the development and implementation of drug policies. We believe that these five elements shall be the foundations of the Chair's outline document as well as a document to be adopted by the Ministers on 15 March 2019.

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 implement the UNGASS Outcome Recommendations in line with the relevant drugs-related goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In our view, the efforts to address the world drug problem and to achieve the relevant Sustainable Developments Goals by 2030 complement and reinforce each other.

Third, pursuing an integrated, balanced and evidence-based approach entails that both demand reduction and supply reduction are addressed. Equal efforts shall be invested in all areas of drug policy, in full compliance with the UN conventions on Narcotic Drugs. Building on evidence on their effectiveness, we continue to support harm-reduction policies as well as prevention measures, treatment of drug disorders; we also strongly promote adequate access to and availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes.

In the same vein, 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. Errors made in its application are irreversible and we welcome the international efforts to limit the application of the death penalty. The EU and its member States will continue their efforts and international cooperation on drug supply reduction, in order to address current and new challenges and threats.

Fourth, the EU and its Member States advocate for an integrated, balanced, and evidence-based approach. Collecting relevant and reliable data is instrumental to get a better overview of the drug situation worldwide, and to provide evidence-based and therefore effective response to the world drug phenomenon. Improving the quality and effectiveness of the Annual Report Questionnaire (ARQ) is crucial, as the ARQ is the backbone of the regular reporting to the CND on the latest trends and of the annual World Drug Report. This is why the document to be adopted by the Ministers in March 2019 shall prioritize to enhance data collection and to strengthen and streamline the ARQ.

Five, it is important for us that the civil society and the scientific community continue to be actively engaged in the process leading towards the 2019 ministerial segment through the Civil Society Taskforce and shall be invited to meaningfully participate in the Ministerial Segment of the 62nd CND session and in the implementation of its outcome in the coming years. A mid-term review for the UNGASS implementation should be envisaged in 2024.

Madam Chair,

Over the past few days, we have been exchanging best practices on supply reduction measures, the evolving reality and trends. Be ensured that the EU and its Member States remain committed to address the current, new and emerging challenges and threats we face, including New Psychoactive Substances and the criminal use of the Internet. We will engage with all the members of the international community to respond to all the current and new challenges.

Finally, the EU and its Member States would like to share a reflection on our joint commitments to address and counter the world drug problem. For us, the seven thematic areas laid down in the UNGASS Outcome Document correspond to the need for an integrated, evidence-based and balanced approach to drug policy. It is the comprehensive guidance needed for addressing the world drug problem. The commitment of the international community beyond March 2019 should be focused on their practical implementation through the broad number of operational recommendations contained therein. The EU and its Member States would like to see measurable progress in the implementation of the UNGASS operational recommendations.

Strengthening the link with the implementation of the drug-related SDGs, including its timeline on reporting, is essential for the international community as a whole.

Thank you, Madam Chair.