

**Statement by Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania to the International
Organizations in Vienna
H.E. Mr. Aurimas Taurantas**

**Commission on Narcotic Drugs 63rd Session
Vienna, 2-6 March 2020**

Mr. Chairperson,
Your Excellences,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Lithuania fully aligns with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. In addition, allow me to make several remarks in my national capacity.

Recent World Drug Report published by the UNODC, as well as EU Drugs Report and Drugs Markets Report show that world drug situation remains a major challenge for the international community despite the progress made so far. Seeking to cope with the challenges we are facing, it is essential to comply with our joint commitments and to strengthen our efforts to implement UNGASS 2016 Outcome Document effectively, as agreed in 2019 Ministerial Declaration. Operational recommendations provided in this document, should not remain abstract declarations but rather be used as an effective tool in our daily work.

Lithuania reaffirms its commitment to the evidence-based policy with the balanced, human-centred approach. We are convinced it could change the situation and contribute to the achievement of UN Sustainable development goals. National drug policies should be in full conformity with the principles of fundamental human rights, therefore Lithuania fully supports the proportionate sentencing for drug related offences. We stand firmly for the abolishment of death penalty regardless the circumstances of crime committed.

Lithuanian ten-year Drug Strategy focuses on major drug policy cornerstones such as: equal importance of drug demand, supply and harm reduction; improved monitoring system and involvement of various sectors.

Development of European drug prevention quality standards was recognized as our high priority. Lithuania together with other countries takes further efforts to create an effective drug prevention system across Europe based on analysis of prevention measures and widespread professional training. In our country early intervention services are available that help young people stop using drugs, change their attitudes and risky behaviour.

In 2017, we launched naloxone supply program as a local pilot project at the main drug treatment centre. Since 2019, in order to reduce the number of deaths caused by opioid overdose, we made naloxone available nationally, allowing its distribution to people who use drugs and their family members through low-threshold agencies.

Lithuania considers comprehensive modern monitoring system as a valuable instrument, which provides factual, objective, reliable, comparable information concerning drugs, drug addiction and their consequences. Our drug monitoring system was supplemented with new innovative data collection methodologies that are needed for detection of emerging trends. Capabilities of the new system include wastewater analysis, web survey, hospital emergency data and analysis of syringe residues. New and repeated research and estimates were conducted with the purpose to fill the data gaps. It enabled us to have comprehensive picture on the national drug situation. However, all the current and future achievements will be worth very little if they are not built on a human centred approach.

Distinguished delegates,

These are small steps in achieving our ten year goals. It is a long way to go. *[As Pope Francis said, "When we stop, things don't go right."]* So, let's go together. Let's work together for a better future.

Thank You