

# Poland

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Poland fully supports the statement made by ..... on behalf of the EU, however, we would also like to add some words of reflection from our national perspective.

First of all, we would like to stress the importance of our membership of the Commission on Narcotic

Drugs, which is being inaugurated at this Session. We wish to actively participate in the Commission's proceedings, share our experience and support efforts of the international community to prevent health and security risks posed by drugs and drug addiction and, in a broader context, phenomena related to mind-altering drugs as well as behavioural addictions. Our approach to drug problems is invariably founded on the respect for human rights, rule of law, building response based on scientific evidence and best practice as well as concentrating efforts on the problems of people and families battling addictions to mind-altering substances. Here, we would like to reiterate our permanent objection to the application of death penalty in any circumstances, not only in relation to narcotic drugs.

The issue of combating drug-related crime and groups which profit from the suffering of others, spread pathologies and threats to the life, health and security of people and societies remains indisputable.

However, in our view, the key aspects of creating a drug policy are empathy, solidarity and support for individuals and communities afflicted by addictions, help and support which gives them hope for a better life as well as assurance that no one is going to be left stranded and excluded.



That is why it is so important, from our point of view, to build coherent, integrated and coordinated strategies and action plans, also on an international scale, which would refer to the addiction phenomenon globally but also consider needs of specific individuals and groups regardless of their social or economic status, severity of drug addiction, education, gender, country of origin or residence.

An example of such approach is Poland's National Health Programme, which has been implemented for several years now. The National Health Programme integrates responses to legal and illegal drug addictions as well as behavioural addictions into a single strategy oriented towards public health priorities.

The focus on public health calls for listening to the voice of civic society and considering the needs of specific groups such as women, including mothers, youth, minorities, individuals at risk of social exclusion as well as individuals of limited access to welfare, material and cultural assets. It is necessary to come into contact with psychoactive substance users in order to improve their health but also to involve these groups in protective measures of building responsibility for their own lives, health and security.

1

Recent years have brought more and more signals indicative of polarized interpretations of international drug law standards, especially in the case of cannabis. In our opinion it is necessary to understand and respect differences resulting from other traditions, cultures and needs of countries or regions. However, this should be accompanied by solidarity, responsibility-sharing and promoting values that are common and



indivisible, values which put first the human being, struggle for health, life and security of as many people around the world as possible.

There are many examples of effective measures. One of them is tackling the problem of the so-called new psychoactive substances. In Poland, we felt the severity of the problem deeply. However, we also experienced positive effects of the mobilization of the international community aiming for the containment and reduction of NPS use consequences. Combating NPS showed how effectively we can act when we have access to evidence-based monitoring data. That is why we support efforts to develop the range and effectiveness of gathering and analyzing data under the Annual Report Questionnaire (ARQ). Reliable data also provide grounds for the implementation of evidence-based prevention, therapy and harm reduction methods, which translates into the real abatement of risk factors and development of protective factors with regard to drug addiction for the widest groups of citizens possible.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Summing up our statement, we wish to stress the importance and appreciate the efforts of the international community to respond to the consequences of using psychoactive substances which were expressly stated in the UNGASS 2016 Outcome Document and last year's Ministerial Declaration. We wish to assure you that we are going to support all actions concentrated on human rights and needs, justice, rule of law, actions that are evidence-based and validated through practice. We will also support those actions which aim for dialogue, respect for the rights and development of co-responsibility of all the members of the international community who respond to drugs and drug addiction.

