

**Statement of the Republic of Austria
for the General Debate of the 64th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs**

by Ambassador Gabriela Sellner

Austria fully aligns herself with the EU statement and wishes to add the following comments in her national capacity.

The 64th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs takes place in a year of two important anniversaries: 60 years ago, the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs was adopted, followed by the Convention on Psychotropic Substances ten years later. In the spirit of these major breakthroughs in international drug policy, we look forward to maintaining a fruitful dialogue and identifying innovative solutions during the present session.

Excellencies, dear delegates, the conditions in which we are meeting this week are not easy, but the COVID-19 pandemic makes the review and analysis of the global drug situation all the more important. I want to thank you Chair and through you the Secretariat for ensuring that the 64th CND is held in an inclusive and participatory format despite the obstacles we are facing.

Austria is committed to fostering international cooperation to tackle the world drug situation. Together with Portugal, we are sponsoring a draft resolution supported by Member States of the European Union that seeks to promote quality, affordable, scientific evidence-based and comprehensive drug prevention and treatment services worldwide.

Austria is firm in its view that addiction cannot be reduced to a criminal matter. Addiction is a chronic illness that has consequences for those directly affected, their immediate environment and society as a whole. Therefore, the medical, health, economic and social dimensions of the issue must also be taken into account. In general, we place a strong emphasis on intensive prevention because evidence shows that health-related measures are most effective when they are implemented at an early stage.

In Austria, we are particularly concerned with the protection of vulnerable groups, such as children and young people. We have launched a number of successful projects in the area of harm reduction and the prevention of the transmission of HIV or hepatitis C.

In conclusion, let me underline our excellent cooperation with the UNODC, our full commitment to supporting the fulfilment of its mandate and thank Executive Director Ghada Waly for her leadership in these challenging times.