



REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

COUNTRY STATEMENT BY
THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS TO UN
AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANISATIONS IN VIENNA,
H.E. MS. ELENA RAFTI

AT THE
64th SESSION OF THE COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS

VIENNA

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Distinguished Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honor to be with you today, even in virtual form, and to speak on behalf of the Republic of Cyprus.

Allow me first to express my Delegation's appreciation to you Madam Chair and to the Secretariat of the UNODC for all your effort and work in order to make this meeting possible under the difficult circumstances caused by the COVID19 pandemic.

The Republic of Cyprus fully aligns with the statement of the European Union, but I would like to add some remarks in a national capacity.

The COVID 19 pandemic has impacted all of our societies, affecting many aspects of our lives, health certainly but also social and economic aspects, and unfortunately exacerbating an already worrying drug situation. In this regard, we welcome the analysis of the INCB 2020 Annual Report on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on access to medicines, the availability of preventive and treatments services, as well as on the illicit drug markets. The Statement adopted today on the impact of the COVID19 pandemic presents a significant tool in our joint efforts to address and counter all aspects of the world drug problem.

The Republic of Cyprus values the role of the CND and UNODC as leading entities for addressing and countering the world drug problem. Cyprus reaffirms its commitment to implementing the Recommendations of the UNGASS Outcome Document in order to obtain concrete measurable progress by 2030. We strongly believe that efforts should be invested in all areas of drug policy, as well as in providing adequate, proportionate and effective responses to drug related offences, in full respect of the UN Drug Conventions and Protocols.

Madam Chair,
Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen,

Cyprus pursues an evidenced-based approach on drugs policy with a main focus on the individual, without neglecting the protection of the society as a whole, encompassing both supply and demand-reduction measures and measures aiming to mitigate the harmful impact of the use of drugs.

Within this framework Cyprus' National Strategy for Addressing Addictions for the period 2021-2028, fully compliant with the respect of human rights and the fundamental principles of human dignity, equality and non-discrimination, focuses on the following main priorities:

- Protecting children and young people from any form of addiction.
- Establishing and implementing early intervention programs and enabling access to treatment and other support services.
- Emphasizing the needs of specific vulnerable groups, and incorporating a gender perspective in policies
- Reducing the stigma surrounding people with a history of addiction and their families.
- Enhancing international cooperation for addressing the phenomenon.

Furthermore, legislation recently adopted provides for the referral to treatment rather than sentencing of drug users and drug dependent individuals as young, first-time offenders are referred to treatment centres as an alternative to prosecution. Residential treatment centres for adolescents have been established providing care for minors who face addiction problems, in an in-house context.

Madam Chair,

To conclude, I would like to reiterate Cyprus' support to the crucial work of the INCB, and of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in addressing drug challenges and facilitating joint efforts to achieve feasible and sustainable policies to address the world drug phenomenon, for the benefit of all those people who struggle with drug dependency, as well as for our societies as a whole.

Thank you.