



National Statement of the Federal Government Drug Commissioner Ms. Daniela Ludwig,

MP

Madam Chair,

Madam Executive Director,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Sixty years of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 50 years of the Convention on Psychotropic Substances, and five years of UNGASS 2016, with its ground-breaking outcome document. In themselves, these would be three good reasons to take an optimistic view of the future.

However, the current situation gives only slight reason for optimism. Illicit drug production and trafficking have reached alarming peaks! Globally, the number of drug deaths is at an unacceptably high level. In many places, the situation of small-scale farmers in drug-growing areas has deteriorated. And the COVID-19 pandemic has only made matters worse. It is precisely those who are already vulnerable, those who are living with addiction, who have been hit full force. Oftentimes, they have no access to the healthcare system! And they have scarcely any means of protecting themselves from infection.

While supply reduction and law enforcement are major pillars of drug control policy, they will not be able to solve the global drug problem on their own. They must be supplemented by another pillar – health policy. We must recognise that drug dependence is a disease! And people suffering from a disease need counselling, care and harm reduction measures! This not only benefits those living with addiction and their relatives. It also benefits society as a whole. If we want to see a reduction in illicit drug use, we must address the reasons that cause people to turn to drugs and invest in efficient prevention measures!

This is why I am delighted that, in late 2020, the European Union adopted a new EU Drugs Strategy for the next five years. It embodies precisely this wisely chosen mix of supply reduction, law enforcement and health policy. In addition, it includes the important element of international cooperation, including alternative development.

Let us continue to collaborate with one another in this spirit. For a strong international drug control regime and for the most vulnerable in our societies!

Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

(335 Wörter)