



# *Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri*

**DIPARTIMENTO PER LE POLITICHE ANTIDROGA**

Honorable Chair, distinguished Delegates

Italy fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union and I wish to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

The Italian Prime Minister recently appointed Mrs. Fabiana Dadone Minister for Youth with the mandate of coordinating drug and addiction policies related to young people across all national institutions.

Today I am here on behalf of the Minister and, in my role of Head of the Department for Antidrug Policies, I wish to bring her best regards to the honorable chair and distinguished delegates of this assembly.

It is an honor for me to have the floor, at this prestigious international event, even if the circumstances do not allow us to gather in person in Vienna.

Given the stress and isolation caused by the pandemic, youth are more vulnerable to addiction than ever before, necessitating new policies and interventions.

Thus, we welcome current efforts to respond to illicit sale and purchase of drugs via the Internet, -especially new psychoactive substances- and I want to stress once again the importance of developing prevention strategies for youth focusing especially on families and schools.

The mandate of the office of Mrs. Minister Fabiana Dadone is not limited to substance addiction, but includes all the forms of addiction that affect youth, such as behavioral addictions. A comprehensive strategy is key. As we develop a national Action Plan for addiction based on the European Action Plan, we will involve both central and local institutions, as well as civil society organizations and the scientific community.

It is also our ambition to strengthen international collaboration: not only in the framework of the European Union institutions, but also at a wider international level. In fact, our belief is that the only possible way to achieve significant results is through a common, synergic effort.

Our policies are based on an integrated, synergic approach: they must not only focus on drug supply but also reduce demand. These two complementary elements are part of the same approach and are supposed to go hand in hand.

Demand reduction, to be effective, must be social health-centered and cover all the aspects of the phenomenon of addiction. Thus, a comprehensive approach should be founded on effective



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and efficient evidence-based prevention programs and best practices. It must be provided access without discrimination to prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and recovery, and risk and harm reduction services.

Chair,

Please allow me to take this opportunity to express our gratitude to all the social and healthcare professionals involved in the treatment of addiction in both the public and private sector. The spread of SARS-COV-2 has brought suffering and has taken a dire toll in terms of human lives. That said, these diligent professionals has continued to work in support of others, in hospitals and healthcare facilities, including addiction treatment services, that have stayed open during this pandemic.

Stress, isolation, and the disruption of social connections are all factors that can lead to the problematic use of drugs and alcohol, as well as to behavioral addictions. Access to treatment is crucial, now more than ever. We will continue to support those who are suffering and we must continue to guarantee health to our citizens without discrimination.

Thank you