

STATEMENT
by
H.E. Mr. Arunas Dulkys
Minister of Health of the Republic of Lithuania

on the occasion
of the 64th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs
Vienna, 12 April 2021

Madam Chairperson,
Excellences, Distinguished delegates,

I would like to thank the UNODC Secretariat for their tremendous efforts to make this CND session possible, especially during this difficult pandemic situation we all face today.

While fully aligning with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union and its Member States, I would like to share a few reflections from our national perspective.

Five years passed since the United Nations General Assembly unanimously adopted the outcome document of its special session on drugs in 2016. It was a significant turning point in international drug policy when all of us agreed on the direction of a comprehensive, balanced and evidenced-based drug policy that must be implemented and further developed in full respect of human rights. In this context, Lithuania strongly supports the abolition of death penalty.

Within the framework of international treaties and taking the UNGASS outcome document as a roadmap, Lithuania has developed a comprehensive and horizontal policy that encompasses drugs, alcohol, and tobacco use disorders. Our national Strategy was launched in 2018 and it reflects a vital change in the way we perceive substance use disorders. It promotes a health-based approach to the use of psychoactive substances and provides a commitment to help people protect or recover their health, well-being and the quality of life. This long-term document is a result of intersectoral cooperation and is based on the evaluation of external experts.

In line with the UNGASS outcome document and the prevention quality standards, Lithuania is developing an **evidence-based prevention** that focuses on the contextual, environmental, and varied needs of target groups. **An early intervention programme** with a special attention to vulnerable groups is applied nationally. Implementation of a **take-home naloxone programme** resulted in decrease of drug-related deaths by 55 % since 2015. Legal barriers to **access cannabis-based medicines** were eliminated. We developed **pro-active monitoring tools for drug precursors** and designer precursors. Our generic approach and decisions on **rapid response to NPS threats** resulted in a low level of its supply and demand.

Despite the progress made, significant challenges are lying ahead, especially in view of the COVID-19 situation. We are determined to work together with all Member States and other relevant stakeholders respectfully and openly to ensure a better and dignified life for all. Therefore, Lithuania has recently applied for a CND membership for the term 2022-2025 and we would very much appreciate your kind support in the upcoming elections.

Thank you!