

**Opening session at the 65th Session of the Commission on Narcotics
Drugs**

Vienna, March 14th 2022

**Norwegian statement by Minister of Health and Care Services,
Ms Ingvild Kjerkhol**

Thank you Chairperson,

Executive Director, Excellencies, representatives of Civil Society, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Firstly, let me welcome you, Ambassador, as Chair of the sixty fifth session of the CND. I can assure you of Norway's full support.

Chairperson,

- Norway condemns Russia's attack against Ukraine in the strongest possible terms. The Russian aggression is a clear violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.
- Norway is aligned with all EU sanctions against Russia.

Distinguished delegates,

Drug related problems have massive consequences for individuals and society. It is our common concern and responsibility to address this in a renewed manner and our main policies are;

- Prevention and health promotion must take place in all areas of society.
- Drug users have the right to a dignified life and to the necessary health care, regardless of substance.

- We need a change in the current drug policy. People suffering from substance use disorder should be met with help and treatment instead of criminal reactions.

Prevention, saving lives and securing dignity must be the number one priority. This calls upon a public health approach as the preferred framework. At the same time, we oppose to legalize cannabis and a general decriminalization of illicit drugs.

To conclude, Norway will strongly promote;

- prevention and public health,
- full respect of human rights, liberty, democracy, equality and solidarity,
- substantive support for the SDGs,
- proportionality of sentencing for drug offences,
- abolition of death penalty for drug related crimes,
- ending of practices which are not in line with the rule of law and the principles of human rights,
- removing stigma,
- respectful inclusion and participation of civil society,
- close cooperation with all relevant UN agencies,
- availability to controlled medicines.

I thank you.