



**Permanent Mission of the Republic of  
Poland  
to the United Nations Office and  
the International Organizations in Vienna**

Poland' Statements  
65<sup>th</sup> session of the of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, 14.03.2022

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Poland fully shares the position presented on behalf of the European Union. However, we wish to highlight two issues:

1. Our objection and denunciation for the war waged by Russia against Ukraine. This open, unprovoked and unjustified aggression is causing immense suffering and death of innocent people. It violates basic human rights, breaks all norms of the international law, including the United Nations Charter, and must be immediately stopped. We condemn it in the strongest possible term.
2. We also wish to emphasise our deep attachment to the development of social life and all our lives based on the respect for human rights and human dignity, rule of law and fundamental primacy of protecting human lives. We therefore consistently continue to oppose punishments for drug-related crimes handed out disproportionately to their gravity, and under no circumstances should death penalty be imposed in such cases.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Recent two years have been dominated by the COVID-19 pandemic. It has resulted in deaths of hundreds of thousands of people and universal deterioration of health as well as socioeconomic status of many societies.

The economic crisis, impoverishment, unemployment, loss of sense of security, social isolation and ensuing limitations of educational and developmental opportunities (especially in children and adolescents) are exacerbating mental health while contributing to the harm being caused by alcohol and drugs.

In our view, it is necessary to see the addiction policy in a broadly understood context of healthcare, with particular emphasis placed on the mental conditions of children and adolescents.

The holistic approach to addiction understood as a complex health, social and legal problem should, in our opinion, become the object of intensified response of all stakeholders engaged in health and social policy.

In Poland, the proof of such an approach is the integration, as of 1 January this year, in a single governmental body - the National Centre for Prevention of Addictions, of all actions concerned with alcohol, drug and behavioural addictions.

The pandemic is not only the time irrevocably lost.

The pandemic necessitated the development and application of new innovative forms of work and response to the problem of addiction, primarily those which make it possible to effectively implement programmes of prevention, support and therapy by means of electronic media. We should all share such experience.

At the same time, we wish to stress that many of the known and implemented solutions have proved effective. We especially want to appreciate the role of non-governmental organizations in battling the effects of the pandemic. Agencies representing civil society have frequently been on the frontline of harm reduction and outreach initiatives for marginalized groups. They were also the last to draw the attention of the public healthcare and security institutions. We therefore believe that NGOs should be permanent feature of actions taken for the benefit of individuals affected by addictions. They should be provided with access to financial support from governments and international organizations, especially in the countries with a limited state support capacity.

How should we act? Regional and global partnerships must be strengthened and developed. We should share our experience and counteract both familiar drug challenges as well as new threats posed by the pandemic, economic and security crisis. It is now of urgent importance that we help refugees from Ukraine escaping the Russian aggression, including those with drug use disorder. In Poland, by the decision of the government, all such individuals have been provided with healthcare enjoyed by the Polish citizens and drug-dependent individuals are already receiving care e.g. under substitution treatment programmes.

We believe that the future of drug policy is the implementation of conclusions and recommendations defined in the UNGASS 2016 outcome document.

But, while not losing sight of goals for the future, we must take urgent action to protect lives, health and security of all of us.