

**STATEMENT BY AUSTRIA**

**General Debate of the 65th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs**

**delivered by**

**Ambassador Gabriela Sellner  
Permanent Representative of Austria to the United Nations (Vienna)**

Austria fully aligns herself with the Statement made by the EU and would like to add the following comments in her national capacity.

Excellencies, dear colleagues,

I congratulate you, Mr. Chair and the other bureau members upon your election and assure you of our full support. Let me thank you and the Secretariat for your efforts to ensure inclusive and lively discussions, despite the necessary limitations of in-person contacts due to the health situation.

Austria stands in full solidarity and support with Ukraine, the Ukrainian government and the Ukrainian people. We condemn in the strongest possible terms the unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine by the Russian Federation. This is a flagrant violation of the UN Charter and international law and a matter for the entire international community. We demand that Russia immediately cease its military actions, withdraw all its troops from the entire territory of Ukraine and fully respect Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence within its internationally recognised borders.

The considerable impact the Covid-19 pandemic has already had on world drug trends is astounding. Austria is concerned to learn from the 2021 World Drug Report that some worrying drug trafficking dynamics have accelerated during the pandemic, such as larger shipment sizes and increases in contactless methods of delivery. The expansion of the global synthetic drugs market, further increasing the number of drug-related deaths worldwide, is another phenomenon that is deeply concerning. For Austria, there is no doubt that enhancing international cooperation is key to addressing these evolving challenges.

The available evidence shows, however, that the pandemic has also triggered positive developments in the area of drug prevention and treatment services. Prevention and the protection of vulnerable and marginalized groups are long-standing priorities for Austria. These issues will become even more important as the long-term social and economic consequences of Covid-19 will start to be felt across all regions of the world.

Austria remains committed to the view that addiction cannot be reduced to a criminal matter. Addiction is a chronic illness that has consequences for those directly affected, their immediate environment and society as a whole. Effective addiction prevention policies and treatment services must therefore also take into account the medical, health, economic and social dimensions of the issue.

In conclusion, let me stress our appreciation for the excellent cooperation with UNODC and thank Executive Director Ghada Waly for her efforts in promoting the important work of the CND and the contribution it makes to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals and other UN-wide processes, such as the Secretary General's "Our Common Agenda".