

Mr Chair, Excellencies, dear Colleagues,

Allow me first to congratulate you Ambassador D'hoop on your election as Chair of the 65<sup>th</sup> session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. I am certain that under your leadership and guidance we can all advance the work of the Commission in an inclusive and constructive spirit.

Ladies and gentlemen, Greece aligns itself fully with the statement of the EU. I would also like to add a few remarks in my national capacity. **Regrettably, though I will start by addressing the situation in Ukraine. Greece unequivocally stands in solidarity with the people of Ukraine as they face Russian aggression. As others have expressed before us, we consider that the military invasion undertaken by Russia constitutes a flagrant violation of international law and of the UN Charter.**

Coming back to our work in the CND, I would like to express our appreciation for the thematic discussions conducted last November and we fully support the ongoing work of the Commission on addressing the issues of

- 1) links between drugtrafficking, corruption and other forms of organized crime,
- 2) appropriate management of confiscated proceeds of crime related to moneylaundering arising from drug trafficking,
- 3) increasing level of the criminal misuse of information technologies for illicit drug-related activities.

We are looking forward to having similar fruitful discussions this year in accordance with the multiyear plan following up on the 2019 Ministerial Declaration.

Greece would like also to highlight the importance of focused work on addressing stigma experienced by the people of using drugs during and post the pandemic as far as access to health, accommodation, and employment. These people remain and even become more vulnerable to be further marginalized and stigmatized following extensive periods of social struggle such as that of the pandemic and associated social and political measures to control it.

Furthermore, and given the importance of evidence-based practice and policy, Greece would like to emphasise the importance of a systematic evaluation of innovations necessitated during the last two years of the COVID-19 pandemic at all levels, meaning international, national and local level both regarding policy and practice.