

**Statement by the Federal Government's Drug and Addiction
Commissioner at the 65th session of the Commission on Narcotic
Drugs
DRAFT**

Madam Chair,

Madam Executive Director,

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

For a few months now, Germany has had a new Government,
and this new Commissioner for Drug and Addiction Policy.

My name is Burkhard Blienert.

It is a pleasure for me to be speaking to you today for the first time.

Germany stands for a multilateral, rules-based foreign policy.

Talking with one another as equals, having reciprocal constructive exchange, cultivating reliable partnerships – these are the values that will continue to determine our actions in the future.

The situation in Ukraine is a brutal demonstration of how important it is for law and reliable partnership, instead of violence and despotism, to govern our dealings with one another.

We condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia's military aggression against Ukraine, which grossly violates international law and the UN Charter, and undermines international security and stability. We express our solidarity with Ukraine

This is why I also wish to unequivocally demand:

President Putin, stop this murderous war of aggression against Ukraine!

Stop the senseless killing!

The new Federal Government was elected, not least for its commitment to consistently base its future foreign policy on the fundamental values and principles that guide our life together.

This also applies to the topics we are dealing with here in Vienna.

- Everything we do in drug policy, too, must be in line with human rights.
- Criminal prosecution must always stay within the bounds of proportionality. This rules out every and any form of death penalty. The death penalty can never be justified; and this also goes for drug-related offences!

- In addition, law enforcement measures can only be successful if they are complemented by a broad spectrum of evidence-based demand-reduction measures.

We want to make a difference – also and particularly in addiction and drug policy.

We want to strengthen prevention in Germany. Prevention must begin in the families, at kindergartens and schools, and continue at the workplace and even in homes for the elderly.

We want to become even better at treating drug addiction and its causes.

And we want to expand the protection of and assistance to those affected. Keyword: Harm Reduction.

Indeed, if there is one thing that science and practice have taught us, it is that many deaths can be avoided.

And in many cases, harm reduction is the first step on the stony path to a better and, ideally, even addiction-free life.

Syringe exchange programmes, drug consumption rooms, HIV and hepatitis treatment – all of these serve to mitigate the destructive cycle of addiction and hopefully overcome it completely.

Substitution treatment is THE step away from the streets.

Naloxon helps to save lives.

Drug checking reduces the risk of overdosing and guides affected persons towards drug counselling.

On the topic of cannabis, we also want to open a new chapter. Here, too, our aim is harm reduction!

In the coming days here in Vienna, we want to discuss new approaches to law enforcement, prevention, counselling, treatment and harm reduction.

Germany continues to advocate a balanced approach,

which includes showing smallholder farmers legal alternatives to growing drugs.

This is decisive in tackling the root causes of what is in fact a global drug problem, from all angles.

This year's resolution on alternative development in Thailand and Peru describes problems of environmental destruction caused by drug cultivation and production. I highly urge you to give it your support.

(Pause)

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The only way we can manage the global challenges we face in drug and addiction policy is by addressing them together. Let us discuss the appropriate ways in which to do so, openly, directly and with understanding for one another.

I am looking forward to our discussions and thank you all for your attention!