

**2022 thematic discussions and first intersessional meeting of the 65th session of the  
Commission on Narcotic Drugs  
Vienna, 21-22 September 2022**

**Statement by Austria  
Ambassador Gabriela Sellner**

Mr Chair,  
Excellencies,  
Dear colleagues,

Austria fully aligns herself with the Statement made by the EU and its Member States, including on Russia's unprovoked, unjustifiable and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine and would like to add the following:

We welcome this meeting and express our gratitude to you Chair and through you to the Secretariat for preparation and organization of this meeting.

Let me also stress our appreciation for the excellent cooperation with UNODC and thank Executive Director Ghada Waly for successfully promoting the important work of the CND and the contribution it makes in particular to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals or other UN-wide processes, such as the Secretary General's Report on "Our Common Agenda".

We would also like to take this opportunity to commend the inclusion of relevant UN bodies in this meeting.

In a constantly evolving drugs market, reducing drug use and demand as well as drug supply require an adequate and effective response through coordinated actions at international level. The increasing number of drug-related deaths worldwide, the gender treatment gap regarding people who use drugs or the connection between illicit drug economies weakening rule of law and human rights standards, are only some of the concerning trends

related to the drug market and included in the World Drug Report of 2022. This calls for joint actions and international cooperation and Austria is fully committed to strengthening efforts to counter the world drug problem together with other member states on the multilateral level.

Moreover, we also need to keep in mind the multifaceted nature of the world drug problem, involving health, security, social, economic and human rights aspects. Therefore, an effective response needs to be equally holistic. Austria firmly believes that addiction cannot be reduced to a criminal matter. In Austria, we strictly distinguish between drug consumption and drug-related crime. Drug addiction is considered an illness that is addressed through medical and social interventions, whereas drug-related crime (e.g. drug trafficking) is addressed through repressive measures.

Austria is strongly committed to a human rights based approach to drug control. It is of great importance that the drug control conventions are implemented in a manner consistent with international human rights standards. We underline at the same time that compliance with the drug control conventions can lead to the direct and positive fulfilment of human rights standards. In this regard, we reiterate our strong support for the 2016 UNGASS Outcome Document with a human rights-centred approach. We also support the proposal made by Switzerland to include a chapter on human rights in the upcoming World Drug Report.

I thank you, Mr Chair.