



European Union

EU Statement on

Agenda item 5(c): International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)

**66th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime**

Vienna, 13-17 March 2023

Distinguished Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. The following countries align themselves with this statement: North Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia*, Albania*, Ukraine*, the Republic of Moldova*, Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Georgia, Iceland[†], Norway[†], Armenia, Andorra and San Marino.

The EU and its Member States would like to express their support to the INCB and to emphasise its important role in supporting Governments in relation to the three international drug control conventions. The EU and its Member States are committed to the effective implementation of these conventions.

Mr Chair,

As recognised in the INCB Annual Report 2022 [para. 944, Rec. 2], there is an integral relationship between drug control and human rights. This is clear from the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, which is based on the concern for health and welfare of mankind. Therefore, we strongly support the INCB's increased focus on a health, including mental health, and human rights-based approach as well as the unequivocal opposition to the death penalty [para. 945, Rec. 3].

In this regard, the EU and its Member States welcome the statement by the INCB President on the occasion of Human Rights Day on 10 December, highlighting the concurrent application of obligations concerning drug control as well as human rights and recalling the importance of the right to health in the context of drug policies.

Mr Chair,

The EU and its Member States also welcome the comments made by the INCB President on Universal Health Coverage Day on 12 December, reiterating the need for

* Candidate Countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, as well as potential Candidate Country Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

[†] Iceland and Norway are members of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

Governments to ensure the availability of internationally controlled medicines and evidence-based prevention, risk reduction and treatment services, including during emergency situations.

We would also like to positively note INCB's activities reminding Member States that in acute emergencies it is possible to utilise simplified control procedures for the export, transportation, and provision of medicinal products containing controlled substances, which is of vital importance. Concrete examples include the humanitarian needs in Ukraine and the devastating floods in Pakistan and the facilitation of the timely supply of controlled substances during these emergency situations.

We also value the work of INCB Learning to enhance the ability of Governments to ensure the adequate access to and availability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances required for medical and scientific purposes. Therefore, we would like to invite Member States to continue supporting INCB Learning for the maintenance of this programme.

Furthermore, the INCB initiative on digitalisation of trade and on the Use, Modalities and Constraints of Electronic Authorizations for Internationally Controlled Substances has been important.¹

The update of the Information Package on the Control of Precursors and the launch of PEN Online light will help to better tackle the challenges posed by non-scheduled precursors.

Finally, we look forward to pursuing the INCB initiative to formulate common standards for the reporting and monitoring of cannabis and cannabis-related substances for medical and scientific purposes.

Mr Chair

To conclude, we would like to assure the INCB of the continued support by the EU and its Member States and of our commitment to further fruitful and effective cooperation.

Thank you very much.

¹ In light of the EU's exclusive competence in the field of precursors, the part below is inserted after the agreement on the text by the CUG