



European Union

Statement on the occasion of the Intersessional Meeting of the 58th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs Vienna, 15 October 2015

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States¹. The following countries align themselves with this statement: the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland⁺, Serbia*, Albania*, Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Norway⁺, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Andorra and San Marino.

The European Union and its Member States would like to thank the UNGASS Board for providing the document containing the elements for the UNGASS outcome document, which reflects the major highlights of the ongoing drug policy discussions in preparation for UNGASS 2016.

We welcome that following principles have been included in the current preamble of the ‘Elements document’:

¹ The way the EU statements are delivered in this Commission is subject to ongoing clarifications in the context of the ECOSOC reform Resolution 68/1

* Candidate Countries former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and 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.

- The recognition that the three UN Drug Conventions, which provide the international legal framework for addressing the drugs phenomenon, are sufficiently flexible to accommodate a wide range of national and regional drug policies;
- The emphasis that the promotion of health and welfare are key objectives of the three UN Drug Conventions;
- The recognition that drug policies should be based on a balanced and integrated approach;
- A greater attention should be placed on women, children and young people.

We also welcome the fact that the following elements have been included in the main body of the document:

- The recognition that dependence is a multi-factorial health disorder that can be prevented and treated;
- The emphasis on the adequate access to and availability of controlled medicines and the importance of UN wide and interagency cooperation in these efforts;
- The promotion of alternatives to incarceration and coercive sanctions that are applicable to persons who have committed drug-related offences of a minor, non-violent nature;
- The focus on proportionate and consistent sentencing;
- The acknowledgement of the challenge posed by new psychoactive substances, supported by a number of operational recommendations.

While welcoming the inclusion of the following important principles, we would however like to see them reinforced in the text:

1. We would suggest outlining the **principle of evidence-base in the preamble of the document** to underline its cross-cutting character. The nature of this principle should be considered as cutting across all our actions, throughout the different pillars of drugs policy, including drug demand and drug supply reduction.

2. The document should provide guidance on how the **efforts to address the world drug problem could be incorporated in a clearer way in the work of relevant UN**

agencies, funds and programs. In the context of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, a holistic approach is required to address effectively this problem.

3. While giving a significant role to alternative development, the document should also stress that **alternative development should be in line with the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.**

4. **The document should also recognise the great importance of civil society and scientific community** in formulating, implementing, monitoring and evaluating drug policies at local, national and international levels, especially in the field of drug demand reduction.

Moreover, the EU and its Member States would like to point out three important principles and elements that are missing:

1. First, human rights, including the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health, are an integral part of the international response to the world drug problem, in line with the key objective of the UN drug control conventions to protect health and welfare of mankind. Therefore the UNGASS outcome document should put a greater **emphasis on the respect for human rights** when building and implementing drug policies.

2. Second, the EU and its Member States would like to recall their strong **opposition to the death penalty** in all circumstances, including for drug-related offences. We reiterate that the death penalty undermines human dignity, while failing to act as deterrent to criminal behaviour. Therefore the UNGASS outcome document should invite the Member States to consider abolishing the death penalty for drug-related offences.

3. Third, the EU and its Member States would like to recall that risk and harm reduction measures have proved effective in reducing the number of direct and indirect drug-related deaths, and notably blood-borne infectious diseases associated with drug use. Therefore the UNGASS outcome document should invite the Member

States to make sure that **access to risk and harm reduction measures are guaranteed and their coverage is widely increased.**

The EU and its Member States strongly believe that the reinforcement and the inclusion of the above-mentioned elements and principles in the UNGASS outcome document would further contribute to and improve the implementation of reinforced drug policies.

Mr. Chairman,

Besides, the CND 58/8 Resolution outlines that UNGASS shall consist of a general debate and interactive, multi-stakeholder round tables conducted in parallel to the plenary along 5 themes. Therefore the EU and its Member States would like to emphasise that the UNGASS outcome document should reflect and address all these 5 themes mentioned in the CND resolution.

The EU and its Member States reiterate their commitment to provide further inputs as regards the preparation process for UNGASS 2016.