



European Union

Statement on the occasion of the

Special segment on the preparations for the UNGA Special Session on the World Drug Problem to be held in Vienna on 3 December 2014

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. The following countries align themselves with this statement: the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Armenia.
2. We thank you for the **revised non-paper** circulated on 12 November 2014 and we welcome it as a good basis for continuing preparations for the UNGASS 2016. We also thank the **Secretariat** for the **Report** on the preparations for, the possible outcomes of, and organizational matters relating to the 2016 Special Session.
3. UNGASS 2016 will be a prominent platform and a very useful opportunity for the international community to take stock of the **achievements** to date and to elaborate **workable and operational solutions** to the world drug problem for the longer term, while addressing the immense **challenges** of the world drug problem with full respect of human rights. A successful outcome of UNGASS 2016 will provide solid input as a stepping stone towards the target date of **2019** and also beyond, notably in terms of the worldwide promotion of **human rights**.
4. We also believe that in 2016 UNGASS will be a first useful opportunity to assess the role of drug policies to achieve the **Sustainable Development Goals and targets** that the international community shall agree upon in September 2015.
5. The EU strongly believes that **UNGASS should not be a mere replica of the High Level Review of the 2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action** carried out in March 2014 under your able leadership. Of course, the 2014 Joint Ministerial Statement shall serve as a very important basis for the debate, but we should seize the opportunity to discuss within UNGASS 2016 also those **issues that, regrettably, have not been included in the 2014 Joint Ministerial Statement**. We appreciate the reference in your non paper on a discussion on “**what works and what does not**” at the national, regional and international level. Nevertheless, UNGASS is a review of the achievements made and challenges encountered in the implementation of the Political Declaration, and this should remain the key priority.
6. We reject the argument that Member States should refrain from discussing, within UNGASS 2016, issues that were not included in the 2014 Joint Ministerial Statement.
7. A priority from the EU perspective is the abolition of the **death penalty in all circumstances**, including for drug-related crimes and, in the wider framework, the promotion of effective **drugs policies based on respect for human dignity, liberty, democracy, equality, solidarity, the rule of law and human rights**.

8. We would like to share some **specific comments** on your proposals contained in the revised **non-paper**, in particular with regards to the proposed draft provisional agenda for UNGASS 2016. We consider that **human rights** as well as the **involvement of the civil society** should be cross-cutting issues in all High Level Workshops. We welcome the inclusion of a **strong engagement of the NGOs** in the revised non-paper. The EU attaches a great importance to the role of civil society, including the **scientific community**, in the elaboration and effective implementation of drug policies. We also support the proposal of a formal civil society hearing during CND 2015 and a formal civil society hearing prior to UNGASS, the outcomes of which should contribute to the UNGASS processes, as well as the formation of a Civil Society Task Force.
9. We appreciate your efforts to guarantee an **inclusive preparatory process** leading to UNGASS 2016 and emphasise the need to ensure the most effective involvement of **all relevant UN agencies and bodies**, in particular dealing with public health, human rights, development and security both in the preparations for and during UNGASS 2016 itself.
10. As far as the draft agenda is concerned, we support your proposal to have a **three-day Special Session** and we appreciate the **replacement of the regional panels with a more general discussion** at the plenary session. We support your proposal to focus on achievements and challenges in addressing the world drug problem, in the framework of a more effective implementation of the **2009 Political Declaration and Plan of Action**.
11. We welcome the idea to organise **High Level Workshops** during the UNGASS 2016 in parallel to the high level general debate and the suggestion that these workshops should be interactive, including involvement of all stakeholder. We appreciate that the number of workshops has been reduced to **four** and we consider that this will make the debate more proactive and focused.
12. As regards **Workshop 1** on demand reduction and related issues “Drugs and Health”, we are convinced that this should be an opportunity to examine the **range of equally important and mutually reinforcing drug demand measures**, including targeted prevention, early detection and intervention, risk and harm reduction, treatment, rehabilitation, social reintegration and recovery. We believe that providing various options for treatment and social support for persons with drug use as well as risk and harm reduction measures, including prevention of overdoses and reduction of drug-related deaths, should be an essential element of drug policies at national, regional and international level. Therefore we would like to see the topic in Part 1 of the workshop reflecting the full range of drug demand reduction measures with the following broader name: **“Drugs and health: drugs demand and blood-borne disease reduction interventions”**. We would also like to express our appreciation on the inclusion of the subtopic on **“Availability of controlled substances for medical purposes”**.
13. As regards **Workshop 2** on “Supply reduction and related measures and on countering money laundering and promoting judicial cooperation”, we appreciate the inclusion of the subtopic on **new psychoactive substances** currently not under international control, as the spread of these substances is one of the main challenges from the perspective of the European Union. As regards the subtopic on precursors, we would like to recall that **precursors** control is not a new challenge *per se*. We would therefore suggest focussing in particular on precursors control related to non-scheduled chemicals and emerging precursors. As regards the subtopic on cybercrime, we would like to point out that this term encompasses broader issues than those falling under the remit of UNGASS and therefore the title of Part 2 should be replaced by a more specific and focused term or with the initial formulation, i.e. **“use of the internet”**.

14. We would also like to propose the inclusion of “**drug-related information exchange**” as an additional issue to be discussed under Part 1, on "Domestic, regional and cross-regional responses to drugs-related crime, including judicial cooperation in criminal matters". This would allow to examine the challenges occurring in the process of collection and exchange of data and information concerning drugs and more specifically mapping of the drug-related information sources, broader standardisation and comparativeness of the data and tools, competent institutions and data provision.
15. With regard to **Workshop 3**, we would like to recall our strong and unequivocal opposition to the **death penalty** in all circumstances as well as the importance of **proportionality of sentencing for drug-related offences** and alternatives to coercive sanctions for drug-using offenders. Therefore we ask that these issues are included under Part 1.
16. Under subtopic "**Drugs, youth, women, children and communities**" we would propose to include "**Risk Groups**", to reflect the whole spectrum of target groups requiring special attention in the context of drugs policy.
17. As regards **Workshop 4**, we welcome the inclusion of the subtopic on alternative development, which we appreciate as an important long term approach to tackle some of the root causes of illicit drug cultivation.
18. We believe that the **action-oriented recommendations** to be prepared by the CND and adopted at UNGASS 2016 should be **concrete** and **focused**, providing solid input as a stepping stone towards the target date of 2019 and beyond. We support your proposal to reflect in a **Chair’s summary** the salient points raised during each of the High-Level Workshops.
19. With regards to the omnibus resolution on drugs approved in the Third Committee on November 25, the European Union has consistently expressed its concern regarding the paragraph calling for the organization in New York of a High Level Event in 2015, in order not to duplicate the work assigned to the CND in the framework of its mandate within the UN system. We joined consensus for the adoption of the resolution on the understanding that this high level thematic debate will be organized within existing resources, that it will not require the adoption of a resolution on modalities and that any meeting should be organized with the active participation and involvement of the CND, as the lead preparatory body for UNGASS 2016. It is unfortunate that this paragraph on inclusiveness has been discussed in an exclusive manner.
20. We commend **Austria** and **Thailand** for having submitted a **draft decision on the preparations for the UNGASS 2016 and we look forward to finding a solution for the effective preparations for UNGASS**. The EU believes that the Bureau of the CND leading UNGASS preparations should be an Extended Bureau, including representatives from the Regional Groups.
21. Finally, we support the proposals put forward concerning the organization of work for the UNGASS Special Segment at the occasion of the **58th session of the CND, in March 2015**, that will be a crucial step to take further decisions in particular on the substantive matters of UNGASS 2016.
22. We conclude by reiterating our commitment to provide **further inputs** as regards the preparation process for the UNGASS 2016.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

