



European Union

**Statement on the occasion of
the 62nd Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs**

Vienna, 14-22 March 2019

Agenda Item 11: Follow-up to the Special Session of the UN General Assembly on the World Drug Problem held in 2016, including the seven thematic areas of the outcome document of the special session.

Distinguished Chair,

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*, Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Ukraine, Iceland+, the Republic of Moldova, Andorra, Armenia, Georgia and San Marino.

On the occasion of this 62nd session, it is timely to reaffirm the important outcome of the Special Session of the UN General Assembly on the World Drug Problem held in 2016. UNGASS reshaped and broadened the global policy on drug, through rebalancing the health side of the drugs problem, including prevention, treatment and harm reduction, focusing on vulnerable members of society, as well as on the link to the relevant Sustainable Development Goals. The Outcome Document insists also on Drug supply reduction, effective law enforcement, responses to drug-related crime, counter money laundering and promoting judicial cooperation. Therefore, the UNGASS Outcome Document is the most comprehensive policy agreement of the international community and a milestone in the discussions on international drug policy. The European Union and its Member States strongly support the concrete implementation of the UNGASS Outcome Document for a real balanced drug policy at international level, strengthening the prevention, public health and human rights dimension in order to accelerate our joint commitment to efficiently improve the world drug situation.

* Candidate Countries North 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 is a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area

The seven thematic areas laid down in the UNGASS Outcome Document respond to the need for an integrated, evidence-based and balanced approach to drug policy. The efforts of the international community up to 2030 need to be focused on their practical implementation through the broad number of operational recommendations contained therein. It is time to accelerate our joint commitment to effectively improve the world drug situation.

The UNGASS areas are reflected in the EU Drugs Strategy 2013 – 2020 and its accompanying Actions Plans, recognizing the need for an evidence-based, integrated and balanced approach to global drug policy.

To give but a few examples, the EU and its Member States deem it important to address drug demand reduction across its full spectrum: prevention, risk and harm reduction, treatment, and social integration and rehabilitation. The minimum quality standards set out by the EU in drug demand reduction address these areas. We promote the use of the internationally recognized standards on drug use prevention and treatment and support the CND's and UNODC efforts to expand their use.

The EU and its Member States stress the importance of the recommendations of the UNGASS Outcome Document on ensuring the availability of and access to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, as also enshrined in the UN drug conventions, while preventing their diversion. The EU Action Plan on Drugs 2017-2020 contains targeted measures tackling both aspects in a balanced manner.

On the supply side, the EU law enforcement agency EUROPOL, with the EU Member States and EU institutions, contribute to a measurable reduction of the availability of illicit drugs. They achieve these results by providing strategic and operational services to law enforcement authorities engaged in disrupting large scale drug trafficking, in dismantling Organised Crime Groups, in tracing criminal assets, in developing effective intelligence-led law enforcement and increasing intelligence sharing. With the implementation of the EU Policy Cycle for organised and serious international crime, law enforcement authorities have been successful in dismantling a number of Organised Crime Groups active across all crime areas, including drugs trafficking.

In the area of emerging threats, since 1997 the EU through its drugs Agency's Early Warning System, has developed the capacity to detect, identify and assess the associated risks, in order to respond rapidly and effectively to the emergence of new psychoactive substances, by applying control measures when necessary. Since November 2018, the EU's new legislation strengthens our existing processes: on the one side, by streamlining and accelerating data-collection and

assessment procedures, and on the other side, by introducing shorter deadlines to ban new psychoactive substances.

As regards human rights, the EU and its Member States strongly reiterate their commitment to respect, protect and promote human rights, fundamental freedoms and the inherent dignity of all individuals, as well as the principles of the rule of law in the development and implementation of drug policies. The adoption of Council conclusions in March 2018 on promoting the use of alternative or additional measures to coercive sanctions for drug policy offenders, is but one illustration of the importance attached by the EU to these values.

Furthermore, few days after the World Congress against the Death Penalty held in Brussels, the EU and its Member States would like to reiterate, once more, that the death penalty should be abolished globally, and we condemn the use of capital punishment in all circumstances and in all cases.

Finally, the EU and its Member States support the operational recommendations on strengthening international cooperation based on the principle of common and shared responsibility, and the operational recommendations on alternative development. Last December, the EU reaffirmed its political engagement and adopted Conclusions on "A new understanding of alternative development and related development-centred drug policy interventions – Contributing to the implementation of UNGASS 2016 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals".

To conclude, the EU and its Member States will continue to promote the implementation of the UNGASS Outcome Document for international drug policy. We commend the former and the current CND Chair, H.E. Ambassador Alicia Buenrostro Massieu and H.E. Ambassador Mirghani Abbaker Altayeb Bakhet, the CND Facilitator H.E. Ambassador Vivien Okeke and your respective teams, for your engagement and the organisation of a number of intersessional and informal meetings to discuss the implementation of the seven equally important thematic areas of the UNGASS Outcome Document and the preparation of the Ministerial Declaration.

We encourage the CND to continue monitoring the implementation of the recommendations contained in the Outcome Document, including through the organisation of subsequent intersessional meetings in the course of this year. We also encourage the UNODC to continue its work on the Annual Report Questionnaire to further reflect the implementation of the UNGASS operational recommendations in the annual World Drug Report.

Thank you, Distinguished Chair!
