

Brussels, 21 November 2024  
(OR. en)

15533/24

**CORDROGUE 118**  
**SAN 651**  
**RELEX 1419**

**NOTE**

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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
No. prev. doc.:	WK 11051/2024 REV 2
Subject:	EU Statement on the occasion of the 3rd intersessional meeting of the 67th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (Vienna, 12-14 November 2024) - Thematic session: "Other substantive matters"

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Delegations will find in the Annex the above-mentioned statement on behalf of the EU and its Member States at the 3rd intersessional meeting of the 67th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) (Vienna, 12-14 November 2024).

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**European Union**  
**Statement at the**  
**Thematic session 6: “Other substantive matters”**

**Third intersessional meeting**  
**of the 67th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)**  
**United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)**

**Vienna, 12-14 November 2024**

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: Türkiye, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Norway and San Marino.

First, let me thank Angela Me for her good introduction to subject, that provided some important context for the discussion; we would also like to thank UNODC for the briefing to member states on harm reduction that was held on Monday this week. This statement will be complemented by one by the USA on behalf of a large group of countries.

In response to the challenging global drug situation, the EU and its Member States are determined to continue promoting a balanced, multidisciplinary and human rights-based approach in drug policies. We undertake further measures in line with the EU Drugs Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2025 focusing on reducing drug demand and drug supply as well as on addressing drug-related harms. We believe that in the context of the record supply and demand of drugs and the emergence of new synthetic opioids, it is important to raise awareness about risk and harm reduction measures and promote their use. It is therefore a matter that merits the attention of this Commission.

In the EU, the increasing integration of the markets for new psychoactive substances and illicit drugs is creating new public health challenges, such as herbal cannabis mixed with synthetic cannabinoids, stimulants mixed with cathinones and ketamine or new synthetic opioids mixed with or sold as heroin. The European Drug Report 2024 shows that over 83 million adults in the EU have used illicit drugs, and more than 6 000 drug-related deaths were recorded in 2022. These figures highlight the need for a comprehensive approach that combines efforts to reduce demand and supply with risk and harm reduction measures, ensuring the protection of public health and the promotion of human rights.

Risk and harm reduction measures are among key measures to minimise the negative impacts of drug use on individuals and communities. Protecting both people who use drugs and society from the harms associated with drug use requires a comprehensive set of interventions. This framework should address different areas of potential harm and risk to achieve better health, well-being, and social outcomes over time. Harm reduction addresses the immediate health and social needs of people who suffer from dependence, mental health or other comorbidities related to drug use, especially vulnerable individuals and key populations experiencing problematic drug use. Programmes like needle and syringe exchanges, opioid agonist treatment, overdose prevention services and other innovative evidence-based interventions can be essential in saving lives, preventing the spread of infectious diseases, and providing for recovery and social reintegration with a gender approach.

We would also like to highlight the specific need for harm reduction activities aimed at addressing the harms caused by injection use, in particular preventing the transmission of Hepatitis C and HIV among other drug-related infectious diseases. This is particularly important given that liver diseases attributed to hepatitis C account for more than half the deaths attributed to the use of drugs. Also, the relative risk of acquiring HIV is 14 times higher for those who inject drugs than in the wider population globally, and about one in eight people who inject drugs were living with HIV in 2022.

Mr. Chair,

As we continue to face these challenges, the EU stresses the importance of enhancing international cooperation to promote risk and harm reduction measures globally as part of an integrated approach ranging from reducing supply and demand of illicit drugs to harm reduction measures, in order to build a stronger, more effective and comprehensive response to drug use. The growing support for harm reduction measures at the international level, shown by the recent CND resolution that for the first time explicitly recognises its importance, is a landmark achievement and represents a step towards a public-health approach to drugs.

Thank you.

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