Council of the European Union

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'I/A' ITEM NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 2)/Council
Subject:	COUNCIL DECISION on the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union in the sixty-eighth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on the scheduling of substances under the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, as amended by the 1972 Protocol, and the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971 - *Adoption*

Delegations will find in Annex a statement from the Czech Republic delegation on the Council decision on the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union in the sixty-eighth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on the scheduling of substances under the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, as amended by the 1972 Protocol, and the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971, to be included in the minutes of the corresponding Coreper and JHA Council meetings.

ANNEX

Statement of the Czech Republic

Proposal for a Council decision on the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union in the 68th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on the scheduling of substances

The Czech Republic believes in a strong and united voice represented by the European Union Member States contributing to a successful course and outcome of the 68th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. Nevertheless, the Czech Republic expresses its decision to abstain from voting on the Council decision on the position to be taken on behalf of the European Union in the 68th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on the scheduling of substances. This position is based on the ongoing discussion at national level and the new regulatory approach to new psychoactive substances and taking into account outstanding issues and formal uncertainties in the scheduling process as required by Article 2(4) of the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances in the Critical Review on HHC (i.e. incomplete information on risk of dependence, incidence of health and social problems and therapeutic potential). The abstention reflects the need for further assessment of HHC, its effects and potential impacts on public health and safety before a final decision on the scheduling is taken.

Following the strong and increasing scientific evidence, the Czech Republic is convinced that psychoactive substances should be regulated based on their level of harmfulness. For this reason, the Czech Republic is striving to fill the gap between extreme prohibition and criminalisation on the one hand and unregulated availability in the grey zone on the other by adopting a reasonable regulatory approach to psychoactive substances.

The Czech Republic remains committed to implementing an effective policy in accordance with the best available scientific evidence and international frameworks seeking the most effective solution to control the phenomenon of psychoactive substances.