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From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

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Subject: EU Statement on the occasion of the 68th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (Vienna, 10-14 March 2025)
- Agenda item 5(d): International cooperation to ensure the availability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical and scientific purposes while preventing their diversion

Delegations will find in the Annex the above-mentioned statement as expressed on behalf of the EU and its Member States at the 68th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) (Vienna, 10-14 March 2025).



European Union

Statement on agenda item 5(d): International cooperation to ensure the availability of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical and scientific purposes while preventing their diversion

68th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Vienna, 10-14 March 2025

Distinguished Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Republic of Moldova, San Marino, and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.

The EU and its Member States continue to underline the importance of ensuring **access to and availability of controlled substances** for medical and scientific purposes while preventing their diversion. That is why the EU tabled a **resolution** at last year's CND, so as to accelerate progress on access and availability, with particular attention for the needs of children. We continue to highlight the need for a comprehensive approach in ensuring access to and availability of controlled substances, which includes awareness-raising, education, training and capacity building as well as data collection. Last year's resolution called on Member States to address these and other barriers, such as those relating to legislation, regulatory and health-care systems, in order to increase the availability of and access to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes. We also recognise that **affordability** is one of the impediments for having adequate access to controlled medicines for many patients around the world.

As set out in the resolution, we believe in the importance of promoting the active engagement and **participation** of the scientific community, academia, non-governmental organisations, civil society, health-care professionals and community-led organisations in improving access to and availability of internationally controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes. They can contribute to raising awareness and improving the acceptance and understanding of the rational use of controlled substances for scientific and medical purposes, as well as to promoting non-stigmatising attitudes towards the rational use of controlled substances, including for children.

We would also like to underline the importance of the availability and accessibility of adequate and effective **treatment** for people with drug use disorders and mental health conditions, regardless of the point of entry into health and care systems, as well as risk and **harm reduction services**, and of ensuring effective coordination between services to reflect the complex needs of people who use drugs. Various efforts are required in this area, such as strengthening regulatory environment and health systems, ensuring quality control of psychotropic substances for medical purposes, providing the adequate regulatory environment on access and ensuring medical training of healthcare professionals.

EU Member States' efforts in the area of access and availability are in line with the **EU Drugs Strategy 2021-2025**, in which the EU commits itself to ensure access to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes, and strengthen treatment and care services. The EU Drugs Strategy also takes an evidence-based approach, and we would therefore like to underline the importance of research for scientific and medical purposes, including a gender perspective in clinical trials, diagnosis and treatments, in order to continue generating evidence-based practice in health care.

Last but not least, the EU and its Member States underscore their grave concern for those populations that do not have adequate access to essential controlled medicines in emergency situations caused by natural disasters and armed conflicts, including the Russian aggression against Ukraine.

Mr. Chair,

Despite all efforts and commitments, a significant imbalance globally in the access to and availability of controlled substances remains. This goes against the aim of the international drug control conventions to promote the health and welfare of humankind, and against human rights instruments referring to the right to health or medical care as a fundamental human right. We need to make further efforts and remain committed to reaching the right balance between preventing misuse and enabling adequate medical use.

Thank you.
