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Subject:	EU Statement on the occasion of the 69th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (Vienna, 9-13 March 2026) - Agenda item 3: General debate

Delegations will find in the Annex the above-mentioned statement as expressed on behalf of the EU and its Member States at the 69th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) (Vienna, 9-13 March 2026).



European Union

EU Statement on agenda item 3: General debate

69th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Vienna, 9-13 March 2026

Distinguished Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to be here and to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. Albania, Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Serbia, and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.

This year marks ten years since the 2016 UN General Assembly Special Session on the world drug problem and the adoption of its outcome document, the principles of which remain valid. That milestone serves as a reminder of both the progress achieved and the magnitude of the challenges that remain.

The drug phenomenon has become increasingly complex, dynamic and interconnected. In this context, multilateralism and international cooperation in the field of drugs through the central role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs as the principal United Nations body and of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is more important than ever.

The European Union and its Member States address the world drug situation through an evidence-based, integrated, balanced, multidisciplinary and human rights-centred approach based on international law, including international human rights law and in compliance with the three international drug control conventions.

This approach is reflected in the new EU Drugs Strategy which sets the EU priorities in five key areas 1) Preparedness against drug-related threats; 2) protecting public health; 3) improving security and protecting society; 4) addressing drug-related harm; and 5) building strong partnerships.

The Strategy places particular emphasis on improving preparedness and response to drug-related health, social and security challenges. It supports enhancing information exchange, strengthening forensic and investigative capacities, and deepening operational cooperation with partner countries, regions and organisations along major trafficking routes, in full respect of the rule of law and human rights.

At the same time, the EU Drugs Strategy places people and public health at the centre of drugs policy. The Strategy prioritises evidence-based prevention, early intervention, treatment, care, recovery, social reintegration and risk and harm reduction, with the aim of reducing health, social and environmental harm including drug-related deaths, drug-related violence and social exclusion. The Strategy promotes gender-responsive responses and improved access to services for vulnerable groups.

The Strategy reinforces the focus on strengthening security and reducing supply, protecting public health and reducing harms. Through coordinated, intelligence-led and internationally connected action, the EU focuses on improving security and protecting society. Drug trafficking presents a substantial and persistent threat to Europe's security. Over half of the most threatening criminal networks operating in the EU are involved in drug trafficking, exploiting global trade routes and digital technologies as well as the EU's position as a major transit hub. Organised crime destabilises society through violence, corruption and infiltration in the legal economy. An EU Action Plan Against Drug Trafficking, presented by the European Commission, aims to address these evolving challenges, enhancing the broader EU Drugs Strategy. Our goals in this area include dismantling organised criminal networks, disrupting trafficking routes and illicit financial flows, preventing criminal infiltration of key logistical hubs, and addressing emerging threats such as synthetic drugs and the diversion of precursors and we count on international support in these endeavours.

Mr Chair,

EU action in the field of drugs is firmly grounded in international law, in particular international drug control conventions, the Charter of the United Nations, and implemented in accordance with international human rights law. Respect for the Charter of the United Nations and for international law remains essential, particularly in times of ongoing conflicts and instability, which exacerbate vulnerabilities, fuel illicit economies and undermine health and security alike.

Drugs policies must uphold human rights, including the inviolable right to life, human dignity and the principle of proportionality. The EU and its Member States therefore strongly and unequivocally oppose the use of the death penalty in all cases under all circumstances, including for drug-related offences, and call for its universal abolition.

Mr Chair,

International cooperation remains indispensable. The EU renews its commitment to strengthen political and operational cooperation with partner countries and regions, to address the drug situation globally, as well as moving this issue further in international and multilateral fora to reach the sustainable development goals and key targets.

Resolution 68/6 provides for the establishment of a group of experts as an important contribution to the preparations for the 2029 Ministerial Conference. We will attach great importance to the quality and independence of this work and are proud to present highly qualified candidates for the panel from Belgium, Portugal, Latvia and Czechia for the upcoming elections. We would greatly appreciate support for their candidatures.

To conclude,

The European Union and its Member States remain fully committed to a balanced, integrated, and evidence-based response to the world drug situation — one that places health and security on equal footing, and is underpinned by human rights, innovation and international cooperation. We look forward to continuing this work together.

Thank you.
