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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 5(c): International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)

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 5(c):
International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)

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,

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

The European Union and its Member States reiterate their strong support to the International Narcotics Control Board and note its important role in assisting Governments in the implementation of the three international drug control conventions. We welcome the INCB Annual Report 2025 and its continued efforts to enhance the accessibility, clarity and policy relevance of its findings and recommendations.

We particularly welcome the continued focus of the INCB on the rapidly evolving synthetic drug market and the illicit manufacture of synthetic substances, which constitute a major threat to public health, security and social cohesion worldwide. The EU and its Member States attach great importance to the Board's forward-looking and evidence-based analysis of these developments, as well as to its practical guidance to support national and international responses.

At the same time, we take note with concern of the increasingly critical financial situation of the INCB which puts the implementation of INCB's mandate at risk. This is why EU Member States allocated general-purpose funding to the INCB last year. The EU and its Member States underline the importance of ensuring that the Board has adequate, stable and predictable resources to effectively fulfil its mandate while aiming to increase its efficiency and effectiveness in line with the UN80 Initiative.

We underline the importance of the INCB's strong and increasing emphasis on human rights fully in line with the EU Drugs Strategy and with the EU's human rights-based and balanced approach to drugs policy, giving equal importance to health, prevention, treatment, risk and harm reduction and social reintegration on the one hand, and to law enforcement and supply reduction on the other. We welcome the Board's continued engagement with Member States on the human rights dimensions of drug control, including with regard to the right to health, and in compliance with the international drug control conventions, access to care, harm reduction, right to security, proportionality of criminal justice responses, the needs of women and children, vulnerable populations, and non-discrimination.

In this context, we also reiterate our strong support for the INCB's clear opposition to the death penalty for drug-related offences. As reiterated during our statement in the general debate, the European Union and its Member States are unequivocally opposed to the use of the death penalty at all times and under all circumstances, including for drug-related offences, and we continue to call for its universal abolition.

The EU and its Member States appreciate the Board's sustained focus on improving access to and availability of internationally controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes. We welcome the INCB's capacity-building activities, tools and training initiatives aimed at supporting competent authorities in ensuring adequate availability of essential medicines while preventing their diversion and non-medical use. This remains a priority for the EU and its Member States, including in humanitarian and emergency settings and with regard to the needs of vulnerable populations, including children.

Concerning drug precursors, the European Union reiterates its support for the activities of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) in preventing the diversion of drug precursors and curtailing the trafficking of designer precursors. Their strategic approach, guided by Resolution 65/3, has provided the most effective framework to confront the challenges associated with designer precursors.

The proactive scheduling of esters of amphetamine-type stimulant precursors in 2024 was a remarkable success. It received unanimous support from all members at the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, demonstrating a shared commitment to tackling this issue. This initiative notably thwarted criminal efforts, leading them to take nearly two years to identify viable alternative designer precursors.

As we move forward, it is crucial that the INCB continues with this proactive strategy. By remaining alert to evolving trends and anticipating the potential threats, the INCB can take decisive action to schedule the designer precursors most likely to be exploited by criminal groups. This forward-looking approach is indispensable in our ongoing battle against drug-related criminality, ensuring that we remain one step ahead in safeguarding our communities against the harm posed by illicit drugs.

Mr Chair,

To conclude, the European Union and its Member States reaffirm their strong support for the International Narcotics Control Board and their commitment to continued close and constructive cooperation. We look forward to further strengthening our collaboration with the INCB, including through enhanced cooperation with the EU Drugs Agency and other relevant partners, in order to respond effectively to current and future challenges in the global drug situation.

Thank you very much.
