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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
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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(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 69th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) (Vienna, 9-13 March 2026).



European Union

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

**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, the United Kingdom, and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.

The European Union and its Member States reaffirm their strong commitment to ensuring the access and availability of internationally controlled narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances for medical and scientific purposes, while preventing their diversion into illicit channels and non-medical use.

We continue to underline that achieving this balance requires a comprehensive, evidence-based and health-centred approach, addressing the full range of existing barriers. These barriers include legislative and regulatory obstacles, lack of resources, weaknesses in health and supply systems, insufficient training of health-care professionals, limited data and monitoring capacities, lack of research for treatment approaches, as well as issues related to affordability, stigma and lack of awareness.

The EU attaches particular importance to strengthening national and regional capacities through international cooperation, including regulatory cooperation, technical assistance, data collection, coordinated efforts for research and innovation, and exchange of good practices. We believe that effective collaboration among governments, international organisations, health authorities, academia, civil society, community-led organisations and the private sector is essential to improve access while ensuring the safe, rational and appropriate use of controlled medicines.

In this context, we underline the central role of the INCB in supporting the implementation of the conventions and facilitating international cooperation. In line with the UN80 Initiative to increase efficiency and effectiveness, we underline the importance of strengthened inter-agency cooperation within the UN system, in particular between the INCB, the WHO and the UNODC, as well as with other relevant international and regional partners.

In this regard, the EU recalls the importance of the effective implementation of CND resolution 67/2 and remains committed to translating its commitments into concrete action as important challenges remain in its implementation, including regulatory complexity, limited institutional capacity, insufficient data, and fragile health and supply systems, particularly in resource-constrained and crisis-affected settings.

We also stress the importance of ensuring access and availability of adequate and effective treatment, care and support services for people with pain, mental health conditions and drug use disorders, including risk and harm reduction services, and of promoting integrated, people-centred and non-stigmatising health responses.

The EU continues to support research and innovation for medical and scientific purposes, including the generation of robust evidence on needs, consumption patterns and treatment outcomes. We underline the importance of inclusive research, including a gender perspective and age-appropriate approaches.

The EU and its Member States remain deeply concerned about persistent global inequities in access to essential controlled medicines, particularly in low and middle-income countries and in emergency contexts, including situations caused by natural disasters, humanitarian crises and armed conflicts. We stress the need to strengthen preparedness and resilience of health systems and supply chains.

Mr. Chair,

Despite progress made, significant gaps in access and availability remain worldwide. This situation runs counter to the objectives of the international drug control conventions to promote the health and welfare of humankind and to the fundamental right to the highest attainable standard of health.

We therefore call for renewed political commitment, enhanced international cooperation and sustained investment to achieve the right balance between ensuring access for legitimate medical and scientific purposes and preventing diversion and non-medical use.

Thank you.
