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Delegations will find in the Annex the above-mentioned statement as expressed on behalf of the EU and its Member States at the 65th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) (14-18 March 2022).



European Union

EU Statement on Agenda item 7

65th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND)

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

Vienna, 14-18 March 2022

Inter-agency cooperation and coordination of efforts in addressing and countering the world drug problem

Distinguished Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

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

Mr. Chair, Russia's unprovoked, unjustified and premeditated military aggression against Ukraine, in violation of the UN Charter and international humanitarian law, will obviously have serious consequences for the work of the CND, in particular on inter-agency cooperation and coordination in addressing and countering all aspects of the world drug situation, including the work of the UN Task Team and closer cooperation with other UN bodies, such as Geneva-based human rights bodies.

* Candidate Countries the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania as well as potential Candidate Country Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

⁺ Iceland and Norway are members of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

The EU demands that Russia immediately ceases its military actions, withdraws all its troops from the entire territory of Ukraine and fully respects Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence within its internationally recognised borders.

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated the value of multilateralism, of coordination of efforts and of interagency cooperation in overcoming common threats. This is combined with the trends identified in the World Drug Report 2021 pointing to the need to foster international cooperation.

International cooperation is a cross-cutting theme of the EU Drugs Strategy 2021-2025. The EU Drugs Action Plan, adopted last year, pursues the aims and objectives of the Strategy and underlines the importance of strengthening partnerships with UN Office on Drugs and Crime, World Health Organization, the International Narcotics Control Board and other relevant UN bodies, including in support of the UN System Common Position on Drugs. It also highlights the need to engage with the relevant international and regional bodies, organisations and initiatives, focusing on drug policies, health, human rights and development and in support of global evidence-based research and data collection. Linked to that, the EU is taking steps in order to clarify the responsibilities of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) in the area of international cooperation and to enable it to cooperate with international organisations, in line with the Union priorities.

Therefore, the EU and its Member States reaffirm the principal role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs as the policymaking body of the United Nations responsible for addressing the world drug situation, and of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime as the leading entity in the UN system in these matters, while also emphasising the need to strengthen cooperation with other United Nations entities, within their respective mandates, to further develop and benefit from synergies and cost-effectiveness of such cooperation with entities and organisations like the World Health Organization, the International Narcotics Control Board, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Human Rights Council as well as United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The EU Drugs Action Plan, which I just mentioned, also highlights the need to accelerate the implementation of joint multilateral commitments such as the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the outcome document of the 2016 United Nations General Assembly Special Session, and in the context of the mid-term review of the 2019 Ministerial Declaration of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in 2024.

The UNGASS 2016 Outcome Document remains the most comprehensive international drug policy document and incorporates broader human rights, health and development perspectives. It also underlines the importance of international and interagency cooperation by encouraging the UNODC and the INCB to strengthen cooperation with the WHO and other competent United Nations entities. This is part of a comprehensive, integrated and balanced approach to strengthening health and social welfare measures in addressing the multifaceted nature of world drug situation, including through effective prevention and harm reduction, early intervention, treatment, care, recovery, rehabilitation and social and occupational reintegration, in cooperation with civil society and the scientific community.

The UNODC-WHO Programme on Drug Dependence Treatment and Care, which last year celebrated a decade of delivering effective and humane treatment for people with drug use disorders, remains a welcome example of such cooperation, having supported Member States in their efforts to address the world drug situation through evidence-based and human rights-based prevention and treatment approaches and aiming to promote policies that strike the right balance between the reduction of drug supply and demand, and incorporate science-based drug prevention and dependence treatment.

The collaboration between UNODC and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) remains essential to bring human rights to the forefront of drug policy and to ensure that drug control efforts are effectively designed to protect people and thus promote the health and the welfare of humankind. In this area, the development of the International Guidelines on Human Rights and Drug Policy is a demonstration of an effective inter-agency collaboration.

As regards Alternative Development and development-oriented drug policies, for the EU and its Member States the commitment to such measures is one of the priority areas under the EU Drugs Strategy. Alternative Development contributes to addressing the root causes of illicit drug economies in the long term, and at the same time makes a clear contribution to meet the goals and indicators enshrined in the Sustainable Development Goals, especially in the field of poverty reduction, gender equality, food security, climate action, life on land and peace and justice. Coordination between UNODC and UNDP is crucial to give a coherent response to the challenge of illicit crops, while fostering security and development.

Distinguished Chair,

We believe that ensuring synergies and complementarity through inter-agency cooperation and coordination and thus engaging other United Nations bodies, including human rights bodies, in relevant drug policies issues is key to strengthening our action to accelerate the implementation of our joint commitments to address the world drug situation. Therefore, we welcome the fact that the Chair-rapporteur of the Working Group on Arbitrary Detention of the Human Rights Council is able to make a presentation under this agenda item, after having been prevented from doing so at the reconvened session of the CND last year.

To conclude, the EU and its Member States continue to strongly encourage the contributions of relevant United Nations entities, international financial institutions and relevant regional and international organisations, within their respective mandates, to the work of the CND, to strengthen international and inter-agency cooperation and to enhance coherence within the United Nations system at all levels with regard to the world drug situation.

Thank you for your attention.
