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NOTE

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	EU Statement on the occasion of the 64th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (Vienna, 12-16 April 2021) - 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 64th CND Session (12-16 April 2021).



European Union

**Statement on the occasion of
the 64th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs
Vienna, 12-16 April 2021**

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

Madam Chair, Distinguished Colleagues,

1. 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, Armenia, Georgia, Andorra and San Marino.
2. We welcome the INCB's 2020 Annual Report and the Report on precursors and chemicals frequently used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. We also thank the INCB for its special report summarising the achievements and challenges of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 and of the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971 to mark their 60th and 50th anniversaries respectively.

* 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.

3. The EU and its Member States are committed to the effective implementation of the three international drug control conventions. We welcome the broad consensus of the international community on these conventions and the relevant international human rights instruments as being the cornerstones of the international drug control system. We would like to highlight, once again, the integral relationship between drug control and human rights, as recognised in the UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) Outcome Document.

We welcome the statement by the INCB President to mark International Human Rights Day on 10 December 2020, which reminded us that the primary objective of the international drug control conventions is to safeguard the health and welfare of humankind, including respect for human rights.

4. The EU and its Member States strongly support the INCB in its categorical and unequivocal condemnation of extra-judicial responses to drug-related criminality, as well as to the death penalty. The death penalty violates the right to life and is incompatible with human dignity. The death penalty does not serve as a deterrence to crime and makes any miscarriage of justice irreversible. The EU Drugs Strategy 2021-2025 that was approved last December, and which sets out the political framework and priorities for the EU's drugs policy, reaffirms that judicial responses must be in line with the right to a fair trial and the principles of the rule of law. In accordance with the principle of proportionality, the international drug control conventions provide states with the possibility to apply alternative or additional measures of an appropriate nature with regard to conviction or punishment in drug-related cases.
5. We welcome the focus of the 2020 Annual Report on drug use among older persons. The situation of older people is also a concern in the EU, where drug overdose is increasingly associated with older long-term users. The EU Drugs Strategy recognises older people with a history of long-term drug use and dependence as a group with special needs, for whom targeted models of care should be implemented.

6. Moreover, the EU and its Member States welcome the analysis contained in the INCB Report of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on access to medicines, the availability of prevention and treatment services, and the illicit drug markets. It is, indeed, our assessment that the pandemic has confirmed the essential character of healthcare systems around the globe, particularly in terms of access to and availability of drug prevention and treatment services and risk and harm-reduction measures. The pandemic has also increased the urgency to ensure the availability of alternatives or additional measures to coercive sanctions for drug-related offences. We welcome that Governments have made efforts to adopt decongestion measures to limit the spread of COVID-19 among people deprived of their liberty.
7. We would also like to welcome the initiative launched by the INCB on the development of Guidelines on International Drug Control Requirements for the Cultivation, Manufacture and Utilization of Cannabis for Medical and Scientific Purposes.
8. Lastly, we would like to take this opportunity to assure the INCB of the continued commitment of the EU and its Member States to pursuing our productive cooperation.

Thank you very much!
