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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 6: Follow-up on the implementation at the national, regional and international levels of all commitments, as reflected in the Ministerial declaration of 2019, to address and counter the world drug problem

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 6: Follow-up on the implementation at the national, regional and international levels of all commitments, as reflected in the Ministerial Declaration of 2019, to address and counter the world drug problem

Distinguished Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It is an honour to participate in this meeting and 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. In these challenging and unprecedented times that we are living in, it is essential, more than ever before, to accelerate the implementation of the UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) Outcome Document "Our joint commitment to effectively addressing the world drug problem". It is the most comprehensive international drug policy document – a milestone – that best responds to the realities on the ground, especially in the areas of human rights, health, and development. The COVID-19 pandemic has reminded us how crucial the cross-cutting nature of the drug control objective is to the protection of the health and welfare of humankind.

* 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 support the multi-year workplan of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), including the holding of thematic discussions, as this will help us accelerate the implementation of our joint commitments to addressing the world drug situation.
4. The international community needs to step up its responses to cope with the challenges at stake. In this regard, it is key to further enhance the cooperation between the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and other relevant UN entities and regional and international organisations. The EU supports that the UN System Common Position on drug policy as well as its Task Team focus on stepping up efforts to ensure that no one is left behind, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Common Position inspires us to work together to implement comprehensive drug-related commitments. We should now make progress on the implementation of relevant parts of the Common Position and accelerate our efforts to ensure that no one is left behind.
5. The impact and some of the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic on the world drug situation may be long-lasting. That is why solid evidence on all aspects of the drug situation worldwide is critical to boost timely and proactive responses, to inform policy actions and to measure results. We have all made considerable efforts to meet this objective. In this regard, we welcome the strengthened and streamlined Annual Report Questionnaire, which now comprehensively captures the drugs phenomenon, and which the EU and its Member States have strongly supported and funded.
6. In this context, we would like to stress the importance of a strong engagement in capacity building in the coming months and years, helping countries and regions to improve and increase data collection, analysis, and dissemination.

7. Building on experience, the European Union and its Member States emphasise that drug policies based upon an integrated, balanced, evidence-based, and multidisciplinary approach prove to be the most effective for addressing the world drug situation. This approach is reaffirmed in the new EU Drugs Strategy 2021-2025, approved by the Council of the European Union in December 2020. The Strategy sets out the overarching political framework and priorities for the EU's drugs policy and its main objective is to ensure a high level of health protection, social stability and security, as well as to contribute to awareness raising. With the respect, promotion and protection of human rights at its core, the Strategy also incorporates gender equality and health equity perspectives.
8. At this 64th session of the CND, the EU and its Member States propose the adoption of a resolution that focuses on promoting quality, affordable, scientific evidence-based and comprehensive drug prevention and treatment services. With this resolution, we aim to emphasise the importance of ensuring that prevention and treatment provided to people who use drugs is of high quality and affordable, in order to further advance our efforts in addressing and countering the world drug situation in an effective and inclusive manner, that fully respects human rights and the inherent dignity of all persons.

Madam Chair,

9. The EU welcomes the fruitful discussions on the occasion of the presentation of the UNODC Strategy 2021-25 at the joint reconvened CND and Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ) session in December 2020. The EU and its Member States remain ready to work in close partnership with UNODC to put into practice the UN reforms in a way which preserves the unique contribution of UNODC to the worldwide promotion of the rule of law and the implementation of the SDGs.

10. As we know, the SDGs and our work on drug policies are complementary and mutually reinforcing. In line with SDG 3, the implementation of the UNGASS Outcome Document would of course strengthen the prevention and treatment of drug use. But it would also enable us to contribute to ending epidemics such as AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, to combat diseases such as hepatitis and water-borne diseases, to reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases, and to provide access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines. In line with SDG 16, the implementation of the UNGASS commitments would contribute to significantly reducing violence and related death rates, and to combatting organised crime. It is therefore key for us to keep the achievement of the relevant SDGs as an overarching consideration when advancing our work on drug policy.

11. To conclude, I would like to emphasise that the EU and its Member States will continue to contribute to our collective efforts at the national, regional and international levels to accelerate the implementation of our joint commitments to address the world drug situation, thus embracing an effective and sustainable drug policy towards 2030.

Thank you, Madam Chair.
