



European Union
Statement on the occasion of the
Intersessional Meeting of the 58th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs
Vienna,
8 December 2015

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson,
Executive Director, Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.¹
2. We support the decision of the CND to produce a short, substantive, concise and action-oriented document comprising a set of operational recommendations. We welcome the revised structure of the “revised elements document”, with five chapters based on the themes of the high-level round tables that will take place at UNGASS.
3. On this occasion the EU and its Member States would like to put forward the following operational recommendations.

On general principles:

4. We believe that drug policies should be built upon an integrated, balanced and evidence-based approach as well as upon a sound public health approach, based on scientific evidence and supported by reliable and objective monitoring systems and evaluation, in compliance with human rights recognized as such by international legal instruments. Therefore, we welcome the inclusion of the principle of evidence-base in the preamble of the revised Elements document.

¹ The way the EU statements are delivered in this Commission is subject to ongoing clarifications in the context of the ECOSOC reform Resolution 68/1.

On demand reduction and related issues:

5. The EU and its Member States are glad to see that a number of important issues have already been covered by the draft. Such issues are: increasing the availability, coverage and quality of evidence-based prevention strategies; ensuring non-discriminatory access to different demand reduction services, guaranteeing access to drug demand reduction services in prison and after release as well as adopting measures to reduce transmission of HIV and other blood-borne diseases related to drug use.
6. Stressing the importance of evidence-based drug policies, the EU and its Member States propose to include the following operational recommendations:
 - a) *Member States should ensure the implementation of international quality standards for demand reduction.*
 - b) *Strengthened cooperation between WHO, UNESCO and UNODC to provide guidance on prevention in community and school settings and request competent international organisations to develop a comprehensive strategy outlining a public health approach to drug policy.*
7. We strongly believe that the outcome document should outline the further operational recommendations as regards to **risk and harm reduction measures**. These operational recommendations could be formulated as follows:
 - a) *Member States should implement measures to ensure the availability and accessibility of risk and harm reduction measures in treatment and outreach services to be combined with health and social measures. The technical guidance issued by the World Health Organisation (WHO), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and UNAIDS is of particular relevance in this context.*
 - b) *Countries, including civil society as well as the scientific community in those countries, should be supported to develop and implement risk and harm reduction initiatives. In particular where there is a growing threat of transmission of drug-related blood-borne viruses associated with drug use including but not limited to HIV and viral hepatitis, as well as sexually transmittable diseases and tuberculosis.*
8. Also, the revised "elements document" includes an operational recommendation to "*provide support for the implementation of effective evidence-based drug treatment programmes*". In this context the EU and its Member States would like to emphasise that treatment should include both medical and non-medical options, be tailored to the individual needs of drug-

users and respond to new patterns of use. In this sense, given its evidence-based efficiency, the UNGASS Outcome Document should explicitly recommend increasing access to and availability of opioid substitution treatment.

9. The EU and its Member States welcome that the revised Elements document emphasizes the need to ensure the availability, associability, and affordability of controlled medicines for medical and scientific purposes, supported by a number of concrete operational recommendations.

On human rights:

10. The EU and its Member States are pleased to see that a number of important elements have been already included in operational recommendations on human rights, especially in the field of criminal justice. The examples of such operational recommendations are a call for the abolition of practices which are not in line with international law, a call for alternatives to incarceration to persons having committed minor, non-violent drug-related crimes and a call for applying proportionate sentencing of drug-related offences.
11. The outcome document should also include the following operational recommendations on human rights to further strengthen the link between drug policies and human rights:

a) Call upon Member States to ensure the consistency of their drug control policies with the rule of law and the human rights enshrined by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and relevant international human rights norms;

b) Call for continued attention to the human rights situation of the most affected communities by drug policies to be reflected in the annual reports of the Executive Director of the UNODC to the CND, as well as in the World Drug Report;

c) Call upon Member States to apply the principle of informed consent as the paramount principle of a drug-dependence treatment programme.

On emerging issues:

12. The EU and its Member States welcome that one of the major current issues - the proliferation of new psychoactive substances - is well reflected in draft operational recommendations. It covers different aspects of addressing this phenomenon, including developing tailored prevention and treatment policies and addressing sales on Internet.

On supply reduction and related measures:

13. The EU and its Member States appreciate that the draft operational recommendations on preventing drug-related crime, addressing new trafficking routes, promoting intelligence and information sharing, strengthening judicial cooperation, addressing links between drug trafficking, corruption and terrorism as well as on full implementation of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (UNTOC) and the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) have been included in the "elements document".
14. The EU underlines the importance of addressing precursors in the Outcome Document by adding the following text: "strengthen the prevention of diversion of precursors, pre-precursors and alternative precursors, including in the manufacture of ATS".
15. We would suggest to also include the following operational recommendations:
 - a) *Law enforcement should prioritize identifying, disrupting and dismantling transnational organized criminal groups involved in any illicit activities relating to drugs trafficking, including money laundering and corruption instead of focusing on drug users and minor, non-violent offences related to drug use and request Member States to intensify international cooperation and to strengthen cross-border management.*
 - b) *Member States should increase the availability and implementation of evidence-based and scientifically sound indicators on drug supply reduction.*

On alternative development:

16. The EU and its Member States appreciate the inclusion of draft operational recommendations on alternative development on addressing the root causes of illicit cultivation of drug crops, incorporating drug policies into the broader development area and establishing viable economic alternatives.
17. We consider that the UNGASS outcome document should also contain the following operational recommendations on alternative development:
 - a) *Coordination among UN agencies, including UNDP, on development programmes that target drug control and related issues should be increased in order to provide adequate funding for this purpose.*

- b) *Country national policies, strategies and action plans should incorporate integrated approaches to the problem of illicit drug's cultivation, and effectively organised alternative development initiatives.*
- c) *Meaningful participation of affected communities, including indigenous groups, should be ensured in the design and implementation of programmes and policies that affect them.*

On the role of civil society:

18. Stressing the important role of civil society and scientific community, in formulating, implementing, monitoring and evaluating drug policies, the EU and its Member States propose to add the following operational recommendations:

- a) *Promote and support dialogue with, and involvement of, civil society and the scientific community in the development, implementation and evaluation of drugs policies at different levels.*
- b) *Ensure better involvement of affected populations, including people who use drugs, clients of specialised services, families, children and youth at risk, and recovered users, in the design and implementation of policies and programmes that affect them. "*
- c) *Hold timely dialogue with Civil Society Taskforce on Drugs.*
- d) *Hold timely dialogue with the Informal International Scientific Network, in order to bridge the gap between science, policy and practices to tackle the world drug problem.*

On death penalty:

19. The EU and its Member States recall the strong **opposition to the death penalty** in all circumstances, including for drug-related offences. We reiterate that the death penalty undermines human dignity, while failing to act as deterrent to criminal behaviour. In addition, we also recall that the opposition to the death penalty for drug-related offences has been strongly reiterated by a large number of Member States during the course of past deliberations; therefore, we believe that the UNGASS outcome document should include the following operational recommendations in this respect:

- a) *Call upon States Parties to consider abolishing the death penalty for drug-related offences*
- b) *Pending the formal abolition, to enforce, without delay, a moratorium on all executions.*

c) *Member States and international organisations which provide finance, equipment, training and intelligence to law enforcement units of States that continue to apply the death penalty for drug-related offences, should advocate, within the framework of this cooperation and their bilateral dialogue, for enhanced human rights protection and the effective implementation of a moratorium on executions, as a first step towards the abolition of the death penalty.*

21. The EU and its Member States reiterate their commitment to provide further inputs as regards the preparatory process.
