

On behalf of Eurasian Harm Reduction Network,

Dear Mr/Mme Chair,

It has already been eight years since the negative side effects, or unintended consequences of the war on drugs were acknowledged by the former executive director of UNODC. These negative consequences include the HIV and hepatitis epidemics, overdose mortality, massive incarceration, corruption, police abuse – we all know this list, as it is impossible to name a country that has not experienced most of them to some extent.

Living in the countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, we have suffered a lot from these side effects of the drug war. The fact that these consequences were not an *intention* of the legislators and the law enforcement is no longer a good excuse to perpetuate them. We know that criminalization of drug use and drug possession for personal use has a negative impact on public health and citizens' rights. Yet, there is no global agreement on what to do about it next.

Some countries experiment with diversion from arrest, with decriminalization, and market regulation. As civil society, we welcome these efforts, but we need robust evidence to prove that they have a positive impact on health, safety and human rights, and are conducive to sustainable development goals. We need *fully consolidated drug policy impact assessment* in order to drive the reform on the global level while avoiding further harm.

The resolution adopted by UN Special Session on the World Drug Problem of 2016 promotes the idea of including the civil society and the scientific community into the evaluation of drug control policies and programs. Today, almost a year after UNGASS, we still see no effort to implement this decision. Implementation of evidence-based drug policy impact assessment on the global level has yet to begin.

We consider it of utmost importance that the Commission takes note of the urgent need to develop a unified methodology of drug policy impact assessment and provide technical support to member states to implement it. On our behalf, we promise to support and promote the development of the methodology of such assessments, as well as data collection and analysis.

Better solutions to the problem of narcotic drugs cannot be figured out without taking a clear, critical look back on decades of inefficiency — and tallying the true costs of the measures enacted thus far. It's high time to start crunching the numbers in a meaningful way. It's time for unified drug policy impact assessment.

Thank you.