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**NOTE**

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From: EU co-Presidency  
To: Delegations

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Subject: Draft Sofia declaration

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Delegations will find below a draft declaration for the XX High Level Meeting of the EU-CELAC Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism on Drugs to be held on 21-22 June 2018 in Sofia, as provided by the EU co-Presidency.

**SOFIA  
DECLARATION**

1. Having met in Sofia on 21 and 22 June 2018, under the co-presidencies of Bulgaria and Suriname, at the XXI High Level Meeting of the Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism on Drugs between the European Union and CELAC.
2. REAFFIRMING the importance of the Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism on Drugs between CELAC and the European Union, a bi-regional framework, carried out on the basis of dialogue, common and shared responsibility, coordination and cooperation, to address in an effective and balanced approach the World Drug Problem that affects both regions.
3. REAFFIRMING that the principle of common and shared responsibility guides all CELAC and EU States actions to ensure their equal commitment to address the World Drug Problem in all its dimensions.
4. EMPHASISING that bi-regional cooperation should complement efforts undertaken at local, national, bilateral, sub-regional, regional and multilateral levels and recognise the importance of ensuring that such cooperation aligns with agreed priorities and objectives and that it should take place under the principle of common and shared responsibility.

MAKE THE FOLLOWING DECLARATION:

***On bi-regional cooperation***

5. WE UNDERLINE the positive cooperation between our regions in the preparations for and during the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem (UNGASS 2016) and emphasizing in this regard that both regions commit themselves to the outcome document. We highlight our joint ambitions and priorities towards a balanced, comprehensive, evidence-based and integrated approach to address the World Drug Problem in 2019, having in mind that there are important topics that need further discussion.

6. WE CONSIDER UNGASS 2016 outcome document as a pivotal reference document in the field of drugs representing the latest consensus. Therefore, efforts in view of, and after, the ministerial segment of the 62<sup>nd</sup> session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs should be focused on broad international implementation of commitments made during the UNGASS in 2016 to address public health, safety and social problems resulting from drug use and any new global drug policy targets (goals) possibly adopted as the result of 2019 global drug policy review should reflect the seven chapters of the UNGASS outcome document.
7. WE COMMIT ourselves to join efforts to review and improve the Annual Report Questionnaire in light of the UNGASS recommendations.
8. WE WELCOME the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and while noting that efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and to effectively address the World Drug Problem are complementary and mutually reinforcing, we will seek to further strengthen the link between the UNGASS recommendations and drug-related Sustainable Development Goals.
9. WE WELCOME the activities conducted by the Cooperation Programme on Drugs Policies between Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union (COPOLAD II), that builds upon the positive results achieved during COPOLAD I.
10. WE COMMIT ourselves to join efforts to further strengthen the cooperation between the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, as the leading entity in the United Nations system for addressing and countering the World Drug Problem, the International Narcotics Control Board and the World Health Organization, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the United Nations Development Programme, and other relevant organisations, within their treaty mandated roles, as part of a comprehensive, integrated and balanced approach to the challenges posed by the World Drug Problem, while reaffirming the principal role of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs as the policymaking body of the United Nations with prime responsibility for drug control matters. We also agree to further strengthen our cooperation, as appropriate, in relevant multilateral fora.

*On demand reduction and related measures, including prevention, and treatment as well as other health-related issues*

11. WE REITERATE our commitment to promote the health, welfare and well-being of all individuals, families, communities and society as a whole, and facilitate healthy lifestyles through effective, comprehensive, scientific, evidence-based demand reduction measures at all levels, covering, prevention, early intervention, treatment, care, recovery, rehabilitation and social reintegration activities, as well as risk and harm reduction measures.
12. WE ENCOURAGE the development and adoption of policies, according to national legislation, that incorporate a holistic, strengthened, balanced, evidence-based and multidisciplinary approach with the objective of reducing the impact of drug use on public health and preventing the stigmatization, marginalization, and discrimination of persons with substance use disorders.
13. WE ACKNOWLEDGE that prevention is one of the main health responses to the world drug problem, and that effective prevention interventions, policies and systems should be developed and implemented in an integrated manner, taking account of the specific needs of target groups and centered on and tailored to the needs of individuals, families and communities as part of comprehensive and balanced national drug policies with the full respect of human rights.
14. WE COMMIT ourselves to take effective and practical primary prevention measures that protect people, in particular people in vulnerable situation, from drug use initiation by providing them with accurate information about the risks of drug use, by promoting skills and opportunities to choose healthy lifestyles and by developing supportive parenting and healthy social environments and by ensuring equal access to education and vocational training.

15. WE SUPPORT the principle of equal access to public health services of quality, without financial hardship as set by the Universal Health Coverage <sup>1</sup>, which should guarantee broad coverage, as well as basic treatment, respecting human rights. We also welcome bi-regional cooperation respecting national legislation and in accordance with the three international drug control conventions, and in the context of comprehensive and balanced drug demand reduction efforts, giving consideration to effective risk and harm reduction measures, including but not limited to appropriate medication-assisted therapy programmes, injecting equipment programmes, as well as anti-retroviral therapy and other relevant interventions that prevent the transmission of HIV, viral hepatitis and other blood-borne diseases associated with drug use. Access to such interventions including in treatment and outreach services, prisons and other custodial settings, and promoting in that regard the use, as appropriate, of the WHO, UNODC, UNAIDS Technical Guide for Countries to Set Targets for Universal Access to HIV Prevention, Treatment and Care for Injecting Drug Users as well as measures of prevention, vaccination, diagnosis and treatment of viral hepatitis should also be encouraged. We further agree to cooperate on and share and promote best practices, research and scientific evidence-based programmes on prevention, early intervention, treatment, and social reintegration and rehabilitation to better address the World Drug Problem.

***On ensuring the availability of and access to controlled substances exclusively for medical and scientific purposes, while preventing their diversion***

16. WE CONTINUE to bi-regionally support all efforts to promote, in line with the UNGASS 2016 Outcome Document, the availability of, affordability of and accessibility to controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes exclusively, including for the relief of pain and suffering, and defined by national legislation, while preventing their diversion, abuse, misuse and trafficking. We will further focus our efforts by examining, as appropriate, domestic legislation and regulatory and administrative mechanisms, as well as procedures including domestic distribution channels, with the aim of simplifying and streamlining those processes and removing unduly restrictive impediments, when present, without undermining the capacities to ensure traceability.

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<sup>1</sup> Universal health coverage (UHC) means that all people can obtain the quality health services they need without suffering financial hardship. Joint WHO/World Bank Group report, December 2017

17. WE ENCOURAGE to strengthen the systems, evidence-based information and research for assessing legitimate needs for medical use in order to make a correct and adequate provision of all necessary prescriptions, especially those used to relieve pain and to treat critical illnesses and/or terminal ones, and in this way establish a more effective tool to guarantee access and avoid diversion to illicit channels.

***On supply reduction and related measures: effective law enforcement, responses to drug related crime, countering money laundering and promoting judicial cooperation***

18. WE STRESS the need to implement joint preventive and law enforcement measures, where appropriate, to identify, disrupt and dismantle transnational organised crime groups involved in drugs trafficking, as well as all other forms of criminal activity that may be linked to the trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, such as money-laundering, trafficking in human beings, arms trafficking or financing of terrorist groups and activities.
19. WE WILL CONTINUE joint actions and cooperation, where appropriate, aimed notably at sharing information among law enforcement authorities in order to better trace international money laundering and precursors deviation routes, and we are committed to strengthening judicial cooperation and mutual legal assistance to better identify, investigate, prosecute and sanction individuals and organisations, in particular financial entities engaged in money laundering and other drug-related criminal activities in accordance with national and international legal frameworks including, where possible, the seizure and recovery of the assets involved.
20. WE REITERATE our commitment to protecting the safety and assuring the security of individuals, societies and communities by cooperating at all levels and focusing our efforts to prevent and counter the illicit cultivation, production, manufacture and trafficking of narcotic and synthetic drugs, as well as drug-related crime and violence.

21. WE RECOGNIZE that each State faces different challenges that require a customized approach and reaffirm the continuing need for cooperation and support, with a continued commitment to working together to develop comprehensive capacities and strategies to counter the challenges posed by new and existing drug trafficking routes and new technologies and methods used by traffickers, including the provision of technical assistance, to, *inter alia*, enhance their capacities to effectively address and counter the World Drug Problem.
22. WE RECOGNIZE the challenge originated by the use of the Internet, and especially darknet, for drug related criminal activities, driven by the exploitation of the opportunities presented by new technologies. We also recognise that tailored answers are needed to effectively address the situation and in this regard, we encourage countries, in coordination with the political and technical levels, to share information and best practices and to make the best of the technical assistance and capacity-building, including training to anticipate the early and effective detection, to prevent, address and counter the use of the Internet, including darknet, by drug trafficking networks and transnational criminal organisations.
23. WE COMMIT to strengthen national, regional and international monitoring of chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of drugs and new psychoactive substances, with a view to more effectively preventing the diversion of and trafficking in those chemicals, while ensuring that the legitimate trade in and use of those chemicals are not adversely affected, including by using national, sub-regional and international reporting systems with the support of the existing and future programmes and International Narcotics Control Board tools such as Projects Prism and Cohesion, the Precursors Incident Communication System and Pre- Export Notification Online (PEN Online) system.
24. WE ALSO HIGHLIGHT the efforts made by the EU and participating CELAC countries including, in the Cocaine Route Programme. We also take note of the positive start of the new cooperation Programme for Assistance against Transnational Organised Crime "EL PAcCTO" (Europa-Latinoamérica Programa de asistencia contra el crimen transnacional organizado: por el Estado de Derecho y la seguridad ciudadana), under which the EU and its Member States cooperate with Latin America on the reinforcement of the rule of law and citizen security.

*On drugs and human rights, youth, women, children, vulnerable members of society and communities*

25. WE REITERATE our commitment to respecting, protecting and promoting all human rights, fundamental freedoms and the inherent dignity of all individuals and the rule of law in the development and implementation of drug policies. We also agree to ensure that our national drug policies, as part of an evidence-based, comprehensive, integrated and balanced approach fully respect all human rights and fundamental freedoms and protect the health, safety and well-being of individuals, families, vulnerable groups of society, communities and society as a whole, without any discrimination.
26. In line with the 2030 Agenda and the UN General Assembly Resolution S-30/1, WE HIGHLIGHT the need to mainstream a gender perspective and ensure the involvement of women in all stages of the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of drug policies and programmes, develop and disseminate gender-sensitive and age-appropriate measures. It must not be treated as an isolated issue or a separate track and should take into account the specific needs and circumstances faced by women and girls with regard to the World Drug Problem and, as States parties, implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.
27. WE WILL ENSURE that measures to prevent illicit cultivation of and to eradicate plants containing narcotic and psychotropic substances respect fundamental human rights, take due account of traditional licit uses, where there is historic evidence of such use, and the protection of the environment, in accordance with the three international drug conventions, and also take into account, as appropriate and in accordance with national drug control legislation, the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.



***On proportionate and effective policies and responses, as well as legal guarantees and safeguards pertaining to criminal justice proceedings and the justice sector***

28. WE AGREE to promote proportionate national sentencing policies, practices and guidelines for drug-related offences, in accordance with the provisions of the drug control conventions and national legislation, whereby the severity of penalties is proportionate to the gravity of offences and whereby both mitigating and aggravating factors are taken into account, while attaching great importance to human dignity and human rights.
29. WE ENCOURAGE, in line with national legislations, to consider the development, adoption and implementation of alternative or additional measures to coercive sanctions in the application of justice concerning drug related offences, consistent with the three United Nations drug control conventions, international law and relevant UN standards. We invite the participants of this bi-regional mechanism to consider evidence-based treatment, care, rehabilitation and recovery and social re-integration practices and community-based support services for drug dependent persons in prisons, as appropriate, as well as the transition from penitentiary institutions to the community, securing continuum of care.
30. WE REGRET that the UNGASS outcome document lacks any reference towards the abolition of the death penalty. We reaffirm our common regional position that death penalty should be globally abolished and we condemn the use of the capital punishment in all circumstances. The death penalty undermines human dignity, while failing to act as a deterrent to criminal behaviour and we urge all States to engage in this debate in the course of future discussions.

***On cross-cutting issues in addressing and countering the world drug problem: evolving reality, trends and existing circumstances, emerging and persistent challenges and threats, including new psychoactive substances, in conformity with the three international drug control conventions and other relevant international instruments***

31. WE RECOGNIZE that there are persistent, new, and evolving challenges that should be addressed in conformity with the three international drug conventions, which allow for sufficient flexibility for State parties to design and implement national drug policies according to their priorities and needs, consistent with the principle of common and shared responsibility and applicable international law.

32. WE ARE AWARE that synthetic drugs offer criminal organisations opportunities for illicit production and distribution among different channels, like the Internet. In this regard, we need to design and implement national drug policies, taking into account the priorities of States, as well as the persistent challenges, new and changing, within the framework of the three international drug control conventions redesign public policies in the area of drug trafficking and to assume the commitment to share information regarding synthetic drugs production, distribution and routes including developing early warning systems and enhancing capacity of national laboratories and law enforcement agencies for the detection and identification of synthetic drugs.
33. WE REAFFIRM our commitment to increase the bi-regional dialogue and cooperation in order to address the main challenges, risks and threats related to the misuse of Internet and the availability of new psychoactive substances, notably as regards potent fentanyl derivatives. Sustained information exchange at the regional and bi-regional levels on effective prevention and treatment and related legislative responses to these threats to support the development of effective, evidence-based responses to the emerging challenge of new psychoactive substances with regard to their adverse social and health consequences is also required.
34. WE PROMOTE exchange of information to better understand the extent of adverse impacts, including the health, social and economic and safety impacts, of drug trafficking in small quantities in order to develop, where appropriate, effective responses to counter micro trafficking.

***On strengthening international cooperation based on the principle of common and shared responsibility***

35. WE TAKE ACCOUNT OF the need to develop, as appropriate, drug policy indicators and tools for the collection and analysis of accurate, evidence-based, reliable and comparable data on all relevant aspects of the World Drug Problem.

36. WE HIGHLIGHT the efforts made by the EU and participating CELAC countries in cooperation programmes and projects at bilateral, sub-regional, regional or trans- continental levels, under which we cooperate on the reinforcement of balanced, integrated and evidence-based approach to the drugs phenomenon and the quality of the EU-CELAC cooperation activities.
37. WE ENCOURAGE increased cooperation and coordination between the UNODC and other relevant UN bodies, within their respective mandates, across the UN system, to jointly develop activities promoting comprehensive, integrated, evidence-based and balanced national drug strategies, policies and cooperation programmes, also in view of the UN 2030 agenda for sustainable development. The efforts to achieve the drug-related Sustainable Development Goals and to effectively address and counter the world drug problem should complement and reinforce each other.

***On alternative development and cooperation on development-oriented balanced drug control policy, and on addressing socio-economic issues***

38. WE COMMIT to continue efforts in the context of long-term and sustainable development programmes to address the most pressing drug-related socioeconomic factors, including unemployment and social marginalization.
39. WE ENCOURAGE the promotion of inclusive economic growth and support initiatives that contribute to poverty eradication and the sustainability of social and economic development, develop measures for rural development, improving infrastructure and social inclusion and protection, addressing the consequences of illicit crop cultivation and the manufacture and production of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances on the environment, with the incorporation and participation of local communities, and consider taking voluntary measures to promote products stemming from alternative development, including preventive alternative development, as appropriate, to gain access to markets, consistent with applicable multilateral trade rules and with national and international law, within the framework of comprehensive and balanced drug control strategies.

40. WE REITERATE our commitment to strengthen sub-regional, regional and international cooperation to support comprehensive and sustainable alternative development programmes, including, as appropriate, preventive alternative development, as an essential part of successful prevention and crop control strategies to increase the positive outcome of such programmes, especially in the areas affected by and at risk of illicit cultivation of crops used for the production of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, taking into account the United Nations Guiding Principles on Alternative Development and the operational recommendations related to alternative development included in the UNGASS 2016 Outcome Document.
41. WE ENCOURAGE the development of sustainable urban development initiatives for those affected by illicit drug-related activities to foster public participation in crime prevention, community cohesion, protection and safety and to stimulate innovation, entrepreneurship and employment.
42. WE AGREE to convene the XXI High-Level Meeting of the Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism on Drugs between CELAC and the European Union in 2019 under the co- presidencies of Romania and .....

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