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**NOTE**

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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
To: Delegations

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Subject: EU Statement on the occasion of the 62nd session of the Commission on  
Narcotic Drugs, Vienna 18-22 March 2019  
- Implementation of the international drug control treaties: International  
Narcotics Control Board

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Delegations will find in annex the final version of the European Union Statement on the International Narcotics Control Board which was agreed by the Horizontal WP on Drugs to be expressed, on behalf of the EU, at the 62nd session of the CND in Vienna.



**European Union**

**Statement on the occasion of  
the 62nd Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs**

**Vienna, 18-22 March 2019**

Agenda Item 9 (c): Implementation of the international drug control treaties:  
International Narcotics Control Board

Distinguished Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

We thank the International Narcotics Control Board for its 2018 Annual Report, with analysis of the drug control situation worldwide, and for the report on precursors and chemicals frequently used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

The EU and its Member States are committed to the effective implementation of the three UN Drug conventions and we welcome the broad consensus of the international community to these three conventions and relevant international Human Rights instruments being the cornerstone of the international drug control system.

The EU and its Member States welcome this opportunity to reflect on the integral relationship between drug control and human rights. We appreciate the Annual Report emphasizing that successful and sustainable drug control action needs to be consistent with international human rights standards.

The EU and its Member States value an integrated, balanced and evidence-based approach, which is human rights-based and in line with the drug control conventions. The protection of human rights is integrated in our political dialogues with third countries or regions and in drug-related technical cooperation programmes funded by the European Union and its Member States.

We strongly support the INCB in its categorical and unequivocal condemnation of extra-judicial responses to drug-related criminality and appreciate the reference to proportionality. In line with the principle of proportionality, the international drug control conventions provide States with the possibility to apply alternative or additional measures with regard to conviction or punishment in drug-related cases of an appropriate nature, such as education, rehabilitation or social reintegration, in particular for persons affected by drugs. We would encourage the INCB to further focus on the issue of proportionality, possibly by updating the 2007 INCB report on the matter. Finally, we very much welcome the report encouraging States that retain the death penalty to consider abolishing it for drug-related offences. The death penalty undermines human dignity, and errors made in its application are irreversible.

We welcome that the 2018 Annual Report is accompanied by a supplement on progress in ensuring adequate availability of and access to internationally controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes. We appreciate that the INCB collects data on this important issue and we want this effort reinforced. The access to, and availability of, controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes remains low or inexistent in many countries. This leads to unacceptable, though avoidable, suffering in many parts of the world. At the same time, the growing misuse, diversion and trafficking of some psychoactive medicines in certain parts of the world is highly problematic. We recognise that various inefficiencies in dealing with scheduling requirements under the three drug control conventions contributes to an inadequate availability of opioids, and agree that the situation should be substantially improved. We strongly encourage States to address effectively the regulatory, attitudinal, knowledge-related, and procurement-related causes.

The EU and its Member States remain concerned about the reported negative trends, including the rapid spread of new psychoactive substances. We encourage State Parties to cooperate more closely to address this shared problem. This should include support to the relevant work of the INCB, UNODC and WHO, as well as information exchange on effective prevention, treatment, legislative and law enforcement responses. Awareness raising about the risk of using these new substances and other drugs should be substantially increased, including with new prevention programmes.

Prevention measures should include early detection and intervention, including with innovative approaches and the support of new technologies. Moreover, prevention measures should include promotion of healthy lifestyles and targeted prevention directed also at young people and families, schools and communities at risk, including in recreational settings.

The EU and its Member States are investing in effective risk and harm reduction measures aimed at connecting people who use drugs and public health services, re-integrating people who use drugs into society, and substantially reducing the number of direct and indirect drug-related deaths and infectious blood-borne diseases associated with drug use, such as HIV and hepatitis.

In addition, the EU has launched last year the new EU Policy Cycle on Serious and Organised International Crime for the period 2018-2021 to ensure closer cooperation among all involved actors to fight cross-border crime related to 10 priorities, including drug trafficking, illicit firearms trafficking, cybercrime, criminal finances and money laundering.

We would like also stress the importance of bilateral and regional cooperation. The EU and its Member States have agreed Action Plans on drugs with a number of countries and regions. They fund and support a wide range of major drug-related cooperation programmes in third countries, through important EU bilateral, sub-regional or regional cooperation programmes. Moreover, the EU and its Member States carry out regular expert dialogues on drugs with third countries and regions. This information exchange and discussion on current and new phenomena, as well as on policy developments is invaluable for all of us.

After the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of the International Narcotics Control Board, we would like to encourage Member States to further develop dialogue with the INCB in order to reflect on the challenges we continue to face and on how we will address them all together.

Thank you very Distinguished Chair!

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