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From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations

Subject: EU Statement on the occasion of the Intersessional meeting of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Vienna 23 September 2019
- Preparations for consideration by the Commission of the proposed scheduling recommendations by the World Health Organization on cannabis and cannabis-related recommendations

Delegations will find in annex the final version of the European Union Statement on *Preparations for consideration by the Commission of the proposed scheduling recommendations by the World Health Organization on cannabis and cannabis-related recommendations* which was expressed, on behalf of the EU, at the Intersessional session of the CND in Vienna.



European Union Statement
on the occasion of the
5th Intersessional Meeting of the 62nd Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs
Vienna, 23 September 2019

Agenda Item 2: *Preparations for consideration by the Commission of the proposed scheduling recommendations by the World Health Organization on cannabis and cannabis-related recommendations*

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

Mr. Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The European Union and its Member States would like to thank you, Mr. Chair, and to thank the World Health Organisation for giving us another opportunity to exchange views and ask questions on the WHO's proposed scheduling recommendations on cannabis and cannabis-related substances. We reiterate that a full understanding by all Member States, of the precise scope, content and consequences of the recommendations, is the only way to enable a future vote by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, based on facts and evidence.

Before going into the substance, Mr. Chair, allow me to welcome the holding of a thematic discussion at the forthcoming intersessional meeting on 16-18 October. This is a good start to the rolling out of the CND Multiyear Workplan, and should help us accelerate the implementation of our joint commitments to addressing the world drug situation.

Moreover, we acknowledge the importance of the expert meeting on the Annual Review Questionnaire held on 28-30 August. It is key to follow-up on the implementation of our international commitments to promote and improve the collection, analysis and sharing of quality and comparable data. The process of streamlining and strengthening the Annual Review Questionnaire is now well engaged and should proceed efficiently according to the mandate given in the Ministerial Declaration of the 62nd CND earlier this year.

Mr. Chair, now please allow us to make a few important remarks in the framework of today's discussion.

Preliminarily, the EU and its Member States welcome the broad consensus of the international community that the three main drug control Conventions and the relevant international human rights instruments are the cornerstone of the international drug control system. We support the important role played by the WHO Expert Committee on Drug Dependence, and we acknowledge that the recommendations of the ECDD are based on the available scientific, medical and public health evidence and comply with the criteria established in the conventions.

We had a first opportunity to discuss the recommendations in the fourth intersessional meeting of the CND on 24 June 2019. The European Union and its Member States are committed to properly evaluating the impact of the recommendations put forward by the World Health Organisation on scheduling of substances, ahead of the decisions to be taken by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. We are grateful for the answers and explanations given by the World Health Organisation and we also welcome the contributions of the International Narcotics Control Board to this discussion. While many of our questions were answered, some clarifications are required for a proper assessment.

Therefore, we welcome the opportunity to discuss further all questions submitted which have not yet been addressed. We also appreciate some clarifications from the INCB and from the UNODC division for Treaty Affairs.

On a procedural level, it is important that we all understand what the follow-up of today's meeting will be. We would therefore welcome written clarifications or additional information in response to the requested clarifications in order to facilitate the process towards a future vote.

In this regard, the EU and its Member States believe that the future vote should take place once the impact of the cannabis and cannabis-related substances re-scheduling recommendations has been assessed.

Mr. Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

The European Union and its Member States are looking forward to receiving additional information. As always, we want to assure you of our cooperation along the process. We have no doubt that the discussions today will help provide clarity on the consequences of the WHO recommendations, before a future vote is held in the CND.