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From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Delegations

Subject: EU Statement on the occasion of the sixth intersessional meeting of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its sixty-second session (Vienna, 16-18 October 2019)

- Thematic session 2: The abuse, illicit cultivation and production and manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, as well as the illicit trafficking in those substances and in precursors, have reached record levels, and that the illicit demand for and the domestic diversion of precursor chemicals are on the rise

Delegations will find in annex the final version of the European Union Statement on "*Thematic session 2: The abuse, illicit cultivation and production and manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, as well as the illicit trafficking in those substances and in precursors, have reached record levels, and that the illicit demand for and the domestic diversion of precursor chemicals are on the rise*" which was expressed, on behalf of the EU, at the intersessional meeting of the CND in Vienna on 16-18 October 2019.



European Union Statement
on the occasion of the 6th Intersessional Meeting
of the 62nd Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs,
Vienna, 16-18 October 2019

Thematic session 2: *The abuse, illicit cultivation and production and manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, as well as the illicit trafficking in those substances and in precursors, have reached record levels, and that the illicit demand for and the domestic diversion of precursor chemicals are on the rise*

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

Mr. Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. The European Union and its Member States wish to thank you for organising this intersessional meeting. These discussions should help us fulfil our joint commitment to effectively address the world drug situation, as stated in the 2016 UNGASS Outcome Document and reiterated in the March 2019 Ministerial Declaration.

2. While heroin is still responsible for the bulk of drug-related harms in the EU, we are also concerned by cocaine and synthetic drugs production and availability. Europe is being targeted as a lucrative market for cocaine traffickers and several indicators suggest its availability is rising, leading to increased harms. Amphetamine, methamphetamine and MDMA are manufactured and consumed in the EU. However, they are also being exported to other countries and producers are quick to react to control efforts making this the most dynamic of the drug markets in the EU.

3. The EU strives to achieve a balanced, multi-agency, integrated approach to effectively tackling drug supply and drug-related crime. In this respect we would like to highlight the role of EUROPOL – the European Union's agency for law enforcement cooperation, which supports its Member States in preventing and tackling all forms of serious international and organised crime and terrorism. We would also like to emphasise the important role played by EUROJUST, which contributes to improving judicial cooperation in actions against serious crime. In addition, we want to highlight the very important role of customs authorities in preventing and tackling illicit drug trafficking.

4. In order to maximise the impact of our efforts, we aim to have a balance between preventing and tackling the consequences of crime. Our tool for the co-operation and co-ordination of actions on all dimensions and between all stakeholders on the national and EU level is the EU Policy Cycle for organised and serious international crime. This intelligence-led methodology is used to identify and prioritise the most pressing threats associated with organised and serious international crimes for the period 2018-2021.

5. Our efforts addressing these threats have already brought encouraging results. For example, EU Member State law enforcement agencies, as well as EUROPOL, have been involved in the takedown of darknet markets in a coordinated law enforcement action. But more is needed and thus, at the end of 2017, EUROPOL adopted the "Drugs in Europe: Bold law enforcement response" initiative. This aims, notably, at increasing the operational impact of multilateral law enforcement cooperation through the adoption of a new methodology focusing on high value targets of interest in multiple jurisdictions and the creation of operational task forces. EUROPOL has also established a dedicated Dark Web Team to work together with EU partners and law enforcement across the globe to reduce the size of this underground illegal economy.

6. The EU is also committed to tackling drug-related financial flows as the EU Member States have agreed to increase the number of financial investigations and encourage its relevant authorities to focus on confiscation and recovery of proceeds of crime, including on money laundering, corruption and other criminal activities in all investigations of organised crime.

Mr Chair,

7. Drug precursor control and monitoring remains a cornerstone of the EU's drug supply reduction strategy, in particular in view of the illicit synthetic drug manufacture taking place in the EU. But, as already mentioned during the 62nd session of the CND in March this year, drug precursor control is currently facing unprecedented challenges. From the EU's perspective, in particular the use of "designer-precursors", which have no known legal use and are specifically made to circumvent the control and monitoring systems of the authorities, is highly problematic. We estimate that around 90% of the synthetic drugs produced in the EU use non-scheduled "designer-precursors" as the key raw material. The EU is currently evaluating its drug precursor legislation and addressing this challenge is one of our main priorities. But as drug precursor diversion and trafficking is a global phenomenon we fully support the INCB's call for a dialogue towards making the framework for international precursor control more effective against the challenges posed by "designer-precursors".

Mr Chair,

8. In addition to our efforts at EU level and the regular evaluation of our legislations and activities, the European Union will continue to conduct drug-related dialogues with third countries and to fund several cooperation programmes as well as related development-centred drug policy interventions. The EU and its Member States consider alternative development programmes as an important strategy to address the underlying root causes of illicit drug economies through an integrated approach. Alternative development thereby combines efforts of rural development, alleviation of poverty, promoting access to land and land rights, protection of the environment and climate change, promotion of rule of law, security and good governance in full respect of international human rights obligations and commitment to gender equality. We thus contribute to the implementation of the UNGASS Outcome Document and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

9. We also emphasize the importance of collecting relevant and reliable data, which is not instrumental only in the EU but also worldwide. Therefore, we welcome the ongoing work on the improvement of the Annual Report Questionnaire (ARQ) in which EU and its Member states are actively participating.

Mr. Chair,

While we encounter, analyse and tackle threats of illicit cultivation, production, manufacture and trafficking of drugs, and are worried about the increase of drug use, we still need to remember that the drug phenomenon is complex and multifaceted. This phenomenon needs to be addressed with its associated health and social risks, such as deaths, infectious diseases, dependency, mental health problems and social exclusion. In this context, the EU would also like to recall that the principle of adequate, proportionate and effective response to drug-related offences has been highlighted in all UN drug control conventions.

Thank you Mr. Chair.