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| From:           | General Secretariat of the Council  |
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| Subject:        | EU Statement on the occasion of intersessional meeting of the 68th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (Vienna, 30 September - 2 October 2025)<br>- Other substantive matters: "Increasing preparedness to address emerging drug threats" |

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Delegations will find in the Annex the above-mentioned statement as expressed on behalf of the EU and its Member States at the intersessional meeting of the 68th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) (Vienna, 30 September - 2 October 2025).



**European Union Statement  
on the occasion of the intersessional meeting  
of the 68th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs  
Vienna, 30 September – 2 October 2025**

**Other substantive matters (session 6): “Increasing preparedness to address emerging drug threats”**

Distinguished Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. The global drug market is growing steadily and shifting rapidly, with serious consequences for people in every part of the world. According to the World Drug Report 2025, we are witnessing a growing demand fuelled by a combination of factors, as well as a growing supply from a relentless and adaptive illicit trade, both of which inflame – and are inflamed by – global instability, in a vicious cycle.
2. The European drug market is also evolving rapidly. According to the European Drug Report 2025, this appears to be resulting in the availability of a more diverse range of substances, often of high potency and purity, which are posing new risks to public health. The complexity and scale of the issue continue to grow.
3. Drug-related challenges have an impact in almost every area. They are manifest in and exacerbate other complex policy problems, such as homelessness, the management of psychiatric disorders and youth criminality. We are also witnessing greater levels of violence and corruption driven by the drug market in some countries. Increasingly, we are observing that almost any substance with psychoactive properties can appear on the drug market, often mislabelled or in mixtures. This leaves people who use drugs potentially unaware of what they are consuming, increases health risks and creates new challenges for law-enforcement and regulators. Additionally, there is rising concern at the Organization for the Prohibition of

Chemical Weapons (OPCW) about the potential weaponisation Central Nervous System-acting drugs, such as fentanyl, by both State and Non-State actors, given their growing availability. In this context, we encourage an exchange of information between the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and OPCW.

4. The rapidly evolving drug markets call for an increased preparedness in response to the emerging drug threats. Increasing EU's preparedness and capacity to react to future developments was our pledge under Pledge4Action initiative. It remains central in the ongoing preparations of the new European Union drugs strategic framework, including initiatives such as exercises incorporating opioid exposure scenarios and the development of academic publisher guidelines to reduce security risks in connection to opioid research.
5. In this regard, the EU is boosting health security and collaboration efforts across sectors under Regulation 2022/2371 to tackle all serious cross border threats to health, which might include those due to opioid and other drugs risks, through preparedness measures to improve emergency response, such as naloxone distribution programmes.
6. Member States and relevant EU institutions and agencies develop and implement comprehensive, human rights and evidence-based policies, including in relation to synthetic drugs and NPS, in order to prevent and address emerging drug threats and reduce related harms. Such policies and measures aim at reducing health and social harms through early intervention, prevention, treatment, recovery and support services as well as research, professional training and harm reduction measures such as needle and syringe exchange programmes, opioid substitution therapies and overdose prevention, including naloxone distribution programmes.
7. The European Union Drugs Agency (EUDA) provides the Union and its Member States with factual, objective, reliable and comparable information, early warning and risk assessment at Union level. The EUDA recommends appropriate and concrete evidence-based actions to address the challenges in an efficient and timely manner.

8. As announced in the EU pledge, the monitoring and analytical capacity of the EUDA has been strengthened to enable the Agency to make better use of the information available to it, for example to take more proactive measures such as threat assessments, strategic intelligence reports and alerts, and to increase the European Union's preparedness for future developments.
9. With regard to preparedness, the EUDA carries out specific tasks including:
  - the exchange of information on, and the early warning system for, new psychoactive substances, including the preparation of initial reports and risk assessments,
  - health threat assessments,
  - security threat assessments in close cooperation with the European Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation – Europol,
  - the establishment and operation of a European drug alert system,
  - the monitoring of developments related to the diversion and trafficking of drug precursors and contributing to the implementation of Union law on drug precursors,
  - the establishment and operation of a network of forensic and toxicological laboratories, and
  - foresight capacities to better anticipate and identify potential emerging risks and opportunities, guide research and innovation investments and support strategic policy responses.
10. By carrying out these tasks, the EUDA provides the European Union and its Member States with a holistic picture, thus increasing their preparedness through actions that anticipate and alert on new developments, whilst responding to emerging issues and learning from best practices.
11. In carrying out its specific preparedness tasks, the EUDA actively cooperates with relevant stakeholders, including other EU and international bodies, offices and agencies, in particular Europol, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) as well as the scientific community and civil society organisations. To ensure a continuous high-level of cooperation, sufficient funding of UNODC and INCB is necessary.

12. Allow me to conclude by saying that international cooperation is essential for addressing emerging drug threats. Thus, the EUDA will strengthen its commitment to cooperate with its international partners and stakeholders.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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