



**European Union**

**EU Statement on  
Thematic session 1: “Prevention as a Core Element of the Public Health  
Response to Drug Use”**

**Intersessional meeting  
68th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs  
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime**

**Vienna, 30 September – 2 October 2025**

Distinguished Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. [...] align themselves with this statement.

We wish to **thank you** for organising this Intersessional Meeting. [Our gratitude extends to the Secretariat for the comprehensive background material provided for this meeting - tbc]. We expect the discussions in the forthcoming days will allow us to accelerate the implementation of our joint commitments.

As we meet today, conflict and violence are unfolding in numerous parts of the world affecting also the drugs situation and the public health responses. The EU and its Member States call for the full respect for the UN Charter and international law, including international humanitarian law, whether in relation to Russia’s war of aggression against Ukraine, or the ongoing conflicts in the Middle East and elsewhere.

The three international drug control conventions provide a solid foundation for action in the area of prevention. In our EU Drugs Strategy 2021-2025, which was adopted almost 5 years ago and will be updated soon, prevention is one of the key pillars, together with treatment and care services for tackling drug demand. In recent years, **the drug market in the EU and worldwide has been expanding**: drug use has been increasing, as has been drug trafficking, with organised crime groups increasingly resorting to violence, creating a challenging policy context for the shaping and implementation of effective responses. In this context, evidence-based prevention – in all its dimensions – seems as important as ever.

As the preparations for the new EU Drugs Strategy are underway, in the ongoing discussions at the EU level, the crucial role of prevention has been repeatedly underlined. We see the need to provide, implement and increase the availability of

prevention interventions and strategies for target groups and local environments, in order to increase community and individual resilience and strengthen life skills and healthy life choices. What is particularly crucial is to rely on **evidence-based prevention activities with sufficient population coverage**, and disseminate the latest **scientific findings on prevention** to decision makers and practitioners, and to provide them with training on what works and what does not, in compliance with human rights standards.

In this context, we are particularly proud of the **European Prevention Curriculum (EUPC)** which is a comprehensive training programme designed to support professionals in implementing high-quality, evidence-based prevention interventions across Europe. The EUPC helps equip practitioners with the necessary tools and knowledge to design and deliver prevention programmes that are both effective and ethical.

The EU curriculum is consistent with the **UNODC and WHO International Standards on Drug Use Prevention**. We believe that it is important for all countries to continue to rely on such key guidance and recommendations in the development, implementation and evaluation of relevant scientific evidence-based national programmes and strategies, in line with the **CND resolutions focusing on prevention, in particular on early prevention**, such as resolutions 65/4<sup>1</sup> and 68/1<sup>2</sup>.

Another important aspect and worrying development is the recruitment of youth by organised crime groups involved in drug trafficking. It is therefore also crucial to address the root causes of this phenomenon by offering education and alternatives to a life of crime through a whole-of-society approach. The EU will continue to promote **evidence-based crime prevention** and take appropriate measures to **prevent the recruitment of children in drug-related crime**.

Distinguished Chair,

In order **to build healthier, more resilient societies**, we must focus on the prevention of drug use, especially among children and youth. Early prevention efforts, including providing education, promoting physical and mental health and fostering strong family and community support systems can significantly reduce the likelihood of future substance use and its associated individual and societal harms, and it should be our key focus for the years to come.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

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<sup>1</sup> [2022 CND Resolution 65/4](#) „Promoting comprehensive and scientific evidence-based early prevention”, tabled by SI and FR on behalf of the EU

<sup>2</sup> [2025 CND Resolution 68/1](#) « Promoting comprehensive, scientific evidence-based and multisectoral national systems of drug use prevention for children and adolescents”, tabled by Chile and co-sponsored by the EU