



European Union

EU Statement on

Thematic session 4: “Adverse Health Consequences of and Risks Associated with New Psychoactive Substances”

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.

According to the **2025 World Drug Report**, the number of different New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) on the market decreased from the peak of 662 NPS identified in 2021 to 527 in 2023. Nevertheless, NPS continue to represent **a serious threat to health and security** due to the number of potent opioids, synthetic cannabinoids and benzodiazepines still appearing on the market and the associated health emergencies and deaths in some regions. The risks to health of these novel compounds are usually unknown, and synthetic opioids have proved to be more potent and harmful. Besides, many people who use NPS, use them unknowingly, consuming the substances as adulterants or in the place of other drugs, sometimes with fatal consequences.

The **2025 European Drug Report** also pointed out that NPS are a persistent problem across the European Union. For the second year in a row, law enforcement agencies in the EU Member States reported a record quantity of NPS to the EU Early Warning System, amounting to 41.4 tonnes imported or seized, and notified 47 new psychoactive substances for the first time in 2024.

The **international community has reacted** to assess the harms caused by NPS and to schedule those that warrant international control. Early warning systems are critical to all member states in order to rapidly detect, assess, and respond to health and social threats caused by new psychoactive substances. In the EU we have a long experience with the **EU Early Warning System** established more than 25 years ago. This System ensures that both the EU and its Member States have state-of-the-art information on NPS and the threats they pose in order to protect public health, prevent severe social risks and rapidly inform policy-making as relevant.

It is our common responsibility to continue addressing these issues, while paying special attention to **young consumer groups as well as persons in vulnerable situations and people who are socially disadvantaged**, including persons experiencing homelessness, migrants and people in prison. We need to continue drawing up appropriate measures, including effective early warning mechanisms and appropriate prevention, treatment, rehabilitation as well as risk and harm reduction models, while also allowing social re-integration and recovery in an environment free of stigmatisation. In addition, it is important to support the scientific evidence-based review and scheduling of the most prevalent, persistent and harmful substances.

In the EU, as of last year we have a **new EU Drugs Agency (EUDA)** in place, replacing the former EMCDDA, which now has an even stronger mandate to make better use of the information it has, for example to respond proactively to threats by undertaking threat assessments, to issue strategic intelligence reports and alerts, and, where appropriate, to propose evidence-based responses and recommendations. In close cooperation with the relevant national competent authorities, the Agency is developing a European Drug Alert System to provide information relating to the appearance of a serious drug-related risk to health, social aspects, safety or security. These measures have enhanced the Union's preparedness for future developments, and are in line with the European Union pledge made at the CND last year.

Moreover, with the **revamped EU health security framework**, the EU is better prepared to respond to all serious cross-border threats to health including those caused by NPS, whatever their origin - natural, accidental or deliberate. Member States in collaboration with the Commission alert each other about emerging threats and consult and coordinate regarding the national response based on risk assessment conducted by the EUDA or other EU agencies. If the situation so requires, the Commission can declare a public health emergency at EU level to accelerate the response and mobilise resources.

In conclusion, we are convinced that we need to focus our attention on further strengthening national, regional and international actions in addressing the challenges posed by NPS, including their adverse health and social consequences – especially among persons in marginalised and vulnerable situations – and associated security problems. In this context, we continue to support global cooperation and strengthening the global response together.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.