



REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

COUNTRY STATEMENT BY
THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF TO UN AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL
ORGANISATION IN VIENNA,
MR. MARIOS IERONYMIDES

AT THE
61ST SESSION OF THE COMMISSION IN NARCOTIC DRUGS

VIENNA

12 TO 16 MARCH 2018

Thank you Madame Chair,

Firstly, allow me to express my delegation's congratulations on your election and assure you of our cooperation to the success of this session of the Commission.

The Republic of Cyprus is fully aligned with the EU statement delivered yesterday, however I would like to add a few remarks on our national capacity

Madame Chair

The Republic of Cyprus supports a balanced and evidenced based approach with a main focus on the individual and the protection of society as a whole. We consider drug dependence as a public health issue and human rights policy priority that has to be managed in an integrated manner. In this vein, we stress the important progress achieved in the framework of the outcome document of the UNGASS 2016. Global drug policy has been improved greatly by calling for a more comprehensive, evidence-based and balanced drug policy. Special focus is put on the health side of the drugs phenomenon, including prevention and treatment in support of vulnerable people.

Recently, the main national coordinating body in the field has been renamed as "Cyprus National Addictions Authority" and has expanded the range of its responsibilities to cover licit and illicit substances as well as pathological gambling. The aim is to have a more coherent policy in order to address addictive behaviours in general.

Along these lines, all measures taken are based on the National Strategy to Address Dependence on Illicit Substances and the Harmful Use of Alcohol 2013-2020. Concerning drug prevention in Cyprus, the main focus is on the support of vulnerable groups in order to prevent the use of illicit and licit substances and the provision of programs in areas of high risk.

Concerning drug treatment and social reintegration, the focus of the Strategy is to: a) provide treatment programmes for specific sub groups, such as migrants, women and patients with dual diagnosis, b) increase accessibility to treatment, c) increase treatment programme effectiveness and retention to treatment, d) improve the delivery of treatment within the criminal justice system and e) provide support to individuals at the social reintegration stage.

Harm reduction is also an integral part of our National Strategy, with our actions aiming at the reduction of health and social risks associated with drug use, such as the transmission of infectious diseases and drug-related deaths. A very innovative measure that was recently taken is the installment of vending machines that provide sterile syringes and other harm reduction material to injecting drug users. The anonymity provided by the machines and the 24-hour availability of the material hopefully will increase the access of this high-risk group and eventually reduce the transmission of blood-borne diseases. Being gravely concerned that almost half of the drug users are Hepatitis C positive, Cyprus provides equal access to Hepatitis C treatment on an exceptional basis.

What we consider a major step forward is a national legislation that provides for the referral to treatment instead of sentencing drug users and drug dependent individuals prosecuted for a wide range of crimes. Also, since 2010, a Protocol of Cooperation exists for the referral of young offenders by the Cyprus Police to treatment centres. This provides an alternative to prosecution for young drug offenders arrested for the first time (in the pre-trial phase) and gives the opportunity of an early intervention or a more intensive treatment programme, according to the needs.

Also, in the supply reduction pillar the priorities set for the period 2017-2020 include:

- Reducing criminal activities connected with the trafficking of substances;
- Preventing the availability of drug precursors, pre-precursors and new psychoactive substances;
- Preventing the legalization of proceeds derived from drug-related criminal activities,
- Enhancing international cooperation in this field, including the cooperation with Europol and Interpol, as well as the Drug Liaison Officers and foreign police attaches based in Cyprus.

Madame Chair,

Cyprus believes that the UNGASS outcome document provides a forward-looking framework to address the world drug problem and stipulates a concrete basis on which we should continue our work to achieve feasible and sustainable solutions to the world drug problem, as well as find a common ground based on the international Treaties.

We firmly believe that we should all step up our efforts to take achievable measures and policies that will benefit the lives of people who struggle with drug dependency.

Thank you.