



European Union
Statement on the occasion of the
63rd session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs
Vienna, 2–6 March 2020

Agenda item 6(a): Consideration of the improved and streamlined annual report questionnaire, as reflected in the Ministerial Declaration of 2019

Mr Chair, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

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

With last year's Ministerial Declaration, we committed to accelerating our commitments to address the world drug problem, including as regards the development of evidence-based policies. This issue is very dear to the EU and its Member States.

In that context, we are welcoming today the result of a process which started in 2017 pursuant to resolution 60/1 of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, and which was confirmed by the Ministerial Declaration of March 2019: the strengthening and streamlining of the Annual Report Questionnaire (ARQ), the backbone of our international data collection system.

We would like to thank the UNODC, the experts from all the Member States and all stakeholders who engaged in this process, enabling the presentation of the new ARQ today.

As acknowledged in the World Drug Report, relevant and reliable data is instrumental in getting a better overview of the drug situation worldwide. We need a realistic and comprehensive view of the drug phenomenon, including aspects related to the variety of policy choices — in criminal justice, in treatment, on the respect of human rights — to be able to better define and assess our policies. Developing policies based on evidence and best practices, supported by objective monitoring and evaluation systems, is essential to better reflect our actions at the national, regional and international levels, and to be able to assess areas where we need to accelerate the implementation of our joint commitments to address and counter the world drug problem.

The EU and its Member States support the proposed new ARQ and the ‘Guidelines for the completion of the annual report questionnaire’. We would like to stress in particular the importance of the focal points for data collection for the ARQ and the necessity to enhance synergies among UN agencies (including WHO, UNAIDS, UNDP, UN Women, OHCHR) and regional and international organisations around data collection issues, in addition to support for the Inter-agency coordination working group on epidemiological data on drugs.

We also believe it is key to strongly engage in capacity building regarding data collection in the coming months and years. Without the necessary support, the questionnaire will not reach the objectives we all committed to.

The European Union and its Member States have strongly supported this work — already at the heart of EU action on drugs. In line with this support, you will note that the EU’s commitment to evidence-based policies has translated into several EU-sponsored resolutions and side-events at this Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

The reformed questionnaire will help the international community gain a better understanding of the drug situation worldwide, to strengthen its action, reinforce cooperation and accelerate the implementation of our joint commitments to address and counter the world drug problem.

Thank you for your attention!
