

**Statement**

57<sup>th</sup> Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs

High-Level Segment

**General debate**

*Check against delivery*

Mr. Chairman,

I refer to the statement of Greece on behalf of the European Union and its Member States – a statement which the Danish delegation of course fully supports.

Progress has been made since the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem was adopted at the High-Level Segment of the fifty-second Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in 2009.

However, the drug problem continues to pose a serious threat to people who use drugs and to society as a whole.

On this background, the Government of Denmark welcomes this opportunity for the Member States of the United Nations to undertake a mid-term review of the progress made in the implementation of the Political Declaration and Plan of Action.

Mr. Chairman, please allow me to dwell on a few points which are essential to the achievement of the goals set out in the Political Declaration and Plan of Action.

Drug policies at national and international level should be balanced. Prohibition and control cannot stand alone. Supply reduction has to be balanced with a sharp focus on evidence-based prevention, early intervention and treatment.

Harm reduction, including reduction of drug-related deaths, should be an essential element of drug policies at national and international level. Regrettably, harm reduction – both as a term and as concrete measures – gives rise to debate.

It is important to keep in mind that the overall aims of drug policies are the health and welfare of human beings as well as the combatting of drug abuse and the harms and risks resulting from drug abuse. On this background, harm reduction

measures have been introduced in Denmark and they have proved to be an essential element of our drug policy.

Recognizing that despite the efforts to reduce both supply and demand, use of drugs is still a problem and a source of harm. What we have experienced in Denmark is that real results in the reduction of harm are achievable. Some of the harm reduction measures introduced in Denmark are complex and expensive whereas others are simple and the costs involved relatively limited. Common to the harm reduction measures is that both people who use drugs and society as a whole benefit from them.

This approach is based on the conviction that drug policies at national and international level should be built on human rights. Everybody, including people who use drugs, has the right to be treated with dignity.

We encourage the use of a human rights based approach and we would welcome the recognition of harm reduction as an essential element of drug policy here in Vienna. In countering the world drug problem, all states have human rights commitments alongside the commitments under the drugs conventions.

To the achievement of the goals set out in the Political Declaration and Plan of Action it is also essential that civil society is involved in the development and implementation of drug policies at national and international level. Not least in the process leading up to the General Assembly's Special Session on the World Drug Problem in 2016, involvement of civil society will provide the Member States with important experience and knowledge.

To conclude, despite our joint efforts we are still facing serious challenges – not least the number of drug-related deaths and the proportions of harm resulting from drug use. Balanced and evidence-based drug policies built on human rights as well as developed and implemented through the involvement of civil society are essential to meet these challenges.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.