European Union
Statement

WHO
72nd World Health Assembly
(20-28 May 2019)

Agenda item 21.1 – Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC)

Geneva, 24 May 2019

- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY –
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EU Statement

Honourable Chair,

Distinguished Director-General,

Colleagues,

I am speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Candidate Countries Montenegro*, Serbia* and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova as well as Georgia align themselves with this statement.

The EU and its Member States thank the Secretariat of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) for this report.

* Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
The EU and its Member States are strong supporters of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, as it is an effective global tobacco control tool and an important component of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. At their last Conference, the 181 Parties to the FCTC committed to a forward-looking Global Strategy to Accelerate Tobacco Control that will guide the FCTC implementation at global, regional and national levels until 2025. We reaffirm our strong commitment to Article 5.3 of the FCTC and its implementation guidelines on the protection of public health policies from the vested interests of the tobacco industry, as an important cross-cutting priority of the Global Strategy, crucial to successful tobacco control action in all policy domains.

In line with the Global Strategy, we urge the WHO and the Convention Secretariat to further strengthen their cooperation, in order to achieve an efficient implementation of COP decisions, and to reinforce cross-sectorial partnerships across the UN system and with other international organisations. The political as well as technical and administrative support that WHO can give to the Convention Secretariat is crucial to progress in FCTC implementation. Therefore, we invite WHO to facilitate procedures necessary to help enact the decisions of the Conference of the Parties. We also highlight the importance of swiftly concluding the hosting arrangement between the FCTC Secretariat and the WHO, reflecting the overarching primacy of the Conference of the Parties in relation to the work programme of the Convention Secretariat.

Importantly, the EU and its Member States call on WHO to ensure adequate resources for the work it is invited to carry out by several COP decisions, in complementarity to the work of the Convention Secretariat, with particular attention to novel and emerging tobacco products. The scientific and technical work on novel and emerging tobacco products that the WHO and Toblabnet are
invited to carry out, is crucial, also in light of recent developments in other international fora such as the World Customs Organisation, which risk jeopardising the primacy of WHO FCTC role in shaping regulatory recommendations for these products.

The EU and its Member States welcome the entry into force of the Protocol to Eliminate Illicit Trade in Tobacco Products, congratulate Parties who have recently joined the Protocol and renew the call upon all other Parties to the WHO FCTC who have not done so, to progress towards the ratification, acceptance, approval, formal confirmation or accession to it.

Finally, we take this opportunity to convey our appreciation to Dr Vera Luiza da Costa e Silva for her tireless efforts and skilful leadership in advancing global tobacco control work.

Thank you