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Madam Chair,

Mr Facilitator, distinguished delegates, members of panel, ladies and gentlemen.

Illicit drug market is one of the most profitable areas for organised crime groups operating in the European Union. And that is why more than 35% of OCG's are involved in drug trafficking. This makes it one of the biggest challenges for law enforcement agencies. Estonia is no exception. But we have had a unique problem for more than a decade now, which has claimed more lives per capita than anywhere else in Europe and even reaching one of the highest death rates in a world in 2012. The reason for that is fatal overdose deaths caused by fentanyl and its analogues.

By today, Estonia is not the only European country who is struggling with a fentanyl crisis, but it is still a "special case" and it has been so since 2001. Challenge with the synthetic opioids is, that the effectiveness of the drug makes it very easy to smuggle. Just 1 gram of fentanyl equals 25-35 doses, depending on the purity and the purity of such doses levels from 5-10%. So just a small amount of drug can cause a lot of harm and bring a lot of profit to OCG's.

This very difficult situation got the Estonian Police thinking, how to handle this enormous problem. And since people's lives were at stake, it was necessary to come up with some different approach and fast. In order to achieve success in dealing with the demanding issue, we found that it is vital to have a close cooperation on every possible level. We need to trust our partners, for only then we can really succeed.

The first step was to develop a database, which could be accessed by all law enforcement and judicial agencies and other partners who have a special bureau or department focusing on drug supply reduction activities. So nowadays Police and Border Guard Board which includes also Migration Bureau, Tax and Customs Board, Prosecutors Office, Prison Service, Financial Investigation Unit - share the same database where operational information can be exchanged with an ease.

Of course there are restrictions of access to some extent, but everybody has the access to the information that is necessary to do their work in best possible way. So if there is operational information available to a colleague in one of the national authorities and it is necessary for others in their work, they will get access to it. From this one database it is also possible to access almost all registers that are available in Estonia, so you can get full details of the criminal in just a few clicks.

Second thing that we did was merging police, border guard and migration bureau to one organisation (Police and Border Guard Board).

Third thing was establishing close cooperation with public health professionals and also with other partners such as local governments, schools, the private sector, parents and the community at large. Our experience shows that it is not possible to be successful addressing the issue only from supply side. As far as there is a demand there will always be supply.

For that reason we have established much wider forum consisting on Police and Border Guard Board, Tax and Customs Board, Prosecutors office, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Social Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Agency of Medicines, National Institute for Health Development, Estonian Forensic Science Institute, Ministry of Education and Research and when necessary we even invite more stakeholders. These authorities are all in a way or another responsible for demand and supply reduction and have common meetings usually 4 times a year. The idea behind this regular information exchange, is to have a look of our successes and challenges in our drug policy and try to figure out together how to address the problem even more efficiently and comprehensively.

In addition to that, police has established bilateral cooperation with various private sector companies, who are at some extent connected to drug industry or services that drug production and distribution requires such as pharmacy industry, medicines agency, chemical industry, energy companies, postal services etc. Due to this cooperation, we have been able to identify many illicit laboratories, plantations and seize large quantities of drugs and their precursors. Hereby we encourage the law enforcement agencies to have an open mind while addressing the issue.

The other effective factor in supply reduction, is focusing on criminal assets. During investigations of serious organized crime it is now a routine to launch a financial investigation focusing on confiscation and recovery of criminal assets as well as money laundering. This is the reason why in Estonia the Financial Investigation Unit is within the police. This affects criminals the most. People are willing to spend more time in prison rather than lose all their assets and proceeds of crime. For this is why they commit crime in a first place. To make money.

And it is clear, that international cooperation is utmost importance when we are dealing with drug supply. Organized criminal groups do not know the borders and so should not the law enforcement and judicial authorities.

To conclude, despite of all the changes that we have made, I can tell you that the problem is still there, but we have seen significant improvement. I believe that we are quite effective when we talk about supply reduction. But the drug problem must be addressed from both - supply and demand side simultaneously.

The basis for success is cooperation on all levels. Sharing information, assisting each other in criminal proceedings, forming of Joint Investigation Team's, sharing best practices and knowledges of new challenges.

Only joint efforts make it possible to have success in drug supply and drug problem as a whole.

Thank you!