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## OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

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From: General Secretariat of the Council  
On: 22 September 2016  
To: Delegations  
Subject: Outcomes of the EU-Russia expert meeting on drugs

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### 1. Adoption of the agenda

The meeting adopted the agenda as outlined in doc. CM 3657/1/16 REV 1.

### 2. Developments in drug situation and policy

The representatives of the Commission and EMCDDA informed the Russian delegation about the main findings of the European Drug Report 2016 as well as the developments in the EU drugs policy, including the ongoing evaluation of the current EU Action Plan on Drugs and the expert meeting on internet and drugs held in June 2016.

The Russian delegation informed the meeting that the Ministry of Interior has taken over the functions of the Federal Drug Control Service. The speaker explained that the Ministry had already been dealing with drug trafficking issues and would now also cover drug prevention activities. The expert explained that the number of patients who injected drugs decreased considerably last year, especially among youth, however, cannabis use increased by 9 percent in total and by 31 percent among youth.

### **3. Successful policies to reduce drug demand**

The representative of the Commission informed the Russian delegation about recently developed EU minimum quality standards in drug demand reduction, which represented a minimum benchmark of quality for interventions in: drug use prevention, risk and harm reduction, treatment, social integration and rehabilitation that Member States were encouraged to integrate and implement in their drug policies.

The representative of the EMCDDA explained the situation which led many EU Member States to adopt risk and harm reduction measures. The speaker noted that the evaluation of such interventions confirmed their efficiency in reducing drug use and limiting risk and harm associated with drug use. He also informed the meeting that an estimated 1.2 million people received treatment for drug use in the EU during 2014 - among them an estimated 644 000 opioid users received substitution treatment. The expert also noted that needle and syringe programmes allowed to reduce the number of new HIV infections by three quarters and that the current level of new infections was the lowest in decades. He also elaborated on efficient prevention measures.

The Czech delegation presented the national example on how the introduction of needle and syringe and opioid substitution programmes allowed to decrease the number of new HIV infections by half within 4-5 years. The speaker stressed that as a result less than 1 percent of injecting drug users were HIV positive.

The Russian delegation informed the meeting that the number of patients who abstained from drug use increased by 1,5 times in 2015 and noted that good cooperation with NGOs working in the field of drugs helped preventing drug users from relapsing. The expert explained that medical examinations of patients who were part of risk groups had been considerably increased and around one third of the population were annually checked against drug use. The expert also observed that HIV testing had been recently increased and a new approach had been taken to prevent HIV epidemics, where all patients going to hospitals would be tested for HIV. The expert explained that all forms of naltrexone were used for drug treatment rather than opioid substitution treatment, as the use of naltrexone showed much better results than the opioids substitution treatment. Also, Russia had negative experience with needle exchange programmes, therefore these programmes were not applied in the Russian Federation.

#### **4. Reducing drug supply and tackling new psychoactive substances**

The Russian delegation gave an overview of the drug trafficking situation in the Russian Federation, noting that cocaine smuggling had considerably increased. The speaker also informed the meeting that they were working on bringing under control a number of new psychoactive substances. The expert also mentioned the challenge presented by drug trafficking over the internet and noted that this issue required special attention.

The representative of the Commission informed the Russian delegation that the EU was working towards putting in place a more efficient system to tackle the most dangerous new psychoactive substances on the EU level and commented the work of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) in controlling the most dangerous substances on the global level. The speaker also informed the meeting about the recent study on alternatives to coercive sanctions for drug law offences and drug-related crime, which mapped the existing alternatives in different EU Member States and gave an overview of their application in practice. The representative of Europol gave an overview of the main findings of the recent EU Drug Markets report.

#### **5. Afghanistan and Central Asia**

The Russian delegation said that the drug situation in Afghanistan remained one of their main concerns and also noted a drastic increase in drug users in the country. Therefore they expressed a wish to strengthen the Paris Pact initiative. The delegation gave an overview of their anti-drug efforts in Afghanistan and neighbouring countries.

The representative of the EEAS informed the meeting about EU efforts to tackle drugs in Afghanistan, including the Heroin Route Programme and specific antinarcotics projects, implemented through the UNODC. He also recalled that the Brussels conference on Afghanistan would be held on 4-5 October 2016, for which a draft communique was being negotiated.

The representative of the EEAS gave an overview of EU cooperation with Central Asia, including through the CADAP programme aimed at supporting the national strategies, data collection, prevention, risk and harm reduction and treatment as well as the BOMCA programme dedicated at supporting capacity of border guards to cooperate efficiently. The German delegation gave an overview of the latest developments in implementing the CADAP programme.

## **6. Exchange of views on the implementation of the UNGASS outcome document and the 2019 review process**

The Russian delegation noted that they were happy with the outcome of the UNGASS on drugs, held in 2016 April in New York, given that it confirmed the importance of the three UN drug control conventions. The delegation also stressed that the focus should now be on the implementation of the recommendations outlined in the UNGASS outcome document and thought that the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) should continue to play a leading role in this process.

The Presidency also expressed satisfaction with the UNGASS and the outcome document, which included new language on many important topics like access to controlled medicines, the international need for a more balanced approach, the strengthening of public health and human rights approaches, gender equality, new psychoactive substances, enhanced coordination among UN Agencies and the strengthened role for the World Health Organization. Also, the structure of the outcome document, away from the traditional three pillars of the 2009 Political Declaration, provided for more holistic discussions on the world drug problem in the future. The Presidency, however, regretted that no reference to abolition of the death penalty for drug-related offences was made in the outcome document and that the concept of "risk and harm" reduction did not appear. The EU side also stressed the importance of the implementation of the recommendations foreseen in the UNGASS outcome document.

Delegations also exchanged preliminary views as regards 2019 global drug policy review.

## **7. AOB**

No items were discussed under this agenda point.