



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 14 March 2013

7297/13

**CORDROGUE 26
COWEB 34**

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

of: EU-Western Balkans dialogue on drugs
on: 26 February 2013
Subject: Summary of discussions

1. Adoption of the agenda

The meeting adopted the agenda as set out in doc. CM 1201/13.

2. Overview of the cooperation between the EU and Western Balkans

The representative of the Commission gave an overview of the cooperation with Western Balkans, outlining the main programmes and initiatives implemented and emphasising the structured and result-oriented engagement with the region.

The representative of the EMCDDA emphasised the tangible results achieved in the beneficiary states in the framework of the IPA 4 programme, as well as the involvement of Western Balkans experts in the existing EU networks.

The representative of Europol gave an overview of different cooperation activities, including trainings and visits, carried out with Western Balkans in such areas as asset recovery, money laundering, witness protection. He underlined that cooperation with the region was one of the highest priorities and expressed hope to conclude the operational agreements with Western Balkans by 2014. He also informed the meeting that Western Balkans gained access to SIENA, and that agreements on liaison officers were to be negotiated as a next step.

Albania expressed satisfaction about cooperation with EMCDDA and noted significant progress in cooperation with Europol. The speaker informed the meeting that the installation of SIENA significantly fostered the information exchange.

Kosovo* confirmed that they were finalising the process of setting up the observatory on drugs and provided information on the methadone substitution programme.

Montenegro informed the meeting about the plans to present the draft action plan for Chapter 24 "Justice, Freedom and Security" to the EU in early March 2013, where the fight against drug abuse will be specifically pointed out. The speaker also explained that the operational agreement with Europol was to be signed in 2013, and that efforts were also focused on strengthening the national focal point at the Ministry of Health.

Serbia informed the meeting about the participation in EMCDDA activities, the twinning project to assist drafting the new drugs strategy in line with the EU *acquis communautaire* and other drug-related initiatives. The speaker also confirmed that the national focal point had not been appointed yet.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/99 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

3. Renewal of the EU-Western Balkans commitment to a comprehensive, balanced and evidence-based response to the drugs phenomenon after the expiration of the EU-Western Balkans Action Plan on drugs (2009-2013)

The representative of the Commission reminded the delegates that a stocktaking exercise was conducted with a view to reviewing the progress in implementing the current EU-Western Balkans Action Plan on Drugs. She presented the achievements in the areas of strategic planning, legislation and institution building, demand reduction and monitoring, law enforcement and judicial cooperation, precursor and essential chemicals control and money laundering, contained in doc. DS 1116/3/13 REV 3. The speaker welcomed the results of this exercise and the delegations were invited to further update this document, should they wish to include more relevant information.

Montenegro informed the meeting that a new national drugs strategy for the year 2013-2020, prepared with help of EU experts and with support of the UNODC, would be soon adopted.

Albania noted that coordination of the fight against drugs was improved by setting up the national coordination committee and that a new national drugs strategy for the period 2012-2016, based on balanced approach and in line with the EU Drugs strategy, was in place.

Kosovo explained that the drugs strategy for the years 2012-2017 contained five objectives following the EU Drugs strategy and informed the meeting about the plans to start a research project on drug situation in Kosovo.

A discussion was held concerning ways to update the EU-Western Balkans commitment to fight against drugs, as the current EU-Western Balkans Action Plan on Drugs expires in 2013. The representative of the Commission noted that as the current Action Plan was a comprehensive one, the commitment to fight against drugs could be updated by adopting a declaration at the forthcoming EU-Western Balkans Ministerial Forum on JHA affairs to be held in November 2013 in Montenegro. Such a declaration could indicate some actions as priorities (e.g. new psychoactive substances) and outline the period for which the validity of the Action Plan is extended or indicate the deadline for the next stocktaking exercise. The speaker also noted that adopting such a declaration at the Ministerial Forum would not be a novelty, as several declarations were already adopted at the meeting in 2012 in Tirana.

Delegations reacted positively to this proposal and promised to come back with an official confirmation concerning the suggestion to update the EU-Western Balkans commitment to fight against drugs by adopting a declaration at the Ministerial Forum rather than drafting a new Action Plan.

4. Developments of drug policy and drug situation

The Presidency outlined the main objectives of the EU Drugs Strategy 2013-2020, contained in doc. 17547/12 JAI 901 CORDROGUE 101 SAN 324 JAIEX 124 and informed the meeting about the on-going work on the draft EU Drugs Action Plan 2013-2016, contained in doc. 5418/1/13 REV 1 CORDROGUE 5 SAN 18 ENFOPOL 12 RELEX 42.

The representative of the Commission informed the meeting about the progress achieved with different legislative proposals and non-legislative initiatives outlined in its communication "Towards a stronger European response to drugs" (doc. 15983/11 JAI 769 CORDROGUE 70 SAN 211).

The representative of the EMCDDA presented the key findings of the EU Drug Markets Report (doc. 5421/13 CORDROGUE 8 ENFOPOL 13 + ADD1), explaining the latest trends in drug trafficking, such as the role of internet, an increase in multi-commodity trafficking, and the use of legitimate transportation. He also gave an overview of the situation with different drugs in the EU.

Albania made remarks on the above-mentioned report concerning the data used, and Serbia informed the meeting that drug use among school children was stable and that the number of drug-related deaths was decreasing.

5. Drug trafficking routes and measures to reduce drug supply

Europol outlined the latest trends in drug trafficking, concerning the trafficking routes, enhanced co-operation between criminal groups, their increasingly international composition, the role of internet and the growing importance of Africa in these illegal activities. He gave an overview of production and trafficking of different types of drugs, noting that Europe remained an important producer of cannabis and synthetic drugs.

The speaker outlined the main activities taken to fight against drug trafficking, also reminding that a number of EMPACT priorities were relevant to drug trafficking.

Austria summarised the results of the finalised "Drug Policing Balkan" project and informed the meeting that they had applied to the Commission to receive funding for the new project concerning joint investigations along the Balkans Route.

The representative of the EEAS gave an overview of the Heroin Route programme, which was coming into its second phase, and noted that the EEAS was looking forward to cooperating more closely with Western Balkans in the framework of this project, although its main focus remained the Black Sea countries.

Montenegro informed the meeting that it remained a transit point, and to a much lesser extent the ultimate destination for mainly marihuana, cocaine and heroin. The speaker also noted that the Western Balkans route branch going through Montenegro was not a major trafficking route, given the volume of drugs trafficked.

Albania presented statistics on seized drugs, explaining that compared to 2011, in 2012 there was a high increase in the number and quantity of drug seizures and also an increase of the number of offenders arrested. The speaker also informed the meeting that the analysis of THC did not confirm a presence of skunk in Albania.

Serbia explained that the majority of drugs trafficked through the country were destined for Western Europe and only a small quantity was aimed at the local market and that marihuana remained the most popular drug in Serbia. He also noted that the price of heroin was record high and that seizures of heroin were decreasing.

Kosovo also presented the statistics on the seized drugs, explaining that cocaine was not really present in Kosovo.

6. Drug demand reduction policies

The representative of the Commission gave an overview of the EU programmes and initiatives in the field of drug demand reduction, including the Drug Prevention and Information Programme and the Civil Society Forum on Drugs.

The representative of the EMCDDA emphasised the leading role of Europe in this field, also noting that harm reduction, although still controversial, was now included into different strategies and action plans of the Member States. He also underlined that the EU Drugs Strategy was the only strategy in the world calling for evidence-based drugs policy. The speaker gave an overview of drug treatment in the EU, mentioning that drug treatment in prisons was still underdeveloped in many regions, however, there were promising initiatives in some Member States.

Kosovo informed the meeting that drug demand reduction was one of their priorities and outlined different initiatives implemented in this field. Nevertheless, the speaker noted that due to the lack of resources some components of demand reduction such as resocialisation and reintegration were very difficult to implement.

Serbia informed the meeting about the organisation of drug demand reduction measures in the country, which included harm reduction measures and treatment in prisons. The speaker also mentioned that methadone treatment was covered by health insurance.

7. Any other business

No items were discussed under AOB.
