



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 16 April 2012

8778/12

CORDROGUE 21

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

of: Meeting of the Horizontal Working Party on Drugs
on: 5 March 2012
Subject: Summary of discussions

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda set out in document CM 1800/12 was approved with addition of the following point under AOB:

- Discussion on drug decriminalisation in Central America.

2. Information concerning the proceedings of other EU bodies

A representative of the COM gave a brief overview of the drug related funding foreseen for the next financial period. The Chair of the ad-hoc working group on Financial Instruments presented the progress made in discussing the Justice and the Health for Growth programmes and emphasised that in order to avoid duplication the chairs of different working groups would ensure as much coordination as possible.

A number of delegations expressed their concern about the lack of specific future EU funding for drug prevention, stressed that they were not satisfied with the removal of drug related issues from the Health for Growth programme and asked them to be included into this programme.

A representative of the EMCDDA noted that the HDG was created as a coordinating body, therefore it should be more active in dealing with these issues and not only be informed about the progress.

The Presidency shared the opinion that the funding issues should be dealt with in the working groups dealing with financial instruments and encouraged the delegations to express their concerns in them.

3. Assessment of the implementation of the EU Drugs Strategy 2005-2012 and its Actions Plans

a) Presentation of the final report by the Commission and RAND Europe

An expert from RAND presented the major findings of the assessment of the current EU Drugs Strategy and its action plans explaining that the Strategy was successful in achieving some of the set goals, that it added value in developing understanding and shared language within the EU, contributed to more collaborative and informed drafting of national drug strategies, facilitated information exchange and sharing of best practices across the Member States, helped the EU to speak with one voice at international fora and promoted a clearly recognisable and acknowledged "EU model" of tackling drug related challenges. There are considerable achievements in the field of information, research and evaluation, the strategy had some success in the field of demand reduction, especially in promoting evidenced-based approach, but in the field of drug supply reduction there is limited evidence of success.

The results of the assessment also indicated that the HDG was considered to be a unique and innovative body and was viewed positively by the Member States. However, COSI was gaining prominence in the field of drug supply reduction and therefore was posing a potential threat to the balanced approach in the HDG.

b) Presentation of the 2004-2011 drug trends report by the EMCDDA

A representative of the EMCDDA presented the above-mentioned report prepared for the assessment of the current EU Drugs Strategy and aiming to indicate the changes in the drug situation between the beginning and the end of the implementation of the strategy.

Comparing to the situation in 2004, currently the estimated number of opioid users remains stable, however, the number of injecting users significantly decreased and the number of people in substitution treatment grew by some 40 percent. The use of cocaine increased, so did the number of cocaine caused deaths, but the demand for treatment also grew. The consumption of ecstasy decreased substantially and mephathetamine is replacing the amphetamine in a number of markets. For cannabis there is a stable decreasing trend and currently there are less cannabis users, however, domestic cannabis cultivation is on the rise. Concerning new drugs, if in 2004 6 new substances were reported, in 2010 there were 41. The positive developments are that currently most Member States are turning towards an evidence-based policy and are evaluating their drug strategies, that the overall number of people in treatment reached an unprecedented number of 1,1 million (although large differences among the Member States still exist) and that harm reduction is applied in all the EU, albeit with varying levels of intervention. The speaker summarised that there had been certain changes in the drug situation which should be taken on board while developing the new drugs strategy, but they were not dramatic.

c) Discussion

The representative of the COM informed the meeting that they were currently evaluating the 2003 Council Decision on harm reduction and conducting a study on cannabis. They also promised to share in one of the forthcoming HDG meetings the results about the EU drugs market study and about ongoing drug research projects, which would be useful in setting the priorities for the new EU drugs strategy and action plans.

A few delegations stressed that despite all the limitations, the new strategy should be a document allowing the EU to speak with one voice and pointed out the need to prioritise actions contained in the strategy, so as not to end up with as many actions as in the current strategy. Some delegations commented on the findings of the RAND assessment concerning the role of the HDG, emphasising that it was important not to lose the balanced approach given that HDG was a horizontal group. The FI delegation noted that the task of current and future Presidencies would be to find ways to improve the coordination in drug supply reduction and the IT delegation insisted on the importance of evaluating the success of treatment not only by measuring the level of mortality, but also by cases of recovery.

In reply to delegations, the expert from RAND explained that it was difficult to draw causal links between the implementation of the current drugs strategy and the changes in the drugs situation, as there might be other factors influencing changes in the drug situation.

The Presidency informed the meeting about their intention to present draft Council Conclusions on the new EU drugs strategy during the next HDG meeting and invited delegations to send their written comments on this issue.

4. *Follow up to the discussion on the future EU antidrug policy: how to proceed*

The Presidency presented the outcome of the discussion on the future of the EU drugs policy held during the HDG meeting on 6 February 2012 and the written contributions received after the meeting, contained in doc. DS 1131/12.

Some delegations agreed that the current strategy was a good starting point for the drafting of the new drugs strategy and encouraged to start concrete work on that. A representative of the EMCDDA stressed the importance of constructing an evaluation model for the new strategy from the very beginning. The representative of the COM informed the meeting that they would have an input from the Civil Society Forum on the new drugs strategy and also results from the public consultation, during which it was inquired how to tackle drug supply and new psychoactive substances.

Some delegations questioned the Presidency about their plans concerning establishing a "reflection group" and the Presidency promised to come back with this answer during the April HDG meeting.

5. *Preparation for the 55th session of the CND*

The delegations examined some of the provisions of the opening statements to be presented on behalf of the EU during the above-mentioned meeting and agreed on the final text.

The IT delegation presented final comments received on their resolution for the CND concerning the promotion of female-oriented strategies and interventions, contained in doc. DS 1068/2/12 REV 2.

The meeting endorsed the revised document and agreed to table it as an EU resolution during the forthcoming CND session.

Delegations proposed further changes to the UK, Australian and Japanese resolution for the CND, concerning the promotion of international cooperation in responding to new psychoactive substances, contained in doc. DS 1070/2/12 REV 2 and it was agreed to continue the discussion on this resolution in Vienna and to table it on behalf of the EU.

The BE delegation presented their resolution concerning the development of the electronic import and export authorisation system for licit trade in controlled substances, contained in doc. DS 1114/1/12 REV 1. Delegations provided further comments to the document and it was agreed to continue the discussion on this resolution in Vienna and to table it on behalf of the EU.

The CZ delegation presented their resolution concerning the promotion of the use and availability of measures to prevent death from opiate overdose, contained in doc. DS 1158/12. The speaker explained that the resolution was drafted to address the problem of high mortality rate, as around 80 percent of drug related deaths were associated with the consumption of opiates and that they would like to focus on prevention among the risk population. The delegations provided comments on the document and a number of remarks were made on the use of the specific name "naloxone" in it. The representative of the EMCDDA noted that only 16 Member States included measures to prevent overdose in their national strategies. The delegations were asked to send their written comments on this resolution by 7 March 2012 at the latest and the Presidency announced that further discussion concerning it would be continued in Vienna, where it would be decided whether to table this resolution in the name of the EU.

6. Preparation for the EU-CELAC Technical Committee meeting

The Chair of the dialogues on drugs presented the agenda of the above-mentioned meeting, to be held on 6 March 2012, contained in doc. CM 1566/12. The representative of the COM made several suggestions for the topics for thematic debates to be held during the EU-CELAC High Level meeting on 4-5 June 2012 in Brussels.

7. Bolivian re-accession to the 1961 UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs

The delegations exchanged opinions on the above-mentioned issue.

8. AOB

The ES delegation informed the meeting that a possibility about having a debate on the decriminalisation of drugs was being considered in Central America with some of their leaders starting to discuss this idea with other leaders. A representative of the EEAS added that some of the leaders were thinking to discuss this idea during the forthcoming Summit of Americas, which is an important event, gathering the leaders of both North and South America. However, not all Central American leaders supported this idea and the scope of this initiative remained unclear.
