



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

Brussels, 16 May 2012

9987/12

**CORDROGUE 31
COEST 154**

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

Of: EU Dialogue on Drugs with Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine
On: 19 April 2012
Subject: Summary of discussions

1. Adoption of the agenda

The meeting adopted the agenda set out in doc. CM 2445/12.

2. Developments in the EU antidrug policy

A representative of the Commission gave an overview of the drug-related developments at the EU, presenting the Commission communication "Towards a stronger European response to drugs", contained in doc. 15983/11 JAI 769 CORDROGUE 70 SAN 211, the results of the evaluation of the EU Drugs Strategy and also the process of developing the EU consensus on quality standards and benchmarks in prevention, treatment, harm reduction and rehabilitation.

3. Developments in the EU drugs situation

A representative of the EMCDDA gave an overview of the drugs situation in Europe in 2011, contained in doc. 17139/11 CORDROGUE 78 + ADD 1.

4. Developments in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine

The Ukrainian delegation presented the drugs situation in Ukraine informing the meeting that drug related crimes and drug addiction had become a serious problem and that drug abuse among young people was increasing. He explained that the effectiveness of Ukrainian law enforcement agencies was reinforced and nearly 20 tons of drugs, including 14 tons of cannabis and nearly 900 kg of cocaine were seized last year. There are many programmes of drug prevention implemented, which allowed to stop the quick increase in the number of drug addicts. The speaker also informed the meeting that they started creating a unified national system for monitoring drugs, psychotropic substances and drug precursors, which would allow judging more precisely the drug situation in the country.

The delegation also gave an overview of the recent policy developments reminding that a few years ago a special central executive body for the control of drugs was created that was later given additional tasks and powers, which positively influenced the coordination of the fight against drugs. A scientific advisory council was also created, which is a consultancy body consisting of 14 experts who make recommendations if the substance under control should be submitted to the list of forbidden substances. The speaker also informed the meeting that recently the Government decided to establish the regional bodies of the State Drug Control Service and that the Service had initiated a debate on the first national drugs strategy, which would be presented during an international high level conference in Kiev in May 2012.

The Moldovan delegation gave an overview of the drugs situation in Moldova, informing the meeting that the last population survey was done in 2009/2010 and that the estimated number of injecting drug users was 21,061 on the right bank and 10,501 on the left bank. In 2011 on the right bank there were 127 newly registered cases of drug use with addiction symptoms and 841 cases without them. The most common way of drug administration at the moment of registration for users without addiction symptoms was smoking with cannabis being used in most cases, while for the drug users with addiction symptoms it was opiates with the majority of them injecting drugs. The speaker explained that detoxification was the main service offered by the health system and that 389 persons received it at the end of last year. Substitution opiate treatment was available since 2004-2005.

The Moldovan delegation also presented drug policy developments reminding that the antidrug strategy for 2011-2018 was in force and announcing that this year they would conduct the evaluation of the implementation of the strategy and its action plan, which would be the first such evaluation exercise.

A representative of the EMCDDA informed the delegations that they were preparing some evaluation guidelines seeking to establish a common set of criteria for evaluation of drug policies, which should be finalised by the end of this year. He also announced that a REITOX meeting to be held in the end of May in Lisbon, during which workshops with a few case studies would be conducted, would be also open for the participation of the current and future observatories from the Eastern Neighbourhood countries.

The Georgian delegation reported on major improvements done in 2011 with regards to drug related crime suppression and national coordination and declared that there was a significant decrease in drug related crimes over the last few years and that a number of so-called “heavy” drug consumers decreased. However, the number of other type of drug consumers increased and the circulation of so-called “soft” narcotic drugs, especially of cannabis, augmented. The patterns of the increasing poly-drug use are also observed and the official number of problematic drug users is 40 000 with a majority of them consuming heroin and ibumorphine. However, since these were practically removed from the Georgian market, the addicts had to search for a replacement and one of the answers in this situation was the introduction of substitution therapy in Georgia. It developed very fast, now covering 80 percent of the country territory. The speaker asserted that there was no methadone in Georgia in illegal circulation.

The delegation presented policy developments informing the meeting that in 2011 a Council for Fighting Drug Addiction was established under the Ministry of Justice and would be co-chaired by the Ministry of Health. Another development is that the first state drugs strategy is under development, for which four working groups on international cooperation, information gathering, research and evaluation, drug supply reduction and drug demand reduction were established. The strategy should be a long term document, in line with international standards, and should be finalised by the end of this year and presented for the adoption of the Council and the President.

The speaker also informed that very recently a National Centre for Mental Health for Addiction was established and all the experts working in the field of drugs were consolidated in the new centre.

The Azeri delegation announced that the drugs situation in the country was of special concern as due to the geographical situation the country was an attractive route for drugs. While hashish is the most popular drug, cocaine is not a favourite type of drug in Azerbaijan. There were 26 000 registered drug users in the country in 2011 (with females representing only 2 percent) and 2105 people were registered for therapy with 900 of them being registered for the first time. Methadone substitution therapy has been implemented since 2004. HIV was not wide spread, however, it was most related with injecting drug use, representing about 63 percent of all cases.

Concerning policy development, the delegation informed that a state programme against fighting narcotic drugs, psychoactive substances and precursors was in place for 2004-2012, and that the next one was foreseen for 2013-2018. In addition, a strategy against the fight of drugs and an action plan were under preparation, which should be finalised by the end of this year.

A representative of the EMCDDA asked for the definition of the term of "registered drugs users", which all the above-mentioned delegations were referring to. The delegations explained that they were still using the system introduced during soviet times, according to which a registered drug user was a drug user, registered at some medical dispensary (on a voluntary or obligatory basis, depending on the country). Therefore, this number indicated only the number of diagnosed people with addiction, but did not show the prevalence of drug use in population. The delegations inquired about the methods for counting the prevalence of drug use and the representative of the EMCDDA explained that this data could be collected by conducting surveys and by gathering data on drug seizures and that new methods were being developed such as sewage water analysis.

5. Thematic debates: synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances - situation and solutions

The Chair explained that this topic was chosen for the thematic debates as synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances was a raising concern in the EU. In general, the Georgian, Azeri, Moldavian and Ukrainian delegations indicated that these substances did not represent a cause of concern in their countries.

The Georgian delegation explained that they did not have any statistically significant data about abuse of such drugs in Georgia, however, they understood that they should prepare for this phenomenon to come. The speaker explained that buying new psychoactive substances on Internet was not a major issue, as the Ministry of Internal Affairs was cooperating closely with the transportation companies and if substances which were not tested as drugs but looked suspicious and did not have documentation, were detected on the border, the border officers could confiscate them without having to prove what the substance was.

The Azeri delegation noted that synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances were not well known and widespread in the country, with synthetic drugs being confiscated only since this year in Azerbaijan. New psychoactive substances are not being sold on the territory of Azerbaijan and there is no domestic use of them, although there were a few cases of smuggling. Some prevention measures against these substances are taken.

The Ukrainian delegation informed the meeting that there were attempts to try new psychoactive substances, but no statistics was available on that. The speaker emphasised that the use of synthetic drugs was noticeably growing and probably it represented the most growing group of drugs in Ukraine. However, opiates was still the second most popular drug with synthetic drugs quickly taking their place. There was only a small percentage of synthetic drugs seized compared to the total of seizures, although it was also increasing.

The Moldovan delegation noted that they had synthetic drugs seizures every year since 1999, although the amounts were not big and they were not replacing traditional drugs. The speaker also informed the meeting that in 2011 and in 2012 they came across new psychoactive substances, however, the difficulty was to detect them and to determine their precise composition (as there are many components, some of them might not be in a national database). However, in a given case cooperation with Polish laboratories allowed to determine the exact composition of the new psychoactive substance detected. The speaker admitted that for the moment the national experience on his topic was not sufficient and that they could only profit from the international cooperation. He further informed the meeting that there was no specific treatment for people with problematic synthetic drug use, therefore general treatment was applied (detoxification and psychological consultation). What concerns prevention, the same approach is taken as with other categories of drugs.

A representative of the EMCDDA expressed his belief that such a situation with synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances in Eastern partnership countries could be related with market approach and cultural aspects. He explained that some EU countries had a long tradition of consumption of synthetic drugs, which were different from other drugs in a way that they could be produced locally and that the effects of addiction were not visible until very late. Moreover, he affirmed that the traditional prevention system did not work in case of synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances.

6. Developments in the EU-Eastern Europe relations

A representative of the European Union Border Assistance Mission to Moldova and Ukraine (EUBAM) presented their drug-related work, informing the meeting that a working group dealing with trafficking in drugs, weapons, smuggling and custom frauds was established and that a task force on drugs was launched last year on the request of Ukraine, aiming to have a mechanism allowing to fight drug trafficking through containers in sea ports. The main targets of this task force are two Ukrainian sea ports and the task force organised a few operational meetings in Odessa (Ukraine) last year. She also announced that in the near future there were plans to conduct an exercise on controlled delivery.

The Chair and PL delegation presented the outcomes of several recent events, including the EU-Eastern Europe conference (26-27 October 2011, Warsaw) and Eastern partnership summit (29-30 September 2011, Warsaw) and recent documents, touching upon the cooperation with Eastern Europe in the field of drugs, namely Council conclusions on the EU-Eastern Europe cooperation in the field of drugs, Council conclusions on cooperation in the area of justice and home affairs within the Eastern partnership and the European Pact against Synthetic Drugs.

A representative of the COM gave a brief update on the Heroin Route Programme Phase II and Eastern Partnership Project „Euroeast Police”, informing the meeting that the latter was under preparation and would probably start in 2013.

7. Any other business

No items were discussed under this agenda item.
