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from: German regional chair of the Dublin Group

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Subject: Country report on Iran

At its Brussels-meeting on 6 December 2011, the Mini Dublin Group Iran presented a report on the current drug situation in Iran and the cooperation with the Mini Dublin Group (MDG) partners. This report focuses on the current situation and recent developments since December 2011.

The drug situation in the Islamic Republic of Iran remains critical. Located next to Afghanistan and Pakistan Iran is still a major transit country for any kind of drugs on the way to other countries, including MDG member countries. Furthermore, a huge amount of drugs stays in Iran for local consumption. In addition, abuse and production of crystal methseems to be on the rise. Despite intensive and continued efforts by the Iranian authorities to tackle the numerous challenges, there is still a long way to go to mend the overall drug situation in Iran.

Despite limited funds, UNODC has continued its valuable work, as lined out in its country programme and the Triangular Initiative, facilitating technical cooperation with Iran at the bilateral, regional and international level and promoting United Nations and international standards and good practices. Cooperation with neighbouring countries is now being enhanced by UNODC through a regional programme. Furthermore, the EU-funded ECO project has set up its new secretariat in Tehran and discussed continuation of its work in a Steering Committee meeting held in Berlin in April 2012.

Several political factors and the quality of bilateral relations continue to influence the level of possible political and technical dialogue with the Iranian authorities. After the incident at the British Embassy (December 2011) and the latest tightening of the nuclear sanctions, the political atmosphere has become even more tense. Thus, international cooperation is cumbersome. The main interlocutor, Minister of Interior and SG of the Iranian Drug Control Headquarter (DCHQ) Mostafa Najjar, is one of the persons sanctioned by EU and US. Furthermore, the deteriorating human rights situation, especially the worrisome increased application of the death penalty for drug related crimes has reduced the level of technical cooperation to a minimum extend in this areas. In this regard, UNODC remains an essential and irreplaceable partner to dialogue with the Iranian authorities, particularly at a time of little international and bilateral cooperation.

Nevertheless, being of mutual interest of both, the cooperation in this field should be kept alive as much as the political atmosphere allows. To sustain dialogue, promote international standards and support counter narcotics efforts of the Iranian authorities, MDG countries should consider the provision of the necessary funds for the implementation of the UNODC country programme .