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NOTE

from:	Presidency
to:	Horizontal Working Party on Drugs
Subject:	Report on the National Drug Coordinators' Meeting in Nicosia, 18 th of September 2012

In the framework of the Cyprus Presidency of the Council of the EU and the Horizontal Working Party on drugs (HDG), the National Drug Coordinators' Meeting was held in Nicosia, on the 18th of September 2012.

National drug coordinators and drug policy experts coming from 19 Member States (Austria, Spain, United Kingdom, Ireland, Germany, Romania, Belgium, Poland, Sweden, Greece, Lithuania, Finland, Denmark, Italy, Netherlands, Czech Republic, France, Malta), Croatia and various EU bodies (Commission, General Secretariat of the Council and EMCDDA) participated in the event. The Cyprus delegation during the meeting was composed of representatives from the Cyprus Anti-Drugs Council, the Drug Law Enforcement Unit of Cyprus Police, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Therapeutic Community "Ayia Skepi" (NGO).

The morning session of the meeting took place at the "Filoxenia" Conference Centre and was chaired by Dr. Chrysanthos Georgiou, Chairperson of the Cyprus Anti-Drugs Council (CAC) and HDG Chair. During the morning session, a welcoming statement on behalf of the President of the Republic was delivered through the Director of his Office.

Initially, the Presidency gave an overview of the draft EU Drugs Strategy for 2013-2020, which is currently under discussion and informed the delegates that the Strategy was to be adopted by the European Council in December 2012. The National Drug Coordinators agreed on the added value of the new Strategy and that the discussion leading to its endorsement has been successful so far. A need to focus on a limited number of future priorities and invest into policies that have proved to be effective, given the current economic situation and budgetary restraints, which have inevitable repercussions on drug policy on a national and EU level, was stressed during the meeting. Many delegations voiced their concern as regards the possible gaps in the future drug related EU funding.

The meeting focused on the topic of “Women Drug Treatment: Issues and Challenges”. A survey conducted by the CAC and the Cyprus Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction focusing on how responses to women’s drug problems are planned and implemented in Europe was presented by Mr. Stelios Sergides, Member of the CAC, Superintendent B of Drug Law Enforcement Unit. The aim of the study was to introduce a broader expert perspective on available responses to women drug users provided by heads of national focal points, and also to build knowledge on useful practices for the future. A booklet on the survey results and review of scientific literature was published and disseminated to the participants.

In her presentation, Dr. Katerina Matsa, psychiatrist and Director in Greece’s National Health System, gave an overview of successful results of the drug treatment unit “18 ANO”, which implements a gender sensitive programme for drug dependent women.

Dr. Elisabetta Simeoni, Scientific Area Director for the Department for Anti-drug policies of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, presented the ongoing work concerning the guidelines on drug prevention, treatment and rehabilitation for girls and women, including the DAD.Net project. This is an international network aiming to promote specific interventions targeted at girls and women to prevent the risks related to alcohol and drugs consumption as well as to re-orientate social and health services towards gender-focused prevention, treatment and rehabilitation so as to better meet the specific needs of drug addicted women.

During the afternoon session, the participants visited the Therapeutic Community “Ayia Skepi” which runs the first treatment programme for women in Cyprus. Further to the presentation of the philosophy, structure and services provided by the programme, National Drug Coordinators had the opportunity to have a tour of the premises.

In conclusion, the meeting proved to be a useful platform of exchange of knowledge and information as regards the issue of drug dependent women and their needs. Participants underlined the importance of taking into account the specific needs and vulnerabilities of women and of designing services that are evidence- based and targeting their needs and realities.
