



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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**CORDROGUE 74
SAN 257**

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

of: EU-Lebanon and Morocco expert dialogue on drugs

on: 2 October 2012

Subject: Summary of discussions

1. Adoption of the agenda

The meeting adopted the agenda as set out in doc. CM 4527/12 with addition of the following points under AOB:

- Euromed Police III project;
- EU development assistance to Morocco;
- Multi-country Workshop on “Drug prevention and monitoring: situation and perspectives in the ENP Southern Partnership countries”.

2. Drug situation and policy in the EU and in Lebanon and Morocco

The Presidency informed the meeting about the preparation of the new EU Drugs Strategy to be adopted by the end of the year. The representative of the Commission gave an overview of the EU drugs situation and the new anti-drug legislation currently under preparation.

The Lebanese delegation informed the meeting that during the civil war Lebanon was a drug producing and exporting country, especially for hashish and opiate poppy. The speaker also noted that lately Lebanon had become a transit country for drug trafficking and that drugs were being smuggled by air, maritime and terrestrial routes. Although clandestine laboratories for drug production do not exist, law enforcement officers detect handmade tools used for the production of heroin, hashish and extraction of the cocaine powder. Also, there are attempts to produce captagon, especially near the border with Syria. Concerning consumption, hashish is the most consumed drug in Lebanon with cocaine and heroin also being popular drugs and there are problems with the misuse of medicines. Although no written antidrug strategy exists in the country, the delegation emphasised its determination to fight drugs from different angles.

The Lebanese delegation called on fostering international cooperation between producing and destination countries and also expressed interest in learning from the EU experience on creating national drug observatories. They were informed that EMCDDA was assisting different countries to develop national drug observatories.

The Moroccan delegation informed the meeting that the national antidrug strategy was in place since 2005 and that they were stepping up efforts to fight the cannabis growing industry, including by preparing an integrated alternative development strategy for cannabis growing regions aimed at fighting against the problem from social, economic and human angles. Also, actions were taken to cut down supply and neutralise trafficking routes. The speaker noted that a number of criminal groups had been dismantled and according to the satellite image, the area grown by cannabis was reduced by 65 % between 2003, when the first study on cannabis growing was carried out, and 2010. The meeting was also informed that cocaine trafficking had become very significant in Morocco.

In reply to the delegations, the Moroccan representatives explained that the first survey on cannabis growth was conducted in 2003 in collaboration with the UNODC and further studies were done in 2004 and 2005, however, no study had been conducted since then. The delegation expressed willingness to carry out a new survey, but cooperation was needed. The speaker called for more advanced cooperation with the EU and UNODC.

The EEAS desk officer for Lebanon informed the delegates that negotiations on the new action plan within the EU neighbourhood policy, which would define the cooperation with Lebanon in the following years, was being finalised. He added that the action plan included a component on drugs, with particular emphasis put on strengthening national coordination, international cooperation, prevention and treatment.

The EEAS desk officer for Morocco gave an overview of the EU-Morocco cooperation in the area of drugs, also noting that a new action plan would be concluded with Morocco within the EU neighbourhood policy, including a component on drugs. The representative mentioned that the process of signing the Memorandum of Understanding with the EMCDDA has been started, but not completed and encouraged the delegation to do so. The Moroccan delegation replied that they would be happy to step up relations with the EMCDDA.

3. Drug trafficking routes and measures to reduce drug supply

The representative of Europol informed the meeting that the latest OCTA report 2011 revealed the diversification in drug trafficking - criminals tending to deal with different drugs at once, instead of dealing with a single drug, as in the past. Also, enhanced cooperation was seen between different criminal group and container shipment started to play a very prominent role in drug trafficking. The representative gave an overview of trafficking of different kinds of drugs, mentioning that Afghanistan remained the major source of heroin and that the Balkan routes continued to be very exploited by criminals for its trafficking, although the Black sea route was increasingly used. He also noted that the Balkans were becoming more and more significant as a new centre for trafficking cocaine, that the majority of hashish came to the EU from Northern Africa and that small aircrafts and even helicopters were progressively used for that. The speaker also mentioned that synthetic drugs were produced in the EU and trafficked within and outside the EU and stressed that combating them was one of the biggest priorities in EU. Differently from the past, major precursors for synthetic drugs production were produced or diversified in the EU and not trafficked in from the source countries.

The Lebanese delegation mentioned that hashish was produced in the country, that precursors were imported in Lebanon and that heroin and cocaine were trafficked through the country with the land route being the most important route for drug trafficking.

Various methods were used to import drugs like concealing them in human bodies, animals, inside equipment, mixing them with other goods, transporting raw substances under the name of legal substances or bringing with uncontrolled trucks. He emphasised the difficulties of inspecting all containers without creating problems for freedom of legal movement of goods.

The Moroccan delegation informed the meeting that cannabis growing was concentrated mainly in the north of the country, where there were mountains, poor soil subjected to erosion, deforestation and a very dense population comparing with the country's average, which created additional difficulties in fighting against drugs and promoting alternative development in the area. Different methods of cannabis plants eradication was used, including mechanical and chemical eradication, however, this created environmental problems. He informed the delegates that in 2009 the government launched an alternative development programme dedicated to replacing illegal crops with alternative ones having a high added value. As regards drug trafficking, the representative explained that 11.000 troops, equipped with hi-tech detection techniques, were monitoring the coast (ports, airports, land crossing points) and that they cooperate with European and other operational platforms in the area. Also, mobile x-ray units were available for container inspection.

4. Drug demand reduction policies

The representative of the Commission explained that all interventions provided in the EU should be based on the best available evidence and respect for human dignity, and that the EU was working on improving the efficiency of services and increasing their quality, also through development of the minimum quality standards. She stressed the importance of the evidence-base in the EU approach to drugs, especially during times of austerity, and noted that while there was proof of the effectiveness in the area of heroin treatment programmes, such proof was lacking for cocaine and cannabis. As regards prevention, the EU strived to prevent early use of drugs, as zero drug use was not considered a realistic goal. The speaker noted that evidence demonstrated that the most used tool for prevention, i.e. media campaigns, seemed to be ineffective in reducing the use of drugs. She informed the delegates that the second evaluation of the Council recommendation of 2003 on harm reduction was being conducted and that the initial results were positive - all EU Member States accepted the principle of harm reduction, which was also included in their drugs strategies. She mentioned that a lot of work still had to be done in the area of rehabilitation and reintegration.

The Moroccan delegation announced that recently six centres were set up for drug addicts and that Morocco was the first country in North Africa to have introduced the opiate substitution treatment. He also informed the meeting that drug consumption was included in their Criminal code, that efforts were made to combat drug marketing and drug dealing at schools, that mass media campaigns were launched, that needle exchange programs were being implemented and that they were dealing with drugs in prison settings. The delegation expressed its wish to cooperate with the EU authorities on the problem of addiction and to follow the European standards of treatment, also they asked for EU help in completing a nation-wide survey on drug addiction.

The Lebanese delegation informed the meeting that they were taking measures to prevent drugs in schools, launching interventions concerning street children and the most vulnerable and also conducting community-based prevention. To raise awareness about the damage of drugs Lebanon was taking various actions including conference organisation at educational and social institutions, dissemination of booklets and other publications and consultation of families of addicts. The delegate stressed that drug addicts were treated as patients more than criminals, and they were encouraged to go through treatment.

5. Any other business

- *Antidrug activities of the Pompidou group concerning Lebanon and Morocco*

The FR delegation gave overview of the antidrug cooperation with Lebanon and Morocco in the framework of the Pompidou Group, informing the meeting that in 2006 the Mediterranean network (MedNET) was set up, now encompassing both Lebanon and Morocco, with a view to promoting co-operation and a two-way transfer of knowledge between and within the countries of the Mediterranean and to improve the implementation of drug policies in participating countries to create a greater awareness of the cultural factors involved. She added that in 2009 all MedNET countries committed to the setting up of national observatories on drugs and drug addiction in close collaboration with the EMCDDA.

- ***Euromed Police III project***

The representative of the Commission presented the above-mentioned project, aiming at strengthening cooperation between the police forces of the EU and Mediterranean Partner Countries and within the forces of the Mediterranean Partner Countries themselves, which was foreseen for the period of 2011-2014 with a budget of 5 million euro.

- ***EU development assistance to Morocco***

The representative of the Commission gave an overview of the EU development assistance to Morocco, informing the meeting that Morocco was the most important beneficiary of EU financial assistance in South Mediterranean region and that assistance focusing on north regions of the country for fighting against drugs had been provided for a number of years. He noted that the strategic approach shifted from the one orientated only on agriculture to a more global one focusing on improving the level of life of local people and ensuring their alternative revenues. The speaker also added that basic social services were improved and schools and health services became more accessible.

- ***Multi-country Workshop on “Drug prevention and monitoring: situation and perspectives in the ENP Southern Partnership countries”***

The representative of the Commission presented the above-mentioned event noting that all Mediterranean countries, except for Syria, would participate in this workshop which would be financed by TAIEX and organised on 15-16 October in Limassol, Cyprus. The speaker also indicated that the participants would have a possibility to strengthen contacts with EMCDDA.
