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CORDROGUE 49
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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: Delegations
Subject: Outcomes of the Dublin Group meeting on 10 November 2016

1. Adoption of agenda

The meeting adopted the agenda set out in doc. CM 4527/16 with the addition of the following points under AOB:

- Brussels UNODC office;
- Request on fentanyl precursor chemicals scheduling.

2. The new vision of the Dublin Group

The Chair of the Dublin Group presented the new vision of the work of the Dublin Group, noting that the Group had to continue to be a flexible, informal consultation and coordination mechanism for global, regional and country-specific problems of illicit drugs production, trafficking and demand, based on consensus and mutual assistance. The Chair stressed that the Dublin Group had demonstrated the validity of outputs and had been recognised as a forum for sharing information concerning regional, national and global drugs trends. He also noted that its main asset had been the local and regional meetings, allowing to compile local situation reports, facilitate coordination of drug policy and assistance, conduct a dialogue with the host country on drug control, draw up recommendations and implement orientations from the Central Dublin Group as well as from regional chairs. The Chair also outlined the priorities for the future work.

3. Presentation of regional reports by the regional chairs

The Japanese regional chair gave an overview of the drug situation and the latest developments in South Asia (doc. 13234/16 CORDROGUE 53 ASIE 83). In Cambodia the availability and use of methamphetamine continued to expand and the drug had spread also into rural areas. Laos had again become a significant producer of opium and drug use, in particular of Amphetamine-Type Stimulants (ATS), appeared to be on the rise. Myanmar continued to be considered as the second largest producer of opium in the world and illicit opium poppy cultivation had increased since 2006, although it was still well below the levels reached in the 1990s. In Vietnam, illicit drug trafficking had been increasing and while heroin remained the primary drug of use, ATS use continued to be on a rise and crystalline methamphetamine use became increasingly widespread.

The Italian regional chair presented the regional report on Central Asia, contained in doc. 13561/16 CORDROGUE 57 ASIE 84. Political turmoil and instability in Afghanistan had displaced opium production towards southern regions of the country, which was causing a shift of trafficking routes in the direction of the Caucasian, Balkan and Southern Routes. This made the use of the new Caucasian Route, the hypothesis of which was being sustained by large drug seizures, more convenient for drug trafficking. A general trend towards the decrease of opioids' seizures in Central Asia had been observed. The availability of heroin in the Central Asian illegal markets had decreased and this led to increase in heroin price. Issues of trafficking and control of new psychoactive substances were becoming urgent and required changes in legislation along with development of new drug-counteracting approaches from law enforcement agencies.

The Spanish regional chair explained that there were no major developments (doc. 13634/16 CORDROGUE 60 COLAC 91) compared with the previous regional report on South America, presented at the June Dublin Group meeting. Colombia, Peru and Bolivia were still the producer countries of cocaine for export, mainly to the USA and European markets. There was a growing concern in the region about synthetic drugs, and this market had a big potential for further development. The speaker stressed that there was a will in the region to enhance international cooperation.

The Spanish regional chair also explained that the drug situation remained similar in North Africa (doc. 13633/16 CORDROGUE 59 COAFR 274), as described in their report provided for the June Dublin Group meeting. The majority of countries in the region remained transit countries for drugs. Morocco continued to be the main producer of cannabis in the region. The consumption of cocaine and heroin was not high, but an increase in cocaine seizures was observed. The speaker emphasised that the countries of the region were willing to enhance international cooperation.

The Romanian regional chair presented the latest developments in Eastern Europe and Caucasus (doc.13950/16 CORDROGUE 63 COEST 283). In Armenia changes were proposed to the existing national legislation enabling authorities to schedule a number of new psychoactive substances. In Georgia, a drug monitoring center would be established in the framework of cooperation with the EMCDDA. Also, the criminal code was changed to distinguish between criminal liability for drug possession and distribution. In the Republic of Moldova standards to reduce risks associated with injecting drug use and standards on psychosocial assistance offered to drug users were approved.

The Romanian regional chair also gave an overview of the drug situation and policy developments in the Near East (doc. 14121/17 CORDROGUE 69). In Lebanon captagon trafficking and production, in which Syrian refugees residing in Lebanon were frequently involved, was the most common drug-related activity addressed by the authorities. Drug consumption was a growing problem in Lebanon, however, there were no reliable estimates of the number of drug users in the country. Jordan remained a transit country for drug trafficking and the refugee crisis contributed to the appearance of new drug trafficking methods.

Trafficking groups continued to use the United Arab Emirates as a drug collection and distribution point, as opposed to a mere transit point. Also, drug use was one of the most serious problems facing the society in the U.A.E. In Saudi Arabia the most popular drug among young people was captagon pills. There was no evidence of major drug cultivation or production within Kuwait, however, rising volumes of drug seizures over the past several years indicated that traffickers increasingly used Kuwait as a destination point. On the whole, drug use in the Palestinian Territories was rising, especially for heroin. Nevertheless, heroin and cocaine remained less commonly used drugs. Drugs use was spreading among youth in Iraq, and often prescribed medicines were used as drugs. Israeli authorities had observed that the use of marihuana and ecstasy among the young population, as well as the demand for cocaine had been growing. The prevalence of drug use had so far been low in Oman, however, an incremental increase in opioid use had been reported recently.

The French regional chair gave an overview of the drug situation in Pakistan and Afghanistan noting that the situation in Afghanistan was concerning due to a significant increase in opium poppy cultivation areas and a significant reduction of opium poppy eradication campaigns (doc. 14067/16 CORDROGUE 67). As regards Pakistan, even if it remained primarily a transit country for drugs from Afghanistan, it was also faced with serious internal problems related to drug use.

Seizures of chemical precursors and cocaine were also rising sharply in Pakistan.

The Hungarian regional co-chair presented the drug situation in the Western Balkans (doc. 15085/16 CORDROGUE 77 COWEB 143). In Albania drug-related crimes remained a serious problem, and while Albania was mainly a transit country for drugs, new evidence might suggest that Albania was also becoming a production country for cocaine and heroin. Bosnia and Herzegovina was mainly regarded as a transit country, and local consumption of drugs was very limited, but slowly growing. There had been a substantial decrease in the quantity of seized drugs in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. Serbia was in the main branch of the Balkans Route of drug trafficking, though recently the main route of heroin smuggling had shifted from Serbia in the direction of the Schengen borders.

The Canadian regional chair gave an overview of the drug situation and policy developments in the Caribbean, noting that there was an expectation that drug trafficking activities in the region will continue to increase. Significant interdiction activities were taking place in the Caribbean. Jamaica remained the principle marijuana producer and exporter to Europe and North America. With the exception of Jamaica, drugs remained criminalised in the Caribbean. Jamaica had recently decriminalised the possession of less than 2 ounces of marijuana and the use of marijuana for medicinal or spiritual reasons.

4. Recommendations of the Dublin Group Virtual Working Group

The US Chair of the informal working group presented the recommendations for improving the functioning of the Group. Delegations also exchanged views on a number of questions presented by the Chair of the Dublin Group on the functioning of the Group and preparation of regional Dublin Group reports. Delegations were requested to provide written answers to these questions by 20 December 2016. Delegations were also required to provide any updates on the regional Dublin Group chairs and the countries covered by 16 December 2016.

5. Presentation on methamphetamine – a key issue in the Southeast Asian region

The Australian delegation gave an overview of the situation in Australia with methamphetamine and Australia's response to this issue. The expert explained that methamphetamine production and use was a serious issue in Southeast Asia, that it was most often seen in crystalline form ("ice") in Australia and that approximately 75% of methamphetamine making its way to Australian shores originated from countries in Asia. The speaker emphasised that "ice" use tripled in the past 5 years, with some 270,000 users causing serious harm to Australian communities and that because of its high price serious and organised crime groups thrived on the profits generated from the sale and distribution of "ice". He also stressed that Australia was actively building cooperation with regional partners and that different initiatives were taken to address the problem, including setting up national taskforce and different international taskforces to tackle "ice".

6. AOB

– *Brussels UNODC office*

The representative of the Brussels UNODC office gave an overview of the activities of the UNODC Brussels office and updated delegations on the UNODC role as regards the UNGASS follow-up.

– *Request on fentanyl precursor chemicals scheduling*

The representative of the US delegation informed the meeting about the request made to add fentanyl precursor chemicals NPP and ANPP to the international chemical tables under the UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988.
