



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 22 November 2013
(OR. en)**

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**CORDROGUE 118
COWEB 170
JAIEX 98**

"I/A" ITEM NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council
To: COREPER/Council

Subject: Draft declaration updating the EU-Western Balkans commitment to fight against drugs

1. In 2009, the Council adopted the Action Plan on drugs between the EU and the Western Balkan countries (doc. 12185/09 CORDROGUE 52 COWEB 150). As this Action Plan expires by the end of this year, the Commission initiated at the beginning of 2013 a stocktaking exercise on the implementation of the current Action Plan.
2. Taking into account the results of this exercise and having discussed the best way forward with Western Balkans representatives during and after the EU-Western Balkans expert meeting on drugs held on 26 February 2013, it was decided that a Declaration should be prepared to prolong the validity of the above-mentioned Action Plan on drugs between the EU and the Western Balkan countries.

3. The Declaration, stressing the EU and Western Balkans commitment to fight against drugs and enumerating a number of priorities for future cooperation, was drafted and examined at the HDG meetings on 17 May 2013 and 17 July 2013 and at the JAI-RELEX working party meeting on 11 September 2013 and later coordinated with the representatives of Western Balkans. A revised version of the Declaration, taking into account the comments provided by the Western Balkans delegations, was endorsed by the HDG meeting on 14 November 2013 and again coordinated with Western Balkans representatives.
4. Subsequently, the EU-Western Balkans ministerial meeting to be held on 19-20 December 2013 in Budva, Montenegro, will be invited to endorse this Declaration.
5. Against this background, COREPER is requested to invite the Council to approve this Declaration updating the EU-Western Balkans commitment to fight against drugs set out in annex and forward it to the EU-Western Balkans ministerial meeting on 19-20 December 2013 in Budva, Montenegro, for endorsement.

EU-Western Balkans Ministerial Forum on Justice and Home Affairs

Budva, 19-20 December 2013

DRAFT

Joint Declaration on enhancing cooperation on drugs and renewing the commitments of the EU-Western Balkans Action Plan on Drugs (2009-2013)

We, the Ministers of the Western Balkans and the Ministers of the European Union Member States, meeting on the occasion of the EU-Western Balkans Ministerial Forum on Justice and Home Affairs in Budva, Montenegro, on 19-20 December 2013, acknowledge the important achievements in developing and implementing national strategies and actions to effectively tackle the drugs issue under the EU-Western Balkans Action Plan 2009-2013. Determined to further build upon our accomplishments over the past four years, we recall the fact that drugs continue to present a complex problem affecting the health and safety of individuals and societies, as well as the security of states in our region. This problem can only be tackled by joint efforts involving all relevant actors and including information exchange and cooperation with the EU agencies.

Building on the results of the implementation of the EU-Western Balkans Action Plan on Drugs (2009-2013), we hereby declare our intention to continue the endeavours to counter the trafficking and use of illicit drugs, by renewing our commitments to implement the Action Plan, which will remain the reference for our cooperation in this area also in the future.

Moreover, taking into account the EU Drugs Strategy (2013-2020), which consolidates the balanced evidence-based approach to drug policy, the respect for the fundamental principles that we all share - human dignity, liberty, democracy, equality, solidarity, the rule of law and human rights - and recognizing the new trends in drugs consumption and the new dynamics in the illicit drugs markets,

We resolve to work towards strengthening our regional cooperation to address the following priorities:

1. Drug demand reduction, with a view to helping reduce the use of drugs, drug dependence, and drug-related health and social harms as well as to guarantee recovery and social reintegration.
2. Polydrug use reduction, including the combined use of licit and illicit substances, and the rapid spread of new psychoactive substances.
3. Drug supply reduction, with a view to providing effective responses to new threats, including the constantly changing trafficking routes and methods of operation of criminal networks, and to stepping up efforts to prevent the diversion of precursors and pre-precursors used in the synthesis of illicit drugs as well as pharmacologically active substances used as cutting agents.
4. Strengthen cooperation with civil society in particular on drug demand reduction measures and awareness-raising campaigns, in responding to the challenges presented by illicit drugs and the spread of new psychoactive substances.
5. Further develop monitoring, information, evaluation and research so as to contribute to a better understanding of the drugs phenomenon and of the impact of measures in order to provide sound and comprehensive evidence for policies and actions in our region.

Done in Budva on 20 December 2013
