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NOTE

From: Spanish Regional Chair of the Dublin Group
To: Dublin Group
Subject: Regional Report for North Africa

ALGERIA REPORT

1. GENERAL SITUATION

Since 2000, there have been a large number of seizures of **cannabis resin** in Algeria.

The trend in the first half of 2014 compared with the same period in the previous year shows a **36.17 % increase** in the quantity of cannabis resin seized by the Algerian enforcement authorities, customs staff and the army units deployed in Algeria's border areas.

As a result, **95 592.973 kg** of cannabis resin were seized in the first half of the year, compared with the **70 202.403 kg** seized in the first half of 2013¹.

¹ Data from statistical report on the first half of 2014 published by the national office for combating drugs and drug addiction at the Ministry of Justice of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria.

Most of these drugs were seized in the Wilaya of Tlemcen, which is in north-western Algeria on the border with Morocco and an area in which large quantities of drugs are transported using traditional means: on pack animals, on foot in backpacks, or in vehicles, in loads of under 200 kg.

The **Tlemcen route** is the favoured one for bringing drugs into Algeria, although the border remains closed and security there has been strengthened by the Algerian authorities in response to the rise in drug trafficking in that part of the country. Within Algeria, the capital and the Wilaya of Ouargla have been seeing a rise in seizures of large quantities of cannabis resin in transit.

The following **routes** have been **identified** in Algeria by the enforcement authorities involved in fighting the drugs trade:

- 1) The Carthage road, which goes from Remchi (Tlemcen) to Ben-M'hidi and El Taref, ending at Tunis.
- 2) The route from Ghadames and Maghnia to Rouissat, in Ouargla.
- 3) The Tripolitania route, starting from El-Kerma, Oran, towards Illizi.
- 4) The Fezzan route, from El-Kazdi, in Naama, towards Illizi.
- 5) The Tibesti (Tlemcen) route to Illizi. The last three are those of the Libyan south².

After cannabis, **psychotropic drugs** form the second largest group by volume of seizures, up by **14.53 %** compared with the first half of 2013. A total of **667 391** psychotropic pills were seized between January and June 2014.

Apparently mules are used to transport these pills, which may be aimed at the French market; these mules carry them in small quantities on commercial flights between Algeria and France³.

² Information published by the Algerian media on the presentation of the 2013 annual activity report of the gendarmerie, by Colonel Benamane Mohamed-Tahar, director for public security and employment.

³ See 2.

The amount of cocaine and heroin in the country also increased in the first half of 2014 as compared to 2013. The total amount of **cocaine** seized in the period referred to was **1 191.126 g** compared to 217.778 g in 2013.

The total amount of **heroin** seized in the 2014 period referred to was **339.11 g** compared to 6.8 g in the same period of 2013.

2. INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

In recent years the Algerian authorities have strengthened their mechanisms for combating drug trafficking and contraband in general by means of legislation. They continue to emphasise the close link between drug-trafficking networks and terrorism in the region and that the former is one of the main sources of funding for the latter; terrorism, arms trafficking, money laundering, corruption and smuggling are all closely connected. At the same time, Algeria appears to be a **transit** zone for sending drugs to the **Middle East and Europe**, though in recent years the number of people consuming drugs in Algeria has also risen.

Algeria is part of the MedNET Euro-Mediterranean cooperation network (Pompidou Group, Council of Europe), which was set up in 2006⁴ with the aim of developing north-south cooperation plans and activities in order to combat drugs. Other members include France, Italy, Lebanon, Morocco, the Netherlands, Portugal, Spain and Tunisia.

⁴ Amsterdam Conference in May 2006, initiative presented at the Ministerial Conference of the Pompidou Group on 27 and 28 November 2006.

Algerian legislation

In the situation described, the following laws have been passed:

- Law No 04-18 of 25 December 2004 on the prevention and suppression of the consumption and unlawful trafficking of drugs.
- Law No 05-01 of 6 February 2005 on the prevention and combating of money laundering and of the funding of terrorism. Supplemented on 13/2/2012.
- Law No 06-01 of 20 February 2006, on the prevention and combating of corruption. Supplemented on 20 August 2011.
- Ordinance No 12-02 of 13 February 2012 amending and supplementing Law No 5-01 of 6 February 2005 on the prevention and combating of money laundering and of the funding of terrorism.

3. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Cooperation with the Algerian authorities is organised in the framework of the protocols for cooperation between the Directorates-General of the Police and of the Civil Guard with the National Security Directorate-General (Interior Ministry) and the National Gendarmerie Directorate-General and the National Coastguard Service of Algeria (these last being Defence Ministry bodies). The protocols address activities related to training and operational information exchange among the signatory bodies.

4. EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Evaluation

In the light of the above, it can be stated that:

- Seizures of cannabis resin on Algerian territory were significantly bigger during the first half of 2014 compared to the same period of the previous year, presumably owing to the gradual sealing of the border with Morocco through the increased deployment of personnel by the security forces engaged in combating drugs and smuggling, and support from army units.

- The international cooperation situation described in the previous point has evolved with the consolidation of narco-terrorism as a concept, it being a permanent and secure source of financing for armed groups operating in the Sahel region. Now that there is a clear link between terrorism and organised crime, Algeria has strengthened its legislation on combating money laundering and the funding of terrorism.
- As in previous periods, the fact that Europe has been identified as a destination for drugs transiting the country - given their proximity to Algeria, the countries in question are essentially Spain, France, Greece and Italy - means that closer analysis is needed of the foreign currency trafficking generated by this illegal activity and of the way in which such money is returning to the networks involved.

Recommendations:

- Increase cooperation on training, operations and prevention to address the use of drugs and psychotropic substances, and step up cooperation on treating addiction.
- Propose amending Algeria's legislation (the code of criminal procedure)⁵ to accommodate coordination mechanisms for developing controlled deliveries, in order to identify the structure of the networks operating at the points of departure, transit and final destination of drugs, and enable comprehensive action to be taken.
- Boost international coordination mechanisms for anti-drug operations in the Mediterranean, with particular emphasis on money-laundering as the legislation in this area has recently changed.

REPORT ON EGYPT

The presentation by the ANGA representative focused on recent seizures broken down by substance, and compared the 2013 figures with those for 2014. Following on from the information set out in the last report dated 27 March 2014, he reviewed the main trends and evaluations:

⁵ In French, *Code de Procédure Pénale*

- Seizures of most substances have dropped considerably (marijuana from 212 to 21 tonnes; hashish from 84 to 32 tonnes; opium from 83 to 47 kg), with the exception of heroin and cocaine. Cocaine seizures have risen, from 3 kg in 2013 to 500 kg in 2014. In reply to questions from the floor, ANGA explained that the increase was due to the interception of an Egypt-bound vessel off the coast of Almería.

Against a clearly political backdrop, the ANGA representative emphasised ANGA's heightened presence and the fact that it was carrying out more controls in the Sinai peninsula (cultivation and transit zone for marijuana and opium) and its launch of awareness-raising campaigns in that area.

- International cooperation: Brigadier Abdel Aziz made numerous references to operations carried out in cooperation with foreign authorities including Spain, France and Italy, and made special mention of the operations carried out in conjunction with the United States, who were represented at the meeting. He made particular reference to an operation conducted jointly with the DEA off the Libyan coast.

When asked about the existence of links between drug trafficking and human trafficking or arms trafficking networks, the Brigadier did not wish to provide any further information, but referred to the competent authorities in each case. He acknowledged that the instability in Libya - where substances are unloaded for land transit to Egypt - had led to a parallel increase in arms trafficking.

Recommendations:

(a) The figures provided orally did not specify the actual connection between Egypt and the seizure (whether the seizure took place in Egypt or whether the Egyptian authorities took part), or whether Egypt was the intended destination. Hence the confusion in the aforementioned instance concerning cocaine, where the exponential increase was due to Egypt having included amongst its own statistics the interception of a vessel off the Spanish coast which - according to the Spanish authorities - may have been heading for Egypt. Likewise, it remains unclear whether the reduction in the number of seizures, which for certain substances was substantial, was due to reduced volumes of drugs transiting the country or to there being fewer police operations.

In view of the above, we recommend improving the systematisation and transmission of information so that more precise data is available, including statistics pinpointing Egypt's involvement, based on an approach which goes beyond a mere description of the operations. In this regard, it is recommended that data on networks and organisations be added, including information on operations carried out on the financing of these structures.

(b) We also recommend stepping up the authorities' efforts in the preventive phases, through social and educational awareness-raising, and improving mechanisms for treating and rehabilitating drug addicts, alongside the coercive and punitive operations against drug trafficking and production in the region.

REPORT ON MOROCCO

1. GENERAL SITUATION

The last few months have seen a consolidation of trends in the field of drug trafficking, as evidenced by recent police operations and drug seizures.

Firstly, Morocco remains one of the world's largest cannabis producers. There is no evidence that its cultivated area has reduced in size, but crop productivity has improved and there are several annual harvests. Last June's annual UNOCD report draws the same conclusions. The report also states that increased local production in several European countries has stabilised trafficking in cannabis to Europe.

Morocco seems to have gradually become an increasingly important cocaine distribution platform, mostly with traffic bound for Europe and, occasionally, for the Middle East and the Arab Peninsula.

Though it has not been established with certainty, it is thought the main entry route for cannabis into Morocco originates in West Africa. Transatlantic air traffic into Casablanca airport has levelled off after an initial surge following the re-establishment of direct flights to West Africa which had previously been cancelled because of their use as a drugs conduit, and the number of seizures has fallen. However, the drop in the number of seizures could also be the result of police efforts in other security-related fields. As regards other entry routes, the group raised the role played by tourist and leisure ports, where police controls are generally more lax.

On the other hand, over the last few months seizures of other types of industrially-produced psychotropic substances, such as ecstasy and similar products, have begun to be significant. Regarding their means of entry, while the press places responsibility with Algeria, Algeria blames Morocco for the entry of cannabis into the country.

2. LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS

The legislation remains unchanged. The campaign for the partial legalisation of hashish, launched by some political groups with a degree of public support, has eased off and does not appear so regularly in the media. However, public opinion is no less favourable to partial legalisation, especially in certain areas in the north of the country.

3. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The high level of cooperation between the Moroccan police authorities and the EU States and the Dublin Group participants continued, and they have even put forward new cases of cooperation at operational level that are worth mentioning.

4. MISCELLANEOUS

The EU delegation stated that the Moroccan authorities are continuing to show interest in being more closely involved with EUROPOL, but there were no new developments in this field so far, except that the authorities are taking a more active role in this matter.

Recommendations:

Monitor developments in cocaine trafficking.

*In addition to what was discussed at the mini-Dublin Group meeting, it is necessary to highlight the data provided by the Moroccan delegation at the 24th meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies in Africa, organised by UNODC and launched in Addis Ababa on 16 September 2014.

Morocco's official news agency (MAP) reports, on the basis of data provided by the Moroccan delegation, that during 2013, a total of 100 tonnes of cannabis resin, more than 219 tonnes of kif, 14.5 kg of cocaine and more than 450 000 psychotropic pills were seized. It also reports that the quantities of psychotropic substances seized have increased alarmingly - by around 530 % - compared with the figures for 2012 and that most of the substances were seized at the eastern border of the country.

For the first half of 2014, the figures for drugs seized are as follows: 94 tonnes of cannabis resin, 221 kg of cocaine and 142 415 psychotropic pills. According to the MAP press release, the authorities report that 2014 saw the emergence of a new international trafficking route for cocaine, coming from Brazil via commercial flights.

Furthermore, in connection with the cultivation of illegal substances, the press release states that the area planted with cannabis crops in the northern provinces has been reduced by around 65 %.

The MAP press release also quotes the declaration of principle by the Moroccan delegation reaffirming Morocco's firm and determined commitment to combat drug trafficking, which the authorities consider to be a national priority.

TUNISIA REPORT

1. GENERAL SITUATION

1.1. Production and trafficking

We maintain the hypothesis put forward in previous years, that Tunisia is not a drug-producing country, but rather a transit country, mainly for cannabis to Europe, in moderate amounts, and to Libya and Egypt. This can be inferred from the limited data available on seizures and the activity of the Tunisian security forces in this area.

In a new development, the Minister of the Interior, Mr Ben Jedou, has published data on the seizures of narcotics by the Tunisian security forces in the first six months of the year, quantifying them as 11 000 kg of hashish and 12 000 pills, without giving further details.

Most known seizures of hashish occur during the inspection of vehicles travelling on public highways in governorates near the borders with Libya and Algeria. It is thought that this substance enters Tunisia via the Tunisian/Algerian border either for local consumption or for transit to Europe, Libya or Egypt. Evidence has been gathered on cases of trafficking by sea in the territorial waters bordering Libya.

We do not have detailed information from official sources of the Tunisian Ministry of the Interior regarding the number of operations, substances seized or persons involved, although - according to unofficial sources - police arrests for drug trafficking or consumption could account for approximately one quarter of all arrests made by the Tunisian security forces.

1.2. Consumption

In the absence of official data from the Tunisian authorities or reliable statistics, we assess that drug use in Tunisia is still fairly limited, with the majority of consumers aged between 18 and 35.

2. LEGAL AND INSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK

Following the approval of the new Tunisian constitution on 26 January 2014, and pending the outcome of the legislative and presidential elections which are to be held in the last quarter of 2014, there have been promises of many initiatives to modernise the existing legal framework. Although there has been no legislative initiative to adapt the current legal framework (Law No 52/92 of 18 May 1992) regarding production, consumption and trafficking in narcotics, there have been various social initiatives in the first half of 2014 calling for the law to be amended, particularly with regard to decriminalising consumption, which is currently an offence under Tunisian criminal law and carries a prison sentence.

On 5 March 2014 the Minister for Education, Fathi Jarrey, announced at an ordinary meeting of the NCA, within the Committee for Educational Affairs, that a programme had been set up to tackle the consumption of drugs and alcohol in educational establishments, in response to public concerns in Tunisia about the apparent increase in consumption by young Tunisians.

3. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

3.1. Technical assistance

Nothing to report.

3.2. Statistics

Nothing to report.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the scant official data provided by the Tunisian authorities, it is difficult to make a precise assessment of the situation in Tunisia and to issue recommendations on prevention of drug addiction and combating drug trafficking; consequently, the first recommendation would be for the authorities to improve the transparency of information in dealing with these matters.

Other recommendations could be as follows:

- Draw up a national strategy to combat drug addiction using a multi-sectoral approach, circulate it to Tunisia's civil society and international partners, and then implement it.
- Encourage the participation of members of the Tunisian security forces, dedicated to combating organised crime, in seminars and activities organised by international bodies and countries of the Mediterranean basin.
- Promote international police cooperation in combating serious crime, normally encompassing criminal organisations engaged in drug trafficking. For this it is necessary to modernise the old structures and operational procedures of the Tunisian Ministry of the Interior, with regard to both combating organised crime and police cooperation.