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NOTE

From: Romanian regional chair of the Dublin Group
To: Delegations
Subject: Regional Report on the Near East¹

STATE OF ISRAEL

1. General situation in the country. Drugs situation in the host country including production, trafficking and demand related issues

Israel is not a major narcotics producing or trafficking country, but has a significant domestic market for illegal drugs, facing an increasing demand for cocaine, hashish and marijuana, as well as heroin, LSD and ecstasy. Since the end of the Second Lebanon War in 2006, the Jordanian border has become a gate for drug entry into Israel, in particular for heroin, cocaine and hashish.

Transit & Smuggling: Israel is still a transit country into Jordan, Egypt and Saudi-Arabia.

¹ Until the moment of the drafting of the report, from Saudi Arabia, Iraq and the United Arab Emirates, the Romanian Embassies and Consulates did not succeed in obtaining additional data apart from those presented in November 2014 on the occasion of the Dublin Group meeting in Brussels (Council document ST 16959/14). Moreover, there are no data available on Kuwait and Syria.

The main channels for smuggling drugs are the official land border crossings. Israelis and foreigners are involved in the smuggling of drugs via "air". Some are smuggled by "innocent mules". Arab-Israelis are involved in smuggling drugs through neighbouring countries.

Synthetic drugs

- Use of cannabis and synthetic cannabinoids is on the rise. The Israeli Anti-Drug Authority (IADA) regularly adds new synthetic drugs to Israel's Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, which provides the legislative basis for drug definition, penalties, and related enforcement authorities.
- An increase in "Hydrophone agriculture", home cultivation for commercial purposes.
- An increase in the number of Kiosks (24/7 convenient stores) selling dangerous substances which are not included in the Controlled Substances Act (ex. "Dr. G").

2. Short update on the country's anti-drug strategy

2.1 Legal/legislative changes, including money laundering and chemical precursors

In July 2013, the 'Kiosk Drug' law passed its final reading in the Knesset, expanding the police's authority to confiscate materials suspected as hazardous to public health or safety. The law was introduced following increasing numbers of cases of young people using dangerous substances sold in kiosks.

A Memorandum of Understanding between the European Monitoring Centre for Drug and Drugs Addiction (EMCDDA) and IADA was signed on 4 February 2014 in Jerusalem. A representative from IADA attended the 2nd Reitox week in May. Among relevant sources of expertise of interest, one can mention the New Psychotropic Substances (NPS), for which an Israeli expert participated in the International Forum on NPS organized by the EMCDDA and by NIDA. Israel appointed a national correspondent to the EMCDDA.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Executive Director, Yury Fedotov, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in Jerusalem, on the 8th of June 2014, which furthers cooperation between UNODC and Israel in countering drugs and crime.

2.2 An assessment of the government's political will to conduct a comprehensive and resolute anti-drugs policy

Due to the multi-faceted and complex nature of the drug problem, which touches on many different areas and demands the involvement of a variety of government agencies, the Prime Minister of Israel is the Minister responsible for the realization of Drug Control Authority Law. However, in 2009, the parliament approved the government's decision to grant the Minister of Internal Security responsibility over the Israel Anti-Drug Authority.

The State of Israel devotes much effort to the implementation of a comprehensive demand reduction strategy. Coordinated by the Israel Anti-Drug Authority (IADA), in cooperation with relevant ministries such as the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Social Affairs and Social Services and other governmental agencies and NGOs, evidence based prevention and treatment programs are implemented throughout the country, targeting the general and at risk populations. IADA also addresses addiction as a chronic health disorder, and aims to provide adequate and accessible treatment and rehabilitation solutions to all drug and alcohol abuse victims.

3. Enumeration of major bilateral and multilateral country national programs (including those that support demand reduction)

In the multi-lateral front, Israel has strong working relations with international organizations working to fight the plague of substance abuse, among them: UNODC, INCB and WHO. Cooperation with our European counterparts: European Council and European Union have also raised to a new level, in particular collaboration with the Pompidou Group and the EMCDDA.

Israel showed interest in cooperation with the EU in the fight against drugs.

At a regional level, cooperation between neighbouring countries is essential and necessary in order to control the flow of illicit drugs and crime. A Memorandum of Understanding agreed upon by Israel and the Palestinian Authority in Cairo in 2005 paved the way for information exchange regarding drug demand and supply reduction. Mutual study visits also took place with our Jordanian counterpart.

4. There haven't been any meetings of the mini-Dublin group.

5. Prioritized identification of needs for external assistance

Israel Anti-Drug Agency works closely with MASHAV - the Center for International Cooperation of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, organizing courses for participants from developing countries around the world in Israel, and on-the-spot short term courses, given in the participants' home countries (Africa - Ghana, Senegal, Nigeria, Kenya and Seychelles, South America - Ecuador, and Eurasia - Kazakhstan, Russia and Armenia).

6. Mini-Dublin group assessment of needs

6.1 Recommendations

The European Commission's Progress Report in 2011 noted that there had still not been any sustained follow up to the recommendations of the Mini Dublin Group on establishing a central anti-drug unit within the Israeli police. No indications on developments in this field were registered until 2014. However, Israeli authorities made efforts on maintaining accurate records of information exchange with neighboring countries on regular individuals involved in drug trafficking activities.

THE HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN

1. General narcotics situation

The drugs situation in the country remains under the control of the Jordanian authorities, (particularly the “*Anti Narcotics Department*” / *AND* and the “*Public Security Directorate*” / *PSD*). The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is still considered a *transit territory* regarding the narcotics, according to the international criteria.

An important issue nowadays is represented (in the context of the Syrian and Iraqi crises) by the camps established within the kingdom for hosting the Syrian refugees, where the Jordanian authorities must pay a special attention to the traffic activities with narcotics, especially “light drugs”, like Captagon.

Note: The most important seized quantities of narcotics were in transit.

The final destinations of the drugs that enter the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan remain:

- *in the case of Captagon - the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and other rich Gulf countries;*
- *in the case of Cannabis and Heroin - Israel, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Arab Republic of Egypt;*
- *in the case of Cocaine and Hashish - Israel and Lebanon.*

During the last month the “Anti Narcotics Department” seized some quantities of drugs arriving from Iraq (like Heroine and Hashish). This is considered to be a “new trend”.

The authorities from the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan developed a very efficient cooperation with the competent authorities within the region and from all over the world, which conducting in seizing drugs quantities in many countries.

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has continued to take measures in order to increase public awareness of the dangers of narcotics, through an effective and active plan in the field. They are visiting students in schools and Universities, lecturing and negotiating the dangers of drugs with the young generation of Jordanians.

The Jordanian awareness plan had extended to cover most government institutions, NGO's, correction & rehabilitation centers, and youth clubs of bulk members, and more over reaching every single citizen of our country by talking to them through media.

Regarding the total number of the activities during 2014, this is as follows:

- 79 “Anti-Narcotics Supporters’ Courses”;
- 3050 “Sensitization Lectures”;
- 163 visits organized to the Anti Narcotics Department (AND);
- Participations – in 93 fairs in this domain;
- 86 media programs / interviews on the narcotics issues;
- 46 press briefings on drugs issue;
- 64 profile meetings;
- 51 radio Programs / “NO TO GRUGS”;
- 56 “Drugs Poison Play”.

Note: The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan had declared, in 2008, the establishment of the “National Anti Narcotics Council”, which includes members from governmental and non-governmental organizations, aiming to take care of the drugs problem in the country. The Council had formulated a comprehensive national strategy in which every entity had been assigned to a specific role in the combating process.

Jordan has two public treatment facilities. One of them is affiliated with the Ministry of Health and the other is affiliated with the Public Security Directorate - PSD / Anti-Narcotics Department - AND. It was also expanded the treatment service by building a new larger treatment facility with a bigger capacity, more sports and amusement facilities.

1.1. Production / Demand

The production and consumption of narcotics in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan are considered by the local authorities as not particularly alarming to this moment. According to the PSD data, only small cultivations of Marijuana were discovered, spread geographically all over the Jordanian territory. We have to underline that the *penalties for possession, use, or trafficking of illegal drugs in Jordan are very strict*. According to Jordanian “*Law No. 11 / 1988, on Drugs and Psychotropic Substances*”, addicts who admit addiction and seek treatment are exempted from these penalties. According to an amendment on the Law on Drugs, that was signed by the His Majesty King Abdullah II, ratified by the Jordanian Parliament and published at the Official Gazette (2012), first time drug users will be sent to a rehabilitation centre instead of prison.

1.2. Trafficking

Jordan's location between drug producing countries to the north and drug consuming countries to the south and west makes it an ideal transit territory for trafficking. The drugs situation is under control, bearing in mind the possibility of facing a bigger problem on short and medium term. AND is trying the best (by the same limited resources and huge efforts), to develop the combating efforts and make them more effective, by giving the officers more training and bringing new detection devices in the institution.

In the same time, they are facing new smuggling trends, and targeting their region with new types of drugs that were not “known” to abusers before, such as cocaine. Cocaine comes to Jordan from South America via European airports targeting Israel, Lebanon and other countries in the region. In 2014, there were seized more than 319 kgs of Cocaine.

Brief summaries of the most significant captures recorded from 01.10.2014 to 31.12.2014

1. On 1st Oct. 2014, an operation in Amman outskirts resulted in seizing (126000) narcotic tablets (Captagon) and 2 kgs of hashish, which were concealed in a house of a known drug dealer, one Jordanian national was apprehended in the operation.
2. On 6th Oct. 2014, an operation in Amman outskirts resulted in seizing (46000) narcotic tablets (Captagon) submitted to one of our undercover officer, the seized drugs were concealed in a Syrian car parked in a garage, the quantity belonged to a previously detained Syrian drug dealer who was trying to dispose the drugs through his wife while he was still in detention center. Five Syrian nationals were apprehended in this operation.
3. On 1st Nov. 2014, searching of a suspected abandoned baggage placed by the main road between the Jordanian & Syrian border points in Jaber resulted in seizing (960000) narcotic tablets (Captagon).
4. On 17th Nov. 2014, searching of a suspected lorry at Al-Omari border crossing resulted in seizing (482700) narcotic tablets (Captagon), were concealed in a shipment of Isolation asphalt rolls, two Jordanian nationals involved were apprehended in the operation and two others are still fugitive.
5. On 18th Nov. 2014, an operation in Al-Mafraq county resulted in seizing (122) kgs of hashish as a courier was delivering them to a person in a cattle ranch in that area, two Jordanians and one Syrian involved were apprehended, three more persons are still fugitive.
6. On 19th Nov. 2014, an operation in Al-Shuna S. resulted in seizing (92450) narcotic tablets (Captagon) were concealed in a mechanic part of a lorry in order to smuggle it to KSA. Six Jordanian nationals involved were apprehended in this investigation.
7. On 25th Nov. 2014, searching of a suspected lorry at Al-Omari border crossing resulted in seizing (1.297.000) narcotic tablets (Captagon), were concealed in a shipment of construction metal wire rolls, three Syrian nationals involved were apprehended in this investigation and two others are still fugitive.
8. On 26th Nov. 2014, an operation in Al-Shuna S. resulted in seizing (24) kgs of marijuana were concealed in a suspect house. Two Jordanian nationals involved were apprehended in this operation.

9. On 29th Nov. 2014, an operation in Amman resulted in seizing (37.5) kgs of heroin as a courier was transferring it from Al Mafrq by car to Aqaba intending to smuggle it to Egypt, the drugs were placed in the trunk of the car, the courier who was a Jordanian national was apprehended in this operation, another person involved is still fugitive.
10. On 10th Dec. 2014, information led to seizing (8.5) kgs of heroin were concealed inside a water vent at the main road in Ma'an county.
11. On 13th Dec. 2014, an operation in Amman resulted in seizing (865000) narcotic tablets (Captagon) were concealed in a shipment of plastic water pipes loaded in a lorry in order to smuggle it to KSA, two Jordanian nationals involved were apprehended in this operation, four others are still fugitive.
12. On 24th Dec. 2014, an operation in Amman outskirts resulted in seizing (24) kgs of synthetic hashish (so called Joker or Spice), 500 small packs of (Joker) prepared for sale and other illegal stuff were concealed in a house of a known drug dealer, three Jordanian nationals were apprehended in the operation, one is still a fugitive.

As a short (useful) brief regarding the efforts of the “Anti Narcotics Department”, we present also, below, the most important cases developed in the first months of 2015:

a. Anti-Narcotics Department (AND) agents (in the first part of February 2015) arrested one suspect and are looking for three others who were in possession of **1.2 million Captagon** pills “in a southern governorate”. The AND received a tip about “a man who had a large stash of illegal pills which he intended to deliver to another individual in the south”. Authorities arrested the suspect a few days later, according to a statement by the Public Security Department (PSD). “The suspect confessed to conducting the operation with the help of three others who are still at large,” the PSD statement added. A search is under way for the others, while the main suspect was referred to the *State Security Court* prosecutor for further questioning, according to the PSD statement. Officials have previously said that Jordan is still considered a transit country when it comes to Captagon smuggling. These pills are usually manufactured and transported from neighboring countries in the north via Jordan to rich countries on the southern borders, because one Captagon pill is worth at least JD7 in these states, while its market value in Jordan does not exceed JD1 per pill. Captagon (fenethylamine) is a synthetic stimulant similar to amphetamine. Although banned in most countries in the 1980s, illegally produced and smuggled Captagon - sometimes containing *amphetamine* instead of *fenethylamine* - is a common drug abused in the Middle East.

b. Anti-Narcotics Department personnel foiled a bid to smuggle **60 kg of processed Heroin** into a neighbouring country, the Public Security Department's (PSD) stated in the end of February 2015. The PSD media centre said officers arrested three people, while another two were still at large.

After a tip-off, the Anti-Narcotics team kept an eye on the culprits and followed them to the Aqaba city, some 330 km south of Amman, where they prepared a number of gallons of fuel in order to conceal the substance in them. These were to be put into one of the boats to be transported across the sea to the “neighbouring country”. The team raided the criminals' whereabouts, seized the contraband and arrested three people. Search is on for the other suspects.

Note: In order to have a complete “image”, please notice, below, the most important seizures, from the first half of the year 2014, which were included also in our previous report on the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (November 2014):

On the 18th May 2014, an operation in Aqaba Port resulted in a big seizure of (314) Kg of Cocaine were concealed in seven bags among a load of a container contains 880 bags of plastic granules. That seizure came as a result of following up the information about the intention of Jordanian drug traffickers to smuggle a quantity of cocaine from Colombia to the Gulf of Aqaba by sea through three containers of plastic granules carrying the numbers (TCLUSS390S6, MSKU1294800, MSKU8924990). The shipper of the three containers is “Coco plastic sas calle 68#7 c-83 CaIi”, Colombia by the shipping company "Maersk Line". The Cocaine was found in the container # TCLUSS390S6). The route of the containers was the following: on 23rd March the container departed port of Colombia, on 25th of March reached port of Panama and proceeded to arrive in Spain on 15th of April, the container arrived in Morocco on 24th of April, and later arrived to Jeddah port on 9th May, after that the containers arrived at the port of Aqaba on 18th May 2014. Also, on the 8th of July 2014, an operation on the desert highway resulted in seizing (79750) narcotic tablets (Captagon), which were concealed in a vent at the side road.

On the 8th of July 2014, an operation in Amman city resulted in seizing (84000) narcotic tablets (Captagon), one Jordanian national (Hussein Al Sardieh Dob: 1971), was apprehended in the operation.

On the 9th of July 2014, an operation in Aqaba port resulted in seizing (14.5) kgs. of Heroin, three Jordanian nationals involved (Mohammad Salem Dob: 1980, Suleiman Najjar Dob: 1972 and Yousef Shiha Dob: 1979), were apprehended in the operation.

On the 10th of July 2014, an operation in Amman city resulted in seizing (885800) narcotic tablets (Captagon), six Jordanian nationals involved were apprehended in the operation.

On the 31st of July 2014, an operation in Zarqa county resulted in seizing (146000) narcotic tablets (Captagon) were concealed in a house, the house owner (Rami Abu Haltam Dob: 1979) was apprehended in the operation.

On the 7th of August 2014, searching a suspected package of FedEx in cargo section at Intl. airport resulted in seizing (100) kgs of synthetic hashish, the package was coming from India. One Jordanian national involved (Mamoun Abu Alghanam Dob: 1966) was apprehended.

On the 11th of August 2014, an operation in Mafraq county resulted in seizing (19) kgs of hashish, was concealed placed in a sack in an empty land behind Al Zadari refugees camp.

On the 18th of August 2014, an operation in Al Azraq area resulted in seizing (13.5) kgs of hashish. Two Jordanian nationals involved (Ameen AlJbour Dob: 1974, and Nawaf Alqarb Dob: 1970), were apprehended in the operation.

On the 17th of September 2014, an operation in Amman city resulted in seizing (274000) narcotic tablets (Captagon), two Jordanians, one Yemeni, one Syrian, and one Saudi national involved were apprehended in the operation.

2. Short update / Anti drug strategy

2.1. Participation in international instruments/ International cooperation

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is party to the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, as amended by the 1972 Protocol, to the UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971 and to the UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988.

The country has ratified all international drug control conventions. It is also a party to the Unified Arab Law and a member of the Interpol, the League of Arab States, and the Organization for Social Defence against Crime and the Pall Arab Bureau for Narcotic Affairs. The Kingdom has been a regular participant in the annual meetings of the Bureau and has been attending the UN's Commission on Narcotic Drugs meetings regularly and responding positively to International Narcotic Control Board requests for reporting. Jordan continues to remain committed to existing bilateral agreements providing for counter-narcotics cooperation with Syria, Lebanon, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Egypt, Pakistan, Israel, Iran and Hungary. There are also excellent relations between Jordan and the US Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Nicosia Country Office based in Cyprus. Finally an agreement is underway between Jordan and Saudi Arabia within the framework of the Arab League operations office for cooperation in preventing and fighting drug smuggling.

Note: During the a meeting, from September 2013, the former Greek Presidency proposed and the Jordanian authorities eagerly accepted, that MS examine the possibility of upgrading their cooperation with Jordan by signing MOU's on exchange of information, which could potentially facilitate the interception of drug traffickers. They are also keen to increase the number of exchange visits, share knowledge, especially concerning prison reform and community based services, in order to raise awareness of the link between drugs and HIV / Aids.

2.2 Jordanian legal framework

The basic legislation is *Law no. 11 of 1988 on Drugs and Psychotropic Substances*, as was recently amended, distinguishing between first time users and long term addicts. The amendment provides that first time user be placed in a rehabilitation center instead of the prison.

2.3 Institutional framework

The **control structure** in Jordan involves four entities:

- a) the Anti Narcotics Department (AND)**, established in 1973 (second in the Arab world after the one in Egypt); which is responsible for coordinating all of Jordan's enforcement efforts against drug trafficking and misuse. Beyond mainstream counter-narcotics work, it participates in the process of treatment of addicts, who are kept in custody in a special quasi judicial, quasi medical rehabilitation facility. Addicts are treated on the basis of a comprehensive program conducted in cooperation with the Ministry of Health;
- b) the Desert and Border Police**, responsible for patrolling the vast border and desert areas (the length of the Jordanian borders is 1,734 km, distributed as follows: 360 km with Syria, 714km with Saudi Arabia, 180km with Iraq and 480km with Israel and Palestine);
- c) the General Customs Department**, responsible for general customs duties and anti-smuggling patrol work;
- d) the Jordanian Armed Forces (JAF)**, which control part of the country's borders.

2.4 Law enforcement efforts

For the past eight years the PSD has began utilizing x-ray equipment on larger vehicles at its major border crossings with Syria and Iraq. It has also intensified police and customs training on how to identify and locate concealed drugs. Sniffer dogs are also used in inspections and searches.

2.5 Corruption

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is a party to the *UN Convention against Corruption*, and has signed, but not yet ratified, the *UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime*. In 2006, an *Anti-Corruption Commission in Jordan (JACC)* was established by Royal Decree, which is run by a board of seven members (including the president appointed by His Majesty the King upon recommendation of the Prime Minister). JACC has investigative and prosecutorial powers and is concerned with sensitizing and raising the awareness of the public at large of the dangerous effects and harmful consequences of corruption on economic, social and political development. As far as its mandate is concerned, JACC is entitled by law to investigate financial and administrative corruption, uncover violations and breaches, gather evidence and information related thereto, initiate investigations and proceed with administrative and legal procedures necessary thereof as well as prosecute all those who are responsible for committing such breaches.

In addition, in 2007 Jordan enacted a comprehensive *anti-money laundering law (46/2007)*, by which the *National Committee on Anti-Money Laundering* was established. This Committee is chaired by the Governor of the Central Bank of Jordan and has nine members. One of the aforementioned nine members is the head of the Anti-Money Laundering Unit (AMLU), which was created under the same law and is the Government's financial intelligent unit.

The enactment of this law is undoubtedly a positive development; nevertheless, the competent Jordanian authorities should consider conducting a comprehensive evaluation of Jordan's capabilities in preventing money laundering and enforcing the law, in accordance with international standards and best practices.

3. Enumeration of major bilateral and multilateral programs

3.1 Major programs

Jordan has a very close cooperation with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the European Union (EU), through the following projects:

CEPOL EU[ZOMED II Programme: This program is funded and implemented by the European Union in order to enhance the international cooperation in the field of combating drugs through the organization of several seminars in different countries.

JORJ22- UNODC Project: "Strengthening the community resources in providing drug abuse treatment and rehabilitation for vulnerable groups in Jordan". funded by the Governments of the Netherlands, was implemented by the UNODC Office in Amman in cooperation with the PSD and the Ministry of Health.

XAM/J07 Project: This Regional UNODC project, entitled "Increasing Access to Prevention and Care Services for Drug Use and HIV/AIDS in the Prison Setting" , is implemented by UNODC in cooperation with Jordanian PSD and the Ministry of Health.

TAIEX Cooperation: After the Jordanian side performed a study tour in Spain, they have programmed to receive a reciprocal expert's mission from Spain to Jordan, which will evaluate their needs in the operational field.

LEXPRO: "Program of Capacity Building in the Western Balkans and the Mediterranean Region through Targeted Drug Law Enforcement Exchange".

UNODC launched a new project in cooperation with PSD I AND and the Ministry of Health in order to raise drug and HIV I AIDS awareness in prisons across Jordan.

The cooperation with the Pompidou *group/MIDNET* is supported by the European Union. Jordan has been one of the member countries of Pompidou group/MIDNET, since 2009. Jordan participates in all MIDNET events (seminars, workshops and training courses), aiming to promote cooperation between Mediterranean countries. Presently, the MIDNET network is processing a project of data collection in Jordan, in cooperation with the Ministry of Health and the Anti-Narcotics Department. We urged the Jordanian side to expand the data collection to include all social strata as well as women.

3.2 *Actions against drugs (demand reduction & rehabilitation)*

The drugs situation in Jordan is perceived by the local authorities as being under control. However they bear in mind that there is a possibility of facing a larger problem in the future. In this context, Jordan continues to take measures to increase public awareness of the danger' of drugs through an active awareness plan. The PSD/ AND conduct seminars and lectures at universities and schools, while they also distribute published material aimed at raising awareness. In addition, the AND's awareness plan also involves cooperation with government institutions, NGO's, correction & rehabilitation centers, youth clubs and of course the media.

Two public treatment facilities function in Jordan; the *National Center for the Rehabilitation of Addicts (NCRA)*, affiliated to the Ministry of Health and the *Police Treatment Centre (PTC)*, operated by the *PSDI* Anti-Narcotics Department. There is also a private treatment Centre, operating inside the Al Rashid Hospital in Amman. Two additional floors have being added to the NCRA centre to cater first time users, who will be sent there for rehabilitation.

Note: It should be also reminded that in 2001, the UNODC Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa launched a project with the view to support the upgrading of treatment and rehabilitation services in Jordan, at which time there was a growing drug problem and a lack of drug demand reduction (DDR) services. The project was the only one of its kind and provided an immediate response to the increasing prevalence of the problem of drug use in the country. Through that project, UNODC provided funding and technical assistance to the NCRA and the PTC. The staff of these two institutions participated in the activities organized by the UNODC, such as treatment and rehabilitation training courses, management training, workshops and study tours to other countries. With the intention to maintain and strengthen the results achieved under the aforementioned project, the UNODC, ROMENA have taken new initiatives, aimed at encouraging the active involvement of community-based services, in order to ensure a network of programs for treatment and rehabilitation of drug users and prevention of HIV. In this context, during 2008, UNODC implemented and successfully completed the project "Strengthening the community resources in providing drug abuse treatment and rehabilitation for vulnerable groups" which- as mentioned above- was funded by the Governments of the Netherlands and Sweden. This project has led to positive results in enhancing and improving DDR services in Jordan. These services have been expanded to include a national NGO and primary health centers (PHCs), in which accessible and target group-oriented prevention, community-based and treatment and rehabilitation services are being offered towards vulnerable groups in the community, such as prisoners and marginal groups of the population. Notwithstanding the above, UNODC aims at taking further initiatives to improve Jordan's responses to HIV prevention among high-risk groups, given that community outreach work and peer education targeting injecting drug users (IDUs) for risk reduction interventions and services, are at present unavailable.

4. Place and date of meetings of Mini-Dublin Group

The Romanian Ambassador to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, as the coordinator of the Mini-Dublin Group for the Middle East organized, organized on June the 12th 2014, the first meeting of this informal working group. The participants - representatives of the diplomatic missions of the Member States of the Mini-Dublin Group in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the EU Delegation in Amman and the Department of Public Security / AND - analyzed the issue of drug trafficking in the region and from this perspective; they emphasized the importance of inter-state cooperation in combating this phenomenon. In the same time, all the participants appreciated the activity of the Jordanian institutions which are acting in the field and the good cooperation between the Hashemite authorities and the member states of the Mini-Dublin Group for the Middle East. The next meeting will be organized soon, when the AND officials will be available.

In the same time, the Romanian Embassy held the most recent meeting at the “Anti Narcotics Department”, in the last week of February 2015. In that context, all the subjects related to the narcotics issue within the kingdom were updated.

5. Prioritized identification of needs for external assistance

The AND has pointed out to this Group that in terms of capacity building assistance, it would welcome the help of the member states of the Group for the equipment of technical unit, the organizing of training courses for Jordanian anti narcotics officers locally and in countries that have a good experience in dealing with drug trafficking, visits to MS for officers of the Jordanian anti-narcotics department, as well as training in the use of K9 dogs for drug detection and providing the furnishing for the new treatment centre.

6. Mini-Dublin Group assessment of needs

6.1 Emerging threats/trends

Despite the fact that Jordan is not an illicit drugs producer, it has become a *main transit country* for the organized smuggling of drugs, while recently it has started to also be targeted as transit territory for cocaine trafficked towards Europe, mainly by post. With regard to consumption, there is a clear increasing trend, especially regarding heroin, hashish and Captagon / Ecstasy tablets. As the Group has also pointed out in previous reports, official data understates the number of drug abusers. There is no official information regarding female users as well as the use of drugs, in particular cocaine, among upper classes, since data collection focuses on the lower social strata. The official position is that most drug consumption in the country is concentrated in poor and high populated areas. There is a risk that problems such as alcoholism or use of certain drugs in these areas will not be appropriately addressed unless data collection is improved.

Moreover there were no statistics provided regarding doping since this matter falls under the jurisdiction of the Minister of Health and the relevant figures are unknown. Given Jordan's position as a significant transit country, the upward trend in consumption figures seems likely to continue.

6.2 Political initiatives

In 2008, a Higher Council for Drug Awareness was established, which is chaired by the Ministry of Interior and has 24 members. This body's mandate was to set up a general strategy for fighting drugs, which was officially launched in May 2009 under the title "National Strategy to Fight Drugs".

6.3 Recommendations

- a) It would be helpful to convey to the Jordanian authorities that more thorough and detailed statistics, which will cover all social strata, would be conducive to a better understanding of the drug consumption situation in Jordan.
- b) MS should examine the possibility of signing MOU's related to exchange of information, which potentially could facilitate the Jordanian efforts regarding interception of drug traffickers.

- c) MS should also examine the possibility of supporting the upgrading of the Jordanian Technical Unit, especially as regards surveillance, which can result to the better protection of undercover Jordanian officers in action. The Jordanian side has acknowledged lack of resources in this respect
- d) Exchange of visits should also continue.
- e) Jordan could be assisted in raising awareness, regarding the link between drugs and HIV/AIDS.

**ANNEX 1 - FINAL STATISTICS OF THE “ANTI NARCOTICS DEPARTMENT”
SEIZURES FOR 2014:**

Narcotics:	Quantities:
Heroin	147, 187 Kg
Hashish	1.222, 710 Kg
Synthetic Hashish	175, 053 Kg
Marijuana	5481, 355 Kg
Captagon tablets	31.732.201
Cocaine	319, 15 Kg
Opium	-
Hashish Oil	-
Tramadol	43116862

STATE OF PALESTINE

1. General situation in the country

The main factor facilitating the set-up and operation of drug trafficking networks in the Palestinian Territories is represented by the existence of “grey areas” in law enforcement. This is due to the different status of the tri-partite division of the Territories:

- Area A: full Palestinian civilian and security control
- Area B: Palestinian civilian authority, Israeli security control
- Area C: Israeli civilian and security control

To this is added the situation of the Gaza Strip under de facto Hamas control.

This overlap of jurisdictions and the necessity of permanent coordination between Palestinian and Israeli law enforcement, sometimes in a difficult security environment, are conducive to the establishment and operation of drug trafficking networks.

Another contributing factor is the existence of the Palestinian refugee camps, inside which regular law enforcement is very difficult, if not virtually impossible.

Regarding East Jerusalem, the data is collected by the Israeli authorities.

The same jurisdictional overlap and difficulty in amassing credible data for the whole of the Territories allows only a very general assessment regarding the dynamics of drug consumption in Palestine.

On the whole, drug use in the Palestinian Territories is rising, due to a combination of the factors mentioned above and social factors (poverty, unemployment, etc). This continues despite the religious, legal, and cultural constraints that prevail in the Palestinian society.

Drugs

Narcotic Department situation in the host country including production, trafficking and demand related issues

Heroin, sedative, hypnotics, chemical drugs, hashish, “Spice (sintetique marijuana)”, marijuana and cocaine are the most common used drugs. There has been a significant increase in heroin consumption. Nevertheless, heroin and cocaine are still the less common drugs used. In the Gaza Strip residents have developed a serious addiction to the narcotic painkiller Tramadol. The rate of drug consumption, especially among young and female demographics (heroin), has increased.

Users buy the drugs from dealers in Israel, Area C, close to checkpoints or refugee camps. The main smuggling routes are: from Egypt through Sinai to Israel and West Bank for hashish and marijuana; from Allenby (Jordan) and Rafah (Egypt) for ecstasy; Jordan Valley – Dead Sea for cocaine and heroin; north from Lebanon to Israel for hashish.

Short update on the country's anti-drug strategy

A challenge for the Anti of Palestinian Ministry of Interior is to identify the so called “closed laboratories” that produce chemical drugs and marijuana in West Bank.

Until 2014 the Anti Narcotic Department had no laboratory to test the substances that have been confiscated. After receiving a donation from the Government of Canada, the Department established a laboratory under the supervision of the Ministry of Interior where all the employees will be specialized in chemical engineering and one laboratory under the supervision of the Ministry of Health. Before the establishing of the laboratories the confiscated substances were tested in the laboratories of An Najah and Birzeit Universities.

The PA police and security services have maintained a good level of cooperation with their Israeli counterparts in combating drug trafficking.

1.1 changes/additions to the country national institutional framework

There is no Palestinian law on drugs and psychotropic substances in force, since the draft law from 2008 has not passed through the Palestinian Legislative Council. Order No. 558/1475 of the IDF, applicable in the West Bank Governorates, concerning illicit drugs, is still in force.

At the moment it is taken into consideration the possibility of issuing a decree by the President until the end of February 2015 on drugs trafficking and consumption. The maximum punishment for drug trafficking will be life sentence. As regarding to users they will be placed in a rehabilitation center instead of prison.

1.2 No information regarding legal/legislative changes, including money laundering and chemical precursors, have been provided

1.3 An assessment of the government's political will to conduct a comprehensive and resolute anti-drugs policy

Tackling psychoactive substances is a declared government priority, addressed by taking a number of actions, including establishing a national early warning system and launching targeted communication campaigns to raise awareness, in coordination with nongovernmental organizations.

Combating drug trafficking is among the top priorities of Palestinian-Israeli law enforcement cooperation.

If the process of unification of the West Bank and Gaza Strip administrations is successful, an extension of the Palestinian-Israeli law enforcement cooperation is possible.

2. Enumeration of major bilateral and multilateral country national programs (including those that support demand reduction)

Palestine has signed agreements concerning the drug trafficking with: Russia and states of the Arab League. Recently, Palestine signed an agreement with the National Rehabilitation Center in Abu Dhabi, where Palestinian experts will be trained. Palestine participates at meetings, trainings and other activities organized by the Pompidou group/MedNET.

Reduction of drugs demand - Treatment

On May 5th 2014, the Ministry of Health of Palestine opened a center in Ramallah for methadone treatment.

On April 30th 2014, the Ministry of Health of Palestine in cooperation with the Government of South Korea started construction of the National Center for Treatment and Rehabilitation in Ramallah. The Center is scheduled to be opened in 2017.

There are 4 more centers for treatment and rehabilitation in East Jerusalem and Jerusalem area.

3. There haven't been any meetings of the mini-Dublin group in Palestine.

4. Prioritized identification of needs for external assistance (as expressed by the Palestinian Authority)

- Kit for initial examination of narcotics.
- Completion of the Anti-Narcotics Law Enforcement planning capability and preparation for dismantling drugs smuggling groups, especially in complicated operations.
- Improving the capability in controlled delivery, working undercover, chemical precursors control, dismantling drugs factories, source recruitments and information analyzing.
- Provide necessary technical assistance for the detection of hidden and smuggled drugs.
- Need of improving public awareness and prevention, by training specialized personnel.
- Training and advice about information collecting and analyzing, especially statistics and data from the international reports.
- Providing the PA with the (Go Case) system, to manage the investigation on the drugs- related crimes, and the related training on the information collecting and analyzing using (Go Case) system.
- Support for studies and researches on drugs fighting, and exchanges regarding the regional experiences in the same field.
- Special training on use of the internet by drug trafficking networks, and on related themes such as, analyzing the relation between drugs and terror.
- Basic supplies, such as furniture and office equipments for the Anti-Narcotics Department.
- Vehicles and transportation for the Anti-Narcotics Department.
- Out reach car – laboratory and treatment.

5. Mini-Dublin group assessment of needs

5.1 political initiatives

Anti-narcotics Department police is making a serious effort to ensure the appropriate ability and quality of its work. Officers from the Department are participating at regional and international level courses in order to benefit from foreign expertise and develop the capacity of fighting against drugs.

STATE OF QATAR

1. General situation in the country

Qatar remains a destination country for drug trafficking from Saudi Arabia. According to the official reports, there has been an increase in the quantity of drugs seized by the customs authorities in 2014 as compared to the previous year.

2. Short update on the country's anti drug strategy

In the fourth report, The Permanent Committee for Drugs and Alcohol Affairs has mentioned the results of the third stage of the National Drug Control Strategy (2010-2015), including facilities provided for psychiatric treatments and centres for social rehabilitation, in addition to the centres under other establishments like Eid Charity and Raf.

Other institutions involved in the National Drug Control Strategy are Drug Enforcement Administration (Ministry of Interior), the Supreme Education Council, the Supreme Council of Health, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Heritage, Qatar Media Corporation, the Ministry of Endowments and Islamic Affairs, Ministry of Justice, Qatar Foundation for Social Protection and Rehabilitation, General Authority of Customs.

Each year, Ministry of Interior organises activities to mark the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

MoI's Permanent Committee for Drugs and Alcohol Affairs has organises several meetings on the role of the medical staff in preventing and reducing the misuse of prescribed medication and the prescription

drug abuse.

The Permanent Committee for Drugs and Alcohol Affairs published several books in Arabic concerning the prevention from drugs and alcohols in the contry.

3. Enumeration of major bilateral and multilateral country national programs

State of Qatar ratified of the Arab Convention on Illicit Trafficking of Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1995.

State of Qatar is a party in the single Convention on Drugs of 1961, Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971, and the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988.

There is an increasing cooperation between competent authorities in the member states in the field of combating organized crime relating to illicit trafficking in drugs, psychotropic substances and chemical precursors in the frame of GCC-Criminal Information Center to Combat Drugs.

REPUBLIC OF LEBANON

1. General situation in the country

Various drugs are currently available in Lebanon, such as marijuana, hashish, heroin, cocaine, amphetamines and other synthetic drugs, for example MDMA (ecstasy). Lebanon is a transit country for cocaine, heroin, and fenethylamine (marketed under the brand name Captagon). Criminal networks based in Western Africa, Panama and Colombia are associated with networks in Lebanon in the trafficking of drugs intended for European markets and the Gulf States. Regarding production in Lebanon, cannabis resin is mainly produced in the fields of the Beqaa Valley of Lebanon. Moreover, heroin production in that very same region has been increasing. Synthetic drugs are increasingly available in Lebanon, in particular, fenethylamine and ecstasy (MDMA). The volume of cocaine trafficked from South America via commercial aircraft has similarly risen.

Captagon trafficking and production is the most commonly illegal – drug related activity addressed by the Authorities. Syrian refugees residing in Lebanon are frequently involved in these illegal activities, a fact that proves the reorganization of criminal activities between Syria and Lebanon as result of the crisis and the strengthening of the criminal links between the two countries.

Tourists and international visitors traffic in small quantities illegal drugs, mostly for personal use, although the extent of this issue remains unknown.

Drug consumption is a growing problem in Lebanon and there are no reliable estimates of the number of drug users in Lebanon. According to the Lebanese authorities, most addicts are between 18 and 25 years old. The most common drug is hashish, but the consumption of heroin, cocaine and synthetic drugs is increasing.

The number of people who inject drugs is estimated at between 2,000 and 4,000 individuals, and about 5.7 per cent of people with HIV in Lebanon are injecting drug users.

2. Short update on the country's anti-drug strategy

Lebanon is a party on the 1961 UN single convention on Narcotic Drugs, the 1971 UN Convention on Psychotropic substances, the 1972 Protocol amending the single Convention and the 1988 UN Convention against illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

Lebanon adopted a law on Narcotics, Psychotropic Substances and Precursors in 1998 (law no. 673), amended by law no. 77 of 3 April 1999, which foresees the establishment of various state structures to address the challenges of drug abuse.

The Lebanese government pursues a strictly implemented drug repression policy. Mere possession or use of drugs, even in a limited quantity, is punishable to the same extent as trafficking. The use or possession of drugs attracts a prison sentence of up to six months, as well as a fine (of about 50 euros). The law does not distinguish between different types of drug use. However, drug dealers, or persons who facilitate drug dealing, are more severely punished, with prison sentences ranging from 6 months to 3 years, and fines ranging from 50€ to 250€

The "Internal Security Forces (ISF)" Counter Narcotics Unit of Lebanon is in charge of combating drug trafficking and drug abuse. The ISF is Lebanon's main police force, made up of an administrative branch and an operations branch, operating under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Interior. The police are in charge chiefly of arresting and detaining suspects, as well as leading criminal investigations. The Drug Repression Bureau (DRB) is part of the Criminal Investigation Department and is responsible for conducting drug-related criminal investigations. The DRB has four detention and interrogation centres. Under article 211 of law No. 673 of 16 March 1998 on drugs, the "Command centre" leads the collection of information that will serve to facilitate the prosecution of drug-related crimes, to detect and prevent drug trafficking, and to destroy illegal crops.

One of the major challenges that the Lebanese authorities are facing in dealing with the drugs problem is the lack of specialized and trained personnel, caused mainly by the rotation system at the law enforcement level.

The main counternarcotics goal of the Lebanese government remains the eradication of illegally-cultivated drug plants in the Bekaa region, but a difficult security environment and the need for additional logistical support and equipment hamper its effectiveness.

Taking in consideration the current political, economical and security situation of Lebanon the anti-drugs policy is not a priority on the agenda of the Lebanese authorities.

3. Enumeration of major bilateral and multilateral country national programs

French authorities have a good collaboration with ISF on drug related issues, especially in providing a wide range of training courses to Lebanese officer from the Drug Enforcement Bureau. Another important aspect of this collaboration is the campaign designated to raise awareness about the narcotics ("Les dangers des drogues") to the young people. The campaign includes presentations of various narcotics and the effects of their consume in about 80 schools from all over Lebanon every year Germany and US are also involved both in providing training and equipments.

At the EU level, there is an interest for establishing a national drug information system and to foster the exchange of experience on best practices. In 2013, the EU provided some training on basic intervention techniques to the investigative units of the Judicial Police in charge of drug-related crimes among others.

4. Place and date of meeting of mini-Dublin groups

For 2015 there are planned two mini-Dublin meetings, at the European Union delegation in Beirut, first in March and second in October.

Note: In attachment we present the statistics of the Internal Security Forces, Drug Enforcement Bureau, for the year 2014.

Statistics 2014

Kinds and quantity of drugs

Kinds of drugs seized	Quantity		Other kinds	Quantity
	kg	gr		(piles)
Hashish	2781	179.55	captagon	35276219 p
Cocaine	72	786.99	Different kinds of Pills	33051 p
Heroin	3	998.91	Unknown Pills	1802 p
Marijuana	18	7.7	xct	169 p
Hashish seeds	1641	943.6	Simo	1236 b capacity 100 ml
Hashish not fabricated	1	60	Ether	-2 liter -93 b capacity 311G
Hashish oil	-	29	Unknown liquid	- 8kg and 25 g - 5205.4 L
Hashish plants	259	698		
Opium seeds	-	896	Acetone	8 gallon capacity 25.250 kg
Ephedrine Powder mixed with borghol	7	800	Hydraulic Acid	4 b capacity 12.600 KG
Unknown white powder	60	501.27	ketamine	-199 siring 5 m 250 mg -0.1 g
kat	9	453.3	MDMA	0.1 g and 8 pills
Cocaine and Ephedrine powder	4	800	Marijuana seeds	20 pills
Cigarettes with hashish	183 cigarettes		Hashish plants	100 plants

Number of cases seized, and criminal classification, and areas:

<i>Classifications</i>								
farmer	Producer	smuggler	Dealers	Carrier	Brokers	Addicts	Others	Total
18	4	77	556	23	377	1317	32	2404

<i>Areas</i>				
Via land	Via sea	Airports	On Lebanese territory	Total
1	7	24	2372	2404

Number of persons arrested and their nationality's and their criminal classifications :

<i>Persons arrested nationality's</i>			
Citizens	Arabs	Others	Total
2806	753	28	3587

<i>Criminal classification</i>									
farmer	Producer	Smuggler	Dealers	Inverte r	carrier	Brokers	Addicts	Others	Total
10	4	135	148	-	50	494	2709	37	3587

Numbers of addicts via kinds of drugs

Hashish		Opium		Heroin		Cocaine		marijuana	
male	female	male	Female	Male	female	male	female	male	female
1577	61	-	-	188	1	434	23	11	-

captagon		Piles		Other (simo)		Others		Total	
Male	Female	Male	Femal	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
32	-	214	10	4	-	152	2	2612	97

During year 2014 drugs planted areas destroyed:

Kind of plants	Area destroyed
Opium	12.000 m2
Hashish	Discovered and not destroyed areas till now 35.000.000. m2

REPUBLIC OF YEMEN

1. General situation in the country

Yemen is a part of the drugs route from Iran/Afghanistan/Pakistan to Western Europe or other countries of the region. The country's large open coasts are difficult to control.

Drug trafficking is facilitated by the fact that the government does not exert effective control over the largest part of the country. The prolonged political instability and the deteriorating security situation in the country are deemed to have resulted in the worsening of the situation due to less vigilance and awareness of illegal activities.

In Yemen, Qat, which is a green leafy shrub that acts as a mild stimulant when chewed, is by far the drug mostly cultivated. The cultivation and consumption of Qat is legal (even though there is a ban on Qat chewing in government offices that has still to be enforced).

Yemen has become also an important source of cannabis resin, as the seizures made in some countries, particularly in Saudi Arabia, indicate.

2. Drug consumption

According to World Bank's reports, 72% of all males and 35% of all females in Yemen habitually chew Qat, while children are being introduced to the habit in the age of 6 or 7.

Qat accounts for 10% of GDP and provides employment to 14% of the working population, while 33% of the agricultural labour force is involved in Qat production.

The widespread use of Qat is associated with serious social, economic, environmental and health problems.

In one of the poorest countries in the world, this habit consumes 25% to 30% of household income and reduces dramatically the productive work time. In addition, Qat production increases by 10% annually, replacing food and exportable crops, while its cultivation results in groundwater depletion, consuming 30% of the nation's groundwater extraction and causing soil degradation.

The high use of pesticides on the crop contaminates drinking water and constitutes a primary cause of the spread of cancer in the country. In this respect, WHO has reported that 20 000 individuals per year have been affected by cancer including dangerous diseases such as kidney failure and cirrhosis of the liver and are suspected to have come from the increased use of insecticides on qat crops with a view to enhancing yield.

Recently, a group of activists in Yemen launched through social media a campaign against the use of Qat, in a bid to highlight the danger of the plant and its negative effects on its consumers.

3. International cooperation legal framework and mechanisms for combating drug trafficking

Yemen has signed the main UN Anti-drugs Conventions of 1961, 1971 (as amended by the 1972 Protocol) and 1988, and the authorities are fully cooperative on counter-terrorism and money laundering requests. Yemen has increased international international cooperation notably with the countries of the horn of Africa, the United States, France, UK, Italy, Saudi Arabia and the UN. The United nations awarded Yemen with the Organizations' 2008 shield in appreciation of its role in combating drug trafficking.

Agencies for combating drug trafficking - The Ministries of Interior and Public Health are responsible for enforcement. The Anti-Narcotics General Directorate (ANGD) was formed in 2002. The Anti-Narcotics General Directorate possesses limited capacities and there is a need for more human and financial resources. It has been admitted that drug smuggling is on the rise partly because there are very few patrols along the border and some locals show willingness to help the traffickers.

4. The next meeting of the mini-Dublin group will take place at the Marriot Hotel, on the 16th of March 2015

5. Legal framework

Anti-Money Laundering (AML) legislation (law 35) dates back to 2003 and pertains to a wide range of crimes, including narcotic offences. Under a 1993 Yemeni law, punishment for trafficking or selling drugs ranges from long-term imprisonment to death.

6. Recommendations

Given the security situation of the country in general, it is not easy to articulate recommendations for the drug problem, which obviously is not given a high priority by the government.

There is an urgent need to address the Qat consumption problem, due to its negative effects on productivity, the environment, health of individuals and the society in general. However, the fact that this habit is by now deeply embedded in society as well as the important economic interests that various groups (farms, traders, etc.) maintain in this respect, will further complicate any efforts to reduce consumption and should be taken into account when formulating relevant policies.

Drug trafficking can be dealt with effectively only in the eventuality of an improvement in the security situation, in the country, which for the time being remains elusive.

It is also recommended that the Yemeni authorities establish a rehabilitation centre, and increase public awareness on the dangers of psychotropic medicine, through public campaigns as well as amend the law on drugs so as to differentiate between different types of narcotics.

SULTANATE OF OMAN

1. General situation in the country

No significant illicit drug production has been reported in Oman. Drugs are imported into the country illegally by sea, mainly from Iran and Pakistan. Local drug consumption is relatively low, according to the authorities, and illegally imported drugs are mostly transshipped and smuggled from Oman into other countries. Strict laws, including the death penalty, exist for drug trafficking.

According to independent sources, there has not been an effective halt to the importation of drugs in Oman. Prices of heroin and hash are very low and stable, attesting to a high demand. Morphine is becoming increasingly popular because it is purer and carries less of a stigma.

2. Drug trafficking routes

Effective control of drug trafficking is hampered by Oman's huge coastline and proximity to Pakistan and Afghanistan, combined with the historical and ongoing smuggling trade across the straight of Hormuz between Oman and Iran.

3. Legal context

The current legislation on drugs is very strict and complies with the commitments undertaken by Oman during the 1998 UNGASS. A law introducing the death penalty for persons found guilty of drug trafficking was enacted in 1999 and another against money laundering in march 2002. The sultanate's law does not punish abusers who voluntarily turn in for treatment and rehabilitation. The law also allows the close relatives of an addict such as the spouse or next of kin, to voluntarily seek assistance for treatment and rehabilitation.

4. Agencies for combating drug trafficking

There is an Inter-Ministerial Committee to oversee drug framework matters in the country. The Royal Oman Police (ROP) launched the General Administration for Combating Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. The General Administration is authorised to deal with the implementation of ROP tasks and relevant international conventions and take legal action in drug and psychotropic substances offences, in cooperation with competent authorities.

5. International cooperation

The Sultanate of Oman has acceded to all three main UN Anti-Drugs Conventions of 1961, 1971 and 1988. Oman is an active participant in the regional and sub-regional cooperation meetings led by the Council of Arab Interior Ministers and the Arab Office for Narcotic Affairs, as well as the GCC. There is close coordination between the Omani police with their UAE counterparts which has been successful in a number of occasions in breaking up international drug rings.

6. Awareness campaigns

The National Committee on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances implements awareness campaigns aiming for three groups of people: non users, influential people, like teachers, media, athletes and family, and users encouraged to rehabilitation.

According to the Health Ministry, Oman has decided to set up drug rehabilitation centres in every one of the country's 11 governorates due to the increasing number of addicts. The rising drug menace has been reported to also spread communicable diseases like hepatitis B and C as well as HIV in the country. However, health authorities are reluctant to dispense syringes recommended in the WHO treatment guidelines for fear of encouraging addicts.

7. Conclusions

It's encouraging that the country has adopted a more dynamic approach to the problem recently, acknowledging the gravity of it. Yet, the increased numbers of users and drug-related crimes demonstrate that there is need for further intensification of efforts, regarding the effectiveness of the controls, the awareness campaigns among the youth and the establishment of more rehabilitation centres.