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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council
On: 17 June 2015
To: Delegations
Subject: Outcomes of the EU-Central Asia dialogue on drugs

1. Adoption of the Agenda

The meeting endorsed the agenda contained in doc. CM 2795/15.

2. Developments of drug policy and drug situation

The representatives of the Presidency, Commission and EMCDDA updated the Central Asian delegations on the latest trends in drug production, trafficking and consumption in the EU and most recent policy initiatives, including proposal to establish a new mechanism at the EU level to tackle new psychoactive substances and to develop minimum quality standards in drug demand reduction.

The delegation of Kazakhstan explained that tackling drugs was one of their priorities and that the drug trafficking situation was stable. The speaker elaborated on actions taken to address drugs and noted that recently the number of drug users had been reduced by 20 percent and that EU efforts to prevent drug use in Central Asia played an important role.

The delegation of Kyrgyzstan noted that they had successful experiences in tackling drugs and called for further consolidating international cooperation to tackle new challenges in order to eliminate the drugs phenomenon. The speaker expressed interest in further support from the EU, including as regards training officials, expanding state drug control service, equipping it with modern technology.

The delegation of Uzbekistan said that they were applying a more balanced approach in tackling drugs and elaborated on the activities aimed at tackling drug production and trafficking. The speaker also mentioned that sharing of operational information had been improved with the development of the single database.

The delegation of Turkmenistan called drugs one of the most pressing current problems and elaborated on actions taken to prevent drug use. The speaker also spoke about the activities aimed at preventing money laundering, noting that a comprehensive structure was in place for this purpose.

The delegation of Tajikistan observed that drugs had become one of the serious world problems, and that the amount of confiscated drugs had been increasing annually in Tajikistan. The speaker informed the meeting that recently a national counter narcotics strategy had been developed for the period 2013-2020 and hoped that the goals of this strategy could be achieved with the help of partners and the EU.

3. Overview of the implementation of the EU-Central Asia Action Plan on drugs (2014-2020), cooperation between the EU and Central Asia and regional activities in Central Asia

The representative of the EEAS elaborated on the implementation of the EU Strategy for Central Asia, noting that the priorities identified in 2007 were still largely valid. She explained that in the future they intended to work more with individual countries in the region, given the growing differences among Central Asian countries and respecting individual aspirations to engage with the EU. The representative recalled that the EU-Central Asia action plan on drugs, implemented through CADAP, BOMCA and other programmes, was a joint commitment and encouraged the Central Asian countries to assist in the implementation of the programmes.

The representative of the Commission noted that the EU had been very active in supporting border management reform and tackling drug trafficking along the heroin route in Central Asia. He called on Central Asian countries to share their experiences and to access the progress made in the region. The representative of the EEAS gave an overview of the new phase of the BOMCA programme, which would continue the focus of the previous BOMCA phases, but would also work to develop instruments to manage migration flows at the borders.

The representatives of CADAP informed the meeting about advancements in launching the new CADAP VI programme, due to start by the end of July 2015, and expressed hope that Uzbekistan would also join this programme. The leaders of CADAP components explained that the new programme would be composed of four components – national drug strategies, national focal points, prevention and treatment, and presented in detail the respective components, their goals and activities foreseen.

As regards the “National drug strategies” component, the starting point of work would be the review and analysis of existing documents, and focus would also be placed on strengthening the inter-agency coordination and work of inter-agency groups on drugs strategy/action plan. The “Prevention“ component would build on the results achieved through CADAP V programme and would ultimately aim at developing and testing prevention programs. The “Treatment” component would contain of six working packages, among other issues offering training for key players of NGOs, study visits to treatment and rehabilitation facilities for drug users in EU and/or neighbouring countries, institutionalisation and further development of the “Atlantis” drug addict treatment programme.

The representative of the EEAS updated on the implementation of the Heroin route programme, covering all states along the heroin route, noting that the new phase of the programme was currently under development, aiming to make the programme more operational and focusing on transregional approach.

The representative of the Commission gave an overview of EU efforts to address HIV/AIDS and elaborated on the updated Action Plan on HIV/AIDS in the EU and neighbouring countries for 2014-2016, aiming to reduce HIV infections, to improve access to prevention, treatment and care and to improve the quality of life of people living with HIV/AIDS. He noted that various existing instruments were used to finance the implementation of the actions foreseen in this action plan.

The representative of Central Asian Regional Information Coordination Centre (CARICC) recalled the goals and functions of CARICC and gave an overview of its activities, including coordination of antidrug operations, support for competent agencies of CARICC member states, production of analytical products and strategical analysis of the drug situation in the region, provision of secure exchange of information among partners. The speaker informed the meeting about CARICC's cooperation with other similar bodies, and noted that the memorandum of cooperation with Gulf Criminal Intelligence Centre (GCIC) was under development.

4. Thematic debate on situation in Afghanistan and possible cooperation under international programmes

The FR delegation, chairing the mini-Dublin Group on South-West Asia, gave an overview of the drug situation in Afghanistan noting that opium poppy cultivation had been increasing for the third consequent year, that significant increase in production of opium had also been recorded and that 1,6 million people in the country were suffering from drug addiction or serious problem with drugs. The speaker recalled that drug trafficking undermined all sectors of licit economy and fed corruption. He emphasised the importance of the political will of the Afghan authorities to tackle drugs and the need to address this issue as a part of a larger development, anticorruption and security agenda.

The FR delegation gave an overview of the Paris Pact initiative, aimed at tackling drugs in Afghanistan through the following activities: strengthening and implementing regional initiatives, detecting and blocking financial flows linked to illicit traffic in opiates, preventing the diversion of precursor chemicals used in illicit opiates manufacturing in Afghanistan and reducing drug abuse and dependence through a comprehensive approach. The speaker also noted that there were significant challenges in funding the initiative.

The representative of the UNODC presented the UNODC's efforts to support the development of public health-centered drug policies in Central Asia, noting that Central Asia was the region with one of the highest numbers of injecting drug users and that the prevalence of HIV was also high. The speaker gave an overview of common challenges identified in high priority countries and measures taken, among which was poor access to and quality of demand reduction services. She noted that a punitive approach prevailed in the region and emphasised that drug users should be treated rather than punished. The representative presented the new UNODC programme for Central Asia for the period of 2015-2019, building on the previous work and covering both drug supply and drug demand reduction.

5. Exchange of views on the outcomes of the Special Segment on the preparation for the UNGA Special Session on the World Drug Problem (9-12 March, Vienna)

The Presidency gave an overview of the EU priorities as regards UNGASS 2016 and encouraged Central Asian states to share their position with the EU. The representative of the CADAP informed the meeting about a possible side event at the CND on drug situation in Central Asia.

6. AOB

No issues were discussed under this agenda item.