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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council
On: 30 April 2015
To: Delegations
Subject: Report of the Dublin Group meeting

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted as set out in doc. CM 2202/15.

2. Review of the functioning of central, regional and local chairs of the Dublin Group

The Presidency of the central Dublin Group called for volunteers to take over the chairing of the central Dublin Group. The chairs of the mini Dublin Groups reported on their activities and the Presidency proposed to establish new mini Dublin groups on South Africa and India, calling for volunteers to lead these mini groups.

3. Exchange of views on the Dublin Group working methods and endorsement of the updated Guidelines for Cooperation in the Dublin Group

Delegations exchanged views on the revised Guidelines for Cooperation in the Dublin Group (doc. DS 1211/15), especially as regards the venue and the frequency of the central Dublin Group meetings and the work of mini Dublin groups. Among other proposals, the Presidency suggested to hold an additional Dublin Group meeting in Vienna, back to back to the CND session in Vienna, and some delegations welcomed this proposal.

4. Discussion on a possible contribution of the Central Dublin Group to the 2016 UNGASS on drugs

The Presidency proposed to consider a possibility to draft Dublin Group recommendations, based on regional recommendations provided by mini Dublin Groups, for UNGASS 2016 on drugs. Some delegations welcomed this initiative, while others noted that there were already many other initiatives ongoing.

5. Thematic debate: the drug problem from a scientific perspective

Dr. Pier Vincenzo Piazza, neurobiologist, Director of Neurocentre Magendie (INSERM, Bordeaux, France) presented three stages of modification of behavioural repertoire due to consumption of drugs and noted that few pharmacological treatments of drug addiction existed. However, he hoped that new pharmacological treatments would be available in the future and elaborated on the recently discovered natural defence against cannabis that could be used to develop new treatments. The speaker informed the meeting that based on this discovery, a new and extremely potent in reducing cannabis use medicine had been developed and the clinical trials would begin by the end of the year.

6. Presentation and / or update of regional reports: Africa, Asia

The FR delegation gave an overview of the drug situation in West Africa (doc. 7878/15 CORDROGUE 24, COAFR 137, COSI 43, GENVAL 11) emphasising that a side effect of drug trafficking in West Africa was an increase in drug use in the region, particularly as regards cannabis, cocaine, heroin and amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS), which led to new public health and security issues. Some countries, including Ivory coast and Senegal, were taking actions to consider introducing alternatives to imprisonment for minor drug-related crimes. Cocaine trafficking was still a major concern, but there was an increase in heroin trafficking through West Africa via East Africa, as evidenced by large seizures reported by countries in the sub-region. There has also been a marked increase in the diversion of precursors for manufacture of ATS to West Africa.

The Australian delegation presented the drug situation in South East Asia (doc. 7849/15 CORDROGUE 21 ASIE 13) noting that Myanmar remained the main consumer of ATS, and Thailand was also one of the main consumers in the region. In Vietnam heroin remained the most consumed drug, however, ATS use was growing. The region witnessed an increased involvement of organised international crime in ATS and other drugs like cocaine and heroin production and trafficking. The report on China would be provided during the forthcoming Dublin Group meeting.

The ES delegation gave an overview of the drug situation in North Africa (doc. 7850/15 CORDROGUE 22 COAFR 138) noting that in Morocco efforts to reduce the cultivated area were countered by improved crop productivity, with several annual harvests and an increase in the proportion of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) in the yield. In Egypt cocaine seizures were on the increase, with the drug being used in Egypt by the wealthy classes and in tourist areas. There was a number of seizures pointing to the growing presence of Latin American crime groups, who were trying to enter the market. Mauritania was still regarded as a transit country for cocaine (originating from America) and hashish (from Morocco), as evidenced by the large seizures of these drugs in recent years, and a rise in drug use was observed in the poorest areas and those where most foreigners live.

7. Thematic debate: Seizure, confiscation and management of criminal assets

Mr. Stephen Almaseanu, head of legal services of the French Agency for the Recovery and Management of Seized and Confiscated Assets (AGRASC) gave an overview of the tasks and activities of the Agency, providing an efficient system of seizures and confiscation of criminal assets. The speaker explained that the tasks of the Agency also involved managing and selling seized assets and that it was designed to be an independent, self-financing body.

8. Presentation and/ or update of regional reports: America, Europe, Middle and Near East

The RO delegation gave an overview of the drug situation in the Near East (doc. 7801/15 CORDROGUE 20) explaining that most of the countries of the region were used as transit countries for drug trafficking and that social unrest and political instability was suspected to have a negative effect both on drug supply and demand. Captagon was a cause of great concern and in some countries, especially in Israel, Jordan and Lebanon, there was a clear increase in consumption. In Israel the use of cannabis and synthetic cannabinoids was also on the raise. Heroin production was increasing in Lebanon, while in Yemen there was an urgent need to address the quat use. Oman decided to establish drug rehabilitation centers due to an increased number of users.

The RO delegation reported on the drug situation in Eastern Europe and Caucasus (doc. 7800/15 CORDROGUE 19 COEST 109) noting that there was a significant increase in funding for drug policies in Georgia and according to the national authorities, consumption of new psychoactive substances after the adoption of the new legislation decreased by 90 percent in the country. In Moldova cannabis remained the most used drug. The demand for drug treatment had been rapidly growing in the last six years in Armenia. A special programme for treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration of drug addicts was approved in Azerbaijan.

The ES delegation gave an overview of the situation in South America (doc. 7866/1/15 REV 1 CORDROGUE 23 COLAC 42) noting that Colombia still lead the world in coca growing and cocaine production, along with Peru and Bolivia, and that cocaine consumption seemed to continue to rise in Brazil. According to the 2014 report by the INCB, Paraguay, together with Colombia, was the largest marijuana producer in South America. In 2013 dried coca leaf production in Peru fell by 17.5 % in terms of net area, which continued the downward trend begun in 2012 and demonstrated the government's will to address the situation. Uruguay was one of the countries that had reported a rise in the use of new psychoactive substances, such as ketamine, though consumption was still well below the levels seen in North America and Europe. In Venezuela the fight against drug trafficking was taken a back seat due to the alarming increase in the common crime rate.

The AT delegation reported on the drug situation in Western Balkans (doc. 8396/1/15 REV 1) noting that addressing drugs remained one of the main priorities of the Albanian law enforcement agencies, that some gaps existed in the legal framework in Bosnia and Herzegovina and that a new national drugs strategy and action plan needed to be drafted. In Montenegro smuggling and consumption of skunk still dominated the drug-related offences. The speaker stressed that overall progress has been achieved in addressing drugs in the region.

The FR delegation gave an oral update on the drug situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan emphasising that the production and trafficking of heroin was increasing and such tendencies might continue in the future. In Pakistan, through which around 40 percent of Afghan production was trafficked, the sea route of trafficking remained important, the level of corruption was high, the judicial system needed improvement and the government strategy to address drugs was not sufficient. Also, drug consumption was growing in Pakistan, and this issue deserved more attention.

The US delegation gave an oral update of the situation in Central America, noting that the current US strategy in the region stressed three areas: prosperity, government and security and elaborated on different initiatives implemented in various countries in the region, explaining that these programmes brought a reduction of some 10 percent in crime.

9. Preparation of the next meeting of the central Dublin Group

The Presidency informed the meeting that the next Dublin Group would be held in the beginning of December, when the revised Guidelines for Cooperation in the Dublin Group would be discussed. Also, the Presidency invited delegations to propose topics for discussions and panellists for the next meeting.

10. AOB

No issues were raised under this agenda item.