

Fight against drugs: Post-1999 Union's strategy. Report, European Council of Cardiff 1998

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OBJECTIVE: this Council report summarises drugs-related activities under the UK Presidency and makes proposals on the key elements of a post-1999 EU drugs strategy. **CONTENT:** action against drugs was a priority for the UK Presidency (January-June 1998). Particular attention in this area was given to: - elaboration of the key elements of a post-1999 EU drugs strategy and priorities for 1998/1999; - coordination of the EU input to the preparations for the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Drugs; - further implementation of regional initiatives in Latin America, the Caribbean and Central Asia. Other actions were carried out within the framework of the CFSP and with a view to strengthening customs cooperation. The Council report also explains future activities in this area: 1) Priorities 1998-1999: beyond strengthening cooperation between the competent national authorities in the fight against drugs, the report indicates that the main priorities in this area include: - institutional reinforcement of the EMCCDA (European Monitoring Centre on Drugs and Drug Addition); - improvement of information exchanges relating to synthetic drugs; - effective implementation of all Community programmes related to drugs; - speedy ratification of the EUROPOL Customs Information System (CIS) and Naples II Conventions; - continuing rapid implementation of the recommendations of the High Level Group on Organised Crime; - enhancing controls on precursors; - studying the positive and negative impacts of the Internet on drug misuse and the effects of illicit drugs on driving. 2) Priorities 2000-2004: beyond continuing pursuit of the aforementioned priorities and assessment of their impact, priorities post-1999 include: - ensuring a balanced approach between demand reduction and supply reduction; - in keeping with the principle of subsidiarity, ensuring the approximation of Member States' drug laws and practices; - promoting the medical and socio-economic aspects of drug abuse (RDT); - emphasising the relationship between drug abuse and social disadvantage (poverty, unemployment, crime, exclusion etc.); - recognising the importance of a multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary approach; - intensifying cooperation and ensuring an effective exchange of knowledge, information and experiences between Member States on demand reduction (including working exchanges); - taking full account of the opportunities offered by the Treaty of Amsterdam in the field of public health and drugs and of the incorporation of the *acquis* from the Schengen Convention. Priorities are also set out at an international level, notably in relation to the candidate countries and the countries of the ALA and MED zones.