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.