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

1998/2132(COS) - 01/01/1999 - Supplementary non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: annual report by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) on the state of the drugs problem in the European Union. CONTENT: the report presents key emerging trends in drug use and the resulting problems in the EU as well as an overview of the drug situation (cannabis, amphetamines, ecstacy, synthetic drugs, cocaine, heroine, medicines), accompanied by a summary of key epidemiological indicators that permit comparisons in the areas of prevalence, consequences, characteristics and patterns of demand and supply (general population surveys, demand for treatment, deaths linked to drug use, police arrests, drug use in prison, the drug market). The report notes that the trend to multiple drug use, including alcohol and diverted medicines, as well as the increasing profile of amphetamines, requires rapid and sensitive assessment and service planning that is flexible and responsive. Furthermore, the focus needs to be extended to incorporate the interpersonal, cultural and demographic substrata of both experimentation and problem substance use. Finally, the quality of data must be improved so that interventions can be more expeditiously targeted and more sensitively evaluated. The report also examines other aspects, such as: - drug demand reduction (prevention, early intervention and at-risk groups, prevention of infectious diseases, substitution and treatment programmes, criminal justice policy, specific target groups...); - the nature and extent of drug use in Central and Eastern Europe; - national strategies (legislative measures, particularly with regard to the use of cannabis); - actions taken by the European Union (eg. Community action programme on the prevention of drug dependence, early warning system on new synthetic drugs...) - international action; - analysis of public spending on drugs. Although the EMCDDA is aware of the restrictions which exist in terms of resources, progressive improvement in collection and diffusion of information (by means of a variety of methods) remains crucial in order to achieve the objective of improved communication and cooperation.