Action to combat drugs: action plan 2000-2004

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PURPOSE : to establish a future European Union Action Plan to Combat Drugs (2000-2004). CONTENT : The ambition of this Action Plan is to provide the EU with appropriate means and tools to combat drugs. Given the need for co-ordinated action at all levels, it should contribute to ensure a truly comprehensive and balanced approach towards the drugs phenomenon and to concentrate on high priority targets. The extent and magnitude of the drugs phenomenon is now better known thanks to the valuable work carried out by the European Monitoring Centre for Drug and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) and the Europol Drugs Unit (EDU). The setting up of these 2 bodies has given a new dimension to co-operation between Member States in the field of information on the drugs situation in the EU. It will be important to concentrate efforts on the regular evaluation of achievement of the initiatives, programmes and policies initiated or pursued during the 2000-2004 period, as well as to improve the monitoring of the drugs problem to rapidly identify new challenges and adopt appropriate strategies. In line with the principle of susidiarity, the 5 general aims and objectives of the EU Action Plan 2000-2004 are the following : - to ensure that the issue of the fight against drugs is kept as a major priority for EU internal and external action; - to continue the EU integrated and balanced approach of the fight against drugs, in which supply and demand reduction are seen as mutually reinforcing elements; - to ensure collection, analysis and dissemination of objective, reliable and comparable data on the drugs phenomenon in the EU with the support of EMCDDA and Europol; - to promote international co-operation, integration of drug control into EU development co-operation and to support the efforts of the United Nations and of UNDCP, in particular to develop international co-operation, based on the principles adopted at UNGASS; - to emphasise that, while not bidding for new resources, the successful implementation of the strategy and actions mentioned in this Action Plan will necessitate appropriate resources. The major characteristics of this Plan are the following : - it emphasises the need for evaluating the experiences made and identifying the best practices with a view to ensuring the consistency and continuity of the Community action in tackling the drugs phenomenon; it, thus, builds upon the previous Action Plan; - it identifies new challenges and strategies to be implemented at EU level and in co-operation with our international partners; - it reaffirms our commitment to the UN Conventions on drug control, in accordance with the EP resolution of October 1998. In addition, the specific targets of the Action Plan in the 5 domains of action are : - information; - action on demand reduction (public health, education, research, etc); - action on reduction of illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances - action at international level (including respect for human rights); - co-operation with international organisations.