Draft European Union drugs strategy for 2005 to 2012

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According to the EU Action Plan on Drugs, the Commission is obliged to present annual progress reviews to the Council and the European Parliament on the implementation thereof. The objective of the review is to report not only on progress thus far but to identify possible gaps in the programme and future challenges. This is the first such Review presented by the Commission.

Methodology:

The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), with its REITOX network, played a key role in helping to prepare this report. Data, collected by Europol from the Member States was also used. The direct participation of Member States was needed for actions not yet fully covered by either the EMCDDA or Europol.

The 2006 overview report is a comprehensive and far-reaching Progress Review, which has been divided into five parts:

Section 1: covers the main developments in the EU since the endorsement of the EU Action Plan.

Section 2: deals with Actions under the current Plan for which the deadline is 2006 or ongoing. Where necessary a "recommendation" is proposed.

Section 3: concerns Actions under the current Plan for which the deadline is 2007 or 2008 but for which special attention is required. Where necessary a "recommendation" is proposed.

Section 4: deals with the financing of Actions vis-à-vis the new programmes that are currently being prepared in the context of the financial framework 2007-2013.

Section 5: Conclusions.

The main findings of the report are that the current continuous monitoring exercise, with its objective annual Progress Reviews leading to a final evaluation in 2008, appears to be effective at keeping track f the current state of play. Some matters of general interest, nevertheless,require a more detailed analysis. They are:

Coordination. To be effective, overall strategies need to be linked to specific practical programmes. The successful implementation of the EU Drugs Strategy and Action Plan requires effective coordination at all levels: national, EU and institutional. Coordination between the public health and law enforcement communities, for example, is not always optimal and coordination between relevant Council working groups on drugs could be improved.

Monitoring. Here too, internal coordination is an issue, both within EU institutions and within national administrations. For some actions relating mainly to supply reduction, it is proving difficult to measure progress at national level. The readiness, or ability, of the Member States to provide data for the monitoring of the actions concerned requires further discussion in the HDG. The Commission is ready to examine ways of simplifying and rationalising the indicators concerned, in coordination with Europol and the EMCDDA.

Assessment tools/indicators of the Action Plan. In the case of Actions 10.2, 10.3, 11.2, 34.2 and 40.1, the assessment tools of the Plan did not enable a clear view to be formed of their implementation. The Commission, in cooperation with the EMCDDA, is therefore proposing several alternatives, marked as "recommendations" in the text. These new assessment tools/indicators – if approved - will be used for the 2007 Progress Review.

Consultation of civil society. Wider consultation with civil societycould add value to the evaluation exercise and make it more transparent. Following the publication of the Commission's Green paper on the consultation of civil society in the drugs field, a more targeted consultative process is planned for 2007 or 2008, depending on the timetable for implementation of the financial framework.