



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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**CORDROGUE 12**

**NOTE**

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from :           Outgoing Portuguese Presidency  
to :              Horizontal Working Party on Drugs

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Subject :        Results of the Portuguese Presidency of the European Union in the field of drugs

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**1. Introduction**

• **HDG**

Coordination on drugs between the EU Member States and with the European Commission is handled by the high level Horizontal Working Party on Drugs (HDG), set up by COREPER in 1997 and reporting directly to this body. The HDG - a cross pillar group in the Council with participation of law enforcement, external relations and health experts - launches and coordinates the execution of all relevant policies, programmes and initiatives in the field of drugs, calling on other Council working groups when specific questions arise. These coordination functions extend to the EU's international cooperation in the field of drugs, including the articulation with relevant international organizations.

The HDG's mandate includes, therefore, a large number of issues that are dealt with according to the priorities of the Presidency in exercise.

## **2. Portuguese Presidency Priorities**

The Portuguese Presidency of the HDG engaged in pursuing the work of the previous Presidencies, under the heading of the EU Drugs Strategy 2005-2012 and the EU Action Plan on Drugs 2005-2008. In this sense, the agenda of the Group under the Portuguese Presidency was established according to two main objectives: responding to the ever changing dynamics of drug supply and drug demand and proposing future actions to take forward the Action Plan.

- **West Africa**

In the line of the above mentioned effort to respond to the ever changing dynamics of drug trafficking routes, the Portuguese Presidency of the HDG has placed West Africa - a rapidly growing platform for the redistribution to Europe of cocaine produced in South America - on the top of the Group's agenda. This constitutes a major novelty in the context of the traditional HDG priorities for international cooperation (Andean Countries and Afghanistan).

An important step forward in the operational efforts to curb cocaine trafficking through West Africa was the signature in Lisbon, on 30 September, of the international agreement establishing the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre - Narcotics (MAOC-N), a law enforcement centre with military support, launched by seven Member States (UK, FR, SP, IR, NL, IT and PT), but open to others. Based in Lisbon, the centre aims at the suppression of illicit drug trafficking by sea and by air across the Atlantic towards Europe and the West African Seaboard, throughout the exchange and analysis of operational information and the planning of interdiction operations conducted on a national basis, involving the deployment of naval and aerial assets of the Member States.

Aware that Guinea-Bissau is, within the West Africa region, a country with specific and particularly acute security and capacity problems - being drug trafficking only the most recent one - the Portuguese Presidency presented, in December, a draft CND Resolution on strengthening international support for Guinea-Bissau, which is still under discussion.

Portugal hopes that, as long as a substantial part of the cocaine destined for Europe continues to flow through West Africa, the cooperation with this region continues to be part of the agenda of the Group. Bearing in mind the rising levels of cocaine consumption in the EU, this is not only an African problem but also an EU problem, which has been affecting, ever more seriously, its citizens.

- **Thematic Debates**

A thematic debate was organized on the HDG meeting of 11 July, concerning the **West Africa cocaine platform** (Actions 35 and 36.4. of the EU Drugs Action Plan 2005-2008). The discussion aimed at the exchange of information on the scale of the problem, the existing law enforcement mechanisms and the possibilities of enhancing the cooperation with the region, including a specialised dialogue on drugs. The conclusions paper (doc. 15656/07 CORDROGUE 85) on Cooperation with West Africa in the field of drugs, later produced and approved by the Council, includes the conclusions of the debate and suggests future measures and lines of action.

The Portuguese Presidency promoted three other thematic debates which addressed measures of the EU Drugs Action Plan that will be either finalised in 2007 or need to be acted upon.

- In the HDG September meeting the Portuguese Presidency promoted a thematic debate on **Information and intelligence exchange mechanisms** (Action 18.1 and 36.1 of the EU Drugs Action Plan 2005-2008). The purpose of this debate was to bring to the political level the most operational aspects carried out by the law enforcement forces and the intelligence services, and to reflect on its results and articulation possibilities with other supply reduction instruments.

- In the HDG November meeting we had a thematic debate on **Interventions in Prisons: the role of harm reduction measures** (Action 13.2 and 15 of the EU Drugs Action Plan 2005-2008). On the basis of the replies to the questionnaire of the discussion paper prepared by the Presidency, several orientations could be agreed upon as a basis for future work (doc. 15824/07 CORDROGUE 88 SAN 243). The HDG invited the Commission and Member States to take account of these conclusions in their work on the proposal for a recommendation on “Prevention, treatment and harm reduction services for people in prison, reintegration services on release from prison and methods to monitor/analyse drug use among prisoners”.

- In the last HDG meeting under Portuguese Presidency, in December, a thematic debate was held on **Preventing the distribution of drugs at street level** (Action 25.2 of the EU Drugs Action Plan 2005-2008). This debate aimed to promote the exchange of experiences and good practices, contributing to improve the intervention of Member States in this area. The debate evidenced the added value of an European common approach to this issue.

- **UNGASS**

Although it was not a specific priority of the Portuguese Presidency, the UNGASS assessment process was a recurrent item of the agenda, due to the fact that the process is to be launched in March 2008, during the 51<sup>st</sup> session of the CND. Bearing this in mind, the Portuguese Presidency of the Group, working in articulation with Vienna, and in line with action 30 of the Action Plan, managed to present, in December, a draft resolution on the procedural aspects of the UNGASS assessment process. This resolution, after being endorsed by the Group, will allow the EU to play a leading role in this global process.

As a parallel exercise, and according to action 31.1 of the Action Plan, the Presidency launched throughout a non-paper, an in-depth and long-term discussion on the future priorities/new elements for the UN global drugs policy. The objective of this exercise - to be continued in the coming months - is to reach a timely internal agreement on the general principles to be defended by the EU in the High Level Segment of March 2009, so that the final outcome of the exercise may express, as much as possible, the European vision on drugs issues.

### **3. Coordination**

- **Internal Coordination**

Like the former presidencies, at each HDG session the Presidency circulated a document outlining the ongoing work in the field of drugs in other Council Working Groups.

In order to enhance internal coordination between thematic groups and groups carrying out general political coordination, the Portuguese Presidency, in a new initiative, promoted visits to regional groups where drug issues have an important impact. In this regard, the HDG has paid a visit to the COLAT (on the 6<sup>th</sup> of September) and to the COASI (on the 12<sup>th</sup> of December), allowing these groups to benefit from an experts vision on drugs and to receive information on drugs dialogue and assistance to countries and regions covered by those regional groups.

- **External Coordination**

In order to improve coordination and articulation with major international partners in the field of drugs, the HDG invited the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Drugs Enforcement Agency (DEA) to make presentations on items discussed during HDG sessions. The Presidency also participated in the Inter-agency Group meeting, which took place in Warsaw, on 28 and 29 November. The meeting conclusions were presented by the Pompidou Group in the HDG December meeting.

#### **4. External Relations**

On international cooperation, the Portuguese Presidency engaged in delivering the commitments set out in the Action Plan, especially action 35, which calls for assistance to be provided to Afghanistan neighbours (such as Pakistan), the Latin American and Caribbean countries and countries on other drug routes (namely West African countries). Actions 37.1, regarding mechanisms such as the EU/LAC Cooperation and Coordination Mechanism on Drugs and the High Level Specialized Dialogue on Drugs between the EU and the Andean Community, and action 34.2, regarding enhanced cooperation with Russia, were also pursued.

During the Portuguese Presidency, two new dialogues, with ECOWAS and Pakistan, were launched. This was done in response to a clear need of reinforcing the dialogue and cooperation with countries that play a strategic role in the context of the present cocaine and heroin trafficking routes towards Europe.

- **ECOWAS**

A first troika with the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) was held on 6 September (doc. 12855/07 CORDROGUE 66). The EU and ECOWAS agreed that drugs issues should be raised higher on the agenda of the political dialogue and cooperation between both regions. The ECOWAS side presented its main needs and priorities for cooperation with EU in the field of drugs and promised to present its new regional Action Plan to combat drugs trafficking as soon as concluded. A paragraph on drugs for the final *communiqué* of the EU-ECOWAS Ministerial Troika of 11 October was also drafted.

- **Pakistan**

A first meeting with Pakistan took place on 12 December (doc. 5076/08 LIMITE CORDROGUE 1 ASIE 1). Pakistan presented its priorities for receiving support and promised to present to the EU side its new 5 year Master Plan for drugs, as soon as it is completed and agreed upon. The EU and Member States will seek to encourage and facilitate the improvement of bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Afghanistan - namely throughout the promotion of bilateral meetings on information sharing and border control - deemed essential in the context of the regional cooperation. Both sides agreed to pay special attention to precursors control.

- **LAC countries**

The Portuguese Presidency conducted, in September (doc. 12854/07 CORDROGUE 65 AMLAT 78 COLAT 15) and November (doc. 15676/07 CORDROGUE 86 AMLAT 93 COLAT 23), two meetings of the Technical Committee of the **EU-LAC Cooperation and Coordination Mechanism on Drugs**. The LAC side made a clear commitment to present to the EU side a list of priorities and proposals for action, to be formalised soon. Efforts were made in order to improve the exchange of information between the two parties and to increase informal contacts in-between the Technical Committee meetings.

The **High Level Specialized Dialogue on Drugs with the Andean Community** was held in Bogota on 1 and 2 November (doc. 15083/07 CORDROGUE 81 AMLAT 88 COLAT 21). The CAN side transmitted a positive impression of the cooperation projects with the EU, specially the PRECAN project on precursors (a clear request from the CAN side). The implementation of the new project on synthetic drugs and the future EU-CAN drugs project, already identified within the framework of the Regional Strategy Paper, were also discussed. Both sides expressed a common view on alternative development, an aspect considered to be of the utmost importance, namely in the framework of the UNGASS assessment process.

- **Russia**

The troika with Russia took place on 11 October (doc. 14009/07 LIMITE CORDROGUE 4). Both sides agreed to establish, as a follow up to the Conclusions of the EU-Russia Experts meeting of November 2006, a matrix on the measures and actions ongoing, scheduled for the future and already executed. Both partners agreed to indicate a focal point for regular contacts. An experts meeting on drug precursors was scheduled, in order to exchange information and enhance cooperation.

- **USA**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> informal dialogue meeting of 2007 with the USA was held on 14 November (doc. 15595/07 LIMITE CORDROGUE 84 USA 69). The fruitful discussion and exchange of views was done in a friendly atmosphere. Existing differences on issues such as poppy eradication in Afghanistan or coca consumption for traditional purposes were minimised and common views were highlighted. Articulation was sought on issues such as future initiatives for West Africa, the UNGASS assessment, EU or US sponsored CND resolutions and the Paris Pact.

- **EU Matrix of Drugs Assistance for 2005**

In accordance with objective 38 of the EU Drugs Action Plan, the Commission, based on its own information and information provided by Member States, drew up a note describing the level of funding and the geographic and thematic distribution of EU drugs assistance projects in 2005. The HDG endorsed this EU Matrix of Drugs Assistance for 2005 in November and sent it for approval by the JHA Council, which approved the document on 6 December, under the title “The level of funding and the geographic and thematic distribution of EU Drug Projects” (doc. 15998/07 CORDROGUE 89 RELEX 936). The extent to which the recommendations are being implemented should be reviewed by the HDG at its April 2008 meeting.

The matrix shows that the total stock of EU projects during 2005 was at nearly 760 million euros, which makes the EU the main player in global efforts against drugs. The roughly 50% increase over comparable figures for the previous year confirms an unchanging commitment by the EU to face international challenges posed by drugs.

- **Paris Pact**

The 5<sup>th</sup> Policy Consultative Group meeting of the Paris Pact was held on 3 and 4 December, in Vienna. The role of the Presidency was, as usual, to coordinate the EU position, namely on the setting of the priorities for experts roundtables in 2008. Under this item, there was consensus on roundtables on the Black Sea region, including Eastern Europe countries (April/May 2008), East Africa (September 2008) and financial flows linked to drug trafficking from Afghanistan (October/November 2008).

## **5. Events of the Presidency**

- **Conference on the Evaluation of Public Policies and Programmes on Drugs**

As part of the official programme of the Ministry of Health, the Institute on Drugs and Drug Addiction organised a Conference on the Evaluation of Public Policies and Programmes on Drugs, which took place in Lisbon, on 19 and 20 September 2007. The Conference was a follow up to the section on evaluation in the EU Drugs Strategy 2005-2012 and EU Drugs Action Plan 2005-2008.

The aim of the event was to promote the debate on the evaluation of public policies, demand and supply reduction programmes and international cooperation programmes. In addition, the situation regarding the methodological developments and the most recent research projects in this area were also analysed. The Conference arrived at several conclusions (doc. 13493/07 CORDROGUE 70), which will contribute for the assessment of the current EU Action Plan on Drugs and the draw up of the forthcoming 2009-2012 Action Plan.

- **Meeting of the EU National Drug Coordinators**

The regular Meeting of the EU National Drug Coordinators took place on 24 October 2007, in Lisbon (doc. 14857/07 CORDROGUE 80). The aim of the meeting was, as usual, to promote an opportunity for the National Drug Coordinators to exchange information on their national developments, to review the scope for greater cooperation and to focus on the implementation of the EU Drugs Action Plan. Two particular issues were discussed: “Cocaine use and provision of treatment services” and “Update on coordination mechanisms”.

## **6. Events sponsored and/or supported by the Presidency**

The Portuguese Presidency co-sponsored and supported the following events in the field of drugs:

- **FESAT's Conference on "Taking a call on cannabis - Drug Helpline Response"**

Held in Lisbon, on 1 and 2 October 2007, the Conference was organised in collaboration with EMCCDA and the Portuguese Institute on Drugs and Drug Addiction and aimed at discussing the several approaches to cannabis consumption.

- **Pompidou Group Conference on Prevention, "Families, lifestyles and drugs - reaching families in prevention"**

Hosted by the Portuguese Institute on Drugs and Drug Addiction, the Conference was part of the 2007-2010 programme of the Pompidou Group and was held in Oporto, on 19 and 20 November. The aim of the conference - which targeted experts and professionals in drug prevention and social work - was to explore and develop approaches to involve families in drug prevention.

- **International Conference on Drugs in Guinea-Bissau**

This donors Conference, organised by the Governments of Portugal and Guinea-Bissau and supported by the Portuguese Presidency of the HDG, was held in Lisbon, on 19 December 2007, with the participation of around 30 countries and organisations. The main outcome of the Conference was a total commitment of 5 MEUROS for the funding of the Operational Plan (specially Phase II - Jan-Dec 2008) presented by the Government of Guinea-Bissau and drafted with the technical support of UNODC.

## **7. Documents adopted by the Council / COREPER**

- After intensive negotiations, the Specific Programme "Drugs Prevention and Information" was approved by the European Parliament and by the Council, on the 25 September 2007. This Decision will contribute to ensure a high level of human health protection and to reduce drug-related health damage, supporting the implementation of the EU Drugs Strategy. The Programme shall cover the period from 1 January 2007 to 31 December 2013 and the financial envelope for its implementation shall be EUR 21 350 000 (Decision n° 1150/2007/EC, of 25 September 2007).

- The HDG also agreed on the proposal of the Commission for a Council decision on defining 1-benzylpiperazine (BZP) as a new psychoactive substance (doc. 12970/1/07 rev 1 CORDROGUE 68 SAN 178), to be subjected to control measures and criminal provisions, in conformity with the decision 2005/378/JHA of 10 May 2005 on the information exchanges risk assessment and control of new psychoactive substances. The COREPER confirmed this agreement and submitted the text for adoption by the Council after appropriate jurist-linguist screening.
  
- To conclude, a short note referring that three other documents related to drugs issues were approved by the Council:
  - Council conclusions on drug trafficking along the cocaine route (doc. 15483/07 CORDROGUE 82 COLAT 22 AMLAT 91);
  - The level of funding and the geographic and thematic distribution of EU Drug Projects (doc. 15998/07 CORDROGUE 89 RELEX 936);
  - Conclusions on the Cooperation with West Africa in the field of drugs (doc. 15656/07 CORDROGUE 85).

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