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NOTE

from: Chairman of the Working Party on Drugs and Organized Crime

to : Article K.4 Committee

Subject: Action on the recommendations in the EDU/Europol report on heroin trafficking

In response to a decision taken by the European Council in Madrid, in December 1995, to take steps to counter drug trafficking by Turkish criminal organizations in Member States of the European Union, in November 1996 EDU/Europol submitted a strategic analysis on the subject of "Drug trafficking activities by Turkish criminal organizations from an EU perspective". That report was then discussed in the Working Party on Drugs and Organized Crime and submitted to the JHA Council, for information, in November 1996. In Dublin, the European Council once again emphasized that combating illegal drug trafficking within the European Union is a high priority. Cooperation between Member States' law enforcement agencies is of the greatest importance in this respect.

The EDU/Europol report is generally regarded by delegations on the Working Party on Drugs and Organized Crime as being of very high quality. It is also Ministers' strong wish that such a strategic analysis should not be left at that.

The Presidency therefore thinks it very important to follow up the present strategic analysis by means of more detailed arrangements, in operational terms or otherwise, between Member States. Such arrangements could relate to joint priority setting, looking into practical difficulties in cooperation and agreeing on operational arrangements for coordinated investigations.

The Presidency considers the extent to which the analysis now available is followed up to be a significant yardstick by which to measure the standard of cooperation in this area under the third pillar.

At the meeting of the Working Party on Drugs and Organized Crime on 30 January 1997, the Working Party agreed to the phased plan outlined below for further action on the EDU/Europol report.

Following on from a previous meeting at EDU/Europol concerning the report, on 7 October 1996, experts from the countries most affected are to meet in conjunction with EDU/Europol on 4 March 1997. The purpose of the meeting is to form an overall picture of the main Turkish criminal gangs engaging in cross-border drug trafficking.

On the basis of that overview, it will then be possible to draw up joint lines of approach for operational measures. Experts will make sure that those lines of approach have the support of the appropriate national authorities. This will ensure that any operational arrangements for joint or synchronized investigations also meet with the necessary follow-up at national level.

EDU/Europol will report to the Working Party on Drugs and Organized Crime in broad terms on how the project is developing, with attention needing to be paid in particular to the relationship between the quality of subsequent stages and the effort which went into producing the strategic analysis as well as the significance of the situation revealed by it. The Working Party can report on this to the Article K.4 Committee for the purposes of any report to the JHA Council.

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