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NOTE

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

to : K.4 Committee

Nos prev. docs: 5439/97 ENFOPOL 16, 5570/97 ENFOPOL 17

Subject: **Synthetic drugs**

In the Working Party on Drugs and Organized Crime, an inventory has been drawn up, using a questionnaire, of the synthetic drugs found in the Member States, insofar as they are not covered by the UN Conventions. This inventory provides a record of the "new" synthetic drugs and the extent of their prevalence and shows whether or not they have been criminalized in the Member States.

The following conclusions may be drawn from the overview to be obtained on the basis of Member States' contributions:

- a limited number of new drugs are involved, only a few of which are found regularly;
- a number of States have criminalized certain groups of "amphetamine-like" drugs by means of a generic approach. It would appear that this generic approach has been effective for the substances found at the time;

- it would seem that in that sense the generic approach has not had a preventive effect, although this could have been expected; the prohibited substances also occur in those countries which adopt a generic approach.

This overview is an important contribution to the discussion currently being conducted in the Horizontal Working Party on Drugs on the establishment of an early warning mechanism for new synthetic drugs. It provides a basis for considering whether it is advisable to have one or more of the "new" synthetic drugs found covered by criminal law in all the Member States. The Horizontal Working Party on Drugs is currently discussing instruments to be used to bring about such criminalization, if desired.

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