

5061/98

LIMITE

CORDROGUE 1

NOTE

from : the Presidency

to : the Horizontal Drugs group

Subject : **Consideration of the main elements of a post-1999 EU drugs strategy**

I. Introduction - Background

At the Cannes summit on 26/27 June 1995, the European Council approved the work being carried out on the European Union Action Plan to Combat Drugs (1995/1999) and the guidelines adopted for the Community Action Programme for the Prevention of Drug Dependency. It urged that further steps should be taken to ensure practical implementation of the strategy involving reducing supply, combating trafficking and international cooperation. The Madrid European Council subsequently endorsed a report from the then Drugs Experts Group setting out recommendations for priority action. The EU Action Plan (1995/1999), the Community Action Programme on Drug Dependency and the Madrid drugs strategy have been, and remain, the basis for action against drug misuse and trafficking at EU level in recent years. Annual reports to the Dublin and Luxembourg European Councils have provided a helpful overview of the considerable progress that has been made in taking forward these activities. The UK Presidency aims to progress further implementation of the EU drugs strategy, taking full account of the measures agreed at the Luxembourg European Council.

II. Consideration of main elements of a post-1999 EU drugs strategy

2. The Presidency's work programme on drugs and drug-related issues has signalled that one of its priority objectives is:

To begin consideration of the main elements of a post-1999 EU drugs strategy

3. We envisage that one of the key activities for the Horizontal Drugs Group under the United Kingdom Presidency will be to launch initial consideration of the main elements of a post-1999 EU drug strategy, with a view to reporting to the Cardiff European Council on:

(i) progress on implementation of specific aspects of the existing drugs strategy;

(ii) possible key themes/priorities for the post-1999 EU drugs strategy; and

(iii) particular measures for action in 1998/99.

4. In pursuing this work it will fall to the Horizontal Drugs Group to take stock of the present Action Plan and strategy, with a view to identifying any gaps/weaknesses that should be specifically addressed in the post-1999 strategy. This review will need to take into account that the Community Action Programme on the Prevention of Drug Dependency runs from 1996-2000 and that the second 3-year Work Programme of the European Monitoring Centre on Drugs and Drug Addiction runs from 1998-2000.

III. Specific input from Member States

5. In order to lay the basis for substantive discussion on these issues at the meeting of Horizontal Drugs Group on 5 March, and begin developing a framework for the post-1999 strategy, this paper invites Member States and the Commission to identify and put forward their preliminary views on those elements they consider to be areas for priority action at EU level. It would be helpful if delegations could provide information to the Presidency/Council Secretariat in response to the following questions:

- (i) What do you consider to be the main strengths or weaknesses of the existing EU drugs strategy ?
 - (ii) Under the existing drugs strategy, what particular areas do you consider should be given priority attention in the 1998/1999 period ?
 - (iii) What do you consider should be the main aims/objectives and key themes/priorities for the post-1999 EU drugs strategy ?
 - (iv) In respect of the European Union's external relations, which countries/regions do you think merit special attention by the EU in tackling the drugs problem ? Should the EU's efforts be targetted primarily at specific countries of concern ?
6. It would be most helpful if responses were sent to the Presidency/Council Secretariat by no later than 14 February 1998.
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