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THE COUNCIL

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**NOTE**

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from : the incoming Austrian presidency

to : Horizontal Working Party on Drugs

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Subject : **Cooperation with CEECs: Status report and suggested follow-up**

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Introduction

Most of the CEECs face increasing problems associated with the traffic and transit of illicit drugs as well as the rise in drug abuse. Drug demand reduction seems still to be a low priority objective in most countries and the need for active involvement of NGOs is not always fully recognised, and they lack experience and funds. The use of new synthetic drugs has risen tremendously among the young generation, and the region seems to play an important role as a producer of synthetic drugs for western European markets.

Despite considerable efforts of the EU and other international organisations, as well as the CEECs themselves to combat drugs traffic and drug abuse, more needs to be done to further develop and maintain an effective and reliable system to combat organised crime and drug trafficking. In the perspective of accession negotiations it will not only be necessary to incorporate the relevant acquis, but to ensure that the standards are actually applied. The pre-accession strategies constitute the relevant framework.

The European Union has launched, in particular within the framework of PHARE, several programmes to help tackle the drugs problem in the CEECs. For instance, in 1992, the Commission started the PHARE Multi-beneficiary Programme, which aimed at strengthening the capacity of all partner countries to fight against drugs by developing a regional approach, facilitating the gradual adoption of the relevant *acquis*, and strengthening cooperation both at the intra-regional level and with MS. In this context, several successful projects have been implemented (precursors, staff training, money laundering, synthetic drugs etc.) and carried out mainly by the Programme co-ordination unit (PCU) in Riga, Latvia. Among its recommendations to improve the drug situation in the CEECs, the PCU recommends to consider prevention measures, calls on the development of harm reduction strategies, and promotes the implementation of NGO and community involvement.

On the other hand, the EMCDDA's information system served as a model for the information system that has been implemented in the CEECs and that is currently entering its final phase. Third, UNDCP has been engaged since the early 1990s in Central and Eastern Europe with several projects with the overall objective of helping these countries to meet the international requirements laid down by the UN conventions.

### **Objectives for HDG**

Intensifying and broadening the already existing cooperation dialogue, exchange of information, and sharing of experiences and practices is one of the major objectives of the Austrian Presidency.

#### **The Presidency envisages that HDG should**

- Discuss the possibilities of involving the CEECs into the elaboration of the post-1999 strategy;
- Discuss the possibilities of associating the CEECs to the elaboration and implementation of the follow-up to UNGASS;

- Discuss possibilities of sharing with CEECs in a practical way the tools and mechanisms available to the EU in the field of synthetic drugs;
- Aim at enhance the CEECs participation in addiction projects, in particular in the framework of the programme of community action on the prevention of drug dependence;
- Develop a regular exchange of views, sharing of experiences and best practices on demand reduction approaches with CEECs;
- Investigate possibilities for an enhanced cooperation between European Union and CEEC NGOs;
- Intensify the cooperation between the EU and other international institutions - such as UNDCP - who work with CEECs to ensure maximum synergy and programme effectiveness.

It could be envisaged to invite the CEECs to participate in one of the upcoming HDG meetings.

#### **Suggested Procedure**

The Presidency proposes to hold a brief "tour de table" at the HDG meeting on 10 July 1998.

Following the exchange of views the Presidency will develop this paper further.

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