

13457/97

LIMITE

CORDROGUE 87

NOTE

from : U.K. Presidency

to : Horizontal Drugs Group

Subject : **United Kingdom Presidency Work Programme on Drugs and Drug-Related issues**

I. Introduction

Action against drug trafficking and drug misuse at EU level have rightly been major priorities for previous Presidencies. A significant body of work has been taken forward in recent years involving Member States, the European Commission, the Europol Drugs Unit (EDU) and the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), within the framework set by the European Union Action Plan to Combat Drugs 1995-99 (8077/94 CORDROGUE 24) and the complementary drugs strategy agreed at the Madrid European Council in December 1995 (12247/95 CORDROGUE 69 SAN 115). Subsequent European Councils have continued to highlight the importance of making progress in a number of different areas. Taking further forward this substantial programme of work will be a key task of the UK Presidency.

This paper amplifies, and should be read with, the references to drugs matters contained in the UK Presidency's paper on its proposals for the Justice and Home Affairs Work Programme.

II. UK Presidency Objectives

- To progress further implementation of the EU drugs strategy with a focus on practical activity, aimed at enhancing co-operation, and taking full account of the Conclusions of the Luxembourg European Council on 12-13 December 1997.
- To begin consideration of the main elements of a post-1999 EU drugs strategy.
- To ensure effective EU co-ordination for the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Drugs.
- To ensure effective co-ordination of drug-related activity between the EU and G8 countries.
- To promote practical and effective implementation of the EU/Caribbean/Latin American and EU/Central Asian drugs initiatives.

III. Co-ordination

Action against drugs spans the three Pillars of the European Union. The Horizontal Drugs Group will, therefore, play a pivotal role under the UK Presidency in co-ordinating and, where necessary, initiating, taking forward and overseeing appropriate activity. A major JHA priority of the UK Presidency is to pursue in the Multi-Disciplinary Group on Organised Crime the strategic programme of 30 recommendations for tackling international organised crime, which will, of course, impact on action against drug trafficking. The Horizontal Drugs Group will seek to complement and assist this work, as far as necessary.

Drug issues now feature to a greater or lesser extent in a large number of Council Working Groups and with the advent of the Multi-Disciplinary Group, the UK Presidency is no longer convinced that the Third Pillar Drugs and Organised Crime Working Group has a distinctive contribution to make. Accordingly no meetings of that Working Group have been scheduled under the UK Presidency. Residual drugs activity from the Working Group will be handled as appropriate by the Horizontal Drugs Group and the Customs Co-operation Working Group.

The United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Drugs will take place in New York during the UK EU Presidency on 8-10 June 1998. This is a major event, which will set the future agenda for global co-operation against drugs trafficking and misuse. The preparatory work under way on precursor chemicals, stimulants, money laundering, demand reduction, judicial co-operation and alternative development highlights the need for a cross-pillar EU response. It will be vital to ensure that this is co-ordinated effectively, both in the preparatory meetings and at the Special Session itself. The aim must be to ensure that the Special Session results in practical outcomes. To facilitate such EU co-ordination, the UK Presidency has scheduled three back-to-back meetings of the Horizontal Drugs Group and the Second Pillar CODRO, on 10/11 February, 5/6 March and 19/20 May. The UK Presidency will consider the possibility of a joint Horizontal Drugs Group/CODRO meeting prior to the Special Session, if it would be valuable.

The UK will also hold the Presidency of the G8 during 1998. It is our intention to ensure better co-ordination and understanding of drugs-related activity between the two groupings.

IV. Specific Activities

Horizontal Drugs Group (HDG)

The Presidency envisages that the HDG would:

- Launch initial consideration of the main elements of a post-1999 EU drugs strategy, with a view to reporting to the Cardiff European Council on (i) progress on implementation of specific aspects of the existing strategy; (ii) possible key themes/priorities for the post-1999 EU drugs strategy; and (iii) particular measures for action in 1998/99.

- Continue implementation of the Joint Action on new synthetic drugs (8984/97 CORDROGUE 41), if necessary by initiating a Joint Action to include any specific new synthetic drugs (which have already been identified by Member States as requiring control) on a common EU list. As required by the Joint Action agreed at the Amsterdam European Council, a first annual report will be made to the Council on progress in operating the early warning system.

- Continue implementation of the Joint Action, agreed at the Dublin European Council, on the approximation of drugs laws and practices (12647/96 ENFOPOL 213).
- Develop a new Joint Action on practical measures to enhance co-operation between Member States on asset confiscation, complementing work in the Multi-Disciplinary Group.
- Follow-up the joint JHA/Health Council discussion on 4 December.
- Continue work on practical measures to tackle drug trafficking from Latin America and heroin trafficking along the Balkan route.
- Take forward, as appropriate, the findings of the feasibility study on the Swedish amphetamine profiling project.

HDG in conjunction with CODRO

- Co-ordinate EU common positions on work being developed for the UN General Assembly Special Session on Drugs.
- Advance practical implementation of anti-drugs projects in the Caribbean, ensuring effective co-ordination with partners, following the high-level political meeting in Santo Domingo on 8-9 December.
- Advance practical implementation of anti-drugs projects in Central Asia, ensuring effective co-ordination with partners.
- Hold first meeting of the co-ordination mechanism between the EU, Latin America and the Caribbean.

CODRO

The Presidency envisages that CODRO would:

- Launch EU initiative aimed at encouraging countries which have not yet ratified and fully implemented the main United Nations Drugs Conventions to do so.

- Undertake diplomatic activity with key countries in relation to Afghanistan aimed at developing a consistent approach and encouraging better EU co-ordination to ensure that the drugs dimension is properly taken into account in all political and assistance activities there.

Customs Co-operation Working Group (CCWG)

The Presidency envisages that the CCWG would:

- Conduct Customs joint surveillance exercises on (i) sea containers and (ii) air cargo and participate in the Balkan Route exercise being arranged by the World Customs Organisation.
- Follow-up the Joint Action on Memoranda of Understanding between Customs authorities and business.
- Implement action plan following the study of container controls.
- Follow-up the Resolution on police/Customs co-operation.
- Take forward work to ensure that the Customs information System database (which will contain EU data on drug smuggling trends and suspects) becomes fully operational.

V. Precursors

In the Economic Questions (Customs Union) Group, the Presidency will support the Commission in pursuing bilateral precursors agreements with countries of Central and Eastern Europe, in the context of the pre-accession programme and building on work under the PHARE Programme, and will monitor the development of negotiations on similar agreements with Chile, MERCOSUR, ASEAN, Canada and Japan.

As necessary, the UK Presidency will help to bring to a conclusion Commission proposals for amending Council Regulation (EEC) No 3677/90 and Council Directive 92/109/EEC to encourage voluntary co-operation between Member States and their chemical industries in monitoring suspicious transactions of non-controlled chemicals.

In the Economic Questions (Customs Union) Group, the UK Presidency will seek to reach agreement on a common EU position on precursor control issues for the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Drugs and in relation to implementation of the INCB informal information exchange network and Special Surveillance List.

VI. Prevention of drug dependency

Further work will be taken forward on the Community Action Programme on the prevention of drug dependency.

The UK Presidency will continue to work with the Commission and the forthcoming Austrian Presidency on preparations for European Prevention Week in November 1998.

The proposed Conference being organised by the UK Standing Conference on Drug Abuse is intended to be the first of regular meetings on inter-governmental demand reduction and related issues.

VII. Relations with Third Countries

(Progress to be overseen by the Horizontal Group or CODRO, as appropriate. The UK's wider plans for external relations (including drugs) in the JHA field and in respect of EU/US relations are covered in separate papers to K.4 Committee).

Central and Eastern Europe (CEE)

In the context of pre-accession negotiations and the PHARE Regional Drugs Programme, priority will be given to links with countries of Central and Eastern Europe, aimed at developing their capability to meet the drugs *acquis* and advancing co-operation with Member States on drugs issues, in particular in relation to synthetic drugs. A CODRO Troika meeting will take place in the margins of a CODRO meeting.

Cyprus

As with the CEEs, any drugs work will be pursued in the context of pre-accession negotiations and an examination of Cyprus' readiness to take on the Third Pillar *acquis*.

Trans-Atlantic Dialogue

In advance of the EU/US Summit (provisionally scheduled for 18 May), the UK Presidency will seek to deepen co-operation between the EU and the US on drugs-related issues, in particular on (i) preparations for the UN General Assembly Special Session on Drugs (taking into account complementary work within the G8); (ii) co-ordination in the Caribbean, Latin America and Central Asia; and (iii) controls on chemical precursors and synthetic drugs. A CODRO Troika meeting will be held on 10 February.

Russia

In advance of the EU/Russia Summit in March, the UK Presidency will continue the dialogue with Russia in following up the UNDCP Moscow Conference in April 1997 and taking account of work under the TACIS Programme. A CODRO Troika meeting will take place in the margins of a CODRO meeting.

Latin America

The first meeting of the co-ordination mechanism between the EU, Latin America and the Caribbean is likely to take place under the UK Presidency, probably in March.

ASEM

The UK will host ASEM II in April 1998 and will aim to use that meeting to promote better co-ordination and dialogue on drugs issues between the EU, Asia and ASEM members.

EU-Mediterranean dialogue

The UK Presidency will, as necessary, give support to the planned Euromed seminar on drug trafficking to be held in Spain.

VIII. International co-operation

As previous Presidencies, the UK will continue to encourage the European Union and its Member States to enhance co-operation in combating drugs with a wide range of international partners through the Council of Europe's Pompidou Group, the United Nations International Drugs Control Programme, the WHO, the Dublin Group and bilateral and multi-lateral agreements with key countries and regions.

IX. Supporting events in the UK

De-brief for Customs joint surveillance exercise "Operation Taboo". York, 14/15 January.

Briefing for Customs joint surveillance exercise "Operation Felix". Gatwick, 26/27 January.

Metropolitan Police seminar on pan-European Turkish organised crime; London, 2-6 March.

European Foundation of Drug Helplines (FESAT) Anniversary Board meeting. Cardiff, 5-7 March.

Home Office seminar on "Emerging technologies for law enforcement in the 21st century" - including drug detection technologies: London, 24-25 March.

Conference on "Drugs: the European dimension": Wilton Park Sussex, 6/8 April.

European International Policing Executive Conference - themes include the response to the drugs problem: Aberdeen, 10-12 May.

Standing Conference on Drug Abuse Conference on "Drugs and Europe: co-operation and collaboration": May (*venue and data to be confirmed*). This is intended to be the first in a number of inter-governmental conferences on these issues.
