

Informal Council of Ministers for Home Affairs

Prague, 15 January 2009

Rational Anti-Drug Policy

The abuse of psychotropic substances and its negative impact on security, law and order, and public health represent a serious problem in Europe and world-wide.

In 2004, the European Council endorsed the EU Drugs Strategy for the period 2005-2012 determining the framework, objectives, and priorities for two consecutive four-year Action Plans (2005/2008 and 2009/2012). The Strategy is an integral part of the process of implementation of the Hague Programme objectives to strengthen the Area of Freedom, Security, and Justice in the EU.

In the final phase of the French Presidency, EU Council adopted a new EU Drugs Action Plan for 2009-2012, which builds on the existing framework of the EU Drugs Strategy based on a balanced approach to reduce both supply and demand for drugs but also on the lessons learned over the past four years. The Action Plan proposes a series of wide-ranging measures to strengthen European cooperation in tackling issues linked to use of illegal drugs. The five main priorities of this Plan aim to reduce the supply and demand of drugs, mobilising European citizens to play an active part, improving international cooperation and understanding of the problem. The Czech Presidency intends to focus on the effective start of the implementation phase.

Within the frame of the new Action Plan, the Czech Presidency will place emphasis on the following issues:

- Support of the development and introduction of indicators of the effectiveness of interventions in the field of the drug supply reduction.
- The drug problem in the light of the free movement of people and goods within the EU.

Indicators of the efficiency and impact of interventions targeted at the drug supply reduction

The Czech Presidency will put emphasis on a balanced and system-oriented approach in general, as already stressed with the topic concerning Modern Technologies and Security. In the light of evaluation of the previous Action Plan and the objectives stipulated in the new one, the Czech Presidency considers as necessary further to accelerate the development of efficiency / law enforcement process indicators as well as the indicators of the impact of supply-reduction interventions. The current system monitoring exclusively the arrests, seizures of drugs, drug prices and purities is neither fully relevant nor sufficient for the evaluation of supply reduction interventions itself and so far, it is incapable to evaluate the impact of interventions intended to reduce the drug supply to the overall drug situation. Such situation creates certain imbalance between highly

developed evaluation culture in the demand-reduction interventions and the under-evaluated supply-reduction area.

Recognizing the significance of this problem, the Czech Presidency wishes to further prioritize the development and piloting of more illustrative indicators of the drug supply reduction and to support quality improvements and more intense use of the indicators used recently.

The Czech Presidency invites the Member States to support the plan for creating forum for better coordination of related research and monitoring activities between all relevant EU- and Member States bodies and to put even more emphasis on this aspect in future working plans of these bodies (such as, but not limited to, EMCDDA and Europol).

Do you agree that there is a need to accelerate development of more illustrative efficiency indicators of law enforcement process in the field of drugs, and indicators / monitoring mechanisms of the impacts of supply reduction interventions in order to improve the ability to pursue the most effective strategies in this field?

Can you mention the criteria for evaluations of drug supply reduction interventions that are seen as most informative for drug policy decision making in your country?

Drugs vis-à-vis free movement of people and goods

The free movement of people and goods is one of the key principles of the EU and the source of its success. Similarly to any other phenomena it has reverse side – i.e. potential risks that emerge to the Member States which are hard to face with the use of obsolete tools. For new members of the Schengen Area, this challenge may be seen as more ponderous due to its relative novelty.

Some of these threats and challenges arise in the drug area and are related to both internal and external migration and to the issues of security. The mobility of drug users coming from countries with high prevalence of drug abuse and high prevalence of severe health impacts (above all HIV/AIDS and viral hepatitis C and B) remains a related problem.

The Czech Presidency therefore encourages the Member States to support a balanced and multifaceted approach based on prevention, supply-, demand- and harm-reduction interventions addressing this specific field. In particular, the Czech Presidency aims to address the following:

- To support extensively the coordination of timely exchange of (i) operational intelligence and (ii) information on the good practices and effective strategies in the detection and prosecution of the drug related crime with special attention to aspects related to the free movement of persons and goods in the Member States. The main platform to promote the above areas will be the European Police Chiefs Task Force (EPCTF).
- To continue developing the West Africa programme (West Africa and Drugs) that had been launched by the French Presidency. Simultaneously, the Czech Presidency invites the Member States to support the Eastern European countries neighbouring EU in areas related to drugs in analogous manner. The Czech Presidency views these countries as an area of exceptional security and public health significance for the entire EU. The Eastern European countries neighbouring the EU represent key transit areas for the increasingly important "northern route" used to smuggle the Afghan heroin (and synthetic fentanyl) to the EU; last but not least, the area is severely hit by the HIV epidemics directly related to drugs use.

Do you agree that the relation between the drug problem and the free movement of people and goods deserves specific and explicit attention of the EU and Members States in the field of law enforcement strategies and in efforts to help to timely address the problem in third countries?

UNGASS evaluation / UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs political declaration

Using this opportunity, the Czech Presidency wishes to reaffirm its commitment to the promotion of successful EU anti-drug policy and its principles outside the European Union. In this field, the Czech Presidency will prioritise the negotiations related to UN

Political Declaration on Drugs and the Review of the UN conclusions/objectives on Drugs (UNGASS¹).

In March 2009, Vienna will host a regular meeting of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs as well as a related High Level Meeting the output of which shall be the endorsement of a formal review of UNGASS and the achievements reached since 1998, and a political declaration which is expected to have a significant impact on the future direction of the international cooperation in combating the drug crime. The Czech Republic appreciates the joint effort to formulate and carry a consensual EU position which had been reached under previous Presidencies in cooperation with the European Commission and the Council. The Czech Presidency shall do its best to promote the EU common position and the political cooperation of European bodies and Member States in this field during the final phase of the process.

¹ in the drugs field, commonly used abbreviation for evaluation the process of evaluation of 20th United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Drugs (1998)