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NOTE

from : Technical Committee EU/LAC (meeting 18 February 2008)
to : Xth High Level Meeting of Coordination/Cooperation Mechanism on Drugs
(4-5 March 2008 in Vienna)

Subject : Report March 2006 - March 2008 of the EU/LAC Coordination and Cooperation
Mechanism on Drugs

This report contains both a description and an assessment of the activities carried out and results achieved within the framework of the Mechanism in the period of March 2006- March 2008.

1. IVth LAC- EU Summit

During the IVth LAC-EU Summit that took place in Vienna, on the 12 May 2006, the Heads of State and Government reiterated their commitment, in accordance with the principle of shared responsibility and on the basis of a global and integrated approach to the world problem of illicit drugs, to strengthening cooperation and to make full use of existing schemes for dialogue and cooperation between the two regions, mainly through the EU-LAC Mechanism for Coordination and Cooperation on Drugs and the EU- Andean Community- High Level Dialogue on Drugs. The Heads of State and Government reiterated, in particular, their commitment to promote initiatives on the sharing of criminal intelligence on drug trafficking, and on alternative development, including preventive alternative development, in interested countries, as a means to generate cost-efficient and long lasting structural changes in areas prone to illicit crop cultivation.¹

2. Review of the Panama Action Plan

With the purpose of developing and strengthening the Mechanism, Heads of State and Government also endorsed in the same Vienna Declaration, the proposal made by the VIIIth High Level meeting, held in Vienna on 6-7 March 2006, to conduct a full review of the Panama Action Plan (PAP) agreed in 1999, as well as of the Lisbon areas for action.

At subsequent Technical Committee meetings, the procedures for conducting the review of the PAP were discussed. Both sides agreed that the review should be seen as a process, and presented their contributions to consider the adoption of a new document renewing the priorities for action.

¹ EU-LAC Vienna Declaration, article 20.

The highlights of the process were the following meetings :

- Extraordinary Meeting of Experts of the Mechanism

On 20-22 February 2007 an Extraordinary Meeting of the Mechanism at a technical level was held in Cartagena, Colombia, to examine by means of three working groups (prevention and reduction of demand, prevention and reduction of supply and other drug related issues) the areas of activities of the Panama Action Plan and debate proposals for priorities and actions in these fields (cf. doc. 6934/1/07 CORDROGUE 19 COLAT 5 AMLAT 19 REV 1).

- IXth High Level Meeting of the Mechanism in Port of Spain

The review process was completed at the IXth High Level meeting of the Mechanism in Port of Spain on 22-23 May 2007 by endorsing new priorities for future actions. The Port of Spain Declaration (cf. doc. 10451/07 CORDROGUE 34 COLAT 9 AMLAT 54) identified priority areas within demand reduction; supply reduction; other drug related issues including money laundering, and customs, police and judicial cooperation.

3. Meetings of the LAC-EU Technical Committee

The Technical Committee met on 8 June and 28 September 2006, 12 January, 12 February and 19 April, 6 September, 14 November 2007, 25 January, 18 February 2008, in Brussels. They were co chaired by Trinidad and Tobago, for the LAC side, from July 2006 to end of June of 2007, and by Bolivia, from July of 2007 to the date. From the UE side, they were co chaired by Finland (second Semester 2006), Germany (first semester 2007), Portugal (second semester 2007) and Slovenia (first semester 2008).

The meetings dealt mainly with the preparation of the review of the PAP and of the High Level meeting in Port of Spain and the follow-up to the High-Level meeting of Vienna and Port of Spain discussed various cooperation initiatives regarding the implementation of the Port of Spain Declaration as well as community instruments for external assistance and other ongoing activities.

4. LAC - EU Intelligence Sharing Working Group

Following the inaugural meeting of the Working Group in Port of Spain on 4 April 2006, the reply submitted by the UK together with Spain, the Netherlands, France, Guatemala and Colombia to the call for proposals launched by the European Commission to that effect, under the 2005 North–South Drugs Budget Line, was selected by the Commission. The objective of the initiative, which was launched following discussions at the 2005 and 2006 High Level meeting of the Mechanism in Lima and in Vienna, is to help Latin American and Caribbean countries increase their effectiveness in combating drugs trafficking and other organised crime by increasing the exchange of operational intelligence between these countries and among them and the EU members of the Mechanism. Its specific objective is to provide a regular forum where national representatives from law enforcement agencies can agree and adopt best practices in the sharing of operational intelligence.

Subsequent meetings of the ISWG took place in Rio de Janeiro on 17-18 October 2006, in Curacao on 22-23 May 2007 and Cartagena, Colombia on 13-14 November 2007(cf. doc. 5674/08 CORDROGUE 16 AMLAT 6 COLAT 1).

5. Coordination aspects of the Mechanism

As it traditionally does each year, Mexico submitted the omnibus resolution on drugs to the General Assembly of the UN, in September 2006. The EU played a constructive role in the negotiations, and unanimously supported the adoption of the resolution.

During the 50th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on 12-16 March 2007 in Vienna, the partners jointly sponsored the resolutions presented by LAC and the EU adopted by the CND.

During several Technical Committee meetings in Brussels the need to strengthen coordination further between the two regions previous to the CND meetings in Vienna was stressed.

6. Cooperation projects of EU for the LAC Region

Twin-cities project

The project for improving drug treatment, rehabilitation and harm reduction in European, Latin American and Caribbean cities in partnership was launched with the financing of the European Community's (EC) North-South Drugs Budget Line in response to a long-held wish of the LAC partners in the Mechanism. Its objective is to set up a network of contacts among cities and promote the exchange of information and best practices on drug policies between. It will focus on the cities needs for treatment, harm reduction and training. To that effect, the European Commission signed in December 2006 a project contract with CICAD as its partner and implementing agency.

Intelligence Sharing Working Group

As stated in point 4 of this Report, the LAC-EU ISWG is an important ongoing project between both regions.

7. Other interregional initiatives

Mainstreaming alternative development

An inter-regional initiative to promote the mainstreaming of alternative development in national and regional development efforts continues to be implemented by the GTZ (German Council for Cooperation) with funds from the EC North-South Drugs Budget Line. It has involved, for now, the production of documents and the holding of workshop attended mainly by representatives from the countries in South/East Asia and the Andean region/Latin America in which alternative development efforts are implemented or need to be carried out.

Promoting harm reduction

A number of Latin American and Caribbean countries are also participating in two EU initiatives, also under the North/South EC Drugs Budget Line, which are implemented, and partly co-financed, by UNESCO. Both seek to provide services and promote the exchange of experiences in Latin America, the Caribbean and Asia in the area of harm reduction.

Cooperation between LAC countries and countries of West Africa

This initiative which targets the new and increasing phenomenon of cocaine trafficking from Latin America to West Africa, was launched in 2006 following discussions at Vienna's High Level meeting of the Mechanism, and is also financed by the EC North/South Drugs budget line. Several countries on both the African side (Cape Verde, Ghana, Guinea Bissau, Senegal, Togo) and the Latin American side (Colombia, Bolivia, Peru, Brazil, Ecuador, Jamaica, Trinidad and Tobago, Dominican Republic, Venezuela) take part in the project, as they have been identified as key countries. The project implemented by the UNODC office in Colombia, aims at the creation of a network for intelligence sharing and law enforcement cooperation between the two regions. It mainly involves training and capacity building of law enforcement officials on both sides of the Atlantic.

Financing agreement between the Commission and Cariforum for the 9th EDF Caribbean Integration Support Programme.

The abovementioned agreement was signed between the Commission and the Cariforum in late 2006. Two million euros were earmarked for supply and demand for illicit drugs with three main components: demand reduction, capacity building for law enforcement agencies and implementation agency for crime and security (IMPACS).

8. Information of EU Instruments on external assistance on drugs

The European Commission presented information on some of the Instruments for External Assistance on drugs, such as the Stability Instrument and the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI).
