



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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NOTE

from :	Austrian Regional Chair for the Western Balkans (Co-Chair: Hungary)
to :	Dublin Group
Subject :	Regional Report on the Western Balkans

Summary

The **Western Balkan region remains the main transit zone for smuggling opiates and heroin from Afghanistan to Western Europe** (according to UNODC about 80-100 tons each year). There are also increasing reports that the “Balkan route” is used for smuggling cocaine from South America into the European Union. The trafficking of synthetic drugs towards these state onwards, e.g. to Turkey, is another major concern. **The Western Balkan region is continuously used as a warehouse** to stockpile the heroin from Afghanistan, cocaine from South America and synthetic drugs from Western Europe on the way to consumption markets.

The countries of the Western Balkans still **face a significant level of organized crime**, of which drug trafficking is a very prominent part. Organized crime groups continue to adapt to different circumstances and changing market demands. Many Western Balkan countries are confronted with poverty and unemployment, making them vulnerable and as a consequence a prime location for criminal groups to expand in the drug industry. According to various reports of international organizations the so-called “Albanian Mafia” controls the huge part of the heroin trade in a number of European states. Their main markets for drugs remain in the EU member states but the internal market in the Western Balkans is expanding. Law enforcement authorities from all countries of the region stipulate that most of the criminal gangs collaborate across ethnic lines.

Corruption is widespread in the Western Balkan countries. On the occasion of the Regional High Level Conference in Belgrade on 30 March 2009 GD Antonio Costa stated that this “homemade problem should be the public enemy number one”. In his speech GD Antonio Costa stated that “shady links between business, politics, and the underworld endanger democracy and the rule of law, undermine the legitimacy of public institutions and erode business confidence.”

The reports of the Mini-DGs indicate that **drug consumption, in particular among the young population, is an increasing problem in the region**. This is mainly the case in regard to opiate consumption, especially heroin. Cannabis consumption is also popular. A market for designer drugs, especially ecstasy, in urban areas is rising. Cocaine consumption has not reached problematic levels so far because of the high costs involved.

The Mini-DGs of the region reported that **the governments of their host countries continue to make efforts to combat illicit drugs and the problems affiliated with them**. Except for Kosovo, all countries are parties to the three UN-Drug Control Conventions.

All countries are members of Interpol. In Kosovo, EULEX has signed an MOU with Interpol, FYROM and Montenegro for cooperation in fighting Organized Crime.

Since 2007 all Western Balkan countries have signed strategic agreements with Europol. Only Croatia has already signed an operational and strategic agreement with Europol. However, all the other countries of the region, have expressed their willingness to make the cooperation even closer and to conclude an operational agreement with Europol in the near future.

All Western Balkan countries **have established inter-ministerial institutions or a mechanism to coordinate activities on combating drug trafficking**. Except for FYROM (Ministry of Health), in all countries the ministries of interior/security took over the lead. Except for Kosovo, all countries of the region have already set up national strategies on combating drug trafficking, reducing supply and drug misuse.

The **EMCDDA** is currently coordinating a **data-collection project** in the countries of the Western Balkans in the framework of the European Commission's CARDS programme (Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation). In 2008, the project helped countries carry out an ESPAD survey, the results of which will be published this year.

All Western Balkan Countries, again except for Kosovo, **are participating in the UNODC Project "Programme of capacity building in the Western Balkans and the Mediterranean Region through targeted drug law enforcement exchange"**. The project is aimed at building capacity in the countries of the region by exchanging carefully targeted drug law enforcement officers from selected agencies of the target countries with selected EU Member states counterpart officers. The project will end in June 2009.

In May 2009 the **United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to build security and the rule of law in South East Europe**. A joint priority will be to address the challenges posed by illicit drugs and organized crime in the region.

The regional cooperation on combating drug trafficking is constantly improving, both on a bilateral and multilateral level. During the past months some of the countries signed bilateral agreements on police cooperation or on combating organized crime.

In this respect, Croatia's intention - as an initiator of the **"Southeuropean Drugs Initiative"** – to organise a meeting for national drugs coordinators from the region and EU member states in the second half of 2009 can be mentioned. The goal of this meeting is to explore the support for the setting up of a "Regional Drug Office" in the Framework of the "South European Drug Initiative".

Under Austrian EU-Presidency in 2006 the project "**Drug policing Balkan**" was initiated. The first meetings took place in Austria (2007) and in Zadar (2008). The Project consists of three phases, phase 1 of this project is considered as completed, as 32 states and Europol have nominated their experts and contact persons. Currently, phase 2 is implemented which is aimed at forming joint investigation teams. Austria is trying to secure funds for the continuation of this project throughout the years 2009-2011. The next meeting shall take place in Bulgaria in spring 2010.

As regards **demand reduction**, in all countries efforts are taken to provide adequate treatment and treatment facilities for drug users. In some countries there also exists a good co-operation with civil society and NGOs active in the field of drug prevention and rehabilitation.

Place and date of meetings of the mini-Dublin groups

In the first half of 2009 Mini-DG meetings took place in Tirana, Belgrade, Pristina, Sarajevo, Zagreb, Skopje and Podgorica. Due to the political developments of the last years, the Mini-DG in Belgrade for the first time dealt with the developments in Serbia only.

Regional recommendations

- **The National capacity on combating drug trafficking of the countries concerned must be strengthened.** National strategies on combating drug trafficking should be effectively implemented according to European standards. The efforts to adapt national legislation should be continued.
- **Efforts to foster regional cooperation to fight organized crime must be continued.**
- **Demand reductions measures should be seen as important pillar of anti-drug activities.** Greater resources are needed to enforce drug prevention and treatment services. In this respect, co-operation with NGOs and civil society should be further improved. Local public-awareness-raising campaigns at schools or universities are recommended.

- **Anti-corruptions-measures need to be intensified** as politics and business are closely linked with crime. The United Nations Convention against Corruption to which all Western Balkan states are parties can be a useful tool in this respect.
- **Cooperation between the police forces and the judiciary of the region, border management activities, intelligence sharing and joint counter-narcotics operations should be further intensified.**
- **Technical and financial assistance is needed to adapt the fight against drug trafficking according to European standards.**
- **The efforts as well as the participation in international projects to provide reliable data on drug abuse and drug addiction should be enhanced.** Monitoring activities play a crucial role in this respect.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Bosnia and Herzegovina</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Country Report by the mini-Dublin Group Sarajevo</p>
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The local mini-DG met on May 12, 2009 in Sarajevo.

I. General Situation in the country (general situation in the host country including production, trafficking and demand related issues)

Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) is an area of particular interest regarding illegal activities related mainly to the trafficking of drugs due to its geographic position at the crossroads of South-eastern and Western Europe. Illegal activities related to drugs are one of the most widespread forms of organised crime in the country. BiH is not, however, a hot spot in terms of production of drugs or demand related issues. The number of drug users – a few thousand according to media speculation - is an increasing problem, especially among the younger population, but still remains low in comparison to other European countries. Local authorities believe that the market for designer drugs, especially ecstasy, in urban areas is rising. BiH is not a significant narcotics cultivator. It is generally assumed that domestic cultivation is limited to small-scale marijuana crops grown in southern and western BiH (mainly around Trebinje and Bihac). BiH is also not a major synthetics narcotics producer and refinement and production are negligible. When authorities locate small marijuana growing operations, these are destroyed.

BiH is considered to be one of the regional hubs for narcotics shipment. As its neighbours, Bosnia and Herzegovina is affected by trafficking on the Balkan route, linking production sites in Afghanistan via Turkey with the main European markets. One of the subroutes goes through Bulgaria, Romania and Macedonia to Kosovo, then through the Serbian and Montenegrin “Sandzak” to BiH, and further on to Croatia and Slovenia. Marijuana is usually transported from western FYROM, Albania and Kosovo over to Montenegro to southern BiH.

There are indications that drugs are stored in locations in BiH, mainly marijuana and heroin, until they can be shipped out to destinations further along the Balkan Route.

Since 2006 the Balkan routes are also more frequently used for trafficking cocaine from South America. Especially the sea ports of former Yugoslavia are the main hubs. In one recent case 300 kg of cocaine were seized in BiH.

In terms of the management of these illegal activities, the country is also considered to be one of the regional hubs. Leaders of the Balkan area's relevant narcotics trafficking criminal structures reside mainly in BiH because the lack of cooperation among the country's different police sections/sectors due to divided state structure helps them to avoid arrest. Drug trafficking in the Federation seems to be mainly controlled by groups originating from Sandzak (Montenegro and Serbia) and Kosovo. Traffickers have capitalized in particular on an ineffective justice system, public sector corruption, and the lack of specialized equipment and training.

Law enforcement authorities postulate that persons from all ethnic groups and constituent peoples are involved in the narcotics trade, often collaborating across ethnic lines. Violent incidents and the killing of some notorious persons linked to organized crime provide evidence of conflict and tensions among BiH criminal groups and possibly with groups from abroad. However, these incidents have also provided useful leads, resulting in arrests of key figures in the drug trade.

Narcotics control capabilities in BiH remain in a formative stage and have not kept pace with developments in other areas of law enforcement. Despite increasing law enforcement cooperation, gradual improvements in the oversight of the financial sector, and substantial legal reform, local authorities are politically divided and enforcement efforts are poorly coordinated.

Border controls are improving slowly and efforts are visible, but flaws in the regulatory structure and justice system, lack of coordination among police agencies, and a lack of attention by BiH's political leadership mean that measures against narcotics trafficking and related crimes are often substandard. No national drug information system focal point exists, and the collection, processing and dissemination of drug-related data is neither regulated nor vetted by a state-level regulatory body.

An issue of importance for tackling the drug problem is the need to develop and implement a comprehensive national strategy. The Ministries of Interior of the two entities (RS and the Federation of BiH, the latter consisting of ten cantons), the Brcko District, as well as the State institutions, are all responsible for tackling the trade in illicit drugs and this results in a series of practical difficulties in the coordination of the various authorities.

1) Legal framework-administrative capacity

The state is facing internal contradictions in addition to political, economic and social difficulties. Due to the fragmentation of the police and judiciary, the central institutions of BiH have difficulties in implementing a coherent security policy. In the face of these challenges, however, there has been slow but steady progress in stabilizing the crime fighting system by consolidating state institutions such as the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Security, Border Police (BP), State Investigation and Protection Agency (SIPA), Intelligence Security Agency (OSA), the Service for Foreigners' Affairs, the Office of the BiH Prosecutor, and the State Court. They contribute to stability and security throughout BiH.

There is a debate about amending the law on the Court of BiH to allow for a further substitution of certain domestic functions by foreign judges and prosecutors. The transitional period for foreign judges and prosecutors ends in January 2010.

The rule of law is a key element of the BiH's integration process into the EU. Last year, the European Union welcomed adoption of the National Strategy for Development of the Justice Sector. The fulfillment of tasks stipulated in these documents is expected to help BiH to significantly improve its justice sector by strengthening its independence, accountability and efficiency. A large number of pending court cases including attempts to undermine judicial independence, insufficient staffing, and lack of funding are the main problems that BiH Justice is facing. The group is equally aware of the recommendations of the Court of BiH, the State Prosecutor of BiH, and of the High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council of BiH, which request an extended mandate of international judges and prosecutors in modified functions and numbers. These institutions also ask for adequate funding to cover the gradual replacement of international judges and prosecutors by national officials.

a) Legislation

Drug control in BiH is based on the previously existing legislation of the former SFR Yugoslavia and recently updated BiH legislation. This includes:

Criminal Code and Criminal Procedures

Law for Control of Production and Trafficking of Drugs and Psychotropic-Substances

Law for Control of Legal Drugs

Law for File Records in Health

The Ministry of Security of BiH has been involved in preparing the “Law on Prevention and Suppression of Abuse of Narcotics in BiH” that was adopted by the BiH Parliament in November 2005. Its adoption has resulted in the resolution of many issues concerning the jurisdiction and the competences of all the institutions engaged in the fight against drugs.

BiH has signed and ratified the UN Conventions on Narcotic Drugs (1961), Psychotropic Substances (1971) and Against Illicit Trafficking (1988). The legal framework for the fight against money-laundering is in force.

b) Institutions – organization and cooperation

Many BiH institutions are engaged in the fight against drugs, namely the police authorities (entity Ministries of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Security of BiH and the Brcko District Police Service) the Judiciary (Ministries of Justice at all levels – state, entity and cantonal and in Brcko District), the Indirect Tax Authority of BiH (BiH Council of Ministers), the Ministry of Health (on entity and local level) and the entity Ministries of Culture and Education. Non-governmental organisations are engaged as well, both directly and indirectly.

Pending any structural rationalisation of the law enforcement sector, the fight against the organised criminal networks involved in drugs trafficking has to rely upon good information sharing and cooperation. The systems and processes required for the effective sharing and collation of intelligence between agencies that is required to identify such networks are poor and ineffective. The cooperation between agencies needed to disrupt such networks is not well structured but is present and improving.

The national focal point for the European information network on drugs and drug addiction should be set up in 2009. Up to now, there exists only a national contact point within the Ministry for Civil Affairs.

BiH is attempting to build state-level law enforcement institutions to combat narcotics trafficking and organized crime in order to achieve compliance with relevant UN conventions. The full deployment of the Border Police (BP) and the establishment of the State Investigative and Protection Agency (SIPA) have improved counter-narcotics efforts. Telephone hotlines, local press coverage, and public relations efforts have focused public attention on smuggling and black-marketing.

Counter-narcotics efforts have improved but remain inadequate given suspected trafficking levers. Cooperation among law enforcement agencies and prosecutors remains difficult but is steadily improving. The High Judicial and Prosecutorial Council has initiated a number of projects to improve police-prosecution coordination and standardization of procedures.

Border Police (BP), founded in 2000, with its more than 2000 officers, is responsible for controlling the country's four international airports and 55 international border crossing points, covering more than 1500 kilometres of green and blue border. BP's achievements have been confirmed regularly including by their European peers and EUPM. Illegal border crossing points remain wide-spread as the external borders of BiH are young. The BP is not able to control all of them due to often difficult geographical conditions (mountains) and lack of manpower. SIPA has become a conduit for information and evidence between local and international law enforcement agencies and has assumed a leading role in counter-narcotics efforts.

II. Short update on the country's anti-drugs strategy

In the 2007 European Partnership between the EU and BiH, the fight against drugs was included in the priorities. More specifically, the following points were considered as short-term-priorities:

- Develop a State-level drugs policy in conformity with European standards,
- Ensure full functioning of a State level office for narcotics.

The relevant EU-visa liberalisation roadmap requirement is:

- adopt and implement a national drug strategy and national drug action plan;
- make the information on drug seizures and persons involved accessible at border crossing points;
- further develop cooperation and information exchange with relevant international bodies in the drug field.

The State Strategy for control and combating abuse of Drugs was adopted by the BiH parliament on 26 March 2009. This includes provision for the establishment of the State level Office for Narcotics. However, the accompanying action plan for its implementation has yet to be agreed at working level and adopted by the Council of Ministers.

A “Strategic Work Plan on Issues of Organised Crime, Terrorism, and War Crimes” was issued on the basis of the conclusions from the meeting of the directors of police agencies held in October 2005. This plan is in accordance with established conclusions reached by the Coordination Body composed of the heads of crime police from SIPA and SBP, and police authorities of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Federation, the Ministry of Interior of the RS, the District Brčko District Police, and OSA.

In BiH there are two methadone therapy centres with a combined capacity to handle about 160 patients. The limited capacity of the country’s psychiatric clinics, also charged with treating drug addicts, is problematic, as the number of addicts and drug-related deaths in the country is rising steadily.

On 10 January 2009, the Ministry of Security launched a public information campaign Prevention of Juvenile Drug Abuse in BiH, aimed at reducing demand for drugs and decreasing the existing drug abuse amongst the juvenile population in the country to a tolerable level.

The campaign is a part of the BiH Strategy and Action Plan for drug control, suppression and prevention for the period 2009-2013, implemented by the Ministry of Security’s Sector for Fight against Terrorism, Organized Crime and Drug Abuse.

1) List of major bilateral and multilateral CN programs

The fight against drugs is a main component of the overall fight against organised crime and was addressed by the European Commission at the negotiating rounds with the BiH authorities for the Stabilisation and Association Agreement.

Cooperation with other countries is established and materialized through INTERPOL, SECI Centre, and an agreement among BiH, Croatia, Serbia, and Montenegro. During the Austrian EU-Presidency a Police Convention for the WB-countries was established. The convention was signed on May 5th, 2006 in Vienna. The implementation of the Police Convention is ongoing. The Police Convention should result in closer cooperation in all fields of organised crime. The initiative was mainly financed by Germany.

The BiH law enforcement agencies have contributed to the continued improvement of bilateral and regional efforts to combat illegal drug trafficking in 2008 and 2009. Some notable successes include:

- The BiH border police have closed illegal border crossings to Croatia in cooperation with that country's border police. Border patrols consisting of Croatian and BiH border police officers have been established. In April 2009 agreements with both Serbia and Montenegro were signed establishing common border patrols, arranging meetings between border police representatives on a regular basis. An agreement with Montenegro was signed in order to close illegal border crossings with Bosnia and Herzegovina. Agreements were signed with Croatia, Serbia, and Montenegro on exchanging border police liaison officers.
- Border police and SIPA have successfully participated in actions against illegal drug traffickers in the region where considerable amounts of drugs were seized and several persons in Serbia, BiH, and Croatia arrested. These actions were coordinated by EUROPOL, including Austria and Slovenia as participants.
- On the regional level the BiH border police are cooperating with their neighbours on a daily basis in stopping illegal drug trafficking resulting in numerous arrests of perpetrators in 2008.

Since 2007 the Austrian Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of Interior of RS are cooperating in fighting illegal drug trafficking, including advanced investigation techniques.

Hungary is leading a twinning project to support the BiH Border Police. The purpose of the project is to strengthen the capacity of the BiH Border Police to combat organized cross-border crime efficiently, through an exchange of knowledge, experience, and best practices, with a focus on improving information management.

The UK government is working closely with the Ministry of Security and other stakeholders on implementation of the BiH Strategy and Action Plan for drug control, suppression and prevention.

BiH is party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention and to the UN Convention against trans-national Crime and its protocols against migrant smuggling and trafficking in persons.

In autumn 2007, BiH signed a strategic agreement with EUROPOL. EUROPOL has signed a memorandum on the establishment of a secure communication link between EUROPOL and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The so called Neus network will enable transfer of confidential data between the Hague where EUROPOL is located and Sarajevo. BiH authorities aim to conclude the “gap analysis” with a view to signing an operational agreement with Europol by summer 2009.

2) Prioritized identification of needs for external assistance

Policy objectives in BiH include a further reform of the criminal justice system (partly already achieved by passing a law in January 2009), strengthening state-level law enforcement and judicial institutions.

The successful implementation of Police Reform in the years to come will have a significant impact on the functionality and the effectiveness of the BiH police services in general and on the fight against drugs in particular.

3) Mini-Dublin Group assessment of needs

The globalization of crime and its multidimensional forms create a complex and challenging security environment that demands a professional response by the relevant authorities in order to address the growing drug-related threats more efficiently. International cooperation is an essential factor in tackling these challenges.

The urgent need for BiH at this point is prompt implementation of the BiH Strategy and Action Plan for drug control, suppression and prevention, including the establishment and operation of State office for Narcotics.

Another decisive factor is the strengthening of the state level institutions such as the Ministry of Security, SIPA, and OSA, which, in order to become functional and efficient, need to be properly staffed and equipped. A well-organised SIPA could take the lead in the fight against organised crime.

Croatia

Country Report by the mini-Dublin Group Zagreb

I. General situation

Small-scale cannabis production for domestic use seems to be the only narcotics production within Croatia. Given its geographic situation on the cross-road between South Eastern Europe and Western Europe and its location on the Balkan route, Croatia is a transit country for smuggling drugs from production countries into the EU. The long coastline (about 1.000 km), numerous islands and the often mountainous borders are difficult to control and make Croatia an attractive transit point for moving narcotics into the large European market.

The geographic factors are further reinforced by the considerable social and political changes Croatia witnessed in the last two decades. The distress caused by the Balkan wars in the 1990s shattered the social fabric of the country and the economic situation, which remains still dire in several parts of the country, have not only led to an increase in drug related crime and drug consumption but also encouraged people to engage in drug-trafficking.

Drugs are smuggled through Croatia overland and by sea. For smuggling on the “Balkan route” all means of transport are employed: passenger vehicles, busses and trucks. Nevertheless, the most significant seizures, particularly for cocaine, are connected with sea transport (mostly container traffic). Organized transnational crime plays an important role in the trafficking of drugs through Croatia.

According to figures provided by the Croatian authorities 7.882 drug-related criminal offences were registered in 2008 (constituting 10.61% of all reported criminal offences) and criminal charges were brought against 5.225 individuals. Furthermore, over the last years the police seized the following quantities of narcotic drugs:

	2006	2007	2008
HEROIN	81 kg 797 gr	73 kg 508 gr	152 kg 570 gr
HASHISH	12 kg 086 gr	4 kg 493 gr	4 kg 844 gr
MARIJUANA	202 kg 445 gr	239 kg 316 gr	220 kg 691 gr
COCAINE	5 kg 640 gr	104 kg 703 gr	28 kg 631 gr
AMFETAMINE	11 kg 604 gr	7 kg 885 gr	15 kg 038 gr
HEPTANONE (tablets)	12 551	6 529	10 920
ECSTASY (tablets)	16 340	12 609	6855
LSD (doses)	21	215	654

II. Short update on Croatia's anti-drug strategy

The Croatian authorities strive to reduce drug supply and demand. Croatian authorities recognize the need for a multi-faceted approach. The Ministry of the Interior (MOI), the Justice Ministry and the Customs Directorate have primary responsibility for law enforcement issues, while the Ministry of Health deals with reducing and treating drug abuse. In order to also target side-effects, such as money laundering, cooperation is established with the tax authorities and asset forfeiting is practiced. Activities are carried out on the national, regional and local level.

A National Strategy for Narcotics Abuse Prevention for 2006-2012 was developed with the assistance from the European Monitoring Center for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA). This Strategy aims to bring demand and supply reduction efforts in line with EU policies and created a National Information Unit for Drugs to standardize monitoring and the assessment of drug abuse data in order to facilitate data sharing with the EU's EMCDDA programs. After the expiry of the Action Plan on Drug Abuse Control for 2006-2009, which aimed to achieve equal availability of programs throughout the country targeting primarily children, youth and families, in February 2009 a new Action Plan was adopted for the period 2009-2012. This Action Plan aims at intensifying the efforts in monitoring, education and international cooperation.

To improve the ability of MOI in its fight against organized crime in the field of suppression of organized production and resale of drugs it is intended to strengthen administrative and institutional capacities of the MOI, especially operative task forces responsible for combating drugs trafficking and abuse. Since the most significant seizures, particularly for cocaine, are connected with sea transport, increasing attention is paid to container traffic.

Complementary to efforts undertaken by the state, approximately 60 civil society organisations are active in the field of drug prevention and rehabilitation. They are mainly involved in the field of addiction prevention, creative animation of free time and re-socialization of addicts.

III. Major bilateral and multilateral counter narcotics programs

As a transit country for narcotics aimed at Western European markets, both the drug situation and the number and size of seizures in Croatia, are affected by the drug situation in other countries. The Croatian authorities acknowledge the necessity of international cooperation. Croatia is a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention and has signed bilateral agreements with 34 countries permitting cooperation on combating terrorism, organized crime, smuggling and narcotics abuse. Among the countries of the region Croatia is the only country with both a strategic and operational agreement with Europol. The Croatian law enforcement bodies cooperate actively with their EU, US and regional counterparts to combat narcotics smuggling.

In the framework of the implementation of the new IPA 2007 a project Strengthening Capacities of Ministry of the Interior to Combat Drugs Trafficking and Drug Abuse is in progress. It aims at strengthening the ability of the MOI in its fight against organized crime in the field of suppression of organized production and resale of drugs.

As initiator of the “Southeuropean Drugs Initiative“ the Office for Combating Narcotic Drug Abuse intends to organise a meeting for national drugs coordinators from the region and EU member states in the second half of 2009. The goal of this meeting is to explore the support for the setting up of a “Regional Drug Office” in the Framework of the “South-European Drug Initiative”.

IV. Place and date of meetings of mini-Dublin groups

The last meeting of the Mini-Dublin Group in Zagreb took place on 23 March, 2009.

V. Needs for external assistance

Sharing of intelligence information, in particular that obtained by countries experienced with counter-drug strategies, would significantly contribute to enhance the efficiency of Croatian authorities in the repression of drug trafficking by enabling them to better target their efforts and might consequently increase the number and size of seizures.

VI. Mini-Dublin group assessment of needs

Besides improving national and regional coordination in the police forces, including training on the regional level, it would be desirable to put more emphasis on co-operation and co-ordination among the various law enforcement agencies that are involved in the fight against drugs (Ministries of Justice, Interior, Finances and Health). Furthermore strengthening the institutional capacities of the Forensic Science Centre (FSC) in the area of narcotic drugs analysis would help to make anti-drug efforts more efficient.

To support the diverse efforts undertaken within Croatia, efforts are also needed in the area of external border control.

While there has been notable improvement in the efforts of the Governmental Office for Combating Narcotic Drug Abuse to establish better and closer connections with civil society, potential remains to further ameliorate the situation of NGOs active in the field of drug prevention and rehabilitation.

Kosovo

Report by the mini-Dublin Group Pristine

The meeting took place on May 5, 2009 at the Austrian Embassy in Pristine.

I. General situation in the country

1) Statistics about confiscation of drugs (source: Kosovo Police)

YEAR	HEROIN	MARIHUANA	HASHISH	CANNABIS (plants)	COCAINE	OTHERS
2008	44,6 kg	177,5 kg	-	9000	2,15 kg	12,4 g + 40 Ecstasy
2009 (01-03)	18,0 kg	4,0 kg	336 g		8 g	-

Additional remarks:

According to Kosovo Police there is no statistics available from UNMIK Police for 1999 and 2000.

Arrest of persons from Kosovo Police 2009 (1-4)	17 (including 2 for cross border crimes)
Charges against persons from Kosovo Justice 2008	236 persons
Number of Police Officers working in DOC	33* (and additional cooperation from Regional Units)
Number of Police Officers working in EULEX OCI	28

Important drug crimes 2009:

Confiscation of 11 kg Heroine in PRIZREN, Kosovo

Theft of 47 kg confiscated Heroine out of Kosovo Police Main HQ PRISTINA, Kosovo

2) Routes (Source: Intelligence Information):

- Afghanistan – Turkey – Bulgaria – Macedonia – Kosovo and further distribution to Western Europe or even via Albania. According to EULEX OCI, approximately 70 percent of the HEROINE with destination EUROPE is transported on this route.
- South America – by sea transport to harbours of MONTENEGRO and GREECE and transport through Kosovo;
- Afghanistan – Pakistan – Iran – Turkey – by sea transport to Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus – by sea transport to Europe (as an alternative to Balkan route)

3) Methods:

- Sending of drug packages without declared ownership by busses (examples: confiscation at Serbian – Hungarian Border);
- Using of inexperienced persons for transport (examples: arrests in Serbia);
- Using Kosovarians living abroad (“Diaspora”) for smuggling of drugs (examples: arrests in Serbia, Croatia);
- Using in car repair shops special prepared hiding places

II. Short update on the country’s anti-drugs strategy

1) Changes / additions to the CN institutional framework:

There have been no changes in the institutional framework.

2) Legal / legislative changes, including money laundering and chemical precursors

There have been no legal or legislative changes.

3) An assessment of the government's political will to conduct a comprehensive and resolute anti-drugs policy:

Fighting organized crime including drugs is on the priority list of the government. There are no obvious obstacles for Kosovo Police in fighting organized crime.

III. Enumeration of major bilateral and multilateral CN programs (including those support demand reduction)

- Kosovo has signed MoU's with ALBANIA concerning fighting ORGANISED CRIME including DRUGS
- EULEX has signed MoU's with INTERPOL, Macedonia and Montenegro for cooperation in fighting OC.

IV. Place and date of meetings of mini-Dublin groups

5th of May 2009, 1000 to 1400 hours in PRISTINA, ARBERIA I. Hotel ADRIA

Invitations: all representatives according to the procedures;

Participants: Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland;

No participation: Bulgaria, Czech Republic, European Commission, Japan, Luxemburg, Norway, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, United Kingdom, United States (last both have nominated representatives)

Reports:

Kosovo Police Cpt Rexhep FETAHU (DOC)
Cpt Veton ELSHANI (IPC)

EULEX Office Criminal Intelligence (OCI): Mr Franck DEBEAUNE
Mr Tom BARCK

Kosovo Justice – General Prosecutor: Mr Hilmi ZHITIA

V. Prioritized identification of needs for external assistance

- International police cooperation;
- Police cooperation especially with Serbia;
- Technical equipment (problems in maintenance of SCANNER, and so on);

VI. Mini-Dublin group assessment of needs

1) Emerging threats / trends:

- Kosovo is still used as TRANSIT and STORAGE – Country for drugs;
- Due to the lack of international cooperation with Kosovo Police there is a gap of information concerning Kosovarians involved in crime activities to other police forces;
- Close interethnic cooperation between Balkan groups in criminal activities regardless of ethnicity;
- Northern Kosovo is regarded as “Safe heaven” for OC – activists, due to the lack of policing, justice and authorities;
- Two border crossings (Gate 1 LEPOSAVIQ in direction RASKA and GATE 31 ZUBIN POTOK in direction NOVI PAZAR) are still a risk for smuggling of drugs;
- The bad or even not existing integration of Kosovo Serbs in Kosovo Police structures has a negative impact on information flow from this side;
- Danger of increasing of drug abuse for Kosovar youth.

2) Political initiatives

The government must set initiatives, in order to arrange the drug fight more effective.

3) Recommendations:

- Intensifying of close international police cooperation with Kosovo Police;
- MoUs for legal and operational support;
- Strengthening of Kosovo Justice;
- Implementation of a functional Witness Protection Programme.

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia</u> Country Report by the mini-Dublin Group Skopje</p>
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Place and date of meetings: The last meeting of the MDG took place on April 23rd, 2009, at the Austrian Embassy. Representatives of the IMCD (Interministerial Commission for narcotics and drugs) Skopje presented the latest activities to the Mini-Dublin Group members. After the meeting a visit to the ALKALOID Company, the biggest medications and drugs producer in the region, was organised.

I. General situation in the country

1) Production of illegal drugs

According to available information there are no illicit drug production facilities of relevance in the country. Small amounts of Marijuana are cultivated mainly for personal use. Licit poppy straw and poppy straw concentrate is produced in the central and eastern part of the country, on approximately 1000 hectares which is an increase of 100% to the former cultivated 500 hectares. The production is monitored by the Ministry of Health and mainly purchased by the Alkaloid Company Skopje for further processing. 24 companies / institutions dealing with import, export or transit of drugs and/or precursors have been registered in the meantime. The information has been communicated to the International Narcotics Control Board in Vienna.

2) Trafficking

The territory of the country lies along major drug trafficking routes, which head from Turkey through the Balkans towards Western Europe. A major concern is the transit of large quantities of heroin from Turkey originating from Afghanistan towards Western Europe. Therefore, the capacity and active engagement of the government to combat trafficking remains crucial to contain any expansion of transshipments of narcotics. In the meantime domestic drug use is at the increase. Trafficking is often related to or part of smuggling and other trans-border activities of minorities, who are actual majorities in border areas and/or in larger cities. There is also often a link to organised crime, whether on local, regional or on international level with relations to migrant populations living in Western Europe.

The re-establishment and existence of criminal structures beyond borders of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, e.g. in Kosovo, is worrisome and could create additional logistical possibilities for trafficking and organised crime. There is also west-east trafficking of cocaine from the Albanian harbours through the country towards Greece.

3) Drug Abuse / Domestic Programmes / Demand Reduction

The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia is not considered as a major market for illicit drugs. The register of drug users (drug offenders) is placed in the Ministry of Interior. According to the official statistics there are more than 8.000 drug users. The register receives data from Police departments of illicit drugs. 41,3 % concerns persons using heroin or estimated 3.500 persons.

Statistics 2004 – 2007:

Year:	2004	2005	2006	2007
Official number of drug abusers	6.583	7.126	7.750	8.345

The most frequently used drug is marihuana, followed by heroin, cocaine and ecstasy. Growth of trafficking and the availability of cheap synthetic drugs could further enhance local consumption in the future.

Drug treatment services and harm reduction programmes are available in the main cities in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. At present, there is one national medical clinic for drug users (in Bardovci, Skopje) and 10 specialized local centers for (methadone substitution) treatment spread over the country. The planned opening of four additional treatment centres in Skopje meets still the resistance of the affected municipalities. The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia receives expert support for new treatment opportunities other than Methadone. The use of the drug-substitute Buprenorphine, which is since 10 years utilized by the USA, has recently approved for treatment and will be produced by the Alkaloid Company in Skopje.

4) Drug Supply Reduction

The overall performance of the Ministry of Interior in fighting drug trafficking can be assessed as positive both from quantitative and qualitative points of view. The legal system and administrative capacity in the area of drug trafficking has been largely aligned with the *acquis communautaire*.

Use of special investigative measures in the fight against organised crime has, as well as in the cooperation between the special unit for the fight against organized crime and corruption of the Public Prosecutors office and the Department for Organised Crime within the Ministry of Interior, become a standard. Conclusively, the regional and international cooperation has improved.

Statistics: Ministry of Interior and Customs Administration

Confiscated Drugs	Statistics 2007	Statistics 2008	Statistics 2009 Jan - April
Marihuana	231.2 kg	122 kg	540 kg (!)
Heroin	63,3 kg	63,3 kg	63,6 kg
Cocaine	486,7 kg	1,64 kg	1,33 kg
Ecstasy	4548 pills	436 pills	no significant quant.

II. Institutional Set-up and the country's anti-drugs strategy

The Interministerial Commission for narcotics and drugs (IMCND) was established in November 2006 and is an institutional part of the Ministry of Health. It consists of members of the Ministry of Interior, of Foreign Affairs, of Education, of Local Self government, of Labour and Social Policy and of Agriculture. Moreover, the Agency for Youth and Sport is also part of it.

Roles and responsibilities of the IMCND are in particular:

- Coordinating, planning and monitoring the implementation of programs in the area of prevention, treatment and suppression of drugs abuse at the local level
- Elaborating the implementation of the National Drugs Strategy and Action Plan
- International collaboration

In December 2006 the National Drugs Control Strategy was adopted by the government. There are currently two Action plans with the National Drugs Strategy in place.

The Action Plans, covering the (pre-implementation) period 2007-2008 and the period 2009-2012, were adopted along with a budget, foreseen for those periods. The Action Plan emphasizes the necessity of cooperation between state institutions, non-governmental organizations, media and responsible institutions at the local level. The Action Plan is based on the principle of decentralization. The objective is to develop a network of different programmes at the county level as well as in the units of self-government and to streamline local programmes with the ones at national level and thus to ensure equal availability of programmes and measures according to the respective needs.

III. Ongoing Activities/ Developments 2008-2009

The Law for Control of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances was adopted by the Parliament in September 2008.

The European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs (ESPAD) showed that tranquilizers are the most common used drugs among students. The use of cannabis has decreased whereas the consumption of ecstasy has increased.

The implementation of the project "Assessment of the capacity of Western Balkan countries to establish a drug information system compatible with the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA)", financed by the European Commission CARDS programme, continued. The objective of the project is to support Western Balkan countries to produce a first Country Situation Summary, as much as possible in line with the European format, as well as an inventory of available national data sources and expertise, entitled Information Map. The Vice-President of the IMCND as the National Focal Point (NFP) prepared the first NFP-report.

The delegation from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia participated in the Regional High Level Conference Promoting the Rule of Law and Human Security in South Eastern Europe in Belgrade, Serbia from 30th -31st March 2009.

A Drug network on information exchange on drugs between the European Agencies, namely EUROPOL and EUROJUST and the local Agencies involved in the fight against drugs trafficking is developed; the National Focal Point for cooperation with EUROPOL has been established within the Ministry of Interior.

Main activities / developments in Drug Supply Reduction since beginning 2009:

January 2009: Disruption of Organized criminal structures from Veles, active in Austria. More than 30 persons had been arrested. The group managed to sell around 30 kg of heroin with a value of 1,5 million €

March 2009: Confiscation of 540 kg of Marihuana in Tetovo

April 2009: Confiscation of 60 kg of Heroin at the border to Bulgaria

IV. Major bilateral and multilateral counter narcotic programs

- EU CARDS Twinning project “Combating drugs related criminal activity” with Hungary as a Twinning partner and the Netherlands as a Junior Partner lasted from 28th April 2006 until 28th August 2007. Objectives: enhancement and practical implementation of the developed National Drugs Strategy; preparation and implementation of a National Action Plan to the same end; consolidation and strengthening of the national drugs co-ordination mechanism;
- Technical Assistance of EAR to equip MoI Central Laboratory;
- Various bilateral contributions in the framework of the police reform program, like capacity building and police trainings; e.g. Police Training Academy in Skopje in 2009 within bilateral police training assistance by German BKA

V. Prioritized identification of needs for external assistance

- Technical support for establishment of Software for collection and evaluation of data for monitoring of drug indicators,
- Technical support to convey Survey of the general population for use of illicit drugs to have EMCDDA indicator
- Continuation of the cooperation with EUROPOL and EMCDDA and other partner organizations
- Support for implementation of the recently adopted Law for Control of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances -preparation of (20) preventive programmes for different target groups

- Support for implementation of the Law for Control of Precursors – continuing education and training for inspectors for control of licit as well as for illicit production and trade of precursors
- Capacity building (esp. in the area of control of synthetic drugs)
- Exchange of information and training for new therapies – transfer of good practices

VI. Mini-Dublin group assessment of needs

1) Emerging threats/trends

- Increase in of trafficking could enhance further the position of the country as an attractive route for the transit and “warehousing base” for trans-shipments towards Western Europe and within the Balkan region. Intensified repression through special operations to disrupt these well established criminal structures and to confiscate the bunkered drugs (first of all heroin) is strongly recommended.
- Illicit trans-border activities especially in the western part of the country (border to Kosovo) continue, including the smuggling of drugs
- Increased trafficking will also increase the availability of drugs in the country itself, in particular less expensive drugs.

2) Political initiatives and recommendations

- International cooperation in the fight against illicit trafficking and organized crime activities in all forms is essential to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia
- The ongoing dialogue with the host country should be used to remind that a successful counter narcotics policy is of major importance to the European Union and its member states.

- It should be reminded again that continuity of institutions and operational staff is a precondition for effective, professional and sustainable work and results.
- The adoption of the National Drugs Strategy and the Action Plans by the government is recognised as a major step of the counter narcotics policy of the country. Their implementation is considered as the next crucial step. The participation and support by the municipalities is essential.
- The fruitful cooperation within the IMCND and with the International Community should be continued.

Montenegro

Report by the mini-Dublin Group Podgorica

April 2009

I. Introduction

Since beginning of the 1990s, Montenegro - like in other Western Balkan countries - has been facing an increase in organised criminal activities resulting from the violent breakdown of Yugoslavia and the introduction of international sanctions. In order to finance belligerent activities during the embargo time a well organised system of smuggling in goods - petrol, tobacco and alcohol products, together with drugs and weapons - has been developed. The natural characteristics of Montenegro, i.e. open access to the Adriatic Sea and diverse mountainous topography, made this Western Balkan country ideal for international smuggling routes of illicit drugs, arms and human beings.

Montenegro is considered only as a transit country in drug trafficking, there are no illicit drug production facilities or organised distribution networks. However, a minor proportion of the smuggled narcotics are sold on the small and growing domestic market as well. During the past years Montenegro has been facing an increase in drug consumption inside the country.

The partly specific social structure of Montenegro represents a notable factor in making the country attractive for drug trafficking. Regional remnants of clan type social system helped to foster and maintain structures of organised crime, finding its main incentive in drug trafficking. It has been reported that a vast amount of drugs are smuggled through Montenegro by family clans scattered around the Balkan countries and moved on towards other family members living in Diaspora. Increasing smuggling can be observed especially during seasonal holidays, when guest workers from various EU countries are in move to family-visits around the region.

II. Mini Dublin Group Montenegro

The first Mini Dublin Group Montenegro meeting, chaired by Austria and co-chaired by Hungary, took place at the Austrian and the Hungarian Embassy in Podgorica on April 1st, 2009 with participants from Bulgaria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, the United Kingdom, the United States and the European Commission. The UNODC Representative was unable to attend the meeting but was involved afterwards into the process.

Guest Speakers were:

Paul Pialek, Police Attaché at the Austrian Embassy Podgorica, resident in Belgrade;

Zvonko Zinrajh, Police Attaché at the Slovenian Embassy in Podgorica;

Dejan Radusinović, inspector in the drug combating department at the Police Directorate of Montenegro.

III. Strategic Framework of Drug Combat in Montenegro

In 2008, the Montenegrin government presented some important strategic documents determining its future direction regarding the development of home affairs, defence policy and approximation to EU and NATO. The most significant ones are:

National Security Strategy, representing the first Montenegrin document of this kind

Integrated Migration Management Strategy (Migration Policy 2008–2013)

Visa Liberalization Roadmap for Montenegro (2008–2012)

National Programme for Integration of Montenegro into the EU (2008–2012)

In all of these documents, drug combat is a key issue in reaching the goals formulated in the above mentioned strategies. Concerning the fight against illegal drugs, the government of Montenegro adopted an action plan on May 27th, 2008: “National Strategic answer on illegal drugs 2009 – 2012”. This strategy consists of the following four main parts: 1. the prevention of drug consumption, 2. rehabilitation of drug addicts, 3. treatment of drug consumers and patient care and finally 4. police and customs interventions.

IV. Situation in Montenegro

According to the Report on Police Directorate Work and Security Situation in 2008, 460 crimes related to narcotic drugs have been detected in the period of reporting, which is 16.2% less than in 2007. The quantity of seized drugs on the other hand, especially the amount of heroin and cocaine, has significantly risen in recent years (+24% in 2008 compared with 2007). Police indicates that this is the result of improved police organisation based on a long-term strategy which succeeded in detaining organized crime groups and cutting of smuggling chains.

In 2008, Montenegrin police states to have seized narcotic drugs worth 4 million Euros on the black market. Montenegro being a summer tourist destination also led to seasonal increases in use of illegal drugs along the coast. The main areas of concern, in which most cases of drug crimes have been detected, are the capital city of Podgorica and surroundings, the port of Bar and coastal areas around Budva and Herceg Novi, as well as the northern regions of Berane, Bijelo Polje, Nikšić, Pljevlja and Rožaje. The Police Directorate published the following statistics on seized drugs in 2007/2008:

Type and quantity of seized drugs (2007-2008)

Drug type	2007	2008	Fall/Growth
marihuana	273. 246,25 gr	327.365,14 gr	+ 54.118,89 gr
- heroin	9. 524,05 gr	18.028,25 gr	+ 8.503,75 gr
- hashish	176,98 gr	13,12 gr	- 163,86 gr
- cocaine	405,54 gr	7.745,88 gr	+ 7.340,34 gr
- synthetic drugs	778 gr and 2.529 units	114,3 gr and 860 units	- 663,7 gr - 1.669 units
TOTAL	284. 131 gr	353.265,69 gr	+ 69.134,69 gr

Source: Report on Police Directorate work and security situation in 2008

Regarding the structure of reported persons, 368 citizens of Montenegro and 76 foreigners were registered to have committed drug related crimes in 2008; 428 were males, and 16 females. 152 of the accused persons (31.3 %) were repeaters.

V. Types of Drugs in Montenegro

1) Marihuana/Hashish

The trafficking and smuggling of marihuana/hashish is not of primary concern in Montenegro. The price of 1kg of marihuana is estimated to be between 250-300 Euros. Police reports only rare examples of cultivation of marihuana in Montenegro.

2) Skunk

Skunk is the generic name often used by the press and police to describe a potent form of the [cannabis](#) plant with higher levels of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). Skunk causes stronger and heightened hallucinogenic effects than ordinary marihuana. Most of the skunk smuggled through Montenegro originates from Albania and Kosovo. As the price of skunk (650-800 Euro/kg) increased recently, smuggling this illegal drug became a very lucrative business and is on the rise. The change in price is connected to an earlier success of the Montenegro police in February 2009: After cutting off a major smuggling route and seizing almost 600kg of skunk, prices on the market rose due to a situation of scarcity. The group arrested was estimated to deal up to 3 tons of skunk a month.

3) Cocaine

The increase in the quantity of seized cocaine (+1810% from 2007 to 2008) is of particular concern and must be especially emphasised. Cocaine arrives in Montenegro from South America by air and sea through the port of Bar; countries of destination are Croatia and Serbia, from which it is distributed on to other EU countries. Even though police authorities have no proof for it, they expect the smuggling of cocaine to be directly connected with producers in Colombia, Venezuela, etc. The police reports that smuggling of cocaine is on the increase.

4) Heroin

Heroin is entering the country primarily from Albania, Kosovo and Turkey. Due to the low quality of the product (price for one gram: 15-20 Euros), there is no market in EU countries for the heroin transiting Montenegro from Albania and Turkey and therefore it is consequently trafficked inside the country. Destinations for higher quality heroin smuggled through Montenegro to other countries are Scandinavia, Belgium and Switzerland. The countries of destination seem to be closely linked to the immigration patterns of the population of Ex-Yugoslavia.

VI. Transit Routes

Illegal drugs enter Montenegro mainly from the south, i.e. Albania and Kosovo, and by sea through the ports of Bar and Risan. The Montenegrin ports remain an important sea gate to forward cocaine from Latin America and other drugs from Asia to the Balkans and to Europe. Drugs leave the country via the north to Croatia and Serbia, from where they are trafficked further to EU countries or Asia.

The port of Bar remains an issue of special concern. The barge traffic and import/export of goods continues to proceed more or less unsupervised by the drug squad and/or custom authorities. Even if special forces of the police detect questionable cargo and demand a search warrant from the special prosecutor, in many cases such warrants are not issued. This has primarily financial reasons, since keeping a cargo ship under detention in order to search it involves high costs.

VII. Police Intervention

In the reporting period 2008, Montenegrin police has carried out several activities to combat drugs. Through international co-operation with the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Croatia the Operation “Ekvador” was executed and containers in the port of Bar investigated. The operation resulted in filing charges against one suspect from Germany and one local suspect from Rožaje because of reasonable evidence that they are involved in smuggling cocaine from South America, organized crime, manufacturing drugs and corruption.

Another successful intervention was carried out by the Montenegrin authorities through the operation “Golub” (Pigeon) that started in 2008 and successfully finished in February 2009. The operation was co-ordinated with Albanian police forces and resulted in more than 30 arrests from both countries. Police seized in all 588kg of “Skunk”, several shotguns, pistols and explosives as well as money in cash and vehicles. Altogether up to 250 police officers were participating in the operation. It is important to state that the captured suspects have been involved in numerous criminal activities and smuggling of all kind on large scale over the last one and a half decades. Given this fact, the operation can be considered a sustainable success, since it cut off major smuggling channels.

According to the Montenegrin authorities there is a considerable lack of human resources and technical equipment for the effective fight in combating drug trafficking and smuggling. Educational training for personnel fighting drug crimes is also requested. The Montenegrin police representative lecturing at the first Mini Dublin Group Montenegro meeting explicitly asked the present members for help in these areas.

VIII. International Co-operation

International co-operation in the field of combating drug trafficking is reported to be working satisfactory. Montenegro is seeking close law enforcement relationships with other countries in the region. Police cooperated actively with their counterparts in Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Denmark, Germany, Norway, Serbia and Sweden. Montenegrin authorities continue to co-operate closely with international agencies like Interpol, DEA and the SECI Centre against Organized Crime.

IX. Treatment and Rehabilitation

Drug abuse in the country has increased significantly. In 2008, more cases of over-dosing occurred in Montenegro than in the entire ten years before. Data on illegal drug use are not systematically recorded, but authorities estimate that Montenegro has between 2,000 and 3,000 drug addicts. Heroin is the most prevalent drug on the local market, but the use of ecstasy and amphetamines is on the rise. Montenegro has recently started a methadone programme to help drug consumers. There is no evaluation on the success of this programme yet; results are expected to be published in summer 2009. Until now, there is only one psychiatric clinic for treating drug addicts, and the facility's capacities are limited.

X. Conclusion

Montenegro has made remarkable anti-drug efforts. However, the Montenegrin police still lacks human resources, infrastructure, technical advices, equipment and training to further efficiently fight drugs in Montenegro. Taking into consideration the [adverse circumstances](#) under which the drug squad is operating, police work is characterized by surprisingly high commitment. Montenegro is within its modest means on the way to build up its fight against drugs capabilities according to European standards.

Even so Montenegro has to continue to improve and develop its measures to fight drug smuggling and drug-related crimes, it can be argued that some of the apparent problems arising from low infrastructure and equipment originate from distribution of the police budget and delayed priorities on behalf of the responsible local authorities.

Members of the Mini Dublin Group Montenegro should take into consideration that Montenegro has repeatedly asked for international support in the area of combating drug trafficking, since the need for action is evident.

XI. Recommendations by the Mini Dublin Group Montenegro

- Police forces should be modernized, particularly equipment and education, in order to improve professionalism and accountability;
- Montenegrin customs authorities should strengthen their engagement in the port of Bar to avoid any possible lacunae;
- Montenegrin authorities should improve co-operation with EULEX and Kosovo Police to combat illegal activities along the borderline to Kosovo;
- Legislative framework should be put into practice;
- A witness protection system should be developed;
- Implementation of EU best practices concerning Police and Customs Services should be put into force;
- More efforts should be put on raising public awareness towards the dangers of drugs.

Serbia

Country Report by the mini-Dublin Group Belgrade

The Belgrade mini Dublin group meeting took place on May 12, 2009, with representative from 19 Dublin group countries, one representative of the European Commission Delegation in Belgrade and a representative from the UNODC office in Belgrade.

Guest Speaker: Mr Zdravko Stanić, Deputy Head of Department for Drugs Smuggling Suppression, Service for Combating Organized Crime, Serbian Ministry of the Interior

I. Introduction

Due to the political developments of the last years, the Mini-Dublin group in Belgrade for the first time dealt with the developments in Serbia only. During the last two decades, Serbia has become, due to its geographic position, but also due to political instability, a major transit area for criminal networks (drugs, cigarettes, prostitution, illegal migration, money laundering etc.) which use its territory to forward their "merchandise" to Western Europe. The Belgrade-Zagreb highway is considered to be one of the main routes of illegal trafficking to western and northern European countries. Drugs usually arrive through Turkey, Montenegro, Kosovo, Bulgaria, Romania and increasingly from South America (cocaine) either directly or through Spain, Italy and Greece, whereas marihuana is also produced locally. Synthetic drugs arrive from the Netherlands or are produced locally.

Drugs in transit are often stored and repacked in Southern and Western Serbia. Transport usually takes place in private cars, trucks and buses. The most important countries of destination are Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Scandinavian countries and Spain. Local criminal groups act mostly as intermediaries between gangs in countries of origin and countries of destination and tend to intensify cooperation with foreign partners.

The Serbian authorities continue to cooperate closely with international agencies (Interpol, DEA and the SECI Center against Organized Crime) and with neighbouring countries, while cooperation with the authorities of Kosovo is virtually inexistent. Cooperation of local police authorities via Interpol - National Central Bureaus (NCB's) with foreign partners is generally satisfactory. Monitored transports are authorized without delay and handled in a professional manner at working level.

The main centres of drug consumption and dealing in Serbia are Belgrade, Novi Sad and Niš. As for drug trafficking, there are two problematic regions: The Sandžak region in western Serbia with its capital Novi Pazar and South Serbia (particularly the municipalities of Preševo and Bujanovac).

As for Sandžak, Serbian authorities reaffirmed that this region remains one of the most problematic areas regarding drug transit but also drug consumption. With a proportionally young population, a high unemployment rate and proximity to the porous borders of Kosovo, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina the mainly muslim populated Sandžak is a favourable place for drug dealers and traffickers (who often have close business and family ties with criminal groups in Turkey). According to local estimations, Novi Pazar has around 10.000 drug addicts who partly look for treatment in Sarajevo. Religious institutions play an important role after cure.

The other region of concern is South Serbia, particularly the municipalities of Preševo and Bujanovac. Just like Sandžak, this region has a high number of unemployment and porous borders, so that smuggling appears to be an attractive source of income. A recent report of the Italian Center for the fight against mafia (DIA) suggests that almost 70 percent of all drugs aimed at Western European markets are smuggled through these two municipalities. However, the Serbian representative at the Mini Dublin Group meeting contested these numbers, claiming that Serbian police had "good control" over this region.

Since 2007, UNODC has been implementing a capacity building project in the region of the Mediterranean and Western Balkans (including Serbia), which provided training in specific areas of fighting against drug trafficking. Training was given in drugs interdiction at land borders and airports, in controlled delivery, and in police training methods. More activities within this project are pending. The project also aims to establish operational links between different countries of the region. Furthermore, cooperation between police and customs is being promoted.

II. Situation in Serbia

1) Drug data

Since the year 2000, the number of drug seizures in Serbia has steadily increased, with the highest number in 2006 (6,300 seizures) and a stagnation on this high level in 2007 (6,141) and 2008 (6,189). This shows that trafficking and criminal activities related to drugs remain to be a problem in Serbia. Nevertheless, the amount of drugs seized has drastically diminished in 2008 (except a slight increase in Hashish). At the Mini Dublin group, this decrease was interpreted by the fact that the amount of drugs in a seizure often depends on coincidence, so that one single seizure can heavily impact and alter the overall amounts. According to information received from the Ministry of the Interior, the Serbian police seized the following quantities of narcotics in 2008:

Confiscated drugs	2008	2007	changes
Heroin	207,649 grams	484,337 grams	- 276,688 grams
Cocaine	15,091 grams	16,134 grams	1,043 grams
Marihuana	1,477,786 grams	1,625,053 grams	- 147,267 grams
Cannabis	None	583 grams	- 583 grams
Hashish	1,139 grams	583 grams	+ 556 grams
Ecstasy	1,078 pills	3,751 pills	- 2,673 pills
Total amount seized	1,743,862 grams	2,296,533 grams	- 552,671 grams
Total number of seizures	6,189	6,141	+ 48
Number of committed criminal offences	6,058	4,926	+ 1132

2) Main characteristics

The main characteristics of the smuggling routes in Serbia are the following:

Heroin comes from areas in and around Afghanistan, through Turkey and Bulgaria or Romania. Smaller amounts of the smuggled heroin stay in the country for local consumers, but the major part of it is being smuggled to Western Europe, mainly to Germany, Switzerland, Spain, Great Britain and Scandinavian countries. Border crossings with Bulgaria and Kosovo are said to be the major points for smuggling heroin of Turkish origin into Serbia, while Montenegro is said to be the main route for further transport to Western Europe.

According to the Serbian Ministry of the Interior, 80% of the heroin produced world-wide is transported via the Balkan route. The street price of heroin in Serbia is 8.000 - 12.000 €/kg.

Regarding cocaine, Serbia is a transit country on the way to Western Europe. Due to the high price and low income levels in Serbia, only very small quantities stay in the country for the local market. However, since cocaine smuggling is particularly profitable, Serbian criminals are involved in smuggling. Smugglers change their routes flexibly, with ships from South America (Argentina, Venezuela, Brazil, Dominican Republic, Peru, Colombia, etc.) coming usually through ports of Spain, Italy, Greece, Albania or Montenegro, wherefrom the cocaine is transported to Serbia by trucks. From there, the smuggling channels use the usual heroin Balkan route. The street price of cocaine in Serbia is 30.000 - 35.000 €/kg.

According to Serbian authorities, Albanians in Kosovo and Albania are the main producers (over 90%) of the marihuana trafficked in the Balkans. The street price for marihuana is from 300 €/kg

Three categories of precursors have been established. Precursors are smuggled from the countries of Western Europe and China, through Serbia to Bulgaria and Turkey.

The route for smuggling synthetic drugs to Serbia is opposite to the heroin smuggling route. In countries where this type of drug is produced, criminal groups distribute these drugs from the Netherlands, Belgium and Hungary to Serbia (street price: ecstasy from 1,50 € per pill).

In the past, the Serbian authorities have concentrated on criminal groups trafficking heroin and cocaine, but increasingly, groups trafficking/ producing synthetic drugs are in the focus of the Serbian authorities, with two major laboratories near Belgrade being discovered in December 2007 and March 2008. The police department for drug-related crimes is cooperating closely with the commercial crime department as well as the border police and customs authorities.

3) Regional and international cooperation

Given Serbia's position as a transit country for drug trafficking, international cooperation between the Serbian police and police organizations of other countries is key. The political stabilization of Serbia over the last years clearly had positive effects on international cooperation, and the representatives of the member countries of the Dublin group in Belgrade speak positive about their cooperation with Serbian police authorities.

On an operational level, the Drugs Smuggling Suppression Department has in 2008 built up a structure of cooperation with other countries on combating criminal groups based in Serbia, but operating abroad. Thanks to this new structure, 8 seizures and 4 controlled deliveries have been made in 2008.

As for the regional cooperation (with the countries of the Western Balkans), two contrary trends can be observed: as a first trend, cooperation with most countries of South Eastern Europe is constantly improving, both on a bilateral and on a multilateral level. Serbia was host of the UNODC-Conference „Promoting the Rule of Law and Human Security in South Eastern Europe” (30-31 March 2009), which was dedicated to fostering regional cooperation also in the fight against drug trafficking. Unfortunately, no participant from Kosovo was invited. On 25 May 2009, Serbia and Croatia signed an agreement on police cooperation, with the Serbian Minister of the Interior inviting other countries to join in.

On the other hand, as a second trend, cooperation with the authorities of Kosovo remains to be extremely difficult and seems to have even deteriorated in the last months. Kosovo is considered by Serbian authorities to be a centre for producing, storing and smuggling of drugs. Even though the Serbian government claims the territory of Kosovo to be a part of Serbia, the Serbian Ministry of the Interior admits to have no executive power whatsoever over Kosovo and as a consequence held meetings with UNMIK and Kosovo Police Service representatives in the past (or used third parties as mediators). These meetings, which have been qualified as unsatisfactory by the Serbian police, seem to have stopped completely. Even though the first meetings between Serbian authorities and Eulex in Belgrade (regarding customs and judiciary issues) have shown that the former are ready to find pragmatic solutions for practical problems regarding Kosovo, there has been no meeting so far on police cooperation.

4) Legislation

Regarding policy instruments and legislation, Serbia has made considerable progress in 2008 and early 2009: a National Strategy for the Fight Against Drugs, involving several Ministries, was adopted by the Serbian government on February 26, 2009, thus fulfilling a longstanding policy recommendation of the Dublin group. On this basis, a national action plan for the fight against drugs was adopted on April 2, 2009.

Furthermore, Serbia's Parliament passed a set of laws in 2008 to enhance Serbia's law enforcement efforts related to the combating of drug trafficking, such as a law to regulate immigration and movement of people through the country and a law on the prevention of money-laundering and financing of terrorism as well as a corresponding proposed national strategy. The government has also developed an Integrated Border Management Initiative to improve coordination among the agencies involved in border control.

Serbia is party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention, the 1961 UN Single Convention as amended by the 1972 Protocol and to the 1971 UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances.

5) Drug prevention and medical treatment of drug patients

The government continued in 2008 its addiction prevention program “Drug Zero, Life One” in primary and secondary schools. This optional program includes lectures for students, parents, and teachers and referrals for families who seek help. Furthermore, the Serbian government and the Belgrade city government conducted a Drug-Free Month public awareness campaign in June 2008 with the support of UNODC, UNICEF, WHO, the Serbian Red Cross, and Serbian anti-drug NGOs.

According to data from the Serbian Public Health Bureau, there were 60.000 drug addicts (average age 25) 85% of which intravenous (4 registered drug addicts on 1000 citizens) in Serbia in 2008. The Health Ministry also conducted a survey on drug abuse among teenagers which showed that in 2008, 15.1% of 16year-old teenagers had tried marihuana, hashish, amphetamines or some other drug at least once. 2.3% of them had consumed these drugs more often.

Besides medical treatment for drug addicts in public and private hospitals, there appear to be also “rehabilitation centres” which are owned and managed by the Serbian Orthodox Church. In May 2009, it became known that in one of these centres in Crna Reka (Sandžak region), patients have been physically tortured and mistreated. Both the state and church authorities reacted swiftly by replacing the manager of the centre and filing criminal charges against 9 persons from the centre.

III. Policy Recommendations

- 1) The National Strategy for combating drug trafficking and abuse should be implemented
The member states of the Dublin group commend Serbia for the adoption of the national strategy for combating drug trafficking and abuse. It is crucial now that all ministries involved cooperate effectively to implement the new strategy and the respective action plan.
- 2) Serbian (and Kosovo) police authorities must find ways to establish effective cooperation
Experience shows that organised crime can profit from unclear legal questions regarding borderlines. It is in Serbia’s own interest to find ways to establish effective cooperation regarding the exchange of information. The Dublin group strongly recommends entering talks with Eulex.

- 3) Control of the borderline with Kosovo must be improved
Contrary to claims of the Serbian authorities, the borderline (in Serbian terminology: administrative borderline ABL) between Serbia and Kosovo appears to be extremely porous. Irrespective of the question of status, this borderline has to be controlled effectively in order to prevent drug trafficking.
- 4) The modernisation of police and customs control equipment at Serbia's borders should be continued
- 5) Profiling should be introduced
As drugs seizures at the borders seem to be haphazard, profiling of cargo and lorries, passengers needs to be introduced, to result in more effective checks of the highest risk transports.
- 6) Training for fight against cocaine smuggling should be enhanced
Considering that cocaine is becoming a drug increasingly smuggled along the Balkan route, training and awareness raising should be done for front-line officers, who often have no experience with detecting cocaine.
- 7) Cooperation between police and customs control should be improved
- 8) Serbian authorities should intensify public awareness campaigns against drugs and organized crime, in cooperation with reliable local partners, in particular in schools.
The Dublin group welcomes the initiative "Drug is zero – Life is one" as an important initiative to raise awareness among young people in certain schools. This initiative should be continued and extended to all schools throughout the country.
- 9) The competent Serbian authorities should cooperate more closely in the areas of drug addiction suppression and prevention. Drug addiction suppression falls within the responsibility of the Serbian Police/Ministry of the Interior, while drug addiction prevention is largely considered to fall within the responsibility of the Ministry of Health. Closer cooperation is needed.

Albania
Report by the mini-Dublin Group Podgorica
June 2009

The Meeting took place at the premises of the Hungarian Embassy on June 4, 2009. Representatives of the following countries were present:

Netherlands, Poland, Czech Republic, Austria, Hungary, European Commission

Excused: German Embassy, Other organisations: ICITAP, PAMECA

Albanian authorities: Ministry of Justice, Prosecution Office for serious crimes, Albanian State Police

I. General Data relating to the current situation

Statistical Data January till May 2009

Sort	Number of cases	Discov.	Amount	Perpetr.	Detained	On bail	Wanted
Heroin	49	49	66 kg 752 gr	79	70	6	3
Methadon	2	2	90.3 gr	2	1	1	0
Amphetamin	0	0	1.4 gr	0	0	0	0
Cocain	12	12	3 kg 133 gr	21	19	1	1
Marihuanana/ Hashisch	95	88	1793 kg 22.9 gr	144	112	24	8
Cannabis (plants)	2	0	533 plants	0	0	0	0
Cannabis (Seeds)	2	2	1 kg 499.5 gr	2	2	0	0
Mixed substances	0	0	4 kg 769.6 gr	0	0	0	0
Total	162	153		248	204	32	12

In comparison:

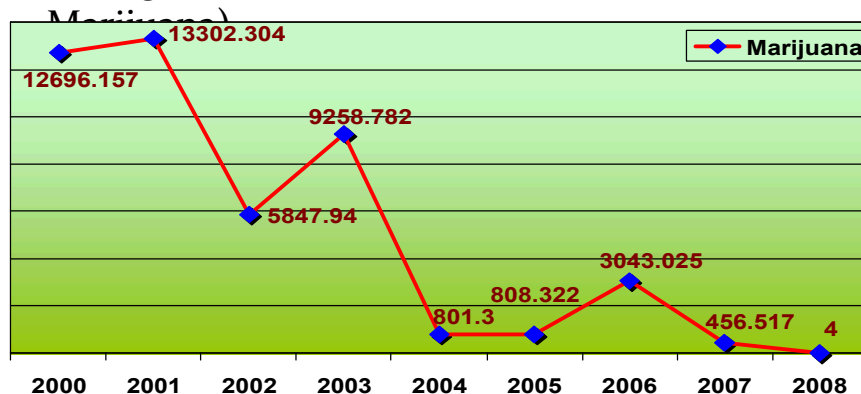
Statistical Data January till May 2008

Sort	Number of cases	Discov.	Amount	Perpetr.	Detained	On bail	Wanted
Heroin	48	48	31 kg 379,4 gr	87	74	7	6
Methadon	1	1	85 gr	2	2	0	0
Ecstasy	2	2	64 Tab	3	3	0	0
Cocaine	7	6	182.2 gr	9	9	0	0
Marihuana/Hashisch	74	71	1870 kg 473.9 gr	134	110	18	6
Cannabis (Plants)	4	2	253 plants	2	2	0	0
Kanabis (Seeds)	0	0	873.2 gr	0	0	0	0
Poppy (Plants)	1	1	61 bime	1	0	1	0
Mixed substances	0	0	6 kg 147.8 gr	0	0	0	0
Total	137	131		238	200	26	12

With regard to **Marihuana** trafficking Greece and Italy have been main transit destinations until recently; from there distribution is being done to further Western European destinations. However Albanian authorities had been able to confiscate a growing amount of drugs at the Albanian- Greek and Albanian- FYROM Border posts due to the sustained use of modern technical devices (scanners) and sniffing dogs. The price of one kg Marihuana therefore has been going up from 20,- to 30,- € in 2000 to 350,-€ in 2009. With regard to Drug trafficking via Italy Albanian authorities emphasize the constant good co-operation with Italian police authorities.

Trend of recent years

- Decrease of the quantities of drugs trafficked through Albania to other countries (Italian statistics)

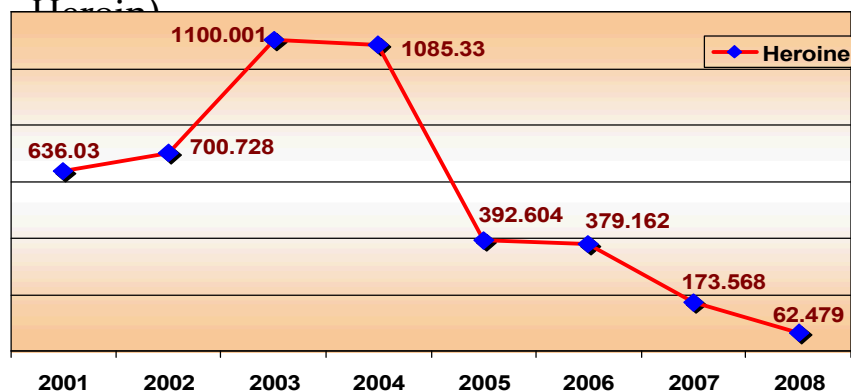


With regard to **Heroin** the situation is rather the same like one year ago. The speed boat moratorium, which had been established three years ago and has prevented Albanian nationals to operate speed boats in Albanian waters has officially expired; since a parliament decision for lifting it still has not yet been made the moratorium continues to be enforced by the authorities. No private speed boats can cross over to Italy so far.

The amount of **Heroin** being transferred via Albania and confiscated has been going down since 2006 and has reached – at the end of 2008- a confiscated amount of some 62 kg only. A most recent confiscation of some 2 kg Heroine could be carried out at Kapshtica Border Crossing Point (AL-GR) in the beginning of June 2009.

Trend of recent years

- Decrease of the quantities of drugs trafficked through Albania to other countries (Italian statistics Heroin)

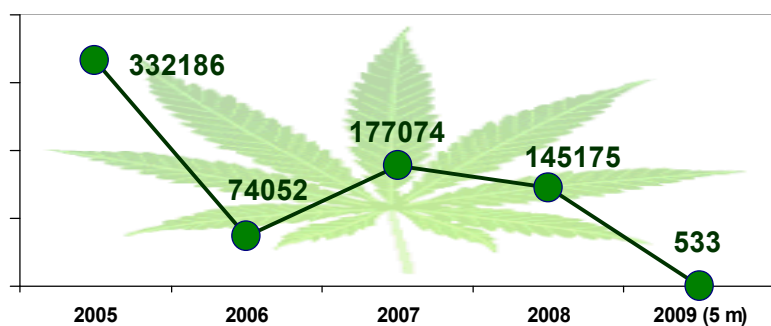


With regard to Anti-Cannabis activities it has to be mentioned that Albania still is a producer; below some detail for documentation:

Trend of recent years

- Reduce of Cannabis production

Cannabis plants eradication 2005-2009 (No)





Typical illegal Cannabis plant in the mountains of Albania

1) Fight against Drug Production

In order to constantly reduce the production of drugs within Albania, the Government approved special measures to be executed with the Police forces and local authorities. The corresponding plan provides two phases:

- Phase of awareness
- Phase of operation

The overall situation has improved in general. However the lawless area of Lazarat in Southern Albania and inaccessible mountain areas in Northern Albania are still problematic zones. With regard to Lazarat Albanian Police Forces are pointing out that this is a unique situation which needs to be tackled by unique measures. New techniques have been followed up and have brought lots of cannabis seizures outside the Lazarat area. Albanian Police obviously still cannot take control of the village by just entering it. Villagers are heavily armed and would resist in a most dangerous way which could harm unarmed civilians and policemen and thus cause many casualties. However all roads leading to Lazarat are subject of ongoing police observation in order to limit the amount of smuggled Cannabis and Mariuhana. By assistance of UNDOC, villagers will be offered alternative methods of agricultural production.

The pictures below show the destruction of an illegal cannabis plant by Albanian Police Forces



Normally detected illegal Cannabis- plants are being set on fire by Albanian Police Officers (see picture below)

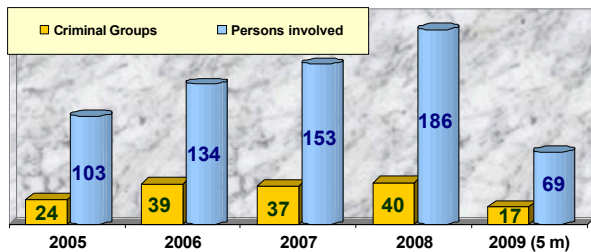


The Albanian authorities demonstrate a rather impressive and growing efficiency of their Law Enforcement Agencies with regard to curb down criminal gangs and individuals (see below).

Trend of recent years

- Increase of the efficiency of law enforcement agencies :

No of criminal groups dismantled and no of persons involved
2005 - 2009



Year	Operations where Special Investigative Means were used
2005	12
2006	40
2007	34
2008	38
2009 (5 m)	12
Total	136

Worth mentioning that in the last few week there were notable cases with regard to drug abuse. Once the perpetrator was a diplomat posted to the Albanian Embassy in Skopje, arrested with 65 kg of heroin in Turkey. At the same time a high ranking police officer tried to smuggle 200 kg heroin from Turkey to Albania and became detained by Turkish authorities.

II. Short update on the countries anti-drugs strategy

1) Legal Co- Operation and Improvements

Some draft amendments to the Criminal Procedure Code were developed related to the destruction of drugs prior to the final conclusion of court and to the introduction of the special investigation technique “controlled delivery” in this Code. The draft was sent for opinion to the General Prosecutor Office and the Ministry of Justice which consented in principle. But being that there is no time for Parliament to consider it before the elections, these amendments are planned to be followed by the Government and the new Parliament after the 28th of June elections.

The following legal improvements have been made during the 1st half of 2009:

- The Regulation approved by the Minister of Interior no.23, date 15.01.2009 “For the secret surveillance of persons and premises and standard procedures during their application”
- The Regulation approved by the Minister of Interior no.93, date 25.02.2009 “For the management of the undercover and infiltrated police employees”

(Albania was accepted as a full member of the European Cooperation Group on Undercover Policing – 18 May 2009).

2) Training

The following events took place:

- Training "Investigation of drug-related criminal offences" provided by the Belgian police during 10-13 February 2009, with the participation of 23 persons from the Crime Investigation Department.
- Training "Training course for new instructors of service dogs and detection of drugs" was organised on 16-19 February 2009 with the participation of 4 police officers in the premises of the Institute for the Training Police Dogs. This training aims to certify police officers for instructor of specialised service dogs, detection of narcotics and on the actions to be implemented by the instructor for the detection of narcotics in BCPs.
- Training "Stimulated purchase" provided under the twinning project with the police of Great Britain, during 23-26 February 2009, with the participation of 8 police officers of the Crime Investigation Department. The scope of the training was:
 - To improve knowledge and skills on the use of special investigation means against organised crime;
 - To improve risk analysis in such operations; familiarisation with foreign experience in using SIM.
- Training "Basic training on narcotic issues" was offered by the US Embassy in Kosovo during 10-11 March 2009, with the participation of one police officer of the Crime Investigation Department. This training provided:
 - Knowledge on the forms and methods used in combating trafficking of narcotics
 - Knowledge on regional experience and beyond in the fight against drug trade.

3) Activities with regard to drug prevention measures

An Action Plan no 1116 "*For the prevention of cannabis cultivation*" was approved by the Minister of Interior on 03.04.2009.

This Action Plan was forwarded for implementation to all Police Directorates and the structures of Local Government, municipalities and communes. The plan is divided in two phases.

- The first phase foresees awareness-raising of citizens on this matter and
- The second is an operational phase.

A Central Staff was established in the GD of State Police in April 2009 and the Action Plan is under implementation. Meanwhile also regional Staffs led by Prefects were established.

- During the period I- V/2009, 17 criminal groups of narcotic trafficking and distribution were dismantled and 69 members were criminally proceeded.
- 12 operations were conducted successfully with the use of special investigation means;
- 4 international operations were carried out in cooperation with the prosecution and judicial authorities of various countries concluded with the arrest of 8 persons.
- 21 persons wanted for drug-related criminal crimes were caught during the reporting period.

4) International Co-operation

International Cooperation:

16

- UNODC
- INCB
- EMCDDA
- INTERPOL
- EUROPOL
- SECI – Center
- Liaison Officers.
- Bilateral and Regional agreements

Year	International Operations	Persons Arrested
2005	9	17
2006	13	33
2007	4	9
2008	15	23
2009 (5 m)	4	8
Total	45	90

4) National Co-operation

National Cooperation:

17

- Prosecution Office
(Investigation of cases)
- State Intelligence Service
(exchange of information)
- Ministry of Health;
(Licensing process, control of precursors, prevention activities)
- Ministry of Finance (Customs);
(Precursors control and common controls)
- Ministry of Agriculture;
(Monitoring of industrial cannabis production)

- ☐ Ministry of Environment
(Fight against cultivation of narcotic plants)
- ☐ Ministry of Education;
Prevention of drug use in schools and universities, prevention activities)
- ☐ Local Government
(Prevention and fight against cultivation of narcotic plants)

VI. Mini-Dublin group assessment of needs.

1) Remarks by participating member states

Austria reports 2 Cases of trafficking from Heroin into EU. The co-operation with Albanian Police Authorities in this regard was very good

Czech Republic reports that ethnic Albanians originating from Kosovo and Macedonia currently are using Czech Citizens as Couriers and Dealers. Albania is being used by these criminal gangs as a main transit country; both Heroin and Cocaine originates mainly from Afghanistan and is being transported mainly to the Netherlands and from there all over Europe.

Hungary reports that statistical data from last year concerning to drug abuse show a slight increase in numbers (4672 cases in 2007, 5458 cases in 2008). During 2008 changed the trends in selling drugs to addicted people. While earlier the place of amusements were favorable, today the dealers directly go to private apartments or meet in public places with their “costumers”. Police reported that the among perpetrators no Albanian citizens were identified, but Kosovar and Turkish ones, who had also leading role operating criminal gangs with more and more sophisticated manner. Among the young GHB (‘Gina’- liquid ecstasy) became more favorable, while cocaine is still considered as an “exclusive’ drug.

European Commission emphasizes that the so-called MEMEX – system (electronic criminal data system) is not working yet in Albania. There is still a remarkable lack of internal police- co-operation; a kind of central supervision is highly advisable.

ICITAP reports about recently held workshops with Albanian State Police Officers in Stuttgart/Germany in order to kick-off a program which both focuses on community policing and operational capabilities. The US Drug Enforcement Agency in this regard is intending to enlarge its activities on the Balkans. The use of unmanned “drones” (aircrafts) could be one choice to detect illegal cannabis plants hidden in the Albanian mountains.

PAMECA reports positive developments and a more intensive co-operation with the Albanian State Police. Albanian Undercover –Agents are being sent into other countries; nevertheless PAMECA still observes remarkable lacks of capacity within the Albanian State Police.

2) Recommendations

- MEMEX data base should be functional as soon as possible
- Corruption remains a major concern; special attention should be given to this problem even after the Parliament elections on June 28, 2009
- Cultivation of crop alternatives should be promoted to rural people further on
- Continuity of all major assignments at the Albanian State Police should be guaranteed even after a possible political change end of June 2009
- Law free zones like the village of Lazarat should receive enhanced attention by the Albanian Government during the oncoming months
- What is written on paper differs from what is happening in practice- Albanian State Police is supposed to fulfill its commitments in a more traceable way
- A reliable Level of Central Supervision with regard to Drug Prevention is highly recommended
- The Mini Dublin Group welcomes the installation of a database system which even will link Intelligence Management to Criminal Intelligence; this will change the current policy of “gathering” to the one of “Accessibility”
- The recently changed structure of the border police will hopefully establish a clearer chain of command, which is of big necessity.

In order to strengthen the dialogue between the International Community and the Government of Albania, the recommendations contained in this report will be made available also to the relevant authorities.