



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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CORDROGUE 63

NOTE

from :	Horizontal Working Party on Drugs
to :	COREPER/Council
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Subject :	Resolution of Council on the importance of the role of the families in preventing drug abuse by adolescents

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,
WHEREAS:

1. The European Council, meeting in Helsinki on 10 and 11 December 1999, endorsed the European Union Drugs Strategy 2000-2004 which covers all EU drug-related activities and set its main targets, among which is a substantial reduction over five years of the incidence of damage caused to health by drug abuse and of the number of drug-related deaths;
2. In June 2000 the Feira European Council adopted the EU Action Plan on Drugs (2000-2004) as a crucial instrument for transposing the EU Drugs Strategy into a hundred or so concrete actions which provide an effective integrated and multidisciplinary response to the drug problem;

3. The aforementioned Strategy is in line with the content of the Political Declaration adopted by the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on Drugs in June 1998;
4. In its communication to the European Parliament and the Council on the EU Action Plan on Drugs, the Commission considered a global approach as the best strategy, covering all sectors of the prevention of drug abuse, discouraging initial use and reducing the negative health and social consequences;
5. The programme of Community action on the prevention of drug dependence within the framework of Community action in the field of public health, has supported projects aimed at preventing and reducing the risks associated with drug dependence by encouraging, among other things, cooperation between Member States, supporting their action and promoting the coordination of their policies and programmes. The programme has contributed towards improving information, education and training aimed at preventing drug dependence and the associated risks, in particular for young people and particularly vulnerable groups;
6. The Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council adopting a programme of Community action in the field of public health (2003-2008) includes the development of strategies and measures relating to the principal health determinants linked to the adoption of healthy lifestyles;
7. Research shows that the morbidity and mortality connected with drug dependence affect a considerable number of European citizens; the damage to health caused by drug addiction is a major problem for public health and has serious social repercussions;
8. The European Union can add value to the efforts of member States in prevention and reduction of risks associated with drug dependence by facilitating the sharing of knowledge on what works;

9. The results of the mid-term evaluation of the EU Action Plan on Drugs (2000-2004) highlighted the following key issues at national level:
- Coordination of drug policy across government services is recognised as important by all Member States, and consequently across community based action, social services programmes, school prevention activities and families;
 - A variety of coordination approaches have been adopted, depending on a variety of issues such as the relative priority given to the drug problem in particular member States, the country structure and administrative organisation;
 - Most Member States have adopted a national plan and/or strategy on drugs;
 - Many national action plans have been developed in line with the principles of the EU Action Plan;
10. The results of the mid-term evaluation of the EU Action Plan on Drugs (2000-2004) made it clear that further progress is needed at EU level, including the development of a strategy for strengthening cooperation with civil society in the field of drugs;
11. Families have an important role to play in giving adolescents detailed information and in educating them in a healthy lifestyle;
12. **TAKING INTO ACCOUNT** the role of families in determining the risk and preventive factors which could influence early drug abuse, including a sense of belonging to a family, parents' involvement in their offsprings' lives and the degree of affection given in early infancy;
13. **BEARING IN MIND** that EMCDDA has devised a special survey to gather data on prevention, based on the involvement of the families and the community and early intervention, acknowledging the urgent need to assess programmes in this field and compare experience;
14. **CONSIDERING THAT** there is growing scientific evidence of the need to involve families in prevention programmes through training designed to improve family relationships, behaviour and organisation;

15. CONCERNED THAT a lack of reliable information on drugs, and confusion as to the true toxicity of psychotropic substances used recreationally could lead parents to underestimate the risks entailed for adolescents who experiment with drugs at an early age;

UNDERLINES THE IMPORTANCE OF:

- 1) Bearing in mind the importance of "risk-assessment" measures that identify families at risk, early distress signals and early intervention strategies involving parents, including those with pre-school children, in targeted prevention programmes with the aim of reducing risk behaviour and later drug use;
- 2) Encouraging local institutions and schools to promote prevention programmes based on the involvement of families, and in particular families at risk, in order to enhance safeguards during childhood and early adolescence, involvement by parents in their children's lives, adequate monitoring, clear rules of family conduct and positive parenting models;
- 3) Paying particular attention to the family environment, strengthening parental training programmes, since the lack of family support and poor parenting skills can promote the development of drug habits;
- 4) Promoting different information strategies to help parents to identify early risk behaviours and early drug use in adolescents;
- 5) Promoting and encouraging parents' participation in school activities and the creation of stable contacts between families and social support agencies through common training programmes, with the aim of bringing synergetic educational interventions to bear on risk behaviour;
- 6) Analysing and carrying out further research on current strategies and programmes, as well as on the development of new comprehensive programmes and strategies for contacting and involving families, actions in support in particular of families at risk, in which parents or siblings are drug users or have psychological and behavioural problems;

- 7) Promoting the development of innovative strategies to:
- involve parents in their children's schooling, sports, games and recreational activities, by promoting opportunities for socialising with a strong educational content and involving cooperation between associations, institutions and the private social sector;
 - contact families at risk or the parents of minors at risk of becoming addicted to drugs, through home visits, self-help methods and other preventive, educative and therapeutic approaches;
 - support families which are socially and economically disadvantaged, to enhance their level of social integration
- 8)
- 9) For this purpose, drawing up an inventory of the most effective methods and instruments for promoting the role of families in drug use prevention for adolescents, and encouraging, in close collaboration with EMCDDA, the exchange between Member States on best practice in this field.
- 10) Ensuring that information, counselling and training offered to parents are tailored to their needs, cultural background and ethnic origin, and that they use appropriate communication strategies