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Subject : 2009-2013 Action plan on Drugs between the EU and Central Asian states

I. Introduction

The EU and CA countries give high importance to action against illicit drugs.

The EU and the Central Asian countries have a shared interest in enhancing their cooperation to address common threats and security challenges. Increased drug trafficking and drug abuse, as well as the lack of efficient border management, are identified as key threats for the Central Asian countries. Limited cooperation between Central Asian countries, insufficient domestic inter-agency co-ordination in the region, and limited co-ordination among the major international donors, as well as between the donors and the states in the region, complicate the establishment of a more efficient border management in the region and fight against drug trafficking through Central Asia to Europe. The European Union and Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan have reaffirmed on numerous occasions that international co-operation is essential in countering the drug problem.

The first **Action Plan on drugs between the EU and Central Asian Republics**¹ was approved in 2002. In the meantime, the context has changed in significant ways and the plan is therefore updated and replaced by this second Action Plan. In particular, international terrorism and organised crime, including drug trafficking, now play a major role in contributing to instability. Illicit drug production in Afghanistan and trafficking through Central Asia remain at high levels. The consumption of illicit drugs in transit countries, including in Central Asia, has also risen, resulting in increases in HIV infection rates due to drug injection use. Drug abuse prevalence has increased particularly dramatically among young people. More emphasis is to be put on strengthening efforts to prevent and reduce the demand for and harm from drug abuse.

The **EU strategy for a New Partnership with Central Asia**², endorsed by the European Council in June 2007, calls for giving greater support to the fight against drugs and stepping up the EU support for the development of modern border management in the region of Central Asia. The Strategy aims at a balanced, bilateral and regional approach.

According to the **EU Drugs Action Plan for 2009-2012**³, the EU Member States and the Commission undertook to address drug-related concerns in producer countries and those along the (emerging) trafficking routes. In action 51, the EU committed itself to update the current Action Plan with Central Asian Republics.

The new Action Plan reflects the shared will of the EU and the Central Asian states to further intensify their anti-drug co-operation.

¹ Doc. 12353/02 CORDROGUE 78 CODRO 1 NIS 107

² Doc. 10113/07 PESC 655 COEST 179

³ OJ C 326, 20.12.2008, p. 7.

II. Objectives

Recognizing the need for a comprehensive EU initiative in the field of drugs as stated by the Dublin and Vienna European Councils as well as the EU Drug Action Plan adopted in December 2008, the objective of this Action Plan is to provide a framework between the European Union and the Central Asian states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan in order to more effectively tackle the drugs problem. Through the new Action Plan between the EU and Central Asia, the EU intends to **intensify the cooperation** with the countries of the region according to their specific needs, requirements and performance. This Action Plan calls for enhanced cooperation and the provision of assistance to the partner countries at national and regional level, in particular in the development of policies and institution building, to enable them to improve their capacity to cope with the drug problem. In line with the EU principles, it builds on an integrated and balanced approach based on partnership and aims at making optimal use of existing frameworks and thus avoiding duplication of efforts. Therefore the EU aims at enhancing its cooperation with other international actors, especially the UN and the OSCE, whose specialised structures are substantially involved in countering drug-trafficking and developing border management in Central Asia.

The aim of the enhanced cooperation under this Action Plan is to better support the countries of Central Asia in meeting the commitments they have made to combat drug trafficking. The EU and the countries of Central Asia will collaborate in conformity with international law, while respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The co-operation between the EU and the Central Asian countries in the areas covered by this Action Plan shall be based, among others, on the following international agreements and documents:

- the principles adopted at the UN General Assembly Special Session on Drugs of June 1998, including shared responsibility, as well as the Political Declaration and Plan of Action on International Cooperation towards an Integrated and Balanced Strategy to Counter the World Drug Problem adopted by the high-level segment of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on 12 March 2009;

- the Partnership and Co-operation Agreements between the European Union and States of Central Asia;
- the EU Council Recommendation on the prevention and reduction of health-related harm associated with drug dependence;
- the EU-Central Asia Strategy for a New Partnership, adopted in 2007;
- the orientations contained in the European Union Drug Strategy 2005-2012¹ and the EU Drugs Action Plan for 2009-2012;
- the national anti-drug strategies adopted by the Central Asian Republics;
- the Dublin Declaration on Partnership to fight HIV/AIDS in Europe and Central Asia of February 2004;
- the Joint Declaration adopted by the participants at EU-Central Asia Ministerial Forum on Security Challenges in Paris on 18 September 2008;
- the Partnership Declaration of the Ministerial on Border management and Drug Control in Dushanbe, 21-22 October 2008.

III. Situation overview

The indicators available for the region of Central Asia and data provided by the threat assessment prepared by Europol and UNODC suggest that drug cultivation, trafficking and abuse in Central Asia, involving in particular the heroin/morphine of Afghan origin, still pose actual or potential problems for both the Central Asian States themselves and the rest of the world, including the EU, despite national and international anti-narcotic efforts.

¹ Doc. 15074/04 CORDROGUE 77 SAN 187 ENFOPOL 178 RELEX 564

Three of the five Central Asian countries (Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan) border Afghanistan¹, the world's largest illicit drug producer, supplying mainly the European, Central Asian and Russian markets.

According to the latest UNODC overall estimates (2008), about 19 % of all Afghan heroin/morphine transited through the countries of Central Asia; while 10 % of Afghan opium exports are estimated to transit through the region. This high level of trafficking contributes to criminality in the region and leads to an increase in drug addiction locally.

Along with **drug trafficking routes** from Afghanistan through Iran and Pakistan, the so-called “Northern Route” through Central Asia is of continued importance.

According to the seizure data and Afghanistan opium poppy survey reports (UNODC), most of the heroin trafficked via the Northern route crosses the Afghanistan/Tajikistan border, which is difficult to control due to the very challenging geographical conditions. Around 20 tons of heroin is trafficked to Russia by train and airways from Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan. The rest, 40 tons, is being trafficked by land through Kazakhstan after passing through neighbouring countries.

Central Asia provides suitable land for the **cultivation** of opium, cannabis and ephedra, the latter two of which grow wild and prolifically in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan in particular. So far there is no evidence that these drugs are cultivated in the region for export. Available information suggests that production of drugs in the region is a potential rather than a current danger.

¹ In 2007, opium poppy cultivation in Afghanistan expanded to the largest area ever recorded and Afghanistan alone accounted for 82% of global opium production. In 2008, there has been 9 % decrease in opium cultivation to 157,000 hectares compared to 2007. Owing to a higher yield of 48,8 kg/ha (up from 42,5kg/ha in 2007), opium production in 2008 is estimated at 7,700 mt, a 6% reduction compared to the production in 2007 (UNODC Afghanistan Opium Survey 2008). Cultivation is now concentrated to seven unsecure provinces in the south of the country, in particular Helmand.

Concerning **drug demand**, this is increasing in all countries of the region. Central Asian countries experience serious drugs abuse related problems, especially among young people, including increasing HIV infection rates. Heroin and opium derivatives remain the primary drugs of **abuse** in the region, however, there is anecdotal information on common use of cannabis and inhalants especially among the young people. According to UNODC, there are an estimated 300,000 regular opiate users in the Central Asian countries which account for an average annual prevalence rate of 0.7 percent of the adult population (aged 15 - 64) compared to the world average of 0.4 percent prevalence of opiate use. Intravenous drug use associated with opiate addiction appears to have contributed to the increase in the number in HIV/AIDS cases in the region. The number of HIV cases increased dramatically (particularly in Kazakhstan), by about 31 percent from 2006 to 2007.

Precursor trafficking remains a serious concern. Large quantities of precursor chemicals, in particular acetic anhydride, originating mainly from China, India, Russian federation, Republic of Korea and the European Union are being diverted from licit trade and smuggled into Afghanistan. The existence of substantial morphine and heroin production within Afghanistan is well established and significant illegal imports of chemical precursors are required for that purpose. According to the latest available estimates by UNODC, 60 percent of the Afghanistan opium crop was converted into morphine and heroin in Afghanistan. This amount of morphine and heroin – approximately 630 tons – would require 12,000 tons of precursor chemicals, including 1,450 tons of acetic anhydride, a chemical with no legitimate use in Afghanistan at this time.

Criminal groups, including recently organised African trafficking groups transiting to Europe, also use international airports in Central Asia for trafficking drugs. Moreover, the Central Asian republics have a relatively modern railway network, which connects them to Russia, and, in the case of Uzbekistan, to Afghanistan. During the past five years, there has been significant renovation of highways in the region and building of bridges between Afghanistan and Tajikistan that have increased opportunities for highway-borne trafficking. There is a direct road link now between China, a potential source of precursor chemicals, through Tajikistan to Afghanistan.

The Ministerial Conference "Border management and drug control in Central Asia", held on 21-22 October 2008 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, has also underlined, *inter alia*, that strong measures by the Iranian authorities at the Iran-Afghan border have increasingly forced Afghan traffic bound for European markets to look for alternative routes, particularly through Central Asia. The porous borders between Afghanistan and the three Central Asian republics, severe terrain conditions and limited resources and capacity make effective **border control** difficult to establish and maintain.

Participants at the Dushanbe conference reaffirmed the commitment to reinforce regional and international cooperation to provide better border management and drug control, the establishment of closer ties between regional and international organisations and support focused assistance on ongoing and future efforts in this field.

The Eighth Central Asia Border Security Initiative (CABSI, a consortium of a number of EU Member States led by Austria) meeting scheduled for late September 2009 will provide follow-up to the results of this Conference.

The CABSI at its 7th meeting on 23 September 2008 in Astana agreed, *inter alia*, to continue the process (aimed at developing a comprehensive and sustainable border management approach in the region) and to extend the CABSI mandate as the co-ordination platform on border security issues in order to achieve a comprehensive overview on border management activities and to encourage the use of the UNODC ADAM database for border management assistance.

The Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination centre (CARICC) Agreement entered into force on 22nd March 2009. CARICC is to serve as a permanently operating regional information and coordination interstate agency that shall assist in organizing, undertaking and coordinating agreed joint international operations to combat illicit trafficking. The Centre shall also ensure collection, storage, protection, analysis and exchange of information on trans-border crime associated with illicit drug trafficking. The first meeting of the CARICC (Council (Management Board)) was held on 26th of February 2009 in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

IV. Activities

When designing the concrete priority areas of action, the following principles should be followed:

- 1) ownership: actions should be integrated into the partner countries' own strategies;
- 2) coordinated approach: led by Central Asian countries, together with donors and implementing agencies, with a view to ensuring coherence and complementarity;
- 3) long term perspective: being critical for the successful institution-building, it aims at promoting policy and organisational reforms, including sharing of the EU experience and transfer of best practices;
- 4) balanced approach towards border management (trade facilitation/border security) and drug policy (demand and supply reduction);
- 5) coherence: with regional approach, harmonisation of procedures and cross-country cooperation;
- 6) regional inclusiveness: regional cooperation will be strengthened by associating Afghanistan to the activities under this Action Plan, preferably by making use of regional mechanisms;
- 7) sustainability: increasing the ability of Central Asian countries to bear the maintenance costs of the structures and means established or received within the programmes.

It will be important to increase ownership by EU and Central Asian countries of the Plan through strengthened dialogue involving also relevant authorities and agencies of Central Asian partners as much as possible.

Furthermore, coordination between all stakeholders in the field of border management and drugs should be enhanced (e.g. in the framework of the Mini Dublin Group meetings, annual CABSI conferences, Paris Pact mechanism or regular national-level coordination meetings).

Emphasis will be on the further development of balanced drug strategies in Central Asia, ensuring that they are anchored in the State budgets and regional coordination initiatives.

A. Strategic Planning

An overview at an international, regional, and national level is vital to ensure that all aspects of the problem are considered, and that resources, both national and from public and private external sources are well targeted at priority areas of activity. A structured approach will be applied, drawing in all local and international stakeholders to co-operate actively and to avoid duplication of effort. The UN and its specialised agencies like UNODC, as well as the OSCE have particularly important role to play.

Actions should include:

- Enhanced EU-Central Asia dialogue, including through expert level Troikas;
- promotion and development of balanced and evidence-based national and regional Drug Strategies and Action Plans on drug demand and supply reduction, based on internationally standardised, reliable and comparable data, and in line with the EU Drugs Strategy and Action Plans;
- implementation of national strategic anti-drug master plans and action plans developing concrete measures, including appropriate institutional development and strengthening of inter-agency coordination, in coordination with other actors;
- support for government institutions in coordination with other actors of the region in the development and implementation of an overall regional strategy;
- work with all interested parties to ensure coherence and complementarity, so that the activities are effectively implemented, without overlap and the associated duplication of resources.

B. Legislation and institution building

An effective legal system protects individuals and defines criminal activity. It establishes enforcement procedures, defines the powers and limitations of the enforcement agencies and is the basis for the criminal process.

Building from legislation, appropriate institutions who are active or who might have a role to play in tackling the drugs problem can benefit from the experience in the European Union. Definition of the role of the different law enforcement agencies involved, both through legislation and operating procedures, so that they are complementary and can work effectively together is crucial, as is the legislative framework for agencies to co-operate across borders, such as in the case of controlled deliveries.

In many cases there has been a lack of awareness of the key issues in drugs crime in the judicial sector. Proportionality of responses to drug-related offences is an important principle. Serious offences should have more serious consequences than offences of a less grave nature. Drug addicts who commit offences should be offered the opportunity to undergo treatment and rehabilitation, in addition to being convicted or punished or as an alternative to conviction and punishment if the offence is of a minor nature. NGOs can be particularly important as they can play a key role in demand reduction and in supporting human rights. In many cases neither the legislative framework nor the know-how exists to develop their activities.

Actions should include:

- promotion of- and training in regular evaluation of achievements of respective Drug Strategies and of implementation of the relevant Action Plans using best practice examples from EU and its Members States;
- further building of national co-ordination structures, including designation of a national coordinator/focal point for interaction with regional and international structures;
- transposition of international standards, taking into account EU best practices, in fields such as synthetic drugs, precursors control, money laundering;
- further transposition and implementation of relevant UN Conventions;
- further institutional development and capacity building, including through the implementation of the integrated border management concept (drawing on the work done in the context of the BOMCA programme);

- support to judicial systems in dealing with drugs issues, for example by improving their organisation and providing training to prosecutors and judges, and in ensuring inter alia respect of human rights, drawing on experience in the EU and building on the activities undertaken in the framework of the Rule of Law Initiative launched at the EU-Central Asia Ministerial platform "Rule of Law, cornerstone of development", held in Brussels on 27-28 November 2008;
- development of the criminal justice system with a view to promote alternatives to imprisonment through treatment for drug addicts arrested on drug use charges and/or for minor non-drug offences;
- strengthening Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) active in the drug demand reduction sector and rehabilitation;
- reinforcement of codes of conduct and anti-corruption programmes for law enforcement, judicial and governmental staff;
- elaboration and adoption of domestic laws in the area of extradition, controlled delivery, mutual legal assistance (MLA), freezing/confiscation and sharing/return of proceeds and instrumentalities of crime;
- completion of the ratification process of the CARICC agreement and its effective operation.

C. Demand reduction, monitoring and rehabilitation

All actions under the present Action Plan shall be based on the declaration on the guiding principles on demand reduction as adopted by the 1998 UNGASS as well as on its corresponding Action Plan. In addition, the EU's and Member States' experience in this field of demand reduction, monitoring and rehabilitation might be used as a valuable basis for cooperation, including through the European Monitoring Centre on Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) in Lisbon and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) in Stockholm.

The international illicit drugs market is dependent on demand. In some areas where there was production or wild crops there is a tradition of use, but the form and scale has been accelerating into new sectors of the population. This is particularly true among the young and urban dwellers.

Much of the growth in demand is related to lack of education and economic development as well as social deprivation. Tackling the growth in demand requires a fresh look at its source. Social policies, which advocate alternative activity, the provision of targeted education to the young and especially vulnerable, and not least activities which counter the social pressures to become a drug abuser.

Suppliers and traffickers also create demand, not least by paying the individuals involved in smuggling and distributing in kind, thus developing pressures to sell their illicit products locally. Economic and social development, whether or not aimed specifically at the reduction of demand for drugs, can have a significant impact on drug demand.

NGOs can play a particularly effective role in awareness-building, treatment of addicts, and small scale social projects.

Actions should include:

- strengthened demand reduction policies, including prevention and rehabilitation, targeted on high risk populations, notably also in penitentiary institutions;
- promotion of the exchange of experience and best practices on demand reduction, with particular emphasis on harm reduction;
- establishment of sustainable institutional framework of National Focal Points / National Drug Observatories to increase the capacity of national experts in regular and ongoing monitoring and evaluation of drug use situation and responses using the best available scientific standards as developed by the European Monitoring Centre on Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), and the relevant bodies of United Nations;
- implementation of the Dublin Declaration on HIV/AIDS, in particular Action 33;
- building capacity of service providers, civil society organizations to design and implement community based effective programmes for prevention of drug use and treatment of drug dependence, as well as prevention and reduction of harms resulting from most risky patterns of drug use, such as fatal overdoses, HIV/AIDS and viral hepatitis or other blood borne infectious diseases, tuberculosis, and other somatic and psychological disorders;

- promoting the activities undertaken in these areas by NGOs and promote closer relations between EU and Central Asian NGOs and others working in the field of prevention, treatment, harm reduction and rehabilitation;
- encouraging the exchange information on indicators of the use and abuse of drugs as well as their impact on health and society and their effective use in policy-making;
- identifying new substances used and new trends in drugs use.

D. Law enforcement, judicial cooperation and border management

Co-operation between the European Union and the States of Central Asia in the field of law enforcement and judicial co-operation shall be in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic substances (Vienna Convention of 1988) and the measures to promote judicial co-operation (extradition, mutual legal assistance, transfer of proceedings, training and other forms of cooperation, controlled delivery etc.) as adopted by 1998 UNGASS.

Law enforcement agencies are in the forefront in the fight against drugs production and trafficking. For the drug abuser they are also often the first contact with official bodies. Their effectiveness is paramount in combating the criminal aspects of drugs.

The Judicial system in the countries of the region need to have a consistent approach to offenders, so that the level of penalties do not influence trafficking and associated offences by creating weak links within and between countries.

Actions should include

- development and/or strengthening of national drug law enforcement agencies and drug co-ordination bodies;
- modernisation of law enforcement bodies and the operating methodologies (risk analysis, controlled deliveries and other investigative methods and procedures and the collection, analysis, dissemination and use of information) also building on the results of CADAP and the work done under the Phare Multi-beneficiary Drugs Programme (which supported the EU Action Plan on Drugs 2000-2004);

- improvement of cross border security measures on airports, ports, trains and roads, particularly transport bottlenecks, through projects and programmes (namely drawing upon the outcome of CADAP to be implemented through BOMCA);
- strengthening operational role of CARICC, including by deployment of liaison officers (including by Europol) and support of the networking of CARICC national units in order to develop close cooperation and synergies with EU bodies;
- increasing exchange of information/intelligence and promoting co-operation, including operational one, between law enforcement agencies in the European Union and Central Asia, through, among other tools, the CARICC;
- organisation of joint operations between the Central Asian drug law enforcement agencies and the relevant agencies of Afghanistan;
- regular meetings of the heads of drug law enforcement agencies of Central Asian countries, Afghanistan and Pakistan focused on operational co-operation against drug trafficking, in particular along the Northern Route;
- development of action plans for the implementation of border management strategies and exchange of best practices;
- improvement of border security through the promotion and development of both Border Liaison Offices which will support cross-border cooperation and information exchange, and Mobile Interdiction Units which will provide coverage of the vast stretches of territory between fixed border check points;
- strengthening of the legal and regulatory framework for dealing with drugs issues, modernisation of the judiciary, for example by improving their organisation and providing training to prosecutors and judges and in ensuring inter alia respect of human rights (including through the EU Rule of Law Initiative for Central Asia);
- development of networks of co-operation of the judicial as well as central authorities (including through the EU Rule of Law Initiative for Central Asia).

E. Precursor and licit drug control

All measures developed within the framework of this Action Plan must be in conformity with the Article 12 of the Vienna Convention of 1988 and the measures adopted by the UNGASS. In the implementation of those INCB has a specific role.

By their very nature, precursors can be difficult to control, as most are needed for legitimate and widespread uses. The European Union has built up a wealth of experience in their management, which could be useful to Central Asia.

Customs services, together with the licensing services and the police, have major roles in fighting precursor diversion by:

- ensuring appropriate prior screening of precursor shipments before these leave their customs territories;
- collecting and analysing information to create intelligence and thus anticipate diversion trends; sharing information at the national, regional and international level.

Actions should include:

- strengthening national and regional systems for controlling precursors, principally in relation to information, such as mechanisms for estimating production capacity of controlled substances, the amounts actually produced, and the needs of legitimate industries;
- promoting the exchange of information and further development of systems for surveillance and investigation of forms of diversion, with particular emphasis on the activities being developed by regional bodies;
- enhancing training opportunities for officials in the Central Asian States responsible for precursor control; such training should particularly embrace the identification and interception of smuggled consignments of precursor chemicals, and can extend to assistance in precursor control legislation and forensic techniques to fight precursor diversion.

F. Money laundering

The commitments entered into in accordance with the relevant provisions of the 1988 Vienna Convention and the targets set up by UNGASS concerning setting up national money laundering legislation and programmes as well as specific measures, remain relevant.

Actions should include:

- implementation of the UNGASS Action Plan against Money Laundering taking account of FATF and EURASIA Group recommendations, including the development and application of legislation and establishment of Financial Intelligence Units;
- implementation measures for effective application of AML legislation for public, banking and financial sectors.

V. Conclusion

The monitoring of the implementation of this Action Plan will be done through a regular dialogue among the EU and Central Asian countries. It is recommended to complement the Action Plan with a succinct work programme on an annual basis. Following an overall review of the implementation of this 2009-2013 Action Plan, it is recommended that a High Level Conference will be organised in 2013.

The assistance programmes of the European Commission and the EU Member States will contribute to and be coordinated with the actions under this Action Plan. In addition, the Paris Pact process, also with support from the EU, should continue to promote cooperation between Afghanistan, transit countries and the broader international community.

ONGOING ASSISTANCE PROGRAMMES AT REGIONAL LEVEL

EU attention to the drug issue in Central Asia has been translated into concrete programmes and actions.

A consistent approach adopted by the European Commission has been to focus on border management reform and drug control, notably through **BOMCA** (Border Management Programme for Central Asia) and **CADAP** (Central Asia Drug Action Programme) with a total commitment of 54,6 million € from 2001 until 2013. Both programmes have a regional approach whose long term strategic goal is the gradual adoption of **EU standards and good practices in the field of drugs and in integrated border management** (The programmes are currently being implemented by UNDP in Bishkek with offices in each of the countries. As of 2010, it is envisaged that CADAP will be implemented by a consortium of EU Member States.) .

Under the **Instrument for Stability**, the EU will provide support for trans-regional cooperation to stem illicit trafficking from and to Afghanistan and has launched a new project (9.5 million €) with Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Azerbaijan and Turkey, as member countries of the Economic Cooperation Organisation (ECO), focusing on the development of their capacity to gather, analyse and share drug law enforcement data in two target sectors – border control and forensics – and with links to relevant organisations such as Interpol and CARICC (and taking also account of the progress in relevant EU initiatives, e.g. European Drug Profiling System). This project is also complementary with another 3 million € EC project, “Interpol in Central Asia” (ICA), which aims to enhance the capacities of the Central Asian countries for information and intelligence exchange using the I-24/7 technology (implementation period: 2008-2010).

In the area of **precursors**, the UNODC project on Regional cooperation in precursors control between Afghanistan and Neighbouring countries is co-financed (1, 2 million €) by the EC under the old North-South Drugs Budget line. Capacity building on precursors control within Afghanistan is one of the key objectives of this project. Mentoring and training is provided to the staff of the Precursor Control Unit (PCU) established under the project in the Counter Narcotic Police Agency. The EC also coordinates the Community participation of the UN led operational initiative to combat diversion and trafficking of heroin chemicals (Operation TARCET / Project Cohesion).

EU Member States' assistance efforts

While the bulk of the EU anti-narcotic assistance to the region is provided by the Community, there is a wide range of co-operation and support activities involving individual EU Member States. These activities most often are multi-year projects implemented bilaterally or through international organisations, in particular the UNODC and their total volume has reached the order of millions Euro in the last 5 years.

Many activities aim to increase the capacity of law enforcement, drug-control and border control authorities of the Central Asian states; some specifically address the regional co-operation and co-ordination, namely the CARICC where several EU member states are directly involved as contributors to the Center,s funding and activities. In the spectrum of cooperation activities by EU member states there are also projects addressing the reduction of drug demand, including the public health aspects. The bilateral cooperation against drugs between individual EU member states and the Central Asian countries includes agreements on cooperation and liaison arrangements between relevant services.

Information exchange and co-ordination among donors takes place within the framework of the Dublin Group with the mini-Dublin Group relevant for the region being currently chaired by Italy.