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Report of the Eighth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Europe, held in Vienna from 16 to 18 June 2009*

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* The present report is being issued in English, French, Russian and Spanish, the working languages of the subsidiary body.



I. Matters calling for action by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs or brought to its attention

Recommendations adopted by the Eighth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Europe

1. The Eighth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (HONLEA), Europe, adopted a number of recommendations made by its respective working groups. Those recommendations are presented below.

Issue 1. The influence of the Internet and other electronic media on drug trafficking

2. The following recommendations were made with regard to issue 1, “The influence of the Internet and other electronic media on drug trafficking”:

(a) As a first step to ensuring an effective response to handling and recovering digital evidence, Governments should encourage their law enforcement authorities to develop a digital evidence strategy;

(b) Because of the pressing need for a concerted worldwide response to cybercrime offences, Governments should be encouraged to consider the development of a United Nations convention against such offences that provides direction and guidance and supports Member States in working together to combat such offences;

(c) To combat offences facilitated through the use of cybertechnologies, Governments are encouraged to ensure that their national legislation is adequate to sustain the successful investigation and prosecution of such offences within their jurisdictions;

(d) Governments should be encouraged to establish digital evidence standards to maintain the integrity and quality of evidence gathered from cybertechnology sources.

Issue 2. Information: the key to dismantling trafficking groups

3. The following recommendations were made with regard to issue 2, “Information: the key to dismantling trafficking groups”:

(a) To support a concerted and effective response by law enforcement authorities against international trafficking networks and organized crime groups, Governments should ensure that their national authorities make full use of the secure communication platforms, databases and other information resources available to them through participation in the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Centre (CARICC), the European Police Office (Europol), the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL), the World Customs Organization and other trusted organizations established to support coordination;

(b) Governments should take steps to ensure that they have established the necessary legal framework to facilitate the mutually agreed operation of foreign undercover law enforcement officers in their jurisdictions;

(c) To enhance, strengthen and maintain close cooperation between law enforcement authorities engaged in the investigation of criminal networks trafficking illicit drugs, Governments should encourage their authorities to respond in a timely manner to requests for information and assistance from foreign counterparts.

Issue 3. Drug trafficking in Europe: trends, strategies and effective responses

4. The following recommendations were made with regard to issue 3, “Drug trafficking in Europe: trends, strategies and effective responses”:

(a) In response to the current threat posed to the States of both West Africa and Europe by transatlantic cocaine trafficking by well-organized and well-resourced criminal syndicates, Governments should encourage their authorities to contribute to and support the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre–Narcotics (MAOC-N) operational initiative;

(b) Owing to the growing use of non-commercial aircraft to traffic drugs using routes from Latin America to West Africa and from North Africa to landing points in Europe, Governments must take immediate steps to strengthen cooperation between law enforcement authorities and the general aviation sector and to support authorities in gathering the information necessary and implementing the procedures required, in order to enable those authorities to respond more effectively to the growing trafficking threat.

Further recommendations for the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its fifty-third session

5. The Meeting recommended that the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its fifty-third session undertake the following:

(a) Address the need to improve the international control of precursors, including the trade in the chemical precursor substitutes typically used in illicit drug production;

(b) Urge Member States to strictly implement Security Council resolution 1817 (2008), concerning international cooperation to curb the smuggling into Afghanistan of precursors for heroin production. As one solution to the problem of the smuggling of illicit supplies of precursors into Afghanistan, it should be recommended that all Member States introduce chemical marking of precursors;

(c) Urge Member States to implement in practice the political decisions as part of the Paris Pact initiative to combat trafficking in Afghan opiates;

(d) Adopt a resolution on the need to assign to the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan a role in combating the illicit cultivation of drug crops and illicit drug production;

(e) Urge Member States to increase the effectiveness of the exchange of information between States on issues related to combating the illicit trade in drugs and their precursors;

(f) Request the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) to conduct a study of the implementation by Member States of their obligations under the international drug control conventions regarding the exchange of information

concerning all aspects of offences established under international legal agreements on the control of the trade in drugs and their precursors;

(g) Request UNODC to carry out a comprehensive analysis and evaluation of the whole range of crime-related challenges and threats stemming from Afghanistan, including terrorist activities, organized crime and the illicit drug trade.

II. Current situation with respect to regional and subregional cooperation

6. At its 1st meeting, held on 16 June, the Meeting considered item 3 of the agenda, entitled “Current situation with respect to regional and subregional cooperation”. For its consideration of the item, the Meeting had before it a document prepared by the Secretariat entitled “Statistical analysis of drug trafficking trends in Europe and worldwide” (UNODC/HONEURO/8/2) and a note by the Secretariat on the current situation with respect to regional and subregional cooperation in South-Eastern and Eastern Europe (UNODC/HONEURO/8/CRP.1).

7. A representative of the Secretariat introduced the item and made an audio-visual presentation providing an overview of trends in the cultivation of illicit drug crops and the illicit production and trafficking of drugs in the region and worldwide. The presentation was based on information provided by Governments to UNODC. Statements were made by the representatives of Germany, Israel, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Switzerland and the United States of America and by the observer for Europol.

8. Demand for illicit drugs, especially cocaine, continued to increase in Europe, and drug trafficking cartels from other regions, in particular Latin America and West Africa, were active in the region. One speaker pointed out that drug traffickers sought not only to profit through the drug trade itself, but also to take advantage of currency exchange rate differences and fluctuations. There was a need for the increased sharing of intelligence in order to combat the activities of well-established criminal organizations. Africa was increasingly being used as a trans-shipment area for cocaine and ephedrine, as well as heroin from Afghanistan, destined for Europe.

9. Several Member States noted that, while there had been a decrease in reported seizures in some countries, several joint operations had resulted in the interception of large quantities of illicit drugs. Effective results had been achieved through good cooperation with European agencies such as MAOC-N and through bilateral cooperation. Spain reported that several major criminal organizations had been dismantled in that country, reducing the amount of cocaine trafficked to the country. It was noted that the level of abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) was stable or slightly increasing in Europe and that pharmaceutical preparations were being diverted for abuse or use in the manufacturing of illicit drugs. Several participants noted that in most countries the street price of cocaine was falling, although purity levels varied. Further information on world trends in this regard were to be made available in the *World Drug Report 2009*.

III. Consideration of topics by working groups

10. At its 2nd to 5th meetings, held on 16-18 June, the Meeting established working groups to examine three issues under item 5 of the agenda, entitled “Consideration of topics by working groups”. The observations made by the working groups and the conclusions reached are presented below. (For the recommendations made by the working groups and adopted by the Meeting, see chapter I above.)

Issue 1. The influence of the Internet and other electronic media on drug trafficking

11. The working group on the Internet and other electronic media on drug trafficking held one meeting, on 16 June. In its consideration of the topic under review, the working group made the following observations:

(a) The use of advanced technologies by criminal groups, such as the encrypted transmission of voice and e-mails, are challenging the ability of law enforcement agencies to gather evidence in their investigation of such illegal operations;

(b) Many law enforcement agencies do not have the capacity to respond to the challenges posed by recovering evidence or data from modern information transmission devices such as mobile telephones and personal computers;

(c) Internet cafes are frequently used by criminals attempting to evade surveillance of their communications by authorities;

(d) The Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime¹ provides States with guidance on legislation drafting and offences.

12. The working group drew the following conclusions:

(a) National legislation is failing to keep pace with and provide support in response to changes and developments in evidence gathering from sources using cybertechnologies;

(b) The Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime has not been universally adopted by Member States of the United Nations;

(c) The convergence of technologies used in common devices in everyday use creates a significant challenge for law enforcement authorities gathering evidence against those persons using such technologies to carry out criminal activities;

(d) In cases where Governments established specialized agencies focused on electronic data recovery to support the investigation of drug trafficking and other criminal offences efforts to gather information on those engaged in such offences and presenting evidence against offenders were more successful;

(e) If authorities are to be successful in investigating offences relating to organized crime and illicit drug trafficking in which the Internet is used as the communication platform, key issues related to the use of computerized

¹ Council of Europe, *European Treaty Series*, No. 185.

communications such as the anonymity that the Internet affords users, the spread of evidence located across multiple foreign jurisdictions and a lack of common definitions for many offences needed to be urgently addressed;

(f) To maintain the integrity and high quality of evidence collection, countries must establish digital evidence standards.

Issue 2. Information: the key to dismantling trafficking groups

13. The working group on information as the key to dismantling trafficking groups held one meeting, on 17 June. In its consideration of the topic under review, the working group made the following observations:

(a) For law enforcement to be effective, it is important that the right information be transmitted to the appropriate agencies and recipients in a timely manner. It is often difficult to encourage law enforcement agencies to share information due to the issue of confidentiality and security concerns;

(b) Centralizing the collection of information by law enforcement agencies can make it easier to access that data from work areas that are separated in terms of both function and physical location. However, the management of large law enforcement databases can present a challenge for effective data mining and security;

(c) Informant programmes should be well managed, using sound and accountable procedures. By adopting a regulated and uniform approach, agencies can preserve the integrity of their programmes. Europol has produced a guide for States members of the European Community on the operation and management of informants;

(d) The use of memorandums of understanding and the posting of liaison officers can open and support dialogue between States for the exchange of drug law enforcement information and operational coordination;

(e) Regional and international organizations such as CARICC, Europol, INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization provide secure and reliable platforms upon which law enforcement agencies can exchange information and operational intelligence;

(f) The use of undercover law enforcement officers to infiltrate criminal networks, in particular those engaged in illicit drug trafficking, is an effective and proactive operational response.

14. The working group drew the following conclusions:

(a) It is important for law enforcement agencies to have an information strategy in order to successfully manage and obtain the maximum benefit from the information that they collect, collate and analyse in the course of daily operations and the investigation of cases;

(b) Undercover law enforcement officers who, through their assignments, become tasked with operating outside their national territories and legal jurisdictions require special support in order to ensure their safety and effectiveness;

(c) Establishing personal contact between professional counterparts in other law enforcement entities remains an important prerequisite for any subsequent exchange of confidential or sensitive information;

(d) When professional information is shared or an enquiry is requested of a partner agency, an acknowledgement and some feedback from the partner agency is an essential element for maintaining cooperation and building stronger ties between agencies and across borders for the future.

Issue 3. Drug trafficking in Europe: trends, strategies and effective responses

15. The working group on trends, strategies and effective responses with respect to drug trafficking in Europe held two meetings, on 17 and 18 June. In its consideration of the topic under review, the working group made the following observations:

(a) The success of law enforcement efforts on the Iberian peninsula has led traffickers to demonstrate their adaptability and resources used to circumvent law enforcement measures, a situation which has led to increased trafficking through West Africa, as well as through the northern Atlantic;

(b) A successful and effective response to transatlantic trafficking has been the collective response by authorities of supporting the MAOC-N operations centre in Lisbon and addressing illicit trafficking through the pooling of information on the movements of suspect persons, vessels, aircraft and companies associated with those individuals. Such a cooperative response builds trust among partners and prevents the duplication of efforts when a syndicate or vessel is unwittingly targeted by more than one authority;

(c) Collecting specific data on operations of traffickers, such as their means of communication, vessel types, trafficking routes and waypoints identified through the analysis of successfully concluded operations, strengthens the planning by law enforcement authorities of future targeting and responses;

(d) Clandestine synthetic drug manufacture, trafficking and abuse are increasing across the region covered by HONLEA, Europe, with authorities reporting increased seizures of ATS and an increase in the dismantling of clandestine laboratory operations. New trends, such as a clear increase in methamphetamine abuse, are emerging;

(e) There have been significant increases in the reports of indoor cultivation of cannabis. The popularity of cannabis as a drug of abuse has increased across the region, as has its price per kilogram on the illicit drug markets. New criminal groups, such as ethnic Vietnamese criminal groups, are emerging as the coordinators of this trade;

(f) The use of non-commercial aircraft to traffic drugs, both across the Atlantic Ocean from Latin America to West Africa and from North Africa to Spain, is on the increase. Poor cooperation in the general aviation industry, which results in the absence of information about the movements of private aircraft, contributes to the difficulties faced by authorities in combating the use of such aircraft for drug trafficking.

16. The working group drew the following conclusions:

(a) Coordinating Atlantic maritime and aviation law enforcement efforts through the MAOC-N centre enables participating authorities to better track suspect vessels, to transit through more jurisdictions and make greater use of techniques

such as controlled deliveries to dismantle a greater part of the structure of the syndicates involved in transatlantic trafficking;

(b) Brief flight times on short distance flights between departure points in North Africa and landing strips in Western Europe challenge drug law enforcement authorities to make effective responses;

(c) The larger profits generated by the increase in cocaine trafficking into Europe has been an enticement for traditional Balkan-route heroin syndicates to make cocaine trafficking part of their illegal activities;

(d) International organizations such as INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization offer their respective law enforcement memberships access to specialized services that directly support operational drug law enforcement. Such services should be used to help countries in different regions to coordinate their drug law enforcement efforts;

(e) The INTERPOL Response Team initiative is providing direct and valuable assistance to police services in the investigation and prosecution of trafficking offences, particularly those offences whose scale and magnitude overstretch the resources of local authorities, such as witnessed recently in West Africa, where authorities were called upon to respond to the interception of a multi-ton cocaine seizure.

IV. Implementation of the recommendations adopted by the Seventh Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Europe

17. At its 1st and 2nd meetings, held on 16 June, the Meeting considered item 4 of the agenda, entitled “Implementation of the recommendations adopted by the Seventh Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Europe”. The Meeting had before it a document prepared by the Secretariat (UNODC/HONEURO/8/3) on the basis of information provided by Governments in response to a questionnaire sent to all States participating in the Seventh Meeting of HONLEA, Europe. The document reflected the replies received from Belarus, Croatia, Cyprus, Germany, Ireland, Israel, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Switzerland as at 29 May 2009. After that date, responses to the questionnaire were submitted by Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Greece, Italy, Norway, Romania and Turkey.

18. The Meeting was informed of actions taken to implement specific recommendations at the national level, results that had been achieved and difficulties that had been encountered. A representative of the Secretariat made a statement regarding the initiative of UNODC to review a number of areas in the context of its organizational reform process, including the effectiveness and frequency of HONLEA meetings in each region. A questionnaire would be sent out to the Member States to obtain their views on the meetings and on what improvements could be made.

19. Statements on the item were made by the representatives of Azerbaijan, Belgium, France, Germany, Israel, Romania, the Russian Federation, Spain and the

United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. The delegation of Armenia exercised its right of reply. The observer for INTERPOL also made a statement.

20. The representative of Romania outlined actions undertaken by that country, including bringing its national legislation in line with European Union standards, the progress made in the use of confidential informants and undercover agents and the establishment of special risk analysis bureaux at all border crossing points.

21. The representative of France informed the Meeting, *inter alia*, that the Central Office for the Control of Illegal Drug Trafficking (OCRITIS) of his country, one of the founding members of HONLEA, had been fulfilling a liaison function. That Office, in addition to receiving requests for controlled deliveries, was the central body for collecting information on drug trafficking. In France, the use of undercover agents and confidential informants was controlled by judicial authorities.

22. The representative of Azerbaijan noted that sanctions for drug trafficking and production should be strengthened and that more detailed information was required regarding the diversion of drugs from licit channels.

23. Several speakers noted with concern the high volume of trafficking of heroin from Afghanistan, and questions were raised in relation to such trafficking, through Central Asia and the Russian Federation, to Europe. It was noted that cartels continued to produce heroin, including using mobile laboratories, in Afghanistan and other countries of the region. Member States needed to cooperate further and through intergovernmental bodies such as HONLEA and the European Union, in order to combat the heroin supply in the Russian Federation and neighbouring States and other parts of Europe.

24. The representative of the Russian Federation noted that more information was required regarding such trafficking to Europe and that the Russian Federation was taking measures to reduce demand for heroin, including by establishing rehabilitation and treatment programmes for opiate abusers. More effective monitoring and technical assistance programmes were required in the countries of Central Asia.

25. Some speakers, highlighting the links between drug trafficking and terrorism, emphasized that a multifaceted approach was required to tackle the problem. One speaker noted that organized criminal groups were loose networks, working together for the duration of a criminal activity, and that, although they usually had a primary area of interest such as drug trafficking, such groups diversified their activities in order to increase their criminal profits.

26. The representative of Germany remarked that, in view of the recommendations on money-laundering, the efforts of the Financial Action Task Force should be taken into consideration so as to avoid duplication of efforts. With reference to document UNODC/HONEURO/8/3, the representative of Germany noted that, although his country was not a founding member of MAOC-N, it recognized the importance of the Centre.

27. Concerning the frequency of the meetings of HONLEA, Europe, one speaker recalled that, at the last meeting of HONLEA, Europe, it had already been proposed that meetings should be held annually in order to keep pace with rapid developments in the fight against drug trafficking. He also emphasized the need for improved coordination of activities in that area. Another speaker supported the view

that the meetings of HONLEA, Europe, should be held more frequently because they were useful for exchanging information and complemented bilateral efforts. Other speakers noted that HONLEA meetings should also assess whether current national legislation was adequate to address issues related to drug trafficking.

V. Organization of the Ninth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Europe

28. At its 6th meeting, held on 18 June, the Meeting considered item 6 of its agenda, entitled “Organization of the Ninth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Europe”. For its consideration of the item, the Meeting had before it a document prepared by the Secretariat (UNODC/HONEURO/8/4). During the discussion of the item, statements were made by the representatives of the Russian Federation and Switzerland.

29. Representatives proposed the following possible topics for discussion by the working groups at the Ninth Meeting of HONLEA, Europe (under item 5 of the provisional agenda): (a) regional cooperation in Europe on combating the illegal trade in heroin from Afghanistan; (b) additional elements for the mechanism for international control of the legal trade in drug precursors; (c) strengthening bilateral cooperation as a decisive factor in combating the illegal drug trade in Europe; and (d) alternative models of demand reduction.

30. The Meeting approved the following draft provisional agenda for the Ninth Meeting of HONLEA, Europe:

1. Election of officers.
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
3. Current situation with respect to regional and subregional cooperation.
4. Implementation of the recommendations adopted by the Eighth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Europe.
5. Consideration of topics by working groups.
6. Organization of the Tenth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Europe.
7. Other business.
8. Adoption of the report of the Ninth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Europe.

VI. Other business

31. At its 6th meeting, held on 18 June, the Meeting considered item 7 of its agenda, entitled “Other business”. During the discussion of the item, a statement was made by the representative of the Russian Federation, who proposed recommendations for the consideration of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its coming session. The Meeting adopted the recommendations, which are contained in

chapter I of the present report. The observer for DrugScope addressed the Meeting concerning the side event held by that non-governmental organization.

VII. Adoption of the report

32. At its 6th meeting, held on 18 June, the Meeting adopted the report of its Eighth Meeting (UNODC/HONEURO/8/L.1 and Add.1-5), including the reports of the working groups and their recommendations.

VIII. Organization of the Meeting

A. Opening and duration of the Meeting

33. The Eighth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Europe, was held in Vienna from 16 to 18 June 2009. The Director of the Division for Operations of UNODC addressed the participants at the opening meeting. The Chairperson of the Eighth Meeting of HONLEA, Europe, also addressed the meeting.

B. Attendance

34. The following States members of HONLEA, Europe, were represented: Albania, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Lithuania, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States.

35. Tunisia was represented by an observer.

36. DrugScope, Europol and INTERPOL were also represented by observers.

37. UNODC served as the secretariat of the Meeting.

C. Election of officers

38. At its 1st meeting, on 16 June, the Eighth Meeting elected the following officers:

<i>Chairperson:</i>	Andrés Perez (Spain)
<i>First Vice-Chairperson:</i>	Lidija Vugrinec (Croatia)
<i>Second Vice-Chairperson:</i>	Sebastiano Vitali (Italy)
<i>Rapporteur:</i>	Simona Marin (Romania)

D. Adoption of the agenda

39. Also at its 1st meeting, the Eighth Meeting adopted the following agenda:
1. Election of officers.
 2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.
 3. Current situation with respect to regional and subregional cooperation.
 4. Implementation of the recommendations adopted by the Seventh Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Europe.
 5. Consideration of topics by working groups.
 6. Organization of the Ninth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Europe.
 7. Other business.
 8. Adoption of the report of the Eighth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Europe.

E. Documentation

40. The documents before the Eighth Meeting of HONLEA, Europe, are listed in the annex to the present report.

IX. Closure of the Meeting

41. Closing statements were made by the Chairperson of the Eighth Meeting and a representative of the Secretariat.

Annex

List of documents before the Eighth Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Europe

<i>Document number</i>	<i>Agenda item</i>	<i>Title or description</i>
UNODC/HONEURO/8/1	2	Provisional agenda and annotations
UNODC/HONEURO/8/2	3	Statistical analysis of drug trafficking trends in Europe and worldwide
UNODC/HONEURO/8/3	4	Implementation of the recommendations adopted by the Seventh Meeting of Heads of National Drug Law Enforcement Agencies, Europe
UNODC/HONEURO/8/4	6	Organization of the Ninth Meeting of HONLEA, Europe
UNODC/HONEURO/8/L.1 and Add.1-5	8	Draft report
UNODC/HONEURO/8/CRP.1	3	Current situation with respect to regional and subregional cooperation in South-Eastern and Eastern Europe
UNODC/HONEURO/8/CRP.2-16	3	Country reports