



**CONFERENCE ON DRUG ROUTES
FROM CENTRAL ASIA TO EUROPE
(Paris, May 21-22 2003)**

Paris Statement

Following a French initiative, the Foreign Ministers of 55 countries seriously affected by the traffic of opium and heroin produced in Afghanistan and originating from Central and South-west Asia met in Paris on May 22nd. Opened by the President of the French Republic, their work, prepared by senior officials responsible in their countries for fighting trafficking and the related social and health aspects, dealt with knowledge of drug routes, the economic impact of this traffic, public health issues and international co-operation.

Ministers stressed that it was crucial to find a comprehensive, balanced and coordinated national and international response to the threat that this scourge represents for all their societies. In this Paris Pact, the Ministers agree to combine their wills and their countries' efforts to step up national capabilities, develop regional partnerships and hence tackle all the aspects of this problem. This is an international security imperative.

1) Observations following the Ministers' debate

1.1 The efforts for reconstruction in Afghanistan, in particular the eradication of poppy cultures and the fight against drugs, undertaken by the international community, the United Kingdom, Germany and Italy in particular, are being pursued. Their effects will be felt in the long-term. The Ministers took note of the communication by Mr. Abdullah, Foreign Minister of Afghanistan, and the setting up of the National Drugs Commission. They support the determination and the efforts of the Afghan authorities to ensure that the future of millions of Afghans does not depend on the production of illicit substances prohibited by the United Nations conventions to which Afghanistan is a signatory.

1.2 According to studies supplied by the United Nations, international organizations and the various specialist agencies, opium and heroin consumption has sharply increased along the drug trafficking routes, and numerous new routes have appeared. All countries are now both markets for consumption and relays for trafficking routes. Heroin consumption remains globally stable in Western European countries and is increasing rapidly across the rest of Europe and Eurasia, causing major problems for society. The work of the conference has highlighted the significant impact of drug trafficking and consumption and the social damage that results from it such as increased crime, insecurity and violence, and the weakening of State structures due to corruption.

1.3 The specific problem posed by trafficking of heroin produced in Afghanistan should be included within the framework of the principles set by the United Nations, in particular the 20th Special Session of the General Assembly in 1998, which remain the guidelines for fighting drug abuse. These include, among others: shared responsibility between producer and consumer countries, the need to consider the drug problem as an integral part of development and human rights policies and the concomitant decrease in supply and demand. The participating countries reasserted their commitment to respecting the 1961 Convention on Narcotic Drugs and its 1972 Protocol, the 1970 Convention on Psychotropic Substances, the 1988 Vienna Convention against the Illicit Traffic of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances and the 2000 Palermo Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The joint ministerial declaration established following the 46th session of the Narcotics Commission is also worthy of mention. The central role of the United Nations was reasserted and in particular that of the ODC, whose vocation is to implement, for the United Nations, major orientations in international policy to fight drugs and technical assistance programmes for countries that request them. In addition, the UNDP, through its global action for development, also contributes to the fight against drug trafficking.

1.4 Particular attention was paid to the health aspects of this problem with the development of drug addiction and diseases spread by intravenous injection such as HIV-AIDS and hepatitis. The information available on drug addiction and communicable diseases in most of the participating countries indicates worrying trends that should provide an incentive for all governments to consider drug abuse as an integral part of public health policies and to deal with it at a regional level. In some regions, the HIV virus is spreading at an alarming rate and requires sweeping measures to prevent communicable diseases from spreading across the population. The work of the conference highlighted the need to reinforce reduction in demand.

1.5 The European Union is one of the main players in the fight against drugs and international organized crime. This is a strong commitment that the Convention's work on the draft constitutional treaty should be able to reflect. Its action extends both to the specific field of the fight against drugs, with the 2000-

2004 Action Plan, and to a wider area, with the Regional Action Plans, set up in partnership with countries in the most sensitive areas of the routes, such as Central Asia or the Balkans. Technical assistance programmes contribute to the implementation of these Action Plans. The EU also intervenes at the source of the problem, development, as in Afghanistan, where it is playing a central role, and is undertaking efforts to provide partner countries with the means to carry out epidemiologic assessments of the drugs situation in order for them to build their own policies. Within the framework of its existing technical assistance programmes, and in close co-operation with the competent technical experts, the European Union has undertaken to set up consistent information exchange networks regarding preventive as well as law enforcement aspects of the fight against drugs.

1.6 All countries have legislation to fight trafficking in narcotics, but efforts should be made to harmonize this to fill loopholes and resolve the incompatibilities that are obstacles to international co-operation and the fight against corruption.

1.7 It was considered that the question of chemical precursors was not being taken seriously enough, despite the fact that the activities of clandestine laboratories and heroin production depend on them. Investigations should systematically be carried out to identify the sources and where misappropriation of licit products occurs. The results should be shared with the source and transit countries. The INCB has a vital central role to play in implementing effective policies for controlling chemical precursors.

1.8 The seminars organized this year by the Greek Presidency of the European Union, and in Tashkent by the OSCE with a view to the Economic Forum that is currently being held in Prague under the Dutch Presidency are proof of strong international mobilization in this area. The fight against drug trafficking cannot be successful unless the state of law is consolidated globally, and the efforts of the OSCE in this direction are to be encouraged.

II) Conclusions of the Presidency

2.1 The international community must reassert its commitment in Afghanistan and in particular, provide its wholehearted support to the National Drugs Commission to implement the next National Strategic Plan against drugs and to encourage realistic action aimed at promoting sustainable alternative development.

2.2 In the countries affected by the drug routes, strategies to fight drug trafficking and drug addiction should correspond to a balanced approach between repression of traffickers, prevention of drug addiction and treatment of drug addicts, in compliance with the United Nations recommendations. It would appear indispensable that each country should have a single lead agency to co-

ordinate national policy, including the health and education sectors, police administration, customs and border guards.

2.3 The health aspects of drug use, and heroin use in particular, should be a priority in policies implemented by States. Information campaigns aimed at young people should be systematically carried out in schools and teaching establishments and sports centres as well as in the principal media to alert them to the dangers of drugs and of heroin in particular. The prohibition messages should be worded so that they do not encourage increased risks by marginalizing or stigmatizing drug addicts.

Demand reduction policies should be put in place, generally comprising medical care, risk reduction measures and possibly substitution treatment, even if there is no international consensus about this type of therapy.

2.4 Due to the cross-border spread of diseases linked to intravenous drug use, joint regional awareness campaigns by the ODC and the WHO should be undertaken. Based on the experience acquired by the EMCDDA, regional drug addiction monitoring centres could contribute to better knowledge of the impact on health of the use of illicit drugs with the help of reliable epidemiologic surveys, and could assist in setting up prevention, risk reduction and addict care policies, which would require additional support from donor organizations. Improved sharing of experiences, particularly at regional levels, is desirable. The World Health Organization and UNAIDS have a particular role to play in attaining this goal.

2.5 The pilot role of the ODC in the fight against illicit drugs and drug addiction should be reinforced. Better synergy between the various initiatives is indispensable, and the ODC should ensure the consistency of the policies implemented. In particular, it appears desirable that the actions undertaken in particular by the ODC, the European Union and the OSCE aimed at Eastern Europe, the Caucasus, the CIS and South-west Asia should mutually complement and reinforce one another. In order to avoid duplicate projects, it appears necessary to reactivate a "clearing house" mechanism grouping together all technical assistance projects for the countries concerned that are part of the ODC's mandate. The ODC should in particular encourage States to harmonize their legislation to facilitate simultaneous action in several countries and mutual legal assistance. The ODC's initiative to create a regional co-operation structure between the Central Asian countries should be supported.

2.6 From an operational point of view, States should possess a central body that receives all intelligence in order to undertake effective action against trafficking networks. Centralization of information would also facilitate international and bilateral co-operation and co-operation via Interpol. All countries should have well-equipped and operational Interpol NCBs. The network of liaison and intelligence bureaus set up by the World Customs

Organization should be able to count on more dynamic participation of customs administrations in its operations.

2.7 To strengthen the fight against drug and chemical precursor trafficking, Interpol, Europol and the ODC, based on experiments carried out in certain countries, could propose an information exchange mechanism based on a centralized database. Exchange of technical data on chemical analyses of seized substances would enable investigators to better identify the drug routes and to overcome the difficulties of sending samples.⁴

2.8 The fight against the laundering of money from criminal activities or corruption should be strengthened. This would enable any sources of terrorism financing to be uncovered. All States should possess legislation that complies with international standards and a financial intelligence unit. Regional groups linked to the FATF could be created to this end, in particular between countries in Central Asia. International co-operation is a sine qua non for the stamping out of corruption. This is why mobilization of participants is necessary so that the current negotiations on a United Nations Convention against corruption results in an operational instrument that is balanced and effective, and legally binding.



International action against drug trafficking must be founded on a wide consensus as it engages the responsibility of the countries affected. Each country has a role to play in fighting traffic within and outside its borders, and each country must also assume its responsibilities to prevent the spread of communicable diseases, a major threat to the 21st century, which, like crime, do not stop at national borders. Action must be based on analyses and accurate assessment of all the phenomena to be taken into account so that the solutions proposed correspond to the real problems. States must be able to count on efficient, transparent and democratic institutions that enforce the rule of law.

France would like to thank all conference participants, and will communicate the results of their work to the international community.

This conference has shown that we are living in an era of global interdependency and that, because of this, the international community must be able to mobilize and engage in constructive dialogue between regions with different cultures, religions and preoccupations with a common goal - making the world of tomorrow a better place through respect for clear international rules based on solidarity and the respect for the law./.