

The Commission adopts a new Drugs Action Plan for 2005-2008

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The European Commission has adopted and sent to the Council and the European Parliament a EU Drugs Action Plan for 2005-2008 whose main aim is to significantly reduce the prevalence of drug use among the Unions population and to reduce the social harm and health damage caused in our countries by the use of and trade in illicit drugs.

Vice-President of the Commission Franco Frattini, responsible for Justice, Freedom and Security said :The Union has opted for the most effective way of tackling the drugs phenomenon: a comprehensive multidisciplinary approach which considers the issue from every angle: demand reduction, supply reduction, fight against illicit trafficking and international action.

The current drug situation in Europe is described in the Annual Report 2004 published by the European Monitoring Centre for Drug Addiction (EMCDDA). The report shows, among other things:

- increasing numbers demanding treatment for cocaine use;
- signs of heavy cannabis use among teenagers;
- increase in ecstasy consumption;
- modest but significant decline in drug-related deaths;
- HIV/Aids decline in some countries, with the risk of epidemic spread remaining high.

In December 2004 the European Council endorsed the EU Drug Strategy (2005-2012) which sets the framework, objectives and priorities for two consecutive four-year Action Plans to be brought forward by the Commission.

According to a Eurobarometer survey issued in 2002 71% of Europeans believe that the decisions on drugs should be taken by the EU. In view of tackling this situation the Action Plan 2005-2008 should provide a guide to all stakeholders in the EU when setting priorities in the drugs area.

The Action Plan follows the structure and the objectives of the new Strategy and focuses on concrete results in specific priority areas.

The Action Plan contains a distribution of responsibilities and schedules for their implementation. Clear and measurable assessment tools and indicators have been introduced for each action proposed, to enable proper evaluation. The Commission will carry out a continuous and overall evaluation of the measures of the Action Plan, with the support of the EMCDDA and Europol.

The Action Plan will be discussed in the Councils Horizontal Group on Drugs, in view of its endorsement by the European Council during the first half of 2005.

For more information go to

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