

## **SOCA progressing in right direction but too early to judge overall success**

**18 May 2007**

**DrugScope responded today to the publication of the first annual report of the Serious and Organised Crime Agency (SOCA).**

Martin Barnes, chief executive of DrugScope, said:

"Reading the text of the SOCA annual report rather than the accompanying press release reveals a more objective and measured assessment of the Agency's first year.

"SOCA has had some notable successes with regards to the disruption of Class A drug trafficking both into Europe and specifically into this country.

"However, the SOCA report acknowledges that these disruptions are probably temporary and that at this point it is too soon to expect to see evidence of the dislocation of criminal markets in the UK.

"One of SOCA's overriding aims is to reduce the underlying harms caused by serious and organised crime. It is too soon to judge the impact of the organisation in this objective a factor again acknowledged by the report itself.

"Over time SOCA will need to devise effective and transparent indicators to demonstrate how its activities are impacting on the harms caused to UK individuals and communities by drugs. There should be no let up in efforts to tackle the demand for drugs, through prevention, education and drug treatment."

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