Joint press release
of the Council of the EU and the European Commission

Fight against illicit drugs: EU signs new agreement with Russia

Today the EU and Russia completed signature of a new cooperation agreement on the control of drug precursors, at the EU-Russia Summit in Yekaterinburg.

The agreement was signed earlier on behalf of the EU by the Irish Presidency of the Council in Brussels and at the Summit by the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the Commission Catherine Ashton, while Director of the Federal Narcotics Service Viktor Ivanov signed for the Russian Federation.

The agreement will strengthen co-operation between the EU and Russia in preventing drug precursors from being trafficked for the manufacture of illegal drugs. It will enable competent authorities to exchange more practical, technical and scientific information on these chemicals, and to ensure that they are only used for legitimate purposes.

The EU already has 11 such agreements with other third countries.

Algirdas Šemeta, Commissioner responsible for Customs, said: "Customs has the dual responsibility of keeping our society safe, while facilitating trade for legitimate businesses. Controlling drug precursors is a prime example of how this is applied. For international threats, like narcotics trafficking, international cooperation is the best defence. Therefore, I warmly welcome today's EU-Russia agreement to work hand-in-hand in preventing drug precursors from being used to make illegal drugs."
Background

Drug precursors are chemicals that are primarily used for the legitimate production of a wide range of products such as pharmaceuticals, perfumes, plastics, and cosmetics. However, they can also be misused for the production of illicit drugs such as methamphetamines, heroin or cocaine.

The EU has already concluded bilateral agreements on drug precursors with Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Venezuela, Mexico, United States, Chile, Turkey and China. These agreements provide for co-operation in trade monitoring and mutual administrative assistance (exchange of information).

The agreement fits in the wider framework of the 1988 United Nations Convention on Narcotic Drugs to which both the EU and the Russian Federation are parties.

It covers the 23 scheduled substances internationally controlled under the 1988 UN Convention and also establishes cooperation on controlling non-scheduled substances used for the illicit manufacture of drugs.

Useful Links

For more details on drug precursors see:
http://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/customs/customs_controls/drugs_precursors/index_en.htm