

European Commission – External Relations The EU’s relations with Latin America

COMBATING ILLICIT DRUGS IN LATIN AMERICA

I. The EC approach in Latin America

Following the priorities identified by the various strategies, Action Plans, Declarations and Agreements, actions are three-fold:

- Participation in the promotion of a balanced approach to the illicit drugs problem in international fora:

The Commission participates in political dialogue aiming at the promotion, co-operation and co-ordination on policy in Latin America with other donors (specialised meetings between the EU-Troika and the US and Canada, the meetings of the Dublin Group, UN Major Donors Group) as well as in fora bringing together donors and Latin American partners (Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the [Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission](#) and the [Mini Dublin Group](#) meetings)

- Assisting LA to become more effective in combating the problem of illicit drugs

Through technical assistance and the support of exchange of experience and know-how, the EC assists the countries of Latin America in areas such as data collection, demand reduction, alternative development and many other areas of supply reduction (precursor control, interdiction, police and judicial co-operation)

- Tackling the issue of drug trafficking through the support of regional and intraregional co-operation along particular drug routes from Latin America to Europe

Here, EC assistance is focussed on support to foster intra- as well as inter-regional co-operation among law enforcement agencies involved in the control of cross-border drug trafficking. With [EUROPOL](#) and [EUROJUST](#), the EU has set-up an internal law enforcement co-operation and co-ordination mechanism that can serve as valuable example for experience exchange and transfer of know-how in this area.

II. EU anti-drugs cooperation projects in the LAC region

About half of the EU efforts in the region remain in the area of **alternative development**, a large part of which is funded by the Commission. Good examples of cooperation in this area at bilateral level are the three ‘peace laboratories’ the Commission is supporting in Colombia, or the number of alternative development projects in place in Bolivia, covering different regions and addressing specific needs for the stimulation of different ‘alternative sectors’, such as the improvement of agricultural production, social

infrastructure as well as the facilitation and promotion of small farmers' ownership of land.

Next in importance are initiatives in the area of **demand reduction**, including harm reduction in which both Members States and the Commission are active. Included here is the first ever meeting of EU-LAC Drugs Monitoring Centres that took place in Caracas in November 2005 as well as several inter-regional projects, the most novel of which is a city partnerships scheme, implemented by CICAD.

In battling the **supply** of illicit drugs the EC has financed important projects on precursor chemicals in the Andean Community (PRECAN). Another example of a supply reduction initiative would be the project supporting the social control of coca production – a project intended to exert social pressure and control over the production of coca leaves.

While most of the funding is of a bi-lateral nature there are some regional initiatives of particular interest. For example in the Andean region, a new EC-financed regional initiative PRADI-CAN (Programa Anti-Drogas Ilícitas en la CAN) aims to assist the four countries of the Andean Community in their fight against illicit drugs, contributing to the implementation of the Andean Plan for the Fight against Illicit Drugs and Related Crimes and the Andean Strategy for Alternative Development.

Some of the funding available covers several regions. Increasing flows of cocaine are reaching Europe from Latin America through the Caribbean and Western Africa. Organised crime that controls cocaine trafficking and related illicit activities along this route, poses serious security threats. These threats are of a trans-regional nature and need to be tackled as such. The Instrument for Stability will be used to address these threats along the entire cocaine route by promoting capacity building and cooperation amongst these regions.

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