

# Drug traffic from Afghanistan as a threat to European security

Author(s): Parliamentary Assembly

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1. Narcotic drugs constitute one of the major challenges to modern societies. Drug abuse destroys human health and dignity, causes the loss of thousands of lives in Europe and brings sorrow and despair to many individuals and their families.
2. Drug trafficking and sales disrupt public order, fuel violent crime, undermine the economy, seek to corrupt, infiltrate and control State institutions and destroy social fabrics. The drugs problem is therefore a major threat to security, social cohesion and the rule of law.
3. Moreover, the proceeds from the illicit drugs trade are used to finance international criminal and terrorist networks, as well as armed insurgent activities. Drugs are therefore also a serious threat to international peace, stability and security.
4. Heroin and other opiates are the most harmful drugs used in Europe, and are the cause of three quarters of drug-related deaths.
5. Afghanistan is by far the main source of heroin and other opiates consumed in the Council of Europe member States. Europe, including Russia, is the main target market for opiates from Afghanistan.
6. Despite many solemn declarations over the last few years, the international community has so far failed to stop the flow of heroin from Afghanistan. Europe continues to pay a high price for this failure. Dozens of tons of heroin reach Europe every year, and kill thousands of people.
7. The Parliamentary Assembly deems it of utmost importance to mobilise political support in Council of Europe member, observer and partner States for a more active and efficient international co-operation in:
  - 7.1. combating poppy cultivation and the production of heroin and other opiates in Afghanistan;
  - 7.2. dismantling the network of traffic of opiates from Afghanistan to Europe, as well as the chains of distribution in Europe;
  - 7.3. disrupting the channels of diversion and smuggling of chemical precursors;
  - 7.4. combating the laundering and re-injection into criminal and terrorist activities of the proceeds of the illicit drugs trade.
8. The forthcoming withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) from Afghanistan by 2014 makes this task even more imperative.
9. With this in view, the Assembly calls on the parliaments of Council of Europe member, observer and partner States to urge their governments:
  - 9.1. as regards Afghanistan, to:
    - 9.1.1. make anti-drugs policy a priority in programmes of co-operation with, and of assistance to, the Afghan Government;
    - 9.1.2. strengthen Afghan law-enforcement agencies with a view to disrupting channels of drug traffic at source, with particular emphasis on combating corruption;
    - 9.1.3. increase support for the capacity building of law-enforcement agencies in Afghanistan, and to step up training programmes for Afghan law-enforcement staff;

9.1.4. step up joint operations with the relevant Afghan law-enforcement agencies focusing on clandestine heroin-producing laboratories and organised criminal groups involved in the drugs trade, and to combine them with increased efforts aimed at integrated rural development, building infrastructure and supporting farmers engaged in alternative production;

9.1.5. assist Afghanistan in developing its economy and diversifying agriculture so as to reduce dependence on revenues from the illicit drugs trade, in line with the Lima Declaration and the International Guiding Principles on Alternative Development (November 2012);

9.1.6. provide full support to, and co-operate effectively in the framework of, the “Paris Pact Initiative” aimed at combating opiates originating from Afghanistan;

9.2. as regards the neighbouring countries, to:

9.2.1. increase support for the capacity building of law-enforcement agencies of the countries of central Asia, and step up training programmes for central Asian law-enforcement personnel;

9.2.2. promote further anti-drugs co-operation at the regional level, involving the countries of central Asia, Iran, Pakistan, India and China, as well as existing co-ordination and co-operation frameworks;

9.3. to create conditions, by concluding specific agreements as appropriate, for enhanced operational co-operation between law-enforcement agencies, including information and intelligence sharing, exchange of best practice and joint investigations;

9.4. to step up international co-operation against the diversion of drug precursors, and consider ways to tighten the monitoring of the acetic anhydride (AA) trade by establishing databases of, and sharing information on, licit AA manufacturers, traders and end-users;

9.5. to step up co-operation as regards the confiscation and recovery of assets from the illicit drugs trade.

10. The Assembly strongly encourages Council of Europe member States to sign and ratify, if they have not already done so, and non-member States to accede to, the Council of Europe Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism (CETS No. 198).

11. The Assembly calls on member States to intensify co-operation in countering the trafficking of drugs from, and of drug precursors to, Afghanistan, as well as the laundering of proceeds from the illicit drugs trade, in the framework of the relevant Council of Europe mechanisms, such as the Co-operation Group to Combat Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in Drugs (the Pompidou Group), the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) and the Committee of Experts on the Evaluation of Anti-Money Laundering Measures and the Financing of Terrorism (MONEYVAL).

12. Finally, the Assembly underlines the importance of combining policing measures against illegal drug trafficking and distribution with efforts aimed at drug demand reduction, at social rehabilitation of drug users – who at the same time are often drug dealers – and at improving social conditions which favour drug use. In this context, the Assembly believes that any attempts to legalise the use of narcotic drugs run counter to these objectives and should therefore be rejected.