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NOTE

From: Presidency

To: Horizontal Working Party on Drugs

Subject: Presidency note - Destruction of seized drugs and other proceeds,
instrumentalities or property of crime

Delegations will find attached the Presidency note summarising the discussions on the destruction of seized drugs and other proceeds, instrumentalities or property of crime.

**NOTE FROM THE PRESIDENCY ON DESTRUCTION OF SEIZED DRUGS AND OTHER
PROCEEDS, INSTRUMENTALITIES OR PROPERTY OF CRIME**

This is a priority under the Spanish Presidency, about which there have been several thematic debates on which this summary note is based.

The police pressure exerted on drug trafficking generates seizures of drugs and other goods used in the production or transport of drugs. The large quantities and volumes of these substances and assets cause management problems in terms of storage and their subsequent destruction, particularly in Highly Impacted European Narcotics Areas (HIENAs).

Understanding that these difficulties are common throughout the European Union, the Presidency presented this priority through a concept note¹ in line with the EU Drugs Strategy 2021-2025² and its Action Plan 2021-2025³ with the aim of raising awareness of all the aspects of this problem and exchanging good practices.

A picture of the situation in the European Union emerged from the responses of several Member States to the questions raised in the introductory concept note, presentations by various experts and rich discussions.

It highlighted the difficulties of storing dozens of tonnes of drugs and thousands of boats, vehicles, tools and assets used in indoor plantations, for example lighting, refrigeration or heating elements. All these products have to be stored, usually in police or judicial premises, until their destruction is authorised. This takes up a large amount of space and generates health, safety and even environmental problems due to their degradation in the case of herbaceous substances such as cannabis, which rots soon after being cut. No less worrying are the security problems caused by the storage of such large quantities of drugs, which have to be permanently guarded by security forces, taking away manpower from investigation and proactive surveillance.

¹ 13990/23 - Concept Note

² EU Drugs Strategy (2021-2025) (OJ C 1021 of 24.3.2021, p. 1) - Strategic priority 4

³ EU Drugs Action Plan (2021-2025) (OJ C272 of 8.7.2021, p. 2) - Action 24

Drugs are destroyed using incineration in virtually all Member States, which in turn poses major logistical challenges in terms of the need to contract suitable ovens for this task, in addition to the transport and storage of the drugs. Another problem is the costs incurred by Member States that are more affected by drug trafficking or are more effective in combating it. Finding new, more efficient and less environmentally damaging methods of destroying drugs is a challenge for the future.

With regard to other assets related to drug trafficking, such as vessels, vehicles, objects used in the production or transport of the drugs, and precursors, the tendency is to avoid destroying them. With proper management, these goods can be directed towards reuse, recycling and reintroduction into the legal market, providing measures are put in place to prevent them falling back into the hands of drug traffickers.

There is undoubtedly much work to be done in the face of an increasingly changing and multifaceted threat, with consequences that are evident in various areas and cause damage to states and society in general. The incoming Presidencies are invited to continue the work done and to connect it with their own priorities aimed at reducing drug supply in the European Union.