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Fight against Drug Trafficking and Organised Crime in the European Union
and Latin America

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1. INTRODUCTION

The drug problem represents a complex interplay between developed northern hemisphere states and the producer and transit states of the developing south. In the drugs trade, developing countries are the suppliers of the lucrative finished products to the consumers of the developed northern countries, mainly the US and Europe. 2009 marked 100 years of international drug control and there have recently been a number of encouraging developments in this issue according to the World Drug report 2010¹. However, this report recognizes that the recent successes must be considered in the context of the long-term challenge.

Most of the long-distance trafficking involves cocaine and heroin, although some cannabis resin and ecstasy are also smuggled between regions. Criminal entrepreneurs have understood that globalisation allows them to implement multinational business strategies, making impressive industrial, financial, transportations, intelligence and communications networks on an international scale. In this context, the trans-national criminal organisations (TCOs), particularly those linked to drug trafficking began to be considered as serious security threats in the post-Cold War era. As a matter of fact, the TCOs can wield significant influence over political and economic institutions at all levels throughout the producers and also the transit countries. Furthermore, the linkage between terrorist groups and the TCOs is considered to have the potential to be a greater threat to people, states and the international community after the terrorist attacks of September 2001. The marriage of convenience between the TCOs and insurgency groups can strengthen the operations of both through the mutual support of financial resources and military skills.

Concerning consumption the UNODC estimates that between 155 and 250 million people (3.5 to 5.7% of the world population aged 15-64) used illicit substances at least once in 2008. At the core of drug consumption lies the problem of drug addicts, those who inject drugs and/or are considered dependent, facing serious social and health consequences as a result. Based on the global estimates of the number of cannabis, opiate, cocaine and ATS users, it is estimated that there were between 16 and 38 million problem drug users in the world in 2008. There are an estimated 15-19.3 million annual cocaine users (annual prevalence of 0.3% to 0.4%) in the world. North America (2%), Oceania (1.4% to 1.7%) and Western Europe (1.5%) are the regions with the highest prevalence rates.

Cocaine trafficking and use is rapidly expanding in Latin America jeopardizing political and economic stability and the undermining all the efforts to anchor democracy in the region. In this fight, Latin America is the battleground, not only because this phenomenon is particularly hitting the poorest countries in the region but also because "the biggest threat to public safety comes from drug trafficking and the violence perpetrated by organized crime"². Moreover, the Latin American TCOs have developed vast networks with Italian and Russian mafias connecting different parts of the world. The created international networks make it possible

¹ Published by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

² Antonio Maria Costa, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations, appointed in May 2002 to the positions of Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and Director-General of the United Nations Office in Vienna (UNOV).

<http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/about-unodc/speeches/2008-10-10.html>

to distribute illicit commodities on a world-wide basis. What is more alarming, some key aspects have traditionally been neglected in the battle against international drug trafficking, such as the key role played by the demand side, the pernicious effects of the "one size fits all" policies or the lack of a shared vision of the problem. New approaches and a multidimensional analysis should be envisaged to tackle the problem, acknowledging the multi-fold reality of the producing, demanding and transit countries.

2. THE ANDEAN REGION AND COCAINE PRODUCTION

The cultivation and the use of coca in the Andes date back to more than four thousand years. Coca leaves were an important element in the social and religious organization of the region's Pre-Colombian civilizations. It was (and remains today) an important element in the diet of indigenous highlanders, serving to suppress hunger, relieve altitude sickness and provide supplemental nutrition. The importance of the cocaine industry to the region nowadays is linked to long-term poverty and under-development. Hundreds of thousands of impoverished and landless peasants have moved to take advantage of the opportunities offered by coca.

Across the Andean region, total area under coca cultivation is well below levels recorded in the 1990s. Government programmes, including US-funded eradication campaigns (i.e. "Plan Colombia" and the Andean Counterdrug Initiative) and enhanced interdiction schemes, have been credited for lowering production levels.

However, long-term decreases in production mask more troubling trends in coca cultivation. The Andean region remains not only an increasing producer of the raw materials for cocaine, but also the site of a more resilient and potent industry.

At cultivation level, the aggressive aerial eradication programme, particularly in Southern Colombia, has caused farmers to relocate crops to more remote areas throughout the region often where coca previously was not grown. This has made it more difficult for crop dusters to identify and eradicate illicit fields.

Also the linkages between suppliers in the Andes and traffickers elsewhere in the region have grown more complex in recent years which have exacerbated law enforcement agency difficulties in dismantling international business operations.

Stricter policies on money transfer and bank reporting since September 11, 2001 have forced traffickers to adopt more convoluted schemes to move money. Instead of laundering massive sums, smugglers use multiple broker networks that can manage smaller quantities, which has increased trafficker transaction costs.

The key premise in the illegal drug trade equation is that no policies can be feasible without tackling the grass-root problems lying in the producers' side. Thus, to accomplish this task, a thorough understanding of several factors has to be achieved beforehand: the scale of the drug crops and the cocaine production in the different areas; the different socio-economic circumstances and alternatives in every producing region/country; the differentiated nature and modus operandi of the transnational networks. As we can see in the following disclosure, the problem is mainly focused in three key countries: Colombia, Peru and Bolivia.

2.1 Colombia

Despite the UN praise for Colombia's commitment to fighting production and trafficking in the past decade¹, Colombia still remains the world's major cocaine producing country; its 610 tons in 2007 are 62% of the global total² (see Annex 1). This pattern is evident with the levels of coca cultivation, increased by a quarter (27%) in 2007. Coca leaf and cocaine production were highly concentrated: ten municipalities accounted for almost half of all cocaine production (288 metric tons) and for one third of the cultivation (35,000 hectares). Moreover, as Mr. Costa pointed out "in Colombia [...] the regions where most coca is grown are under the control of insurgents".

The complexity of the Colombian case results from the linkage between the producers and the FARCS. With dominant Colombian cartels of the 1980s dismantled, traffickers have developed relations with a number of suppliers, many of which are offshoots of Colombian guerrilla and paramilitary groups.

2.2 Peru

Peru remains the second largest coca-cultivating country (see Annex 2), with 36% of global leaf production in 2008. After a slight crop reduction to 48,200 hectares in 2006, cultivation increased to 56,100 hectares in 2008. What is more alarming, Peru's capacity to supply cocaine internationally is likely to increase in the coming years. The cocaine production potential could be more than the estimated 280 tons of 2007 due to inaccurate estimations of the cultivated area.

2.3 Bolivia

Bolivia is currently the world's third largest producer of cocaine (see Annex 3), primarily supplying Europe and other markets in South America. According to the United Nations, coca cultivation in Bolivia increased from 23,600 hectares in 2003 to 27,500 hectares in 2006, and over the same period Bolivia's estimated potential cocaine production increased from 100 metric tons to 115 metric tons. After dramatically reducing coca crops to 14,000 hectares thanks to forced manual eradication under Plan Dignidad³, Bolivia has witnessed a steady increase⁴. President Evo Morales continues to pursue his policy of "zero cocaine but not zero coca" seeking to industrialize the coca crop and increase legal coca cultivation. These policies are in violation of existing Bolivian law and the 1998 UN Drug Convention, and they threaten to counteract the progress Bolivia has made in eradication and interdiction. The Bolivian Government keeps sending misleading messages to the international community in this aspect. Bolivia's Anti-Narcotics Law 1008 permits the legal cultivation of 12,000 hectares of the coca crop, which is traditionally consumed by Bolivia's farmers to fend off hunger and help them work at high altitudes. La Paz has also suspended any collaboration with the

¹ Record aerial and manual eradication levels, impressive cocaine seizure numbers, interception of imported precursor chemicals, destruction of processing laboratories and action against drug traffickers and armed groups.

² "Latin American drugs: losing the fight" Latin America Report N°25 –14 March 2008, International Crisis Group & UNODC, World Drug Report 2008

³ Beginning in 1998, this country's "Plan Dignidad" led to the almost complete eradication of coca production in the Chapare Valley, once known as the world's second largest coca producing region

⁴ Coca, Drugs and Social Protest in Bolivia and Peru, Latin America Report N°12, 3 March 2005

United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) under accusations of "espionage and of financing *criminal groups* trying to undermine his government"¹.

3. THE TRANSIT COUNTRIES

As important as the producing countries should be the treatment granted to transit countries, not only because of the fact they are providing a highway to the demanding markets in Europe and US, but also considering the spill-over effect of drug trafficking and its associated violence in their domestic societies.

3.1 Mexico

Reliable data on how much cocaine enters Mexico from South American sources and Central American transit countries is unavailable. However, it is generally agreed that in 2007 close to 90 % of all cocaine that entered the U.S. came through Mexico.

In order to explore the rich market of the drug transit, several cartels appeared in Mexico. There are two cartel wars currently raging in Mexico that have combined to produce record levels of violence in 2009. The first war is the struggle between the government of Mexico and the drug cartels. The second, a parallel war, is the fight among the various cartels as they compete for control of lucrative supply routes. Shortly after his inauguration in December 2006, President Felipe Calderon launched an all-out effort to target the cartels, which he viewed as a major threat to Mexico's security and stability. Over the past three years, the Calderon administration's efforts have weakened and fragmented some of the major cartels (namely the Gulf and Sinaloa cartels), but this government progress has upset the balance of power among the cartels, which has resulted in increased violence. Many important steps should be taken by the Mexican society to help address the country's security crisis. However, lack of economic opportunity and distrust of authorities helps foster poor legal compliance and low cooperation with, and support for, government efforts.

3.2 Central America

The countries in Central America are considered a natural conduit for the illicit activities of drug trafficking organizations (DTOs) which have grown in size and strengthened over the last decade weakening the states' abilities to maintain public security. All seven Central American countries are actively used by major DTOs to smuggle drugs into the United States. Law enforcement officials in many parts of Central America are struggling to contain violence in urban centres and key trafficking points. Moreover, the development of more diffuse smuggling routes is likely to have expanded the corruptive influence of narcotics trafficking to public offices. These have changed the political economy of many communities, where the cash influx had led to traditional industries, such as fishing and tourism, being abandoned in favour of illicit activities.

3.3 The Caribbean: Haiti and the Dominican Republic

Political instability, the virtual absence of a functioning state apparatus, the existence of armed gangs, widespread poverty and corruption have all contributed to increasing Haiti's importance as a cocaine trans-shipment point. According to the U.S. Drug Enforcement

¹ <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/11/02/world/americas/02bolivia.html?ref=world>

Agency, 83 tons of cocaine transited the Hispaniola Island in 2007, while 159 drug flights from South America to that island were tracked, but the amount transited to each country is unknown.

3.4 Venezuela: a *sui generis* case

The United States keeps singling out Venezuela for their failure to make progress in meeting their international counternarcotics obligations and having "failed demonstrably to make sufficient efforts in fighting illicit drug trafficking"¹. It comes as no surprise to see the uproar created by the suspension of the bilateral programmes established between Caracas and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration in 2005 if we consider Venezuela's potential as a major route for smugglers moving cocaine from neighbouring Colombia to the European and U.S. markets.

Indeed, Venezuela is a major transit country for drug shipments to the United States and Europe, with 150 metric tons of cocaine and increasing quantities of heroin moving through its territory annually². All in all, the Venezuelan government has failed to address the increasing use of its territory for transit purposes, to eradicate coca and opium poppy fields near its border with Colombia and to tackle corruption inside its security forces. In contrast, Ecuador - also neighbouring country with the two largest coca producers, is widely praised for its commitment to protect its borders and territory against drug trafficking and other transnational crimes. Venezuela is a clear example where the fight against drug trafficking - despite its intensity, is deeply embedded into its foreign policy and its national strategy towards neighbouring countries thereby creating a gruesome scenario for the efforts made to counteract these.

3.5 The South Cone: Brazil, Argentina and Chile

Brazil has become an important trans-shipment hub for cocaine to Europe and North America due to its long borders with the three main coca-growing and cocaine producing, as well as the navigable waterways and highway infrastructure in the Amazon region. Thus, trafficking is carried out by Colombian led groups, which use front companies employing Brazilian workers to run operations and launder money. They are based in the big cities (Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro, Salvador, Recife) from which drugs are shipped to the Caribbean in U.S. transit and to Africa in European transit.

Since the early 2000s, Argentina's traditional role as a transit country for Bolivian, Peruvian and Colombian cocaine to Europe has changed and more drugs are being consumed and produced in country. The main cocaine entry points in Argentina are by land through the north western regions of Salta and Jujuy, the only provinces bordering Bolivia. While Buenos Aires international airport is an important trans-shipment point to Europe, the largest drug cargoes go by ship from Buenos Aires to Europe.

Chile is a trans-shipment point for larger cocaine shipments coming mostly from Colombia through Ecuador and Peru, as well as small quantities crossing the border directly from Peru and Bolivia, en route to the U.S. In recent years, it has witnessed an increase in trafficking to

¹ International Narcotics Control Strategy Report 2008. Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, March 2008

²Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>

Europe, mainly by sea to Spain, Portugal and the Netherlands, but also through Santiago airport.

4. THE DEMANDING SIDE: EUROPE AND U.S:

There is no doubt that the drug trafficking phenomenon is a two-way process fuelled by the demand and supply variability (see annex 6). In absolute terms, the U.S. continues to be the single largest cocaine consumer market in the world, with an estimated steady annual demand for 250-300 pure tons. Similarly Europe is the world's second largest cocaine market and growing with an estimate 250 tons of cocaine entering the continent annually. Nothing can be done in the source countries while the demand keeps growing at these alarming rates.

4.1 The United States' Policy

Since the 1960s the United States considers cocaine trafficking as a national security threat. This is because it sees cocaine trafficking as a potential harm to the US national economy and moral values, as well as potential support to international terrorism and regional instability. Turning to the diplomatic impact, the US fears regional instability fuelled by narco-dollars, as well as the massive flow of cocaine from Latin America.

Since the mid-1990s, the U.S. government has defined combating drug trafficking -especially in the Andean region and Mexico, as a primary foreign policy objective. To cut off the flow of illegal drugs, Washington focuses primarily on the first three stages of supply: cultivation, processing and transit. Two are the flagships of this strategy in Latin America: the Colombia Plan, as the main source country, and the Merida Plan, aimed at the main transit countries.

A priori, Washington seeks to discourage coca planting and to obtain government cooperation to convince local communities and mostly poor farmers to eradicate crops. These alternatives can be cash, substitute crops and, recently, community infrastructure projects and a broader set of income-generating activities. In the event of failure to cooperate, forced eradication is also envisaged. In terms of priority and financial commitment, funding for alternative development has been treated as the least significant aspect of the strategy. Officials acknowledge privately that discouraging Bolivian, Colombian and Peruvian farmers from cultivating coca has not been successful and has not stopped traffickers from maintaining the flow of cocaine into the U.S. At the same time, there is growing criticism that most source countries' budgets are too low to envisage parallel programs to joint the military expertise exported from Washington, such as infrastructure investment and community development, particularly in the subsistence areas where much of the coca cultivation occurs. The US approach to drug control, however, sometimes disregards the sovereignty of other states and international law. The difficulties of the US government with Venezuela and Bolivia are an example. This situation can trigger discord, even though Latin American states heavily depend on the United States for economic support.

4.1.1 The Colombia Plan

Aimed at tackling the problem in one of the most prominent source countries was the rationale behind the implementation of this integral anti-narcotic strategy in 1998 under the administrations of President Andrés Pastrana and Bill Clinton. The aim was to "secure an increase in U.S. aid for counternarcotics projects, sustainable economic development, the protection of human rights, humanitarian aid, stimulating private investment, and joining

other donors and international financial institutions to promote Colombia's economic growth¹".

Therefore, the focus of Plan Colombia was on ending cocaine production by helping peasants develop alternative crops and economic development. Since 1997 U.S. funding for Plan Colombia has increased from \$86 million to \$756 million². About 97% of all these funds have been dedicated to military weapons, weapons transfers, military training and military attacks against FARC.

Several elements of this strategy have sparked wide criticism, such as the side effects of mass aerial fumigation, damages to legal crops or abuses of human rights. Moreover, critics of the initiative also claimed that U.S. trained elements within Colombian security forces were involved in supporting or tolerating abuses by the paramilitary organizations. Furthermore its predominantly military character made would-be donors reluctant to cooperate in the social aspects of the programme and which ended up being one of its major flows³.

4.1.2 The Mérida Initiative (also called *Plan Mexico* by critics)

As the counterpart to the Colombia Plan, the Mérida Initiative was launched by the government of the U.S. and Mexico alongside with the countries of Central America (through the Central American Integration System) to tackle the problem of drug trafficking in the area and avoid the spill over into the United States.

The Merida Initiative, announced on October 2007 and signed into law on June, 2008, is a multi-year security cooperation proposal launched by Mexican President Felipe Calderón and President George W. Bush to provide equipment and training to support law enforcement operations and technical assistance for long-term reform and oversight of security agencies. Nevertheless, the difference is quite substantial if we compare it with the Colombia Plan, since the rationale behind this policy is to enable a budget line to the recipient countries rather than direct military interventions in their territory. Its ambitious budget proposal includes \$450 million for Mexico and \$100 million for Central America for the period 2009-2010, comprising military training, equipment, intelligence and community action programmes in Central American countries to implement anti-gang measures and expand the reach of these measures.

4.2 Situation in the EU

EU Member States still have distinct policy perspectives on the drug issue. However, the cooperation on the fight against drugs is increasing at a European level. This can be seen in the development of a transversal drug monitoring system that encompasses 30⁴ countries with a combined population of almost 600 million people. It can also be seen in the EU drugs strategy and action plan, tools that are designed to take stock of the information available and elaborate it into practical and collective action. In order to assess Europe's drug situation

¹ President Pastrana meeting with U.S. President Bill Clinton (August 3, 1998)

² Centre for International Policy, Washington.

³ "European Parliament resolution on Plan Colombia and support for the peace process in Colombia" February 1, 2006.

⁴ 27 EU Member States and Croatia, Turkey and Norway.

there is a need of a simultaneous understanding of national features, of sub-regional specificities and increasingly, of common European, or even global, trends.

The European Monitoring centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) in its 2009 report presents the following estimates¹:

Cannabis: - Lifetime prevalence: at least 74 million (22% of European adults). Last year² use: about 22.5 million European adults or a third of lifetime users.

Cocaine: lifetime prevalence: about 13 million (3.9% of European adults). Last year use: 4 million European adults or a third of lifetime users.

Ecstasy: - Lifetime prevalence: about 10 million (3.1% of European adults). Last year use: about 2.5 million or a quarter of a lifetime users.

Amphetamines: - Lifetime prevalence - about 12 million (3.5% of European adults). Last year use: less than 1 million.

Opioids: - Problem opioid users: estimated at between 1.2 and 1.5 million Europeans. Drug-induced deaths accounted for 4% of all deaths of Europeans aged 15-34, with opioids being found in around three quarters.

4.3. EU Policy

The European Union has perceived the threat posed by the drugs trade in public health, social cohesion and political stability issues (of the countries concerned). Addressing them directly contributes to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) which include the eradication of poverty and the improvement of health. The EU approach to drug control accepted the UN General Assembly special Session on Drugs (UNGASS) in 1998: shared responsibility, emphasis on multilateralism, balanced approach, development mainstreaming and respect for human rights. Considering the impact of drug trafficking to the EU, it is regarded as a societal security threat rather than a national security threat.

In December 2004, the European council endorsed the EU Drugs Strategy (2005-2012) which set the framework, objectives and priorities for 2 consecutive 4 year Action Plans to be brought forward by the European Commission. This strategy includes five basic components:

¹ The estimates relate to the adult population (15-64 years old).

² 2008.

- Political dialogue;
- Drug Action Plan involving other regions of the world;
- International Agreements and cooperative efforts to prevent the diversion of chemical precursors needed for the manufacture of drugs;
- Preferential trade agreements;
- Financing of drug-related projects.

5. JOINT EU-LAC EFFORTS AGAINST DRUG TRAFFICKING

This cooperation builds on mutual understanding of shared responsibility, a balanced and evidence based approach, and compliance with international law, including respect for human rights. In 2007 the EU and LAC sides confirmed these basic principles with the Port of Spain declaration, and materialised them in common areas of cooperation (supply and demand reduction, alternative development and other drug-related issues like money laundering and customs, police and judicial cooperation).

As for the institutional framework, EU-LAC cooperation takes place at three complementary levels:

1. Bilateral/regional level - through bilateral political dialogue and the National Indicative Programme agreed between the European Commission and each individual country and/or region;
2. Inter-regional level -through two existing schemes for dialogue and cooperation : EU-LAC Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism on drugs, launched in 1995 in Madrid;
 - EU-CAN High Level specialised Dialogue on drugs, which first met in 1995;
3. Multilateral level - through a close coordination of the EU and GRULAC Group at the annual meetings of the UN Commission of Narcotics Drugs (CND) in Vienna by seeking to cosponsor each other's resolutions.

The above mentioned first level-Bilateral/regional level - includes 5 basic components:

(a) Political dialogue

EU co-operation with Latin American countries in the fight against the consumption, production and trafficking of drugs has been traditionally one of the cornerstones of the EU-LAC dialogue, for it has been targeted as one of the main de-stabilizing factors and a serious risk for the consolidation of democracy and stability.

The European Union's overall relations with Latin America and the Caribbean have been strengthened considerably since the mid-1980s while a full range of agreements has been concluded at all levels based on the three pillars of political dialogue, co-operation and trade relations. Hence, the establishment of the San Jose Dialogue and the institutionalisation of an EU political dialogue with the Group of Rio, with the Andean region, with Mercosur, with Mexico and with Chile have to be regarded as significant milestones in integrating the political dimension into the EU-LAC relations, the first step to achieve a common approach on the matter. Besides these landslide achievements, it is also worth mentioning the adoption of Association Agreements with Mexico and Chile, the recent conclusion of the negotiations with Central America countries concerning an Association Agreement, with Colombia and Peru and the Economic Partnership agreement (EPA) between the EU and the Caribbean countries.

(b) The Action Plan

- *Panama Plan of Action*: A Plan of Action was adopted in Panama in April 1999 and endorsed by the EU-LAC Summit of Rio of June 1999. According to this Action Plan, which has ultimately become the blue print of the EU in this field, four fields of activity were identified:

- 1) envisaging demand and supply reduction (alternative development and eradication; precursor and licit drug control);
- 2) boosting police, customs and judicial co-operation and drug-related arms-trafficking;
- 3) tackling money laundering;
- 4) promoting judicial organisation and drug legislation and institutional capacity-building.

To the extent that the diversion of precursor chemicals play a key role in making possible the manufacturing of illicit drugs, the EU has signed agreements with a limited number of countries to prevent this diversion, including the members of the Andean Community, Chile, and Mexico. These agreements have established mechanisms for easier communication and exchanges of information as regards the mutual trade of chemicals that could possibly be used for the illegal manufacturing of cocaine, heroine and synthetic drugs.

(c) Trade Agreements

A key item in the EC's agenda is the "the GSP-Drugs Scheme" which enables the EU to grant duty-free and unlimited access to the countries in the Andean and Central American regions, so long they abide with the guidelines agreed in this given realm. The ultimate objective of this trade regime has been, and remains, to help these countries diversify their production and exports away from illicit drugs by reducing the incentives for drug cultivation and trafficking.

(d) Financing

The Member States and the Commission have devoted considerable resources to drug-related projects in Latin America and in other regions of the world. The Commission finances drug-

related projects through its geographical budget lines and through the North-south Drugs Cooperation budget line.

In the framework of the Action Regional Plan for the fight against drugs in Latin America, more than €100 million were given to projects for alternative development in Bolivia, Peru and to the laboratories of peace in Colombia.

(e) The concept of shared responsibility

Drug control is today recognized as part of overall efforts to foster social and economic development in a broader sense. Worldwide, the EU accepts the principle of shared responsibility, i.e. the high level of demand in our societies stimulates production elsewhere. The drug problem is increasingly viewed from a broader set of human welfare issues addressing the social and economic dimensions of sustainable development in both producing and consumer countries.

On the framework of the Inter-regional level, the XIth High-Level Meeting of the Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism on Drugs EU-LAC, held in Quito (Ecuador) on 26-27 May 2009, decided to continue strengthening the bi-regional EU-LAC cooperation in the fight against the world drug problem. In this context three new initiatives have been launched: LAC and EU Programme of Cooperation in antidrug policies (COPOLAD); European, Latin American and Caribbean cities in partnership; Prevention of the diversion of drug precursors in the LAC region (PRELAC). The first one - COPOLAD - will aim to strengthen bi-regional cooperation on policies in the action against drugs at the national, sub-regional and bi-regional levels. The "Cities in Partnership" initiative has involved a total of 1,125 people and 47 cities have participated in the several collaborative actions being carried out. The PRELAC initiative started on 1 March 2009. The specific objectives are to strengthen the capacities of national administrative control authorities of selected countries within the region to prevent the diversion of precursors.

The Madrid Declaration, adopted by the Heads of State and Government of the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean on 18 May 2010, have decided to intensify their existing bi-regional cooperation to tackle the world drug problem, in accordance with the principle of common and shared responsibility.

The European Parliament was a pioneer in the fight against drugs. In 1986, it adopted a Resolution inviting the European Community to react against drugs at international level. One year later the first budget line was created for the fight against drugs in developing countries. Since the late 1980s the EP has adopted many resolutions on drugs issues and also on Latin American regions or countries issues as Mercosur (12 October 2006), Andean Community (15.03.2007), Central America (15.03.2007), Brazil (12.03.2009), Mexico (11.03.2010) and Latin America (05.05.2010). The EP has always insisted that the drugs issue cannot be resolved by each state on an individual basis, which means that it is essential that the EU adopt a genuine European policy on fighting drugs, and implement it in an integrated, global manner, using all necessary means to prevent the human health and social exclusion problem it causes, and repairing the damage done to society by drugs trafficking organisations. Furthermore, the EP has recommended to the Council to significantly increase

development aid to drug producing countries, by means of programmes to fund sustainable alternative crops and the radical reduction of poverty, exploring also the possibility of promoting and safeguarding production for medical and scientific purposes.

During more than 30 years (1974-2005) the EP and the Latin American Parliament (PARLATINO) had regular meetings (Inter-parliamentary Conferences) which contributed to establish close links between Europe and Latin America insisting on political dialogue, economic issues and bilateral cooperation. In 1981, on the conclusions of the IV Conference there was an invitation to all the represented legislative bodies to take measures against the drugs production and trafficking. Since 1987 all the following Conferences have taken the drug issue in their agendas. In the XII conference the principle of common and shared responsibility was stressed for the first time.

6. TOWARDS A NEW DRUGS POLICY?

Following the advice of the EMCDDA an integrated, multidisciplinary and balanced approach to drugs combining demand and supply reduction is required. The strategy in this multifold reality needs to be focused on two key policy fields as well as on two cross-cutting themes: 'International cooperation' and 'Research, information and evaluation'¹.

In June 2010, the members of the Organization of American States (OAS) adopted a new hemispheric drug strategy that will help countries develop policies to focus not only on supply and control, but also on drug dependence. The strategy explicitly recognizes that drug dependency is a chronic relapsing disease that must be dealt with as a core element of public health policy. The new OAS strategy goes hand in hand with the recent shift in drug policy announced by the United States. President Barack Obama's pledge to allocate more resources to drug prevention and treatment parallels the hemispheric view that drug abuse and dependence are public health issues and not just criminal acts.

Similarly, the new OAS drug strategy promotes treatment as an alternative to incarceration. It includes the establishment of drug courts where recovery is closely supervised by a judge with the power to reward progress and rebuke relapses. In this context, the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) a specialized OAS agency is training drug treatment counselors and therapists throughout Latin America.

As a first step to a comprehensive approach to confront the intertwined challenges of drug trafficking and drug dependency, it is crucial that Latin America includes an emphasis on the root cause of the problem - the consumption of illicit drugs. Approximately 20% of drug users account for nearly 80% of drug use. By progressively reducing dependence among hard core drug users, the new programmes not only help reduce the demand for drugs but they also affect the profitability of the TCOs that threaten the economies, the security and the democratic governance of the western hemisphere.

In the EU several governments have relaxed their policies on controlled substances, such as cannabis, heroin and cocaine. for instance in 2001 Portugal decriminalized the possession of small amounts of these drugs and now encourage drug users to get medical treatment. Many of these harm reduction-inspired policies, which are considered illegal under international law

¹ EU drugs strategy for the period 2005–2012, endorsed by the European Council of December 2004.

by the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), have been seen as successful, although it is too early to make far-reaching claims about their effectiveness.

However, President Obama is unlikely to alter the US policy direction established one hundred years ago. Since his arrival in office, he has defended the existing international drug control regime and even criticized domestic state-level changes, as exemplified by dismissive US statements about the importance of US popular support for the medical use of cannabis at the 2010 Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) meeting. Nevertheless, it has been written in the Financial Times: "Adding the direct cost of prohibition (police and prisons) to the taxes foregone by the present system, the US would expect a fiscal benefit of about \$100 bn a year."¹

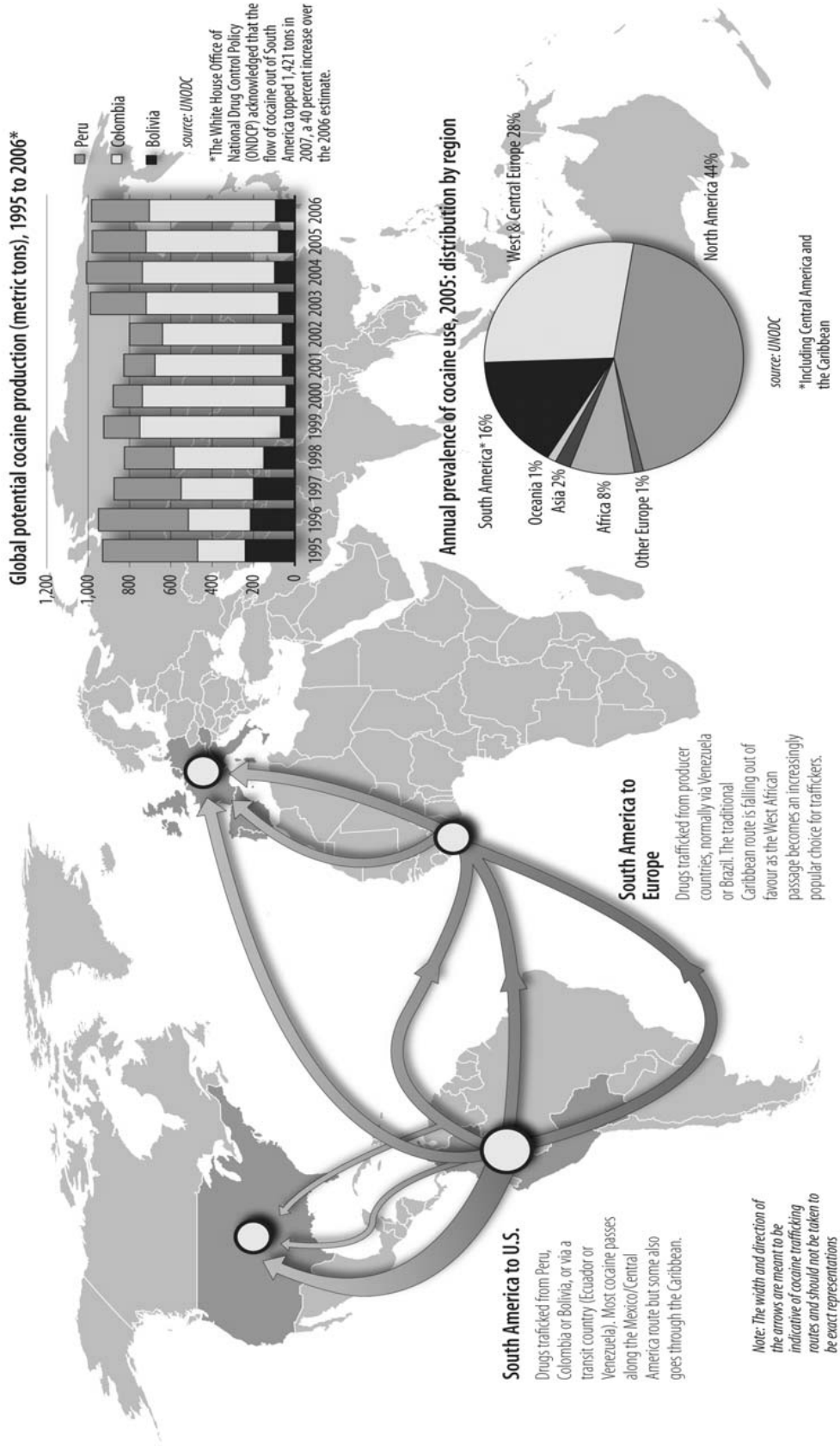
7. CONCLUSIONS

The drug problem is one that requires cooperation at every level, local, regional national, non-governmental and international. First of all there is the need for regional policy coordination among the Andean States as well as among other Latin American states in order to reduce gradually the trafficking and maintain democracy and security in the western hemisphere. The difficulty in multinational cooperation against drug trafficking is that each participant has a different perception of the threat posed by drug trafficking. Therefore, they may not agree to cooperate with each other, as was the case with the EU and the United States in Plan Colombia. From the US perspective, drug trafficking is a national security threat that affects its values and identity. The US, as a superpower, sees itself as having the role of an international policeman, while the EU drug control towards Latin American producers focuses on economic, social and political development in the coca growing areas through alternative development programmes.

Once again, fostering regional integration in Latin America should be the bedrock in these efforts against drug-trafficking and the pernicious effects this phenomenon brings about to its societies. Nevertheless, combating the drug trade around the world requires a global effort and that is the reason why the two main recipient regions, the U.S. and the EU need to coordinate their efforts and harmonize their policies in a clear blue-print that could provide a tailor-made strategy to every country in the region, whether producer or transit.

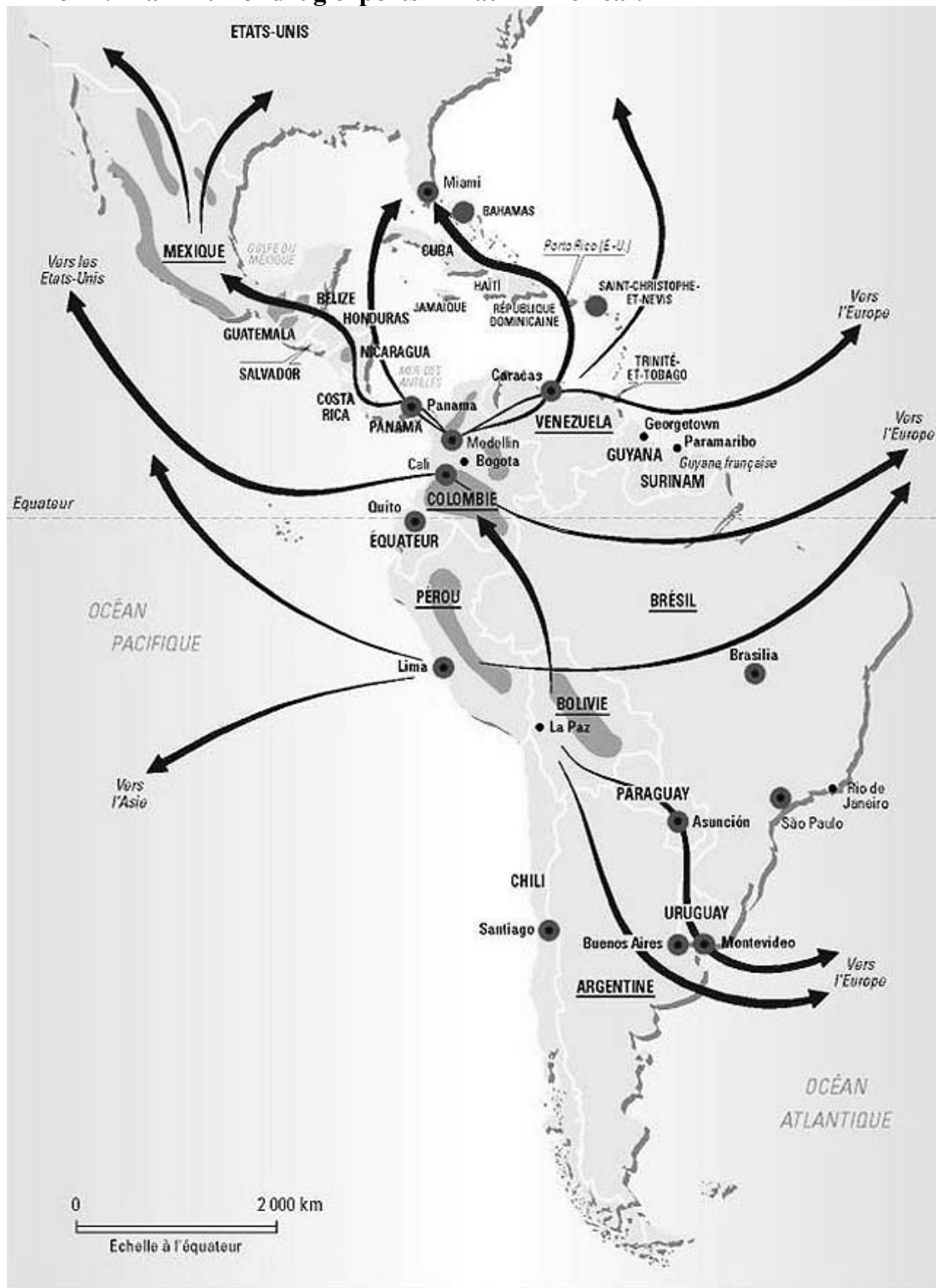
¹ Financial Times, 12 April 2009.

Annex 1: Main drug trafficking routes¹.



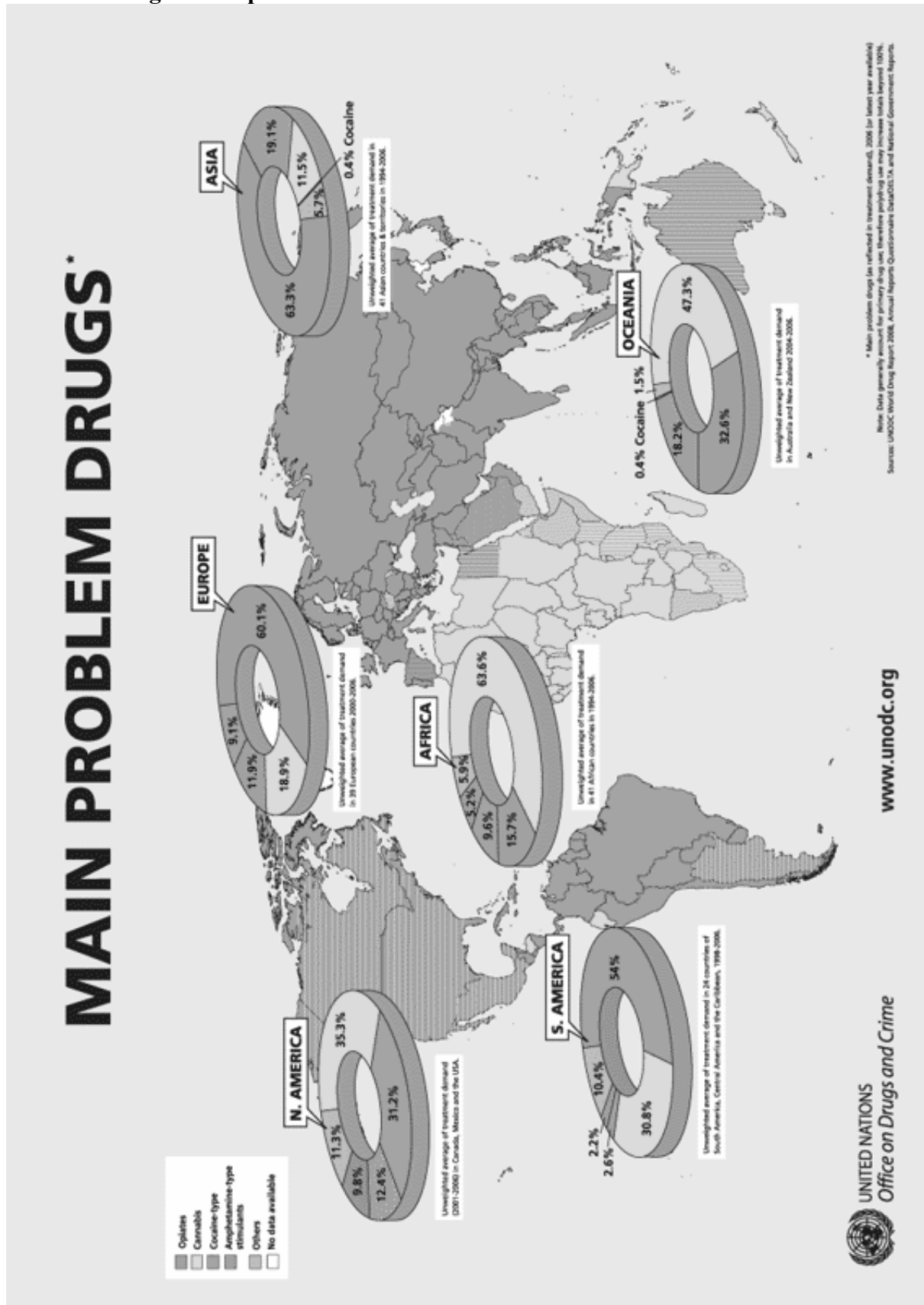
¹ Source: International Crisis Group, March 2008.

Annex 2: Main flux of drug exports in Latin America¹.



¹ Source: *Atlas mondial des drogues*, PUF, September 1999.

Annex 3: Drug consumption in the world.¹



¹ Source: UNODC, 2008.

Annex 4: Main Problem Drugs as Reflected in Treatment Demand by Region 1990s-2008

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