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## REPORT

with a proposal for a European Parliament recommendation to the Council on  
production of opium for medical purposes in Afghanistan  
(2007/2125(INI))

Committee on Foreign Affairs

Rapporteur: Marco Cappato

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## **PROPOSAL FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RECOMMENDATION TO THE COUNCIL**

### **on production of opium for medical purposes in Afghanistan (2007/2125(INI))**

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the proposal for a recommendation to the Council tabled on behalf of the ALDE Group on production of opium for medical purposes in Afghanistan (B6-0187/2007),
  - having regard to its previous resolutions on Afghanistan, most recently that of 18 January 2006<sup>1</sup>;
  - having regard to the 2006 UNODC/World Bank report on 'Afghanistan's Drug Industry',
  - having regard to the 2007 Annual Report issued by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in June 2007;
  - having regard to the UN's Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Resolution 2005/25 of 22 July 2005 on the feasibility of a possible assistance mechanism that would facilitate the adequate treatment of pain using opioid analgesics, to ECOSOC Resolution 2004/40 of 21 July 2004 on guidelines for psychosocially assisted pharmacological treatment of persons dependent on opioids, to ECOSOC Resolution 2005/26 of 22 July 2005 on demand for and supply of opiates used to meet medical and scientific needs, to World Health Assembly (WHA) Resolution 58.22 of 25 May 2005 on cancer prevention and control, to WHA Resolution 55.14 on ensuring accessibility of essential medicines, and to the final recommendations of the 12th International Conference of Drug Regulatory Authorities, held in Seoul from 3-6 April 2006, urging regulators to work for better access to narcotic painkillers;
  - having regard to the mission reports of its ad hoc delegation to Afghanistan, in July 2005, and of its election observation mission in September 2005;
  - having regard to the final report of the European Union Election Observation Mission to the parliamentary and provincial council elections held on 18 September 2005;
  - having regard to Rule 114(3) of its Rules of Procedure;
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (A6-0341/2007);
- A. whereas international drugs policies are based on the United Nations Conventions of 1961, 1971 and 1988 that prohibit, in particular, the production, trafficking, sale and consumption of a whole range of substances other than for medical or scientific purposes,
- B. whereas the UNODC report entitled "Afghanistan: Opium Survey 2006" stresses that the

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<sup>1</sup> OJ C 287 E, 24.11.2006, p. 176.

area under illicit opium cultivation produced a record volume of about 6,100 tonnes in 2006, an increase of nearly 50% over 2004 figures,

- C. whereas the Afghan National Drug Control Strategy adopted in January 2006 addresses supply as well as demand reduction, alternative livelihoods and the strengthening of government institutions, and whereas the Ministry of Counter Narcotics, established with the help of EU money, is the lead agency in the implementation of the strategy,
- D. whereas the Government of Afghanistan established a Drug Regulation Committee, which comprises officials from the Ministries of Counter Narcotics, Health and Finance, in order to "regulate the licensing, sale, dispensation, import and export of all drugs for licit purposes in the country",
- E. whereas the EU should do more to bring about a drastic reduction in opium production since – according to the UNODC's Afghanistan 2007 Annual Opium Poppy Survey – Afghanistan's opium production has now reached a frightening new level, twice the amount produced just two years ago; whereas Afghanistan has practically become the exclusive supplier of the world's deadliest drug, with 93% of the global opiates market, although it has to be noted that the number of opium-free provinces has more than doubled, from 6 last year to 13 in 2007, and that 50% of the whole Afghan opium crop comes from the single province of Helmand,
- F. whereas the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund estimate that almost 40% of Afghanistan's GDP is opium-related, and whereas the UNODC estimates that 3.3 million people (out of a population of over 31 million) are engaged in the poppy sector, producing an income of US\$1,965 a year per family,
- G. whereas in 2007 the farm-gate value of the opium harvest totalled US\$ 1 billion, or 13% of the licit GDP of Afghanistan, and whereas the total potential value of the country's 2007 opium harvest accruing to farmers, laboratory owners and Afghan traffickers reached US\$ 3.1 billion, which represents almost half the country's licit GDP of US\$ 7.5 billion, or 32% of the overall economy including the opium sector,
- H. whereas the incentive for Afghan farmers to produce opiates is largely financial and whereas licensed opiates will have to produce – in order to be economically attractive – an income higher than that coming from illegal opiates,
- I. whereas the European Union remains the biggest donor as regards efforts aimed at reducing the opium supply through projects that promote alternative livelihoods – which are desperately needed as a way to complement the national diet – as a substitute for illicit crops,
- J. drawing attention to the European Commission's recognition, as set out in its Country Strategy Paper (2007 - 2013), that the growing opium economy and the danger of "state capture" by narco-interests pose a critical threat to development, state-building and security in Afghanistan,
- K. whereas there are substantiated claims that insurgents, warlords, the Taliban and

terrorist groups are obtaining their major source of funding through trade in illicit narcotics,

- L. considering that on 25 June 2007, the Senlis Council, an international security and development think tank, presented a detailed Technical Dossier that describes how a village-based "Poppy for Medicine" project could work in Afghanistan, including an Integrated Social Control system, the production of Afghan medicines at village level, compulsory economic diversification and general rural development,
- M. noting that the World Health Organisation (WHO) has indicated that 10 countries consume 80% of the opiates legally available worldwide, and that the remaining 180 states include the majority of developing countries that make up 80% of the world's population; noting also that the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) has asked the international community to promote the prescription of painkillers, especially in poor countries, as severe under-treatment is reported in more than 150 countries where hardly anyone who is in need of treatment is being treated, and, in another 30 countries, where under-treatment is even more prevalent or where no data are available,
- N. whereas the International Narcotics Control Board has stated that there is a global oversupply of opiates for medical purposes, even if this evaluation does not take into consideration potential demand,
- O. convinced that, to promote and strengthen peace and security in Afghanistan, the international presence needs to be complemented by an increased civil cooperation, in order to foster socio-political progress and economic development and also to win "the hearts and minds" of the local population,
- P. considering, once again, the extremely high costs and serious flaws in terms of effectiveness of a counter-narcotics strategy that does not take into account the regional, social and economic diversity of rural Afghanistan when developing and deploying measures on alternative livelihoods, and one that is based only on eradication,
- Q. considering that the promotion of a process of institution-building, democratisation and affirmation of the rule of law, a fair justice system and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms can only happen through policies that do not impose violent solutions, such as forcible eradication of crops, on what are in themselves non-violent practices,
- R. whereas the fight against drug production in Afghanistan should reflect a differentiated approach by locality, whereas counter-narcotics efforts against farmers must be carefully limited to areas where licit livelihoods are possible (places where access to land and water resources is better, there is proximity to markets and land-person ratios are higher), and whereas alternative livelihood programmes need to focus especially on poorer regions with limited resources, which are the most dependent on opium in the first place,
- S. whereas the EC's Afghanistan Country Strategy Paper for 2007-2013 has an appropriate focus on rural development and governance, but more emphasis needs to be placed on the reform of the Afghan ministries in charge of controlling drug production, namely the

Ministry of the Interior,

1. Addresses the following recommendations to the Council:
  - (a) oppose, in the framework of integrated development programmes, recourse to fumigation as a means of eradicating the poppy in Afghanistan;
  - (b) elaborate and submit to the Afghan Government, within the framework of Europe-sponsored illicit supply reduction programmes, a comprehensive plan and strategy aimed at controlling drug production in Afghanistan, by improving governance and tackling corruption at the highest levels of the Afghan administration (with a special focus on the Ministry of the Interior); targeting action against the key traffickers on the ground; improving comprehensive rural development, particularly in the poorest areas and in those not yet producing opium on a large scale; carefully and selectively engaging in manual eradication; and looking at the possibility of pilot projects for small-scale conversion of parts of the current illicit poppy cultivation into fields for the production of legal opium-based analgesics;
  - (c) offer its assistance in the implementation of a scientific "Poppy for Medicine" pilot project that will further investigate how licensing can contribute to the alleviation of poverty, diversification of the rural economy, general development and increased security, and how it can become a successful part of multilateral efforts for Afghanistan;
2. Instructs its President to forward this recommendation to the Council and, for information, to the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States and of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

## **EXPLANATORY STATEMENT**

### **Introduction**

1. This recommendation on Afghan opium aims to explore the possibility of establishing general conditions internationally which could allow licit poppy production in Afghanistan to be placed on the world's legal market for opium-based analgesics. Such a development would be desirable for two reasons: the need to increase the availability and affordability of painkillers both in developed and developing countries, and the need to devise more effective policies to address both stability and sustainable economic development in Afghanistan. Afghanistan's economy continues to be predominantly informal and is based mainly on an illegal crop, as such hindering national progress both in political and socio-economical terms.

### **Background on International Regulation Mechanisms regarding Opium**

2. Opium has been regulated internationally since 1912, when an International Opium Convention was signed at The Hague, representing the first international drug control treaty.
3. International drugs policies at global level have revolved around the norms contained in the UN Conventions of 1961, 1971 and 1988. These prohibit in particular the production, trafficking, sale and consumption of a whole range of substances other than for medical or scientific purposes. States that wish to produce the prohibited plants have to set up National Agencies to oversee production, refining, transport, commerce and trade in those substances.
4. When the 1961 Convention was adopted, India and Turkey were the biggest producers of poppies. The Single Convention on Narcotic and Psychotropic Substances created the legislative framework to allow the regulation of those countries' production. At the request of the United States which, in turn, offered to buy a substantial part of that production in order to prevent its diversion into the illegal heroin market, both countries, in compliance with the UN Convention, established national agencies to monitor the production and sale of poppy derivatives. The experiment in legalising poppy production in those two countries was successful; however it was not considered that it provided adequately for the growing demand for opiates. With the passage of time legal opium production, subject to strict supervision by the law enforcement agencies of individual countries, was expanded to Australia, France, Spain, Japan, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Bulgaria.
5. The UN treaty requires every country to submit annual reports to the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), stating that year's actual consumption of many classes of controlled drugs as well as opioids, and projecting required quantities for the next year. This is to allow trends in consumption to be monitored, and production quotas allotted. Afghanistan has ratified all three UN Conventions on Drugs.
6. Both the WHO and the INCB have urged the UN Member States to promote the most

ample availability of affordable opioids for the treatment of pain, with particular attention to poor countries, where severe under-treatment is reported in more than 150 states. Over the last few years, the UN Economic and Social Council and the Assembly of the WHO have adopted a series of resolutions outlining what needs to be done at the multilateral level.

### **The situation in Afghanistan**

7. According to UN estimates, the 2007 opiate requirements for Afghanistan, a country of over 31 million inhabitants, are, in grammes: Codeine (15,000), Dextropropoxyphene (375,000), Diphenoxylate (7,500), Morphine (3,000), Pethidine (60,000) and Pholcodine (70,000).
8. Opium cannot be considered a traditional Afghan crop. In fact, as the government began to lose control of provinces during the Soviet invasion of 1979-80, the Mujahideen, as well as the warlords, started to take control, and, with the unspoken approval of western interests, established a series of illicit systems to finance their warring activities through activities including poppy growing. The money was principally employed to force the USSR slowly into withdrawal. When the Red Army was finally forced out of Afghanistan in 1989, a power vacuum was created. Various Mujahideen factions started fighting against each other for power. As Western support ceased, they resorted ever more to poppy cultivation to finance their military activities. Some local opium dealers, looking for a safe operational hub, joined forces with the more fanatic sections of the Mujahideen supported by Arab extremists like Osama bin Laden as well as the Pakistani secret intelligence service (ISI) to form the Taliban movement towards the end of 1994.

The Taliban, having taken control of 90% of the country, actively encouraged poppy cultivation. Thus they not only fulfilled their promises and obligations to their partners – the various regional mafias - but also increased their own income by imposing taxes on local farmers and through subsidies from international organised crime gangs. According to the UNODC, Afghanistan saw a bumper opium crop of 4,600 million tonnes in 1999, which was at the height of the Taliban rule in Afghanistan. It has been documented by several NGOs that in 1997-98, the UNODC reached out to the Taliban to promote agreements with the final aim of curbing poppy production, suggesting a possible international recognition of their regime. These formal agreements never materialized and the huge increase in opium production resulted in supply exceeding demand and a drop in the high-street price of heroin and morphine in the West, boosting consumption all over Europe. To stop this trend, it is alleged that the Taliban leader, Mullah Omar, issued a ban on poppy cultivation "on religious grounds", resulting in one of the lowest opium production levels in 2000. After regularly producing 70% of the world's opium throughout the 1990s, Afghanistan decreased its production to 74 tonnes per year under a ban by the Taliban in 2000, although the ban may have been intended primarily to boost prices after the country accumulated a stockpile of over two years' supply. After the 2001 war in Afghanistan, production increased again.

9. According to US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) statistics, Afghanistan's production of oven-dried opium increased to 1,278 tonnes in 2002, more than doubled by 2003, and nearly doubled again during 2004. In late 2004, the U.S. government estimated that



4.5% of the country's total cropland was under poppy cultivation, and produced 4,200 metric tonnes of opium, 87% of the world's supply, yielding 60% of Afghanistan's GDP. Afghanistan is currently the greatest illicit opium producer in the world, coming before Burma (Myanmar), part of the so-called "Golden Triangle".

10. The UNODC report "Afghanistan: Opium Survey 2006" stresses that the area under illicit opium cultivation reached a record level of about 6,100 tonnes last year, an increase of nearly 50% over the previous year's figure. The value of the resulting heroin was estimated at \$3.5 billion, of which Afghan farmers were estimated to have received \$700 million in revenue (and of which the Taliban are estimated to have collected anywhere from tens of millions to \$140 million in taxes). For farmers, the crop can be up to ten times more profitable than wheat.
11. Recent World Bank and International Monetary Fund figures estimate that almost 40% of Afghanistan's GDP is opium-related, and that some 2.9 million people are engaged in the poppy sector. The UNODC reported that last year only six of the 34 provinces in the country were poppy-free and that particularly in the southern provinces of Helmand, where attacks by the Taliban against government and international troops have increased, illicit cultivation had soared to 69,300 hectares.

#### **Proposals for revision of European Strategies and Approaches in Afghanistan**

12. In January 2006, the Afghan National Drug Control Strategy addressed the issue of supply as well as demand reduction, alternative livelihoods and the strengthening of government institutions, and the Ministry of Counter Narcotics, established with the support of European money, was chosen as the lead national agency to implement the strategy. On 1 August 2006, the Government of Afghanistan established a Drug Regulation Committee, in order to "regulate the licensing, sale, dispensation, import and export of all drugs for licit purposes in the country". Article 22 of the above-mentioned 1961 UN Convention states that "whenever prevailing conditions in the country or a territory of a Party render the prohibition of the cultivation of opium poppy [...] the most suitable measure, in its opinion, for protecting public health and welfare and preventing the diversion of drugs into the illicit traffic, the Party concerned shall prohibit cultivation".
13. Given the implications of a lack of affordable painkillers the world over and the effects of an illicit economy on Afghan daily life, and considering the entirety of European efforts to promote higher standards of health policies and in state and nation-building programmes, the European Parliament should urge the Council to adopt a common position that could trigger a major revision of current strategies and approaches both in the field of opioid availability and affordability at the global level and on poppy eradication in Afghanistan.
14. The European Union also remains the biggest donor as regards efforts aimed at reducing the supply of opium, through projects to promote alternative livelihoods - that Afghanistan also desperately needs to complement the national diet - to substitute illicit crops. This is a policy that it is considered less intrusive than mere eradication. However, despite the promotion of "alternative development", there are no tangible

signs that overall opium production will decrease in the near future.

15. Today's lack of security in Afghanistan should be addressed with a more articulate and comprehensive set of measures and policies which must try to complement the promotion and strengthening of peace, reconciliation and security. This should be done both through a substantial multilateral presence and an increasing civil cooperation, with the aim of fostering development, progress and confidence in the efforts and security assistance currently underway.
16. In this context, the process of institution-building, democratization and affirmation of the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms can only happen through policies that do not impose "solutions" such as forcible eradication of crops.

As suggested in the Report prepared by the EU Monitoring Mission of the Afghan Parliamentary Election of September 2005, a different approach should be pursued in addressing illicit opium production, one which also takes account of the possibility of diverting opium derivatives into the licit market for analgesics. While such a measure may seem inappropriate on a wide-scale at the present time, experiments to meet national requirements could be launched in selected provinces in Afghanistan where production is limited and security does not present too many challenges. EU Member States should, in accordance with international norms and in full collaboration with the UN system, including UNDP, UNODC, WHO, as well as the World Bank and the IMF, evaluate the real dynamics of demand and supply of opium-derivatives for the global market in analgesics. They should at the same time address the problems that characterize the prescription of essential painkillers world-wide as a precondition for reassessing and allocating significant new quotas for opium production.

## **PROPOSAL FOR A RECOMMENDATION (B6-0187/2007)**

tabled pursuant to Rule 114(1) of the Rules of Procedure

by Graham Watson, Marco Panella, Marco Cappato and Annemie Neyts-Uyttebroeck

on behalf of the ALDE Group

on production of opium for medical purposes in Afghanistan

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to Rule 114(1) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas drugs policies at the international level are derived from the United Nations Conventions of 1961, 1971 and 1988, and whereas these conventions prohibit in particular the production, trafficking, sale and consumption of a whole range of substances other than for medical or scientific purposes, the latter being permitted on condition that countries set up National Agencies to oversee the production, refining and transport of and trade in those substances,
- B. whereas the 2006 Report issued by the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) on 1 March 2007 states that in Afghanistan the total area being used for illicit opium poppy cultivation increased to a record 165 000 hectares, an increase of 59% over the figure for 2005, and more than twice the figure for 2003,
- C. whereas the report entitled 'Afghanistan: Opium Survey 2006' compiled by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) stresses that last year the quantity of opium harvested in that country reached a record level of about 6100 tons, an increase of nearly 50% over the figure for the previous year,
- D. whereas the above figures show that it will clearly be impossible to achieve the goals set by the political declaration adopted by the 1998 UNGASS (United Nations General Assembly) in New York concerning the total eradication or substantial reduction of illicit crops by 2008,
- E. whereas the Afghan National Drug Control Strategy adopted in January 2006 addresses supply as well as demand reduction, alternative livelihoods and the strengthening of government institutions, and whereas the 'Ministry of Counter-Narcotics', established with substantial European funding, is the lead agency for implementing the strategy,
- F. whereas on 1 August 2006 the Government of Afghanistan established the Drug Regulation Committee, which comprises officials from the Ministries of Counter-Narcotics, Health and Finance, in order to 'regulate the licensing, sale, dispensation,

import and export of all drugs for licit purposes in the country',

- G. whereas Article 22 of the 1961 UN Convention states that 'whenever prevailing conditions in the country or a territory of a Party render the prohibition of the cultivation of opium poppy [...] the most suitable measures, in its opinion, for protecting the public health and welfare and preventing the diversion of drugs into the illicit traffic, the Party concerned shall prohibit cultivation' and whereas the prevailing conditions in Afghanistan cannot ensure the imposition of an effective system of control of poppy cultivation through prohibition,
- H. whereas furthermore both the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund estimate that almost 40% of the Gross Domestic Product of Afghanistan is opium-related, and that some 2.9 million people (12.6% of the population) are engaged in the poppy sector,
- I. whereas only six of the 34 provinces in the country are poppy-free and whereas in particular in the southern province of Helmand, where attacks by the Taliban against government and international troops have increased, illicit cultivation has soared to 69 300 hectares,
- J. whereas the European Union remains the biggest donor for the efforts aimed at reducing the supply of opium through projects to promote alternative livelihoods - that are desperately needed also to complement the national diet - to replace illicit crops and whereas it is considering more intrusive practices such as control through eradication,
- K. whereas in 2005 the Security and Development Policy Group's 'Senlis Council' finalised a feasibility study on the licensing of opium production in Afghanistan, which was presented in Kabul in September of that year,
- L. whereas the World Health Organisation indicates that 10 countries consume 80% of the opiates legally available worldwide, whereas the remaining 180 states include the majority of developing countries, which account for 80% of the world population, and whereas the INCB has called upon the international community to promote the prescription of painkillers especially in poor countries, which have seen an extraordinary increase in the number of people living with HIV/AIDS and where over 15 million cases of cancer are expected in the next 10 years,
- M. whereas the United Nations estimates that the requirement of narcotic drugs for 2007 for Afghanistan (in grams) is 15 000 of Codeine, 375 000 of Dextropropoxyphene, 7500 of Diphenoxylate, 3000 of Morphine, 60 000 of Pethidine and 70 000 of Pholcodine,
- N. denouncing the fact that insurgents, warlords, the Taliban and terrorist groups find their major source of funding in trafficking in illicit narcotics,
- O. convinced that in order to promote and strengthen peace and security in Afghanistan, the military presence needs to be complemented with increasing civil cooperation to foster development and progress,
- P. convinced that the promotion of a process of institution-building, democratisation and affirmation of the rule of law and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms can

only happen through policies that do not impose violent solutions to non-violent practices, such as forced eradication of crops,

1. Addresses the following recommendation to the Council:

urges the Council to adopt a common position - pursuant to Article 15 of the Treaty on European Union - concerning a comprehensive 'counter-narcotics' strategy in Afghanistan, which should provide for the production of poppies for medical purposes to be used, in the framework of an internationally managed pilot project, for the production of opium-based analgesics for the national Afghan market and possibly for those countries that experience a lack of availability of opiates;

2. Instructs its President to forward this recommendation to the Council and, for information, to the Commission.

## RESULT OF FINAL VOTE IN COMMITTEE

<b>Date adopted</b>	12.9.2007
<b>Result of final vote</b>	+ : 33 - : 8 0 : 23
<b>Members present for the final vote</b>	Vittorio Agnoletto, Roberta Alma Anastase, Robert Atkins, Christopher Beazley, Angelika Beer, Bastiaan Belder, Monika Beňová, André Brie, Elmar Brok, Cristian Silviu Buşoi, Marco Cappato, Véronique De Keyser, Hanna Foltyn-Kubicka, Michael Gahler, Jas Gawronski, Alfred Gomolka, Klaus Hänsch, Anna Ibrisagic, Jelko Kacin, Ioannis Kasoulides, Metin Kazak, Vytautas Landsbergis, Francisco José Millán Mon, Raimon Obiols i Germà, Vural Öger, Cem Özdemir, Ria Oomen-Ruijten, Justas Vincas Paleckis, Ioan Mircea Paşcu, Alojz Peterle, Tobias Pflüger, João de Deus Pinheiro, Hubert Pirker, Samuli Pohjamo, Michel Rocard, Raül Romeva i Rueda, Libor Rouček, José Ignacio Salafranca Sánchez-Neyra, Jacek Saryusz-Wolski, György Schöpflin, Gitte Seeberg, István Szent-Iványi, Antonio Tajani, Charles Tannock, Inese Vaidere, Geoffrey Van Orden, Jan Marinus Wiersma, Josef Zieleniec
<b>Substitute(s) present for the final vote</b>	Laima Liucija Andrikienė, Alexandra Dobolyi, Carlo Fatuzzo, Milan Horáček, Anneli Jäätteenmäki, Tunne Kelam, Jaromír Kohlíček, Erik Meijer, Nickolay Mladenov, Rihards Pīks, Aloyzas Sakalas, Anders Samuelsen, Adrian Severin
<b>Substitute(s) under Rule 178(2) present for the final vote</b>	Šarūnas Birutis, Eduard Raul Hellvig, Bilyana Ilieva Raeva