

# SPECIALISTS ON AFGHAN OPIATES MEET IN THE HAGUE

13 Feb 2013

## Event

On 11-13 February 2013, experts and leading practitioners from Europe, Asia and the USA met at Europol in The Hague for a series of meetings convened under the Paris Pact Initiative.

Started in 2003, the Paris Pact Initiative is a global partnership to counter the trafficking and consumption of opiates coming from Afghanistan. The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) jointly facilitated the event, which was attended by delegates from Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Iran, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Russian Federation, Belarus, Australia, the European Union, and international organisations such as Interpol and the World Customs Organisation.

Afghanistan remains by far the world's largest producer of opium poppies, providing the base for 90 per cent of global heroin, and the opiate market continues to remain extremely flexible and adaptable. Diversification of trafficking routes from Afghanistan is a prominent and current development, and especially towards Europe, so Europol is keen to extend its knowledge and experience to fight heroin production and trafficking from the EU perspective. A considerable amount of Europol's operational support is in the field of drugs trafficking, as well as other areas of organised crime. As a member of the Paris Pact Initiative, Europol coordinates and provides support to pan-EU law enforcement investigations into large-scale heroin trafficking, and the diversion and smuggling of the critical heroin precursor chemical, acetic anhydride.

Three one-day sessions focussed on the thematic areas of: Heroin Precursors; Legal Frameworks and Cross-Border Cooperation; and Financial Flows.

The meeting was timely, as Europol recently released its first EU Drug Markets report, published in partnership with the EMCDDA in Lisbon. The report highlights the severe health and social problems associated with heroin use and promotes a range of actions necessary for the health and security of the EU.

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