

I

*(Information)***COUNCIL****COUNCIL RESOLUTION****of 27 November 2003****on combating the impact of psychoactive substances use on road accidents**

(2004/C 97/01)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

- (1) bearing in mind that the European Union's drugs strategy (2000-2004) stresses the importance of undertaking work on driving under the influence of illicit drugs and medicines, and in particular of carrying out additional scientific studies on the connection between drugs and road accidents;
- (2) bearing in mind that the European Union Action Plan on Drugs (2000-2004) states that the Commission and the Member States will undertake research into the effects of driving under the influence of illicit drugs and medicines;
- (3) bearing in mind that the Commission communication on the mid-term evaluation of the Action Plan on Drugs (2000-2004) acknowledges, on the one hand, that the group of experts on alcohol, drugs, medicine and driving made a number of recommendations concerning the problem of driving under the influence of illicit drugs and, on the other hand, invites the Commission and the Council to implement those recommendations;
- (4) bearing in mind the Commission communication on a European Road Safety Action Programme and, in particular, the measures identified therein to combat the use of drugs and medicines related to vehicle driving; also bearing in mind the importance of timely and effective implementation of that action programme;
- (5) bearing in mind the conclusions of the Council (Transport/Telecommunications/Energy) concerning the above European Action Programme, and in particular the indications there included to accord special attention to the problem of driving under the influence of drugs;
- (6) recalling Resolution 44/5 of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs on the prevention of the recreational and leisure use of drugs among young people adopted in Vienna in March 2001;
- (7) bearing in mind the Resolution of the Council and of the Representatives of the Member States on the prevention of the recreational use of drugs, and in particular, the recommendation aimed at reducing the number of road accidents resulting from the recreational use of drugs, for example, by improving the mobility of young people with the help of public transport;
- (8) recalling Council Directive 91/439/EEC of 29 July 1991 on driving licences and in particular Annex III thereto, which envisages rules on refusal to issue or to renew a driving licence in the event of dependence or regular abuse of psychotropic substances;
- (9) bearing in mind Title V of Directive 2001/83/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 November 2001 on the Community code relating to medicinal products for human use; whereas this Directive requires that information accompanies all medicines placed on the market, and that such information on the labelling or in the package leaflet should advise patients of the potential risks on their ability to drive safely when the medicine is taken according to the advice to patients; whereas that information is also provided to prescribers in the summary of product characteristics and has to specifically cover any adverse effects which may impact on the patient's ability to drive;
- (10) recalling the 2002 Annual Report by the European Monitoring Centre on Drugs and Drug Addictions, and in particular the reference to the danger of poly-drug abuse in the context of driving;
- (11) bearing in mind the work carried out on this matter by the Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe, and in particular the conclusions of the seminar held on June 18-20, 2003, concerning road traffic and psychoactive substances;
- (12) bearing in mind that scientific research shows that psychoactive substances can seriously impair driving ability, in particular by affecting the drivers' psychomotor functions, and consequently be the cause or concomitant cause of road accidents; bearing in mind also the repercussions of road accidents on the health, social, working and security levels in EU Member States;

- (13) whereas the statistics gathered by the Member States on the presence and the incidence of psychoactive substances in road accidents are still too fragmented and not easily comparable; whereas the data available show anyhow that the phenomenon is widespread; in particular, poly-drug abuse and the combined use of drugs, alcohol and medicines in the context of driving is a cause for concern;
- (14) whereas the number of road accidents increases considerably at weekends, particularly around nightclubs and discos, and in some Member States road accidents on Friday and Saturday nights have become the main cause of death among young people from fifteen to twenty-four years old;
- (15) whereas it is necessary to carry on with research, especially on the epidemiological aspects. In particular, if appropriate epidemiological inquiries are to be possible, further efforts must be made to develop methodologies and control tools intended to detect psychoactive substances use by vehicle drivers, as well as to check the effects of the same substances on driving ability;
- (16) whereas numerous traffic controls on vehicle drivers are indispensable, especially in dangerous situations, for the proper monitoring and more effective combat of this phenomenon.
- (17) whereas, in order to understand the phenomenon more fully and correctly, it would be useful to increase, within the limits of available resources, the number of neuro-behavioural and toxicological tests carried out on vehicle drivers;
- (18) whereas professional transport of goods and persons continue to increase in the EU, also as the consequence of the achievement of the Internal Market and the EU enlargement; whereas in order to prevent accidents involving heavy vehicles, the use of psychoactive substances by professional drivers should be detected, where possible and in accordance with national law, during periodical medical checks and road side checks; whereas, a specific regime for professional drivers could be envisaged;
- (19) whereas the exchange of information at European level should be increased in order to identify best practices both in the handling of psychoactive substances-related driving cases and in the training provided to all the practitioners concerned;
- (20) whereas information and prevention campaigns should be improved in order to increase awareness of the dangers of consuming psychoactive substances as well as of their combined use in the context of driving; in particular, it is advisable to arrange specific information campaigns targeting young people and encouraging their active participation. Whereas it would be useful to make aware and involve the managers of night clubs and discos in such prevention action;
- (21) whereas the importance, with a view to reducing the number of road accidents, of developing early-intervention programmes tailored to drug users and of taking the opportunity afforded by checks on driving in a mental and physical state impaired by drug use to make contact with the users and start, where appropriate, the rehabilitation process,
- UNDERLINES THE IMPORTANCE OF:
- (22) promoting and widening research on the influence of psychoactive substances over driving ability, so that prevention and law enforcement measures can be grounded on sound scientific evidence. Fully exploiting the opportunities offered by the Sixth Framework Programme of the European Union for research and technological development, in particular as regards the effects of synthetic drugs and the study of the effects of drugs on the nervous system;
- (23) increasing, within the limits of national law, the use of neuro-behavioural and toxicological tests designed to detect the possible consumption of psychoactive substances by drivers, as well as to check the influence of such substances on driving, above all in the event of fatal road accidents and in accidents classified as serious according to national definitions and regulations, and when there is a legitimate suspicion to believe that the drivers were under the influence of psychoactive substances;
- (24) developing research to improve road tests, with special attention to their practicality and reliability, in order to disseminate and standardise their use, and in the light of the results obtained by the joint study carried out by the European Union and the USA (Rosita II);
- (25) ensuring the exchange of information among Member States, including the countries acceding to the European Union, to identify best practices, and providing the European Commission and the EMCDDA with information concerning the measures undertaken at national level in good time, in order to make monitoring of the phenomenon at European level possible;
- (26) launching targeted information and prevention campaigns to warn against the dangers of psychoactive substances use in the context of driving, through the involvement of young people, health practitioners, families, schools as well as professional drivers;

- (27) defining and developing effective prevention measures, which should be tailored to the specific cultural and social contexts both at national and local level, aiming at reducing the number of road accidents resulting from the use of psychoactive substances in recreational contexts, *inter alia* by encouraging the use of public transport as an alternative to the use of private vehicles in places and situations at risk and setting up first-aid groups consisting of social workers and health practitioners, acting inside nightclubs and discos to identify individuals at risk early before they start driving;
- (28) launching awareness campaigns to involve night-club managers, and promoting collaboration between the latter and the competent local and national authorities to prevent dangerous situations and manage them effectively;
- (29) taking any appropriate measures, which may include sanctions, in respect of vehicle drivers who are under the influence of psychoactive substances, which reduce their capacity to drive;
- (30) gathering and evaluating information regarding measures for rehabilitation of drivers who have used drugs with a view to developing tailored early-intervention programmes
- AND INVITES THE COMMISSION TO ENSURE A TIMELY AND EFFECTIVE FOLLOW-UP TO THE EUROPEAN ACTION PROGRAMME ON ROAD SAFETY, AND IN PARTICULAR:
- (31) to carry out a study on the functioning and effectiveness of the neuro-behavioural and toxicological tests concerning the intake and influence of psychoactive substances on driving ability, currently used in the Member States of the European Union. On the basis of the outcome of such a study, to explore the possibility of drawing up, in cooperation with the Member States and the parties concerned, and to propose procedures harmonised or alternatively guidelines at European level for the above tests in order to make results reliable and comparable;
- (32) to draw up, in cooperation with the Member States and the parties concerned, and to propose guidelines at European level, also based on the best practices identified in the European Union, concerning the management of psychoactive substances-related cases in the context of driving (e.g. evaluation of the effects of the substances on driving, secondary-prevention action and/or treatment);
- (33) to draw up, in cooperation with the Member States and the parties concerned, including CEPOL, guidelines at European level recommending training programmes for the police officers and health professionals;
- (34) to consider, in light of the experiences obtained at national level, and in consultation with the European Agency for the evaluation of medicinal products, the advisability of the general introduction of appropriate, harmonised pictograms on medical packagings;
- (35) to consider the possibility of proposing measures aimed at ensuring appropriate levels of control on professional drivers;
- (36) to work out the establishment, within the European Commission, of a European Road Safety Observatory, subject to the decisions to be taken by the Council (Transport/Telecommunications/Energy) on this matter. In this context, to ensure issues related to driving under the influence of psychoactive substances are tackled in the context of EU activities in the field of road accidents;
- (37) to draw up, in cooperation with the Member States and the parties concerned, a glossary including terms and definitions related to the main aspects of the use of psychoactive substances related to vehicle driving ability, in order to improve mutual understanding among the European Union Member States.
-