

The Parliamentary Committee "for Encountering the Problem of Drugs" of the Hellenic Parliament convened on February the 1st, 2005 following the proposal of 2nd Vice –President of the Chamber, Mr. Georgios Sourlas and discussed the major problem that arose after the publication of the UNODC Report (United Nations Office on Drugs and Narcotics) and the Afghanistan Counter Narcotics Directorate regarding opium production in Afghanistan (Afghanistan: Optimum Survey, November 2004).

The Committee, taking under consideration the fact that the Reduction of Demand and Supply constitutes the two pillars of the EU and UN policy for facing the Drug problem, expresses its deepest concern for the significant increase in opium and heroin production in Afghanistan today.

According to the Report:

- In 2004, i.e. two years after the fall of the Taliban regime, the UN Report mentions that opium production reached the 4.200 tones.
- More than 400 heroine production laboratories operate in Afghanistan.
- Opium production spread in every province of Afghanistan and became not only the main financial "development" mechanism, but also the most powerful link between hostile populations.
- We also point out that in times of the Taliban, there was a danger that the whole narcotics "industry" in Afghanistan fall into the hands of Al Qaeda and other terrorist groups.
- The opium economy, of ca. 2.8 billion dollars, makes up ca. 60% of the GDP of Afghanistan.
- All this takes place in a period during which ca. 20.000 US and NATO military forces are stationed in Afghanistan, including 150 Greek soldiers.
- After all this, one can justify the worries and questions that arise regarding the progress of the situation and the sincerity of the intentions to limit the production of opioids in Afghanistan.

Taking into consideration the Political Statement of the 20th UN General Assembly which recognizes that action against the global problem of drugs constitutes an ethical and common responsibility and confirms the need of a consensus approach to the elimination of illegal drug cultivation, as well as the Action Plan on International Cooperation for the Elimination of Drug Cultivation and Alternative Development of the same General Assembly, plus the General Assembly Resolutions 58/141, 44/11 and 45/14 on the same issue, the Committee invites the relevant Committees of the National Parliaments and of the European Parliament to intervene so that the International Community can recognize immediately the disastrous consequences of illegal drug cultivation on economic and social development, the political stability and the safety of Afghanistan, its neighbouring countries as well as all nations. It is urgent and necessary to immediately formulate and implement drug control strategies at a national level, as well as on an international co-operation level, which will include measures of prevention and treatment of addiction to substances, law enforcement, dismantling of the illegal drug cultivation, as well as of the relevant laboratories, and measures of alternative development of countries that, like Afghanistan, resort to drug cultivation, production and trafficking and depend on this production of death as a means of economic, social and political development.

At the same time, the Parliamentary Committee urges the international community to an immediate intervention and financial aid in order to establish all necessary alternative structures and cultivations for the development of Afghanistan. The same also applies to other drug production countries.