

Europe warned of cocaine crisis

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The U.N. narcotics czar warns that Europe is headed toward a cocaine crisis as many governments there continue to be in denial of the problem.

Speaking at an international meeting in London Thursday, Antonio Maria Costa, executive director of the U.N. Office on Drugs and Crime, said too many European governments are only focusing on the supply end in South America but not on consumption in their backyards. He said the worst offenders are Spain, England and Italy.

Costa said the stable or even falling demand for cocaine in most of the world is being undercut by an upward trend in Europe.

"You are heading for a crisis. We are facing a pandemic, and not only because of coca addiction by high profile entertainers, executives, models or socialites who flaunt their illicit drug use in words and deeds. This is a symptom of a deeper problem -- one made worse by uncritical reporting in the media," he said.

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