

# Commission Presents Three Deliverables of its New Security Strategy



## News

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Alongside with its new Union Security Strategy of 24 July 2020, the Commission has tabled more concrete policy goals in three priority areas:

- Fight against child sexual abuse;
- Fight against illicit drugs;
- Fight against firearms trafficking.

The Commission points out that threats in these areas have been worsened by the coronavirus pandemic, particularly child sexual abuse, demonstrably exacerbated by physical isolation and increased online activities. Fighting drug and firearms trafficking is key to action against organised crime, a top internal security priority across Europe.

The new EU strategy for a more effective fight against child sexual abuse presents a framework to respond in a comprehensive way to the increasing threat of child sexual abuse, both in its online **and offline** forms. The strategy will be the reference framework for EU action in the fight against these crimes over the next five years. It sets out concrete initiatives under the following eight headings:

- Ensuring the complete implementation of current legislation (i.e. Directive 2011/93/EU on combating the sexual abuse and sexual exploitation of children and child pornography);
- Ensuring that EU legislation enables an effective response;
- Identifying legislative gaps, best practices and priority actions;
- Strengthening law enforcement efforts at the national and EU levels;
- Enabling Member States to better protect children through prevention;
- A European centre to prevent and counter child sexual abuse;
- Galvanising industry efforts to ensure the protection of children in their products; and
- Improving the protection of children globally through multi-stakeholder cooperation.

One of the key elements of the strategy is the plan to create a new European centre on child sexual abuse. It is designed to support law enforcement (e.g. by sharing reports in relation to child sexual abuse from companies with police authorities) in the EU and its Member States in the prevention of child sexual abuse, as well as to ensure that victims receive appropriate assistance. The Commission will also work on setting up a prevention network, which is to overcome the current problems that research into the motivation of offenders is scarce and fragmented, and that the communication between research and practitioners is low. The network would follow a scientific approach towards the prevention of child sexual abuse. Reputed practitioners and researchers are to support Member States in putting in place usable, evaluated and effective prevention measures to decrease the prevalence of child sexual abuse in the EU and to facilitate the

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exchange of best practices. Another focus of the strategy will be a strengthened law enforcement response. This includes setting up an Innovation Hub and Lab at Europol, which is to facilitate Member State access to technological tools and knowledge developed at the EU level.

[The new EU Drugs Agenda and Action Plan 2021-2025](#) sets out the political framework for the EU's drugs policy over the next five years. It aims at guiding Member States in achieving improved protection for citizens in the face of the complex challenges posed by illicit drugs. The Agenda identifies eight strategic priorities related to security, prevention and health:

- Disrupting and dismantling major high-risk drug-related organised crime groups operating in EU Member States;
- Increasing the detection of illicit trafficking of drugs and drug precursors at EU points of entry and exit;
- Increasing the effective monitoring of logistical and digital channels exploited for small- and medium-volume drug distribution, as well as increasing seizures of illicit substances smuggled through these channels in close cooperation with the private sector;
- Dismantling drug production and processing, preventing the diversion and trafficking of drug precursors for illicit drug production, as well as eradicating illegal cultivation;
- Preventing the uptake of drugs, enhancing crime prevention and raising awareness of the adverse effects of drugs on citizens and communities;
- Enhancing access to treatment options for people who experience harm from substance use;
- Increasing the efficiency of risk-and-harm reduction interventions so as to protect the health of drug users and the public;
- Developing a balanced intervention on drug use in prisons (reducing demand and restricting supply).

The Action Plan accompanying the Agenda sets out concrete measures for implementing these priorities. The Commission highlights that the EU Agenda on drugs addresses several new aspects compared to previous policy initiatives, such as the increased poly-criminality of organised crime groups, the role of the EU as a producer and exporter of drugs, as well as technological enablers (e.g. darknet marketplaces, cryptocurrencies and encryption technologies for buying/selling drugs).

[The 2020-2025 Action Plan on Firearms Trafficking](#) addresses remaining legal loopholes and inconsistencies in firearms controls that hinder police cooperation. It sets out four priorities:

- Safeguarding the licit market and limiting diversion;
- Building a better intelligence picture;
- Increasing pressure on criminal markets; and
- Stepping up international cooperation.

Since the Action Plan on firearms trafficking builds upon previous experiences with the Southeast Europe region, it also lays down the common way forward with the Western Balkans, Ukraine and Moldova. To this end, the Action Plan includes tailor-made activities for the Southeast Europe region. The Commission highlights that fighting the illicit access to firearms is a cross-cutting security issue. It not only affects the EU, its Member States and neighbouring countries, but it is also interconnected with other forms of criminal activities, such as terrorism, illicit drugs trafficking, trafficking of human beings, maritime piracy, counterfeiting, environmental crime, or organised property crime. Therefore, there is an urgent need to step up actions in this area at the national, EU and international levels.

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