

# Drug Trafficking Report Published



**Cornelia Riehle**

## News

On 19 April 2021, Eurojust published its [Report on Drug Trafficking](#), reviewing experiences and identifying challenges in judicial cooperation. The report is based on an analysis of 1838 drug trafficking cases that Eurojust was involved in during the period 2017-2020. Drug trafficking remains a highly lucrative market worldwide, with an estimated value of €30 billion per year in the EU alone.

Specific issues identified by the report regarding international judicial cooperation in drug trafficking cases concern:

- New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) and their precursors;
- Cooperation with third countries;
- Controlled deliveries;
- Conflicts of jurisdiction;
- Financial investigations, asset tracing and asset recovery;
- The European Investigation Order (EIO);
- Drug trafficking in a digital environment.

Cocaine and cannabis constitute the main drug types dealt with in Eurojust's casework. According to the report, cases involving New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) and (pre-)precursors are increasingly presenting enormous legal and operational challenges for judicial authorities, due to the constant changes in substances that have not (yet) been criminalised. Regularly updating legislation is strongly recommended to close these gaps.

Furthermore, cross-border controlled deliveries remain a sensitive issue from operational and legal points of view. Hence, the report recommends striving for greater harmonisation of and specific regulations on controlled deliveries at the EU level.

With regard to associated crimes, it appears that money laundering goes hand in hand with drug trafficking. Hence, embedded financial investigations are deemed crucial in the fight against drug trafficking, including measures for the freezing, confiscation, and recovery of assets.

Ultimately, drug trafficking in a digital environment appears to be a rapidly growing phenomenon, with more and more drug trafficking cases having links to digital marketplaces, darknet platforms, encrypted devices, etc. Therefore, judicial authorities are encouraged to seek special knowledge, for instance through the National Contact Points of the European Judicial Cybercrime Network (EJCN).

Further recommendations include making full use of existing agencies and networks such as Eurojust itself, its coordination centres, the EJC, Asset Recovery Offices (AROs), Financial Intelligence Units (FIU), and other networks. Setting up Joint Investigation Teams (JITs) should also be considered when fighting drug trafficking.

### AUTHOR

**Cornelia Riehle**

Deputy Head of Section  
Academy of European Law

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