

Launch of European Ports Alliance



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News

On 24 January 2024, the European Commission and the Belgian Council Presidency officially [launched the European Ports Alliance](#) and its Public Private Partnership. Strengthening the resilience of logistics hubs through a European Ports Alliance is one of the key priorities outlined first in the EU [Roadmap to fight drug trafficking and organised crime](#), adopted on 18 October 2023 (→ [euclid 3/2023, 257](#)). It also implements Commission President Ursula von der Leyen's commitments to take strong action in 2024 to fight drugs smuggling and criminal infiltration into European ports.

The partnership comes against the background that European ports, which account for 75% of EU external trade volumes and 31% of EU internal trade volumes, are particularly vulnerable to drug smuggling. Criminal networks increasingly use violence, corruption and intimidation to secure their smuggling activities in ports. Ports are the main gateway for drugs smuggled into the EU, which is also shown by the fact that 70% of all drugs seizures take place at EU ports.

The European Ports Alliance is based on three main elements:

- Mobilising the customs community against drugs trafficking;
- Strengthening law enforcement operations in ports and against the criminal organisations orchestrating drugs trafficking;
- Setting up a Public-Private Partnership helping against drugs smuggling and involving all relevant stakeholders, including ports authorities, private shipping companies and private operators working in ports.

Measures to improve security in all EU ports include:

- Provision of €200 million for funding modern equipment to help customs authorities scan containers and check imports more efficiently;
- Specific law enforcement operations in ports with increased support by Europol, Eurojust, the EPPO and the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT);
- Protection of logistics, information, staff, and processes in ports through the Public-Private Partnership.

Looking at the institutional side of the Public-Private Partnership, meetings at the ministerial level will be held annually. They will identify remaining challenges, set strategic priorities and assess progress made. Senior official meetings will take place to prepare and follow up on the priorities set by the annual ministerial meeting.

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