

## ROADMAP

**Roadmaps aim to inform citizens and stakeholders about the Commission's work in order to allow them to provide feedback and to participate effectively in future consultation activities. Citizens and stakeholders are in particular invited to provide views on the Commission's understanding of the problem and possible solutions and to make available any relevant information that they may have.**

<b>TITLE OF THE INITIATIVE</b>	The New EU Drugs Agenda (2021-2025) and related EU Action Plan on Drugs (2021-2025).
<b>LEAD DG – RESPONSIBLE UNIT</b>	Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs (DG HOME), Unit on Organised Crime and Drugs Policy.
<b>LIKELY TYPE OF INITIATIVE</b>	Communication.
<b>INDICATIVE PLANNING</b>	Q3 2020.
<b>ADDITIONAL INFORMATION</b>	EU drugs policy: <a href="https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/organized-crime-and-human-trafficking/drug-control/eu-response-to-drugs_en">https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/organized-crime-and-human-trafficking/drug-control/eu-response-to-drugs_en</a>

**This Roadmap is provided for information purposes only and its content might change. It does not prejudice the final decision of the Commission on whether this initiative will be pursued or on its final content. All elements of the initiative described by the Roadmap, including its timing, are subject to change.**

## A. Context, Problem definition and Subsidiarity Check

### Context

Drugs pose a complex security, social and health problem that affects millions of people in the EU. In addition to the direct impacts on security and health, the illicit drugs phenomenon has wide-ranging consequences that include violence and community safety, negative impacts on the legal economy, corruption, and damage to the environment.

The [EU Drugs Strategy 2013-2020](#) and its corresponding EU Action Plan on Drugs 2017-2020 are under final evaluation that will conclude in Q3 2020. The current strategy was implemented through two action plans: the [EU Action Plan on Drugs 2013-2016](#) and the [EU Action Plan on Drugs 2017-2020](#).

In the context of the evaluation of the current EU Drugs Strategy and corresponding EU Action Plan, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) published the [European Drug Report 2019](#) and the EMCDDA together with EUROPOL published the [EU Drug Markets Report 2019](#). These EU flagship reports on the drug situation and the state of illicit drug markets in Europe describe the context that will factor into the definition of the new EU Drugs Agenda and new EU Action Plan on Drugs, along with the final and [mid-term evaluation results](#).

Based on data from the EU Drug Markets Report 2019, the drug market in the EU is estimated at a *minimum* retail value of EUR 30 billion per year, making illicit drugs the most valuable market for criminal organisations operating in the EU. More than one third of identified organised crime groups are directly involved in the drug market, of which approx. two thirds also have links with wider criminal activities including money laundering and corruption. We are also facing an unprecedented increase in the availability of illicit drugs in the EU. The volume of cocaine introduced in the EU is at an all-time high. At the same time, we are also seeing increased production of illicit substances within the EU, mainly of synthetic drugs. In terms of the increased violence in communities, the report confirms that criminal use of firearms and other types of weapons and explosives that enable violence in the context of the drug trade has increased in importance over the past few years.

Furthermore, the European Drug Report 2019 shows that the use of illicit drugs is a recognised contributor to the global burden of disease. Chronic and acute health problems associated with the use of illicit drugs include dependence and drug-related infectious disease. While there is a range of acute harms from illicit drug use, drug overdose is the ultimate harm. Taking into consideration that there is suspected systematic under-reporting in some EU Member States of drug overdoses, as well as the differences in the ways toxicological examinations are conducted and registered - in 2017, in the EU, there were *at least* 8,238 overdose deaths involving one or more illicit drugs. Risk of exposure to the effects of drugs has increased dramatically whether through online availability of drugs, in social circles or exposure to the increasing violence of drug trafficking organised crime groups.

### Problem the initiative aims to tackle

In order to better address this problematic context of illicit drugs and to follow-up on the conclusions of the final evaluation of the current strategy and action plan, the European Commission will propose a new EU Drugs Agenda and related EU Action Plan on Drugs that will cover 5 years from 2021-2025. The new agenda and its new action plan will provide the direction for collective action in the field of drugs both within the EU and at international level. The agenda will represent the EU position on drugs policy and will identify common strategic objectives to reduce demand and supply of drugs, as well as dependence, and related security, health and societal harms.

Based on the current state of illicit drugs in Europe and broad conclusions shaping up from the final evaluation of the current instruments, some priority problem areas have emerged for consideration in the new EU Drugs Agenda. These include but are not limited to:

- Supply of illegal drugs from being smuggled into the EU, especially heroin and cocaine;
- Production and trafficking of illicit drugs within the EU, especially of synthetic drugs;
- New supply chains making drugs available to citizens through internet (including darknet) marketplaces and postal/parcel services;
- Drug production and trafficking alongside other forms of organised crime;
- The new phenomenon of “designer” precursors;
- Prevention issues related to the uptake of drugs for those that are at risk of developing dependency;
- Harmful use for those that are engaged in addictive and harmful patterns of drug consumption;
- Drug use in prisons.

#### **Basis for EU intervention (legal basis and subsidiarity check)**

Under the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), the main legal basis of the EU drugs policy is based on:

- 1) The area of freedom, security and justice (Title V of Part Three).
- 2) Public health (Title XIV of Part Three).
- 3) Common commercial policy (Title Two of Part Five).

The scale of the drugs problem is global, and drug markets and organised crime groups are cross-border, making their impact on security and health a cross-EU issue. Therefore, strategic direction on tackling the impacts of the drugs phenomenon should be framed at EU level. Elements with a cross-border dimension that will be addressed by the EU Drugs Agenda and Action Plan will for example include coordination and effectiveness of cross-border responses of law enforcement, judiciary, customs and border control, monitoring of internet and darknet marketplaces for drugs, and addressing the links to other important EU security threats such as trafficking in human beings and terrorism.

Furthermore, because the drugs problem is so extensive geographically, it is important for the EU Drugs Agenda to ensure that the EU speaks with one voice in the international fora in terms of shared concerns in the area of drugs, and advocate the balanced, integrated and evidence-based approach to the drugs phenomenon. These are important elements of the EU Drugs Agenda that also intend to add value to domestic strategies of Member States.

#### **B. What does the initiative aim to achieve and how**

The initiative is proposed as a Commission Communication that will define the high-level EU Drugs Agenda and Action Plan on Drugs for the period 2021-2025. The new EU Drugs Agenda and its Action Plan will aim to reduce the demand and supply of drugs in Europe by serving as effective instruments for Member States to guide and complement national security and health policies and national/local action, as well as collaborate and coordinate more effectively cross-borders, cross-sectors and inter-agencies.

The new agenda will also integrate horizontal policy concerns such as stimulating multi-sector digital innovation across responses to the drugs phenomenon from use of digital channels for prevention of drug use, to use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) tools and instruments in investigations by law enforcement; strengthening international cooperation; increasing efforts on research including new trends and threats; and also addressing gender dimensions in this area.

The new EU Drugs Agenda will provide the overarching political framework and priorities for the EU policy response to the current drugs context. The new EU Action Plan on Drugs will facilitate the implementation of the priorities laid out in the agenda.

#### **C. Better regulation**

##### **Consultation of citizens and stakeholders**

Extensive consultations have been conducted as part of the final and mid-term evaluations of the current EU Drugs Strategy and its Action Plans on Drugs. The Commission has been gathering input from a broad range of stakeholders, including public authorities and administrations at national, regional and local levels including customs and law enforcement, academia, anti-drugs and health related civil society and non-governmental

organisations, chemical and medical industry representatives, practitioners involved in the drugs or health policy fields and private individuals. Anyone affected by illicit drug use has also been invited to respond to the public consultation launched in November 2019 in the scope of the evaluation. The public consultation run for a duration of 12 weeks, in all EU languages. No other public consultation is planned.

#### **Evidence base and data collection**

The new EU Drugs Agenda and related EU Action Plan on Drugs will be based on the outcomes of the ongoing evaluation of the current EU Drugs Strategy and EU Action Plan on Drugs, expected to be finalised in Q3 2020. The outcomes of the evaluation will be published together with an analysis of the instruments based on the Better Regulation criteria (effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and EU added value) undertaken through desk research, case study analysis and extensive stakeholder consultation activities.

The new EU Drugs Agenda and related Action Plan will also take into consideration additional publications such as the EU Drug Markets Report 2019 from the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction and Europol, the annual European Drug Reports, as well as other publications available from the European Commission, and other EU and international institutions. Examples include the World Drug Reports from UNODC and the Outcome Document of the 2016 United Nations General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem.