



## **STATEMENT**

# **“COALITION OF EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AGAINST SERIOUS AND ORGANISED CRIME”**

**Spain - Cádiz, 14 FEBRUARY 2025**

The ministers responsible for Justice and Home Affairs / Interior of the Kingdom of Belgium, the Republic of France, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Republic of Italy, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Kingdom of Sweden and the Kingdom of Spain, declare the following:

Gravely concerned by the perturbing threat of serious and organised crime to the values and stable functioning of our society, the safety, well-being and fundamental rights and freedom of our citizens, the ministers for the interior and justice in our countries have come together since December 2021,

Expressing their commitment in working together in the European Union and with third countries towards a comprehensive approach to reduce the influence of and disrupt criminal networks, apprehend and convict perpetrators and seize and confiscate their illicit assets,

French, Swedish, Spanish and Belgian EU Council Presidencies, supported by Germany, Italy and the Netherlands and the European Commission and relevant EU agencies, put the common EU approach against organised drug-related crime high on the political agenda with a special focus on more effective law enforcement, judicial cooperation and reinforced cooperation with key actors and relevant stakeholders in key regions such as Latin America and the Western Balkans. We convey to the current Polish and the future Danish Presidency the urgency to continue these efforts.

The Coalition expressed full support for the “EU Roadmap to fight drug trafficking and serious and organised crime” to step up the response from our governments, law enforcement, and private actors by means of a collective and coordinated approach. Now is the time to make sure the right strategies and measures are included in the upcoming EU strategies that include serious and organised crime.

### Future Proof Strategies

We therefore encourage the Executive Vice-President for Tech Sovereignty, Security and Democracy; the Commissioner for Internal Affairs and Migration; and the Commissioner for Democracy, Justice, and the Rule of Law to ensure a cross-cutting coordination and dialogue between all actors concerned by the new Internal Security Strategy and subsequent action plans, especially those directly commissioned to fight various areas of serious and organised crime and particularly drug trafficking with the aim to dismantle and disrupt the most threatening criminal networks.

The coalition welcomes the new Drugs coordinator of DG HOME within the Commission as an important step to streamline the different policies and actions and to ensure the work is done across all policy domains.

We acknowledge the interlinkages between serious organised crime and other serious crime threats should be jointly addressed.

The following declaration intends to deliver the most important aspects that should be included in the future EU Internal Security Strategy and other relevant strategic documents in the areas of prevention, illicit financial flows, cooperation with third countries, information exchange of law enforcement and resilient logistical hubs.

## Prevention

We encourage Member States to make focus on efficient crime prevention including, i.e. to make use of the administrative approach to tackle any criminal activities in legal entities and to prevent criminals from gaining government contracts, subsidies or permits to engage in commercial activities that could cover or launder illicit profits and to prevent the infiltration into legal business structures

Furthermore, it is also essential to focus attention on the influence of organised criminal networks by coercion, use of violence and online recruiting of youngsters and other violent groups.

We call on the Commission to

- make available flexible funding mechanisms to maintain a sustainable European Crime Prevention Network (EUCPN) and European Network on the Administrative Approach (ENAA),
- make use of the work and experience of the ENAA to deliver the message of the administrative approach to member states,
- Apply a horizontal, multidisciplinary) and whole-of-society-approach, i.e. assure that impact assessments of the Commission contain an assessment on the consequences for the internal security.
- Include the prevention of recruitment of minors online into criminality, the prevention of violence as well as the administrative approach in the relevant new EU strategies / the new EU Internal Security Strategy.
- Focus on the prevention of corruption, making use of the tools offered by prevention and the administrative approach (e.g. integrity checks)
- Consider, in view of the ongoing evaluation, the need for a revision of the Pyrotechnic Articles Directive 2013/29/EU on the prevention of the misuse of pyrotechnic articles and the commission of violent crimes.

## Illicit Financial Flows

The fight against organised crime requires us to step up measures at EU level to prevent and disrupt the flow of illicit profits across borders by strengthening cooperation within the EU on confiscation investigations and confiscation orders, including the non-conviction-based ones on unexplained wealth and by strengthening cooperation within the EU on the related investigations, including the ones carried out by Financial Investigation Units

The attention given to illicit financial flows, including the confiscation and seizure of assets should be continued in the future EU Internal Security Strategy. Consequently, we encourage Member States to implement the Directive on Asset Recovery (EU 2024/1260).

We also encourage Member States to fully implement the Anti-Money Laundering package adopted during 2024, and to make use of the possibility to establish Public Private Partnerships between law enforcement authorities and the private sector in the field of anti-money laundering and the financing of terrorism.

## Regional cooperation

Standing together against the undermining effects of serious and organised crime, transcending our borders, is paramount to ensure a successful strategy to counter crime and especially drug trafficking. Indeed, key players of organised crime often direct criminal activities within the Union from third countries and hide themselves as well as their assets in these countries.

Judicial cooperation with third countries, including through mutual legal assistance and extradition, is essential for successful prosecutions and for bringing members of criminal networks to justice. We welcome a further exchange of expertise in this area, for example in the context of the European Judicial Organised Crime Network (EJOEN)

We have already initiated a successful path of cooperation with Latin-American countries as the source and transit-countries of cocaine, exemplified by the concrete progress between the EU and CLASI countries, which we intend to improve in the coming years.

Therefore, the future EU Internal Security Strategy should give ample attention to the cooperation with third countries. Recent analyses show that next to Latin America, the Caribbean, the Western Balkans, or Africa are emerging as important transit hubs to Western Europe.

We call on the Commission to work closely with all relevant entities, when developing new strategies on serious and organised crime and the cooperation with the Latin American, Caribbean and Western Balkans regions and Africa. Without pre-judging the upcoming negotiations on the new Multi-annual Financial Framework (MFF), we equally call on the European Commission to reserve sufficient EU funds for Member States (ideally through multilateral cooperation between them) to implement concrete and operational cooperation with the law enforcement authorities in those regions.

## Information Exchange

Following the recommendations from the High-Level Group on Access to Data our governments need to address the proposal for effective access to data for effective law enforcement.

We call on the Commission to:

- proceed swiftly with the work on access to data for effective law enforcement and stress the need to develop a roadmap by Q2 2025 for the implementation of relevant measures, including legislation if considered necessary as a result of a thorough and comprehensive impact assessment, to ensure the lawful and effective access to data for law enforcement, which need to be addressed as a matter of urgency while excluding any interference with national security and without weakening encryption in a generalized or systemic way.
- together with the Member States and interested stakeholders to support through a common communication narrative the explanation of the needs of law enforcement to access data operating within legal frameworks to protect society, to encourage service providers to cooperate with public authorities enhancing the public private partnership along with interagency cooperation, and to contribute constructively to the public discourse.



- Explore possible tools and communication channels to implement cross-border exchange of relevant information, in accordance with national legal frameworks

### Resilient logistical hubs

In early 2024, the Coalition members welcomed the launch of the European Ports Alliance, which aims to strengthen the resilience of our ports and avoid the so-called waterbed effect, by ensuring that EU ports are adequately secured against serious and organised crime, a goal which is fully in line with the Coalition's ambition, including by enhancing interagency cooperation and stimulating public-private cooperation.

We welcome the fact that this topic will remain high on the agenda of the new Commission, and we stand ready to support the further development of this Alliance.

We call on the Commission to continue to actively support the development of the European Ports Alliance and to promote a set of well-defined, actionable initiatives that address both the immediate and long-term challenges facing European ports.