



Coalition European countries
against organized crime

EUROPEAN COALITION AGAINST ORGANISED CRIME

MINISTERIAL DECLARATION

PARIS – FRANCE

20 APRIL 2026

The Ministers responsible for Justice and Home Affairs of the Kingdom of Belgium, the French Republic, the Federal Ministry of the Interior of the Federal Republic of Germany, the Republic of Italy, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Kingdom of Spain and the Kingdom of Sweden met today, in the presence of representatives of the European Commission and the Europol and Eurojust agencies;

They discussed the benefits of public-private partnerships in the fight against criminal infiltration and corruption in ports, as well as the fundamental issue of access to digital evidence, which requires cooperation from stakeholders in the sector;

The Ministers declare as follows:

Considering the growing threat posed by serious and organised crime, in particular drug trafficking, to European values and the functioning of our democratic societies;

Considering that serious and organised crime is one of the most significant and evolving threats to European security today;

Taking into account existing legal frameworks, as well as established coordination processes and mechanisms for international and European cooperation in the fight against crime and, in particular, against serious and drug-related organised crime, with agencies such as Eurojust, Europol, and the EUDA, as well as other mechanisms and programmes for international and European cooperation, such as the MAOC-N, the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT), the European Ports Alliance and the European customs alliance for borders (EUCAB), to increase the resilience of ports against criminal infiltration by strengthening the work of customs, police and other law enforcement agencies and public and private stakeholders in EU ports;

Acknowledging the launch in Copenhagen (October 2nd 2025) of the European Coalition against Drugs (ECAD) within the framework of the European Political Community, the operationalisation of which will be presented at the EPC Summit in Armenia on 4 May 2026;

Recognising that the external dimension is key to combat drug trafficking effectively, in particular the cooperation with the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, essential in the search for long-term solutions regarding cocaine demand and supply;

Recognising that we share with these countries threats and challenges related with transnational organised crime and criminal infiltration in ports;

Recognising the efforts made by successive presidencies of the Council of the EU to place a common approach to serious and organised drug-related crime on the political agenda;

Welcoming the priorities proposed by the European Commission in the fight against drugs in its Drugs Strategy and Action Plan, as well as in its Internal Security Strategy (Protect EU) and recently the EU Ports Strategy;

Encouraging the Commissioners responsible for Justice and Home Affairs, in close cooperation with all relevant directorates within the European Commission (in particular DGs TAXUD, INTPA, ENEST, MENA and MOVE), to work closely with the Coalition on the following priorities.

Building on our joint work, the Coalition will focus its efforts on five priorities as part of its 2026–2028 multi-annual action plan with the following measures:

1. *Dismantling international criminal networks and their facilitators.*
 - a. *The European Commission has announced the publication of a proposal to renew the 2008 Framework Decision on the fight against organised crime by the end of 2026. The coalition welcomes the Commission's ambition to present legislative proposals aimed at combating organised crime more effectively. The Coalition, in*

conjunction with the relevant Directorates-General, will contribute to discussions on the future of Europol and Eurojust;

- b. The Coalition will work to promote conditions for improved access to digital evidence by investigative services that ensure freedom, security and justice within the European area; in this regard, particular attention will be paid to data retention conditions and access to such data, also in encrypted environments, drawing on the recommendations of the European high-level group on access to data;
- c. The Coalition will, through a group of experts, continue its review of the current legal framework for judicial cooperation

2. Working towards resilient logistics hubs and maritime security, in support of the European Ports Alliance.

- a. In the face of the risk of corruption and criminal infiltration (particularly in ports), it is essential to strengthen cooperation between public authorities and private partners contributing to security. This involves, in particular, the sharing and more efficient use of information available in national systems in accordance with EU law. All available instruments need to be put to use effectively against criminal infiltration and corruption, including the administrative approach.
- b. The Coalition aims to produce a European assessment of the threat posed by drug trafficking in ports. The ports of Antwerp, Hamburg and Rotterdam are developing, in cooperation with Europol and the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (now EUDA), an operational model that can be adapted and applied to other European ports, starting with the members of the Coalition, in close cooperation with the European Customs Alliance for Borders;
- c. The Coalition will encourage public-private partnerships between law enforcement agencies and postal and courier services to combat the trafficking and illegal distribution of drugs, explosives and firearms, used by criminal groups.

3. Targeting illicit financial flows and assets.

- a. The Coalition's objective is to identify common responses to combat parallel financial systems used by organised crime networks, in particular underground banking systems and illicit financial flows through crypto-assets, in close cooperation with the AMLA, Europol and Eurojust;
- b. The recovery of criminal assets is a powerful tool for combating cross-border organised crime. Several Member States have already adopted national legislation enabling the application of investigative measures during the enforcement phase. The Coalition will explore ways to propose that the Commission form an expert working group to (i) conduct a detailed mapping of the legislative and practical gaps at the EU level, (ii) confirm the legal feasibility of a new instrument, (iii) develop options for a dedicated EU legal instrument for cross-border investigative measures in the execution phase and enhance mechanisms for efficient cross-border exchange of information relevant to the execution phase.
- c. The Coalition will support the implementation of the new European legal instrument Directive EU 2024/1260, which includes advanced tools such as non-conviction-based confiscation and the facilitation of cross-border recovery of frozen and confiscated assets.

4. Taking action on prevention.

- a. *The Coalition considers the implementation of preventive activities and administrative approach as a key factor in successfully tackle serious and organised crime groups in their attempt to infiltrate the legal economy and to make use of legal business structures, in the framework of an holistic approach.;*
- b. *To combat corruption and criminal infiltration of the legal economy effectively, the Coalition believes there is a clear need for exchange of information between Member states (law enforcement or administrative authorities) for administrative purposes. The Coalition will therefore support the operational action 3.1. of EMPACT that aims to establish a mapping of what currently exists in terms of the administrative approach in member states, with the aim to invite the Commission to develop options for a dedicated EU legal instrument for cross-border cooperation in this field;*
- c. *Effective interagency cooperation is essential to successfully combat serious and organised crime. Therefore, new forms of horizontal cooperation should be established and supported, with particular reference to the prevention of infiltration of organized crime groups in port and airport domains;*
- d. *In this regard, the Coalition also welcomes the reference in the EU Port Strategy to the work of the European Ports Alliance and to the proposal of the Commission to present an EU framework for background checks for port workers.*
- e. *One of the Coalition's priorities is also to support efforts to prevent the online recruitment of young people into organised criminal groups. Coalition members will therefore work in particular with online platforms and the European Commission to design appropriate countermeasures.*

5. *Strengthening international cooperation.*

- a. *The Coalition will commit to strengthening its relations with countries in the Latin American and Caribbean region in the fight against transnational organised crime, including by contributing to the consolidation of CLASI's role in the region and advancing it's operational implementation with the involvement of the European Union and by drawing on the experience developed under EMPACT. It will pursue three objectives: operational cooperation in law enforcement, making logistical hubs more resilient, and stepping up the fight against illicit money flows;*
- b. *The Coalition will support various initiatives aimed at dismantling criminal networks in drug source and transit regions, particularly in the Western Balkans, West Africa and the Maghreb/Middle East region;*
- c. *Finally, the Coalition wishes to see the activities of the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre – Narcotics (MAOC-N) strengthened. The centre plays a vital role in detecting and combating maritime drug trafficking. Indeed, since its creation, it has contributed to the interception of more than €42 billion worth of cocaine and cannabis. It must have sufficient resources at its disposal to continue this work.*