



TEXTS ADOPTED

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Narco-trafficking in Europe's waters: protecting our borders and supporting our law enforcement officers

European Parliament resolution of 17 September 2026 on narco-trafficking in Europe's waters: protecting our borders and supporting our law enforcement officers (2026/2797(RSP))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Treaty on European Union (TEU) and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU), in particular their provisions on the area of freedom, security and justice,
- having regard to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, in particular its articles on human dignity, the right to life, freedom of expression, victims' rights and the protection of personal data,
- having regard to the UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, adopted by the General Assembly on 20 December 1988,
- having regard to the Commission communication of 1 April 2025 on ProtectEU: a European Internal Security Strategy (COM(2025)0148),
- having regard to EU drugs strategies, and to the latest version published together with the EU action plan against drug trafficking 2026-2030,
- having regard to the work of the Council's Horizontal Working Party on Drugs (HDG), which was established in 1997 and is responsible for coordinating EU action on drugs,
- having regard to the reports and analyses of the European Union Drugs Agency (EUDA), in particular the European Drug Report 2025,
- having regard to the launch of the European Coalition against Drugs, which brings together more than 40 countries and aims to strengthen international cooperation against drug trafficking,

- having regard to the work of the Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe on drug policies and prevention,
 - having regard to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, signed in Palermo in 2000, and the protocols thereto, and to the UN Convention against Corruption, adopted by the General Assembly on 31 October 2003,
 - having regard to the various provisions adopted by European and international bodies on preventing and combating money laundering and the financing of organised crime,
 - having regard to the commitment of the European authorities to combating drug trafficking, in particular through the EUDA, Europol, Eurojust and the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA), as well as cooperation with the Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre - Narcotics (MAOC-N),
 - having regard to the importance of strengthening port security, maritime surveillance and international cooperation along key Atlantic trafficking routes,
 - having regard to Europol's report entitled 'Diversification in Maritime Cocaine Trafficking Modi Operandi',
 - having regard to the Joint Declaration of the Fourth CELAC-EU Summit, adopted in Santa Marta on 9 November 2025,
 - having regard to the European Ports Alliance and its Public-Private Partnership on strengthening security and resilience in European ports,
 - having regard to the EU crime priorities for the EMPACT cycle 2026-2029,
 - having regard to Rule 136(2) of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas drug-trafficking is a global criminal business and a major threat for the EU as a whole, in terms of security as well as public health, social justice and respect for the rule of law;
- B. whereas Europe is a major destination for and consumer market of illicit drugs, with a multi-billion-euro drug market that brings together different drug-trafficking networks, mafias, criminal or terrorist organisations from both within and outside Europe, as well as rogue states involved in drug trafficking; whereas drug production is also increasingly linked to networks operating in other parts of the world, with the UN recently raising concerns about the growing role of countries, such as those in East Asia, in the production and supply of synthetic drugs;

- C. whereas there have been several attacks and deaths linked to drug trafficking across the EU, including recent episodes in Portugal in October 2025, Spain in February 2024 and May 2026, France in May 2024 and October 2024, Belgium in May 2025, the Netherlands in September 2026 and Italy in June 2025, while law enforcement officers were carrying out their duty to uphold the law and protect the security of the EU and its citizens; whereas this demonstrates the need to increase resources and operational assets for the fight against drug trafficking at EU level; whereas the nature of these duties exposes police officers, border and customs officials and other frontline law enforcement personnel to particularly high levels of risk, underscoring the need to recognise and classify these activities as high-risk professions in the EU;
- D. whereas cocaine trafficking to Europe has increased significantly, with maritime routes accounting for a substantial share of trafficking flows, highlighting the need for stronger maritime surveillance, intelligence-sharing and international cooperation along the entire trafficking chain;
- E. whereas criminal networks involved in drug trafficking operating at sea are increasingly sophisticated and mobile, using go-fast vessels, semi-submersibles, fishing vessels and other methods to evade detection, highlighting the need for improved maritime surveillance, intelligence and enforcement capabilities; whereas organised criminal networks involved in drug trafficking are increasingly adapting their trafficking methods in response to heightened security in Europe's largest harbours, notably by shifting cocaine routes through transit countries such as those in West Africa, highlighting the need for a broader and more forward-looking EU strategy that addresses the entire trafficking chain, from source and transit countries to final destination markets; whereas this underscores the need for strengthened judicial cooperation with third countries, including countries in West Africa, to ensure that individuals convicted of serious drug trafficking offences – such as Dutch drug trafficker Jos Leijdekkers, who remains at large in Sierra Leone – do not evade justice;
- F. whereas maritime security has become a strategic issue linking Europe with Latin America and the Caribbean, as drug-trafficking routes have expanded, reflecting the increasingly transregional nature of the illicit drug trade, with European and Latin American criminal organisations operating in a coordinated manner; whereas, in this context, enhanced cooperation with Latin American and Caribbean countries is essential to confront this challenge effectively, given their key role, alongside the EU, in disrupting production, trafficking and money-laundering networks affecting both regions;
- G. whereas the continued expansion of drug trafficking networks causes

profound harm to society and to future generations, as addiction, violence, corruption and social exclusion weaken communities, undermine public trust and expose children and young people to increased risks of exploitation, recruitment and long-term vulnerability;

- H. whereas corruption, money laundering and illicit financial flows facilitate drug trafficking and form part of the same criminal ecosystem, undermining control mechanisms and posing a threat to the EU's security and democratic institutions;
- I. whereas dismantling the financial pillar of organised crime requires coordinated action by law enforcement, financial institutions, customs authorities and international partners;
- J. whereas effective action against maritime drug trafficking requires stronger EU coordination, intelligence-sharing and the coordinated deployment of assets; whereas the MAOC-N provides an established platform for multilateral cooperation, but continues to require adequate operational resources, maritime and aerial assets and enhanced coordination;
- K. whereas effective action against drug-trafficking requires public-private cooperation to strengthen port security, risk analysis and intelligence-sharing, with the European Ports Alliance providing an important framework for cooperation;
- L. whereas enforcement alone has not proven sufficient to reduce trafficking or drug-related harm and must be complemented by sustained investment in prevention, education, treatment, harm reduction, community resilience and tackling the social and economic drivers behind trafficking;
- M. whereas the EU drugs strategy and its action plan offer a framework aimed at providing a balanced approach that combines security, public health, prevention, treatment, harm reduction and international cooperation, with particular attention to victims, affected communities, children and vulnerable young people;
- N. whereas previous strategies have highlighted the need to find a better balance between law enforcement responses and policies on prevention, risk reduction and social justice;
- 1. Deeply condemns the attacks and regrets the loss of lives of all direct and indirect victims of drug trafficking in the EU, particularly in the light of the most recent incidents reported in several Member States; expresses its deep sympathy and sincere condolences to the families and loved ones of the victims; recognises that such unfortunate incidents reflect the operating environment in which criminal networks are not only quickly evolving but also increasingly interconnected, organised and aggressive;

2. Stresses that police and Guardia Civil officers on the front line against drug trafficking must have the necessary vessels, equipment, training, staff and legal protection to carry out their missions safely; calls on the Member States to reflect the high-risk nature of this work in the professional status and social protection of these officers;3. Strongly condemns the activities of criminal networks involved in drug trafficking, which undermine public security, fuel violence and corruption, and threaten the health and well-being of EU citizens; urges the Commission and the Member States to reinforce law enforcement and judicial capabilities through increased funding, operational support and enhanced resources and support for specialised law enforcement and judicial agencies and bodies dedicated to combating drug trafficking; stresses the need to strengthen cooperation and information exchange between customs, law enforcement, judicial and administrative authorities, and calls on the Commission to ensure the necessary framework to support these efforts; recognises the high-risk nature of the duties performed by police officers, border and customs officials and other frontline law enforcement personnel involved in combating drug trafficking, and calls for these duties to be recognised and classified as high-risk occupations in the EU;
4. Calls on the Commission to complete the ongoing assessment on whether the existing legal framework for fighting illicit drugs in the EU remains fit for purpose in the light of evolving drug markets, and, where appropriate, to put forward proportionate and adequate responses to emerging challenges;
5. Takes note of the proposal announced in July 2026 by the Commission and the Vice-President of the Commission / High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy for a new EU sanctions regime targeting serious forms of organised crime, including trafficking and other activities linked to illicit drugs; takes note of the proposed restrictive measures in this regard, such as asset freezes and prohibitions on making funds or other economic resources available to listed persons or entities, as well as travel bans to prevent entry into, or transit through, EU Member States by listed persons;
6. Calls on EU-level dialogue among Member States on the operational challenges faced by law enforcement during maritime pursuits, with a view to sharing best practices on the safe and effective interception and neutralisation of vessels;
7. Calls for strengthened and internationally coordinated maritime capabilities, operations and presence of European assets in key Atlantic trafficking zones;
8. Notes that particular attention should be paid to the EU's outermost regions, whose geographical location leaves them especially exposed

and vulnerable to the drug trafficking phenomenon; recalls that these regions form an integral part of the Union and its external borders, and calls for their specific challenges to be fully taken into account in the EU's response to organised crime;

9. Stresses that the fight against drug trafficking and related crime must be carried out in full compliance with applicable EU laws and the Charter of Fundamental Rights; emphasises that the exchange of information by law enforcement authorities and EU bodies and agencies must be compliant with relevant data protection rules, privacy and information security standards;
10. Urges Frontex, EMSA, Eurojust and Europol to strengthen joint activities in EU waters and cooperation with MAOC-N, including through enhanced real-time coordination and intelligence-sharing; encourages the use of Europol's and Eurojust's capabilities to support the disruption of criminal networks involved in drug trafficking; calls for greater coherence between the activities of the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) and other relevant EU security policies, strategies and capacity-building programmes, while ensuring appropriate parliamentary and judicial oversight;
11. Recognises the important role played by the MAOC-N as a model of international collaboration against crime in supporting maritime interdictions and cocaine seizures through timely intelligence sharing, deconfliction and coordination with national authorities and international and strategic partners; calls for adequate resources to strengthen its operational capacity in the Atlantic and Mediterranean;
12. Calls for adequate resources to implement the EU ports strategy, the EU drugs strategy and the action plan against drug trafficking 2026-2030, and for stronger cooperation between Member States, EU agencies, civil society, international partners and the private sector through the European Ports Alliance; calls for training, prevention and protection measures to put in place for port workers; calls for cooperation with the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL) to expand specialised training programmes for law-enforcement authorities, enhance expertise in tackling drug-related organised crime, and promote the exchange of best practices across Member States;
13. Calls for strengthened risk-based tracking and inspection of vessels increasingly exploited by criminal networks involved in drug trafficking to evade detection in coastal areas and sustained investment in maritime surveillance; calls for support and assistance to be provided to dockers and fishers faced with pressures, threats and blackmail attempts by drug trafficking networks;

14. Encourages cooperation with law-enforcement authorities, judicial bodies and relevant stakeholders to ensure that interdictions of vessels suspected of drug trafficking are carried out safely and proportionately;
15. Stresses the importance of strengthening judicial and operational cooperation with third countries, including EU-West African cooperation, to address transnational maritime drug trafficking along key trafficking routes; underlines that such cooperation should be accompanied by support for capacity-building and by efforts to address the underlying socio-economic drivers that make transit countries vulnerable to exploitation by trafficking networks; calls on the Commission to assess whether the current EU framework remains fit for purpose in the light of evolving drug markets and, where appropriate, support proportionate legal and policy responses;
16. Encourages international cooperation, including with China, to prevent the diversion of precursor chemicals and strengthen information-sharing on emerging providers and substances; calls for strengthened operational capacity of Europol and Eurojust, and hopes that the ongoing reforms help strengthen the integrity, transparency and resilience of European ports, including by improving the protection of front-line officers and workers against the risks of intimidation and corruption;
17. Welcomes the key role of the EUDA and its importance in applying an evidence-based, integrated, balanced and multidisciplinary approach to the drugs phenomenon; recalls that, under the Agency's mandate, this approach must incorporate human rights, gender and gender equality, age, health, health equity and social perspectives;
18. Notes that the Agency is tasked with monitoring the drugs phenomenon in the EU, covering its health, human rights, social, safety and security aspects, including the implementation of applicable EU drug-related strategic documents; calls for a holistic approach to be applied and mainstreamed in the fight against drug trafficking;
19. Highlights the role of the EUDA, in cooperation with Europol, Eurojust and national authorities, in strengthening EU-wide information-sharing and rapid alerts on emerging precursor substances and synthetic drugs;
20. Calls for stronger action against corruption, money laundering and illicit financial flows linked to drug trafficking, including through European banking and financial systems, and for greater transparency and accountability around networks facilitating the circumvention of controls at major European ports; calls on the Member States to strengthen the identification, freezing, seizure and confiscation of assets linked to drug trafficking and organised crime

to ensure that criminal proceeds are effectively traced, seized and ultimately confiscated;

21. Welcomes the EU drugs strategy and its action plan and reiterates support for a balanced approach combining public health, prevention, demand reduction, treatment, harm reduction, judicial and police cooperation, and cooperation with third countries;
22. Calls for sustained investment in prevention, education, treatment, harm reduction and community resilience, while placing the experiences of victims, trafficked individuals, affected communities, children and vulnerable young people at the centre of EU drug policies; calls for sustained investment in addressing the social and economic drivers of trafficking and for the full involvement of civil society, in particular grassroots organisations, in preventing and combating organised crime and drug trafficking;
23. Calls on the Member States to strengthen and, where appropriate, establish effective frameworks to protect persons who cooperate with law enforcement and judicial authorities in cases of drug trafficking and organised crime, including through physical protection, confidentiality measures and access to legal assistance; calls for appropriate protection mechanisms to be considered for individuals coerced or exploited into criminal activity, including minors, where their circumstances warrant a different approach from that applied to cooperating witnesses; calls for enhanced cooperation and the exchange of best practices between Member States on witness protection schemes, while ensuring full respect for fundamental rights and judicial safeguards;
24. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Commission, the Member States, Europol, Eurojust, EUDA, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, and the United Nations.