Organised crime in the European Union

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The Council adopted **conclusions** on setting EU priorities for the fight against organised crime between 2011 and 2013. The priorities identified include the following:

- weaken the capacity of organised crime groups active or based in West Africa to traffic cocaine and heroin to and within the EU;
- mitigate the role of the Western Balkans, as a key transit and storage zone for illicit commodities destined for the EU and logistical centre for organised crime groups, including Albanian-speaking organised crime groups;
- weaken the capacity of organised crime groups to facilitate illegal immigration to the EU, particularly via Southern, South-Eastern and Eastern Europe and notably at the Greek-Turkish border and in crisis areas of the Mediterranean close to North Africa;
- reduce the production and distribution in the EU of synthetic drugs, including new psychoactive substances;
- disrupt the trafficking to the EU, particularly in container form, of illicit commodities, including cocaine, heroin, cannabis, counterfeit goods and cigarettes;
- combat against all forms of trafficking in human beings and human smuggling by targeting the organised crime groups conducting such criminal activities in particular at the southern, south-western and south-eastern criminal hubs in the EU;
- reduce the general capabilities of mobile (itinerant) organised crime groups to engage in criminal activities;
- step up the fight against cybercrime and the criminal misuse of the internet by organised crime groups.

These conclusions should be implemented at European and, where relevant, national or regional level against agreed strategic goals and via EU annual Operational Action Plans.

The conclusions are a follow-up to the creation at the end of 2010 of the EU policy cycle for organised and serious international crime. This document establishes a multi-annual policy cycle and clear methodology for setting, implementing and evaluating priorities in the fight against organised and serious international crime. It is proposed to implement an initial reduced policy cycle from 2011 to 2013 on the basis of the EU Organised Crime Threat Assessment (OCTA) 2011. The first fully fledged EU policy cycle will be based on the EU Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (SOCTA) 2013 and will cover the years 2013 to 2017.

In this context, Ministers also took note of a publication that aims at experience sharing in the fight against organised crime. It is called "Complementary approaches and actions to prevent and combat organised crime: A collection of good practice examples from EU Member States" Delegations were invited to ensure proper dissemination through their national channels.