

European Union Drugs Agency

2022/0009(COD) - 12/01/2022 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to strengthen the current mandate of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, transforming it into the European Union Drugs Agency.

PROPOSED ACT: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and on an equal footing with the Council.

BACKGROUND: the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction was set up by Council Regulation (EEC) No 302/93. This founding act was recast in 2006 through Regulation (EC) No 1920/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council. However, this recast Regulation does not reflect the current reality of the drug phenomenon and is out of step with the tasks the Centre needs to perform to address the current and future challenges of the drug phenomenon.

Illicit drugs are a complex security and health problem that affects millions of people in the EU and globally. The situation is deteriorating, with volumes of cocaine and heroin introduced in the EU at all-time high. The use of benzodiazepines is also on the rise, potentially reflecting the high availability and low cost of these substances as well as pandemic-related mental health issues.

Adopting a targeted revision of the Agency's mandate is part of the reaction of the EU to these developments.

CONTENT: the Commission proposes to **strengthen the mandate** of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction and ensure that the future Agency can react effectively to new challenges, provide better support to Member States, and contribute to developments at the international level.

Establishment of the Agency

The proposal establishes the European Union Drugs Agency (EUDA) which will replace and succeed the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA). The new Agency's mandate should cover drug markets and drug supply issues which are necessary to understand the impacts of the drug phenomenon on public health, reduce the availability of drugs in the Union and curb drug demand.

Wider coverage of poly-drug use issues

The Agency should also expressly address poly-substance, i.e. other substance-based addictions when those substances are taken together with drugs by developing monitoring systems that would consider, instead of focusing only on one substance, heroin for example, the important role played by concurrent or sequential use of other substances as well, such as non-controlled opioids or misused medications.

Drug alert system

As dangerous substances might lead to harm for public health, the Agency should be able to issue alerts. To support such a function, the Commission proposes that the Agency should develop a **European drug alert system**, accessible by national authorities. Such a system should facilitate the rapid exchange of information that may require rapid actions to safeguard public health, safety, and security. The Agency should be able to inform not only national authorities, but also potential users of these substances.

Virtual laboratory

The new mandate seeks to establish a network of forensic and toxicological laboratories, bringing together national laboratories. The network will foster information exchange on new developments and trends and will support the training of forensic drug experts.

Threat assessment capabilities

The proposal sets out the possibility for the Agency to develop threat assessments on new developments of the drug phenomenon that have a potential to impact negatively public health, safety and security. These threat assessments will help increase the preparedness of the EU to react to new threats and support other tasks of the Agency.

Information campaigns and supply and security issues

The Agency should be able to act on its analysis and develop EU-level prevention and awareness raising campaigns relating to illicit drugs, allowing the agency to act on the basis of the analysis it produces. The agency will also be able to support Member States in preparing national campaigns.

Moreover, the proposal aims to expand the Agency's mandate to also explicitly address drug supply and drug market issues. It seeks to improve the analysis of drug supply in the EU based on better information on drug trafficking and production, thereby contributing to more effective law enforcement and supporting the internal security of the EU. In addition, improved access to best practices in the area of drug demand and other public health responses will be made to beneficiaries of the Agency's services. Moreover, the Agency will make relevant contribution to actions in support of the mental health policies in Member States.

Research and innovation

The proposal provides a mandate to the Agency to be more active in the context of the EU research knowledge cycle. This should also include the Agency's involvement in the EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security.

International dimension

Under the new mandate, the Agency's role at international level is strengthened. Despite its international recognition as a centre of excellence and its active engagement on international issues, the founding Regulation does not define sufficiently the responsibilities of the Agency in this area. Therefore, the proposal aims to clarify the tasks of the Agency as regards the international dimension, to include in the mandate itself the necessary competencies.

Budgetary implications

This proposal would have an impact on the budget and staff needs of the Agency. It is estimated that an additional budget of around EUR 63 million and around 40 additional posts would be needed for the remainder of the period of the MFF to ensure that the Agency has the necessary resources to enforce its revised mandate.