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To:	Mr Jeppe TRANHOLM-MIKKELSEN, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union
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Subject:	COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION of the EU Drugs Strategy 2013-2020 and the EU Action Plan on Drugs 2017-2020

Delegations will find attached document SWD(2020) 151 final.

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COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE EVALUATION

of the

EU Drugs Strategy 2013-2020 and the EU Action Plan on Drugs 2017-2020

{SWD(2020) 150 final}

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The EU Drugs Strategy 2013-2020[1] and its second EU Action Plan on Drugs 2017-2020[2] set out the **political framework and priorities for EU drugs policy**. The Strategy provided a **balanced, integrated, evidence-based framework for tackling drugs in and outside the EU**, and consisted of two main policy areas – drug demand and supply – and three cross-cutting themes: coordination, international cooperation, and research, information, monitoring and evaluation.

The Commission launched the evaluation of the Strategy and Action Plan in 2019 to assess their implementation in terms of **relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and EU added value**. **A wide range of stakeholders were consulted** including Member States competent authorities, civil society organisations and the general public.

The evaluation found that the technological, social, political and environmental context affecting the demand and supply of drugs has changed considerably since 2013 making the Strategy and Action Plan only partially **relevant**. However, they are largely **coherent** with relevant European legislation and policy at international level.

The Strategy and Action Plan have been partially **effective** in achieving the drug demand and supply reduction objectives. On the other hand, they were more effective in terms of the three cross-cutting objectives. The evaluation found that drug policy was overall effectively coordinated at EU and international levels, and contributed to the ability of the EU to 'speak with one voice', while the understanding of the drugs phenomenon and the impact of interventions has been improving.

On **efficiency**, the evaluation found no conclusive evidence that the results attributed to the Strategy and Action Plan were achieved at either reasonable or unreasonable cost. The lack of available quantifiable data regarding related costs made it difficult to carry out a sound assessment on efficiency.

The Strategy and Action Plan generated **EU added value** insofar as they achieved results that national or other European initiatives would not have achieved. In particular, they established a common strategic framework, 'bridging' between Member States, and different levels of governance. They encouraged cross-border coordination, exchange of information and best practices among Member States.

The stakeholder consultations suggest that **there is continued support from Member States and civil society organisations for strategic EU involvement in drugs policy**, and the outright discontinuation of the Strategy was seen as likely to have negative effects.

There is room for reflection on how to enhance the future EU strategic document on drugs, including making it concrete, translating it into more operational and robust actions, and setting clear priorities. Monitoring should be simplified. In this context, the Strategy's current lifespan of 8 years could be shortened.

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[1] OJ C 402, 29.12.2012, p. 1.

[2] OJ C 215, 05.07.2017, p. 21.

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Future priorities need to account for trends such as increased poly-criminality of organized crime groups and their adaptive and innovative *modus operandi*; role of the EU as a producer and exporter; increased levels of violence and corruption that enable the drug trade; technologic enablers such as darknet marketplaces, cryptocurrencies and encryption technology for buying/selling drugs; new patterns of drug consumption between young people and the aging population, as well as gender differences; societal and environmental effects. The consequences of the drug phenomenon are becoming more complex and intertwined, extend across different sectors and go beyond EU's borders. The future strategic approach to EU drugs policy must be evidence-based, balanced and further integrated to reflect the relevant trends that the EU will be facing in the coming years.