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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	EU-CELAC Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism on Drugs - Annual Report (1 January 2024 - 31 December 2024)

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Delegations will find in the Annex the above-mentioned annual report, endorsed at the XXVth High-Level Meeting of the EU-CELAC Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism on Drugs, which took place in Warsaw (Poland) on 8 May 2025.

**EU-CELAC Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism on Drugs -  
Annual Report  
1 January 2024 - 31 December 2024**

This report is the result of a regular analysis of the activities carried out in relation to the Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism on Drugs between the European Union (EU) and the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) from 1 January 2024 to 31 December 2024. The information contained in this report is limited to inter-regional programmes and does not contain information on other EU-funded programmes at regional and bilateral levels in the field of drugs.

**I. EU-CELAC High-Level Meeting and Technical Committee Meetings**

The CELAC-EU Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism on Drugs ('the Mechanism') held its **XXIV<sup>th</sup> High-Level Meeting on 22 February 2024 in La Paz (Bolivia)**, under the co-Presidency of Bolivia and Belgium. The welcome address was given by the President of Bolivia, H.E. President Luis Arce Catacora. The co-Presidencies of the Mechanism were represented by H.E. Annelies Verlinden, Minister of Interior, Institutional Reform and Democratic Renewal of Belgium as well as by H.E. Dr. Carlos Eduardo Del Castillo Del Carpio, Minister of Government and H.E. Nestor Huanca Chura, Minister of Productive Development and Plural Economy of the Plurinational State Bolivia. The High-Level Meeting endorsed the La Paz declaration<sup>1</sup>, in which it was agreed to focus bi-regional cooperation of the Mechanism for the next five years by addressing in particular five topics of common interest:

- 1) Addressing and countering the illicit production and trafficking of drugs, including cocaine, their consequences on citizen security and public health, and their social and economic impact on people and communities.
- 2) Addressing and countering the manufacture and trafficking of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) and other synthetic drugs, their consequences on citizen security, and their social, health and economic impact on people and affected communities, including via early warning.

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<sup>1</sup> ST 6914/24

- 3) Addressing substance use and substance use disorders, including abuse, issues related to health, including mental health, and social vulnerabilities, focusing on prevention and treatment quality standards.
- 4) Addressing the link between drugs and crimes that affect the environment, countering such crimes and tackling their negative impacts, including the effects of illicit cultivation of crops used for the production of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, the effects of drug manufacturing, and waste disposal on the environment, on local communities, and providing corresponding drug policy responses.
- 5) Addressing and countering other forms of organised crime related to drug trafficking such as money laundering and firearms trafficking and their negative effect on the economy and citizen security.

Four thematic debates were held during the XXIV<sup>th</sup> High-Level Meeting, focusing on the following topics:

- Money laundering and drug trafficking;
- New post-pandemic micro-trafficking patterns and the effective prevention strategies that countries are developing to deal with them;
- Cooperation on sharing best practices on recovery and social reintegration;
- Demand reduction policies: human rights, traditional uses and public health based on scientific evidence.

The High-Level Meeting also addressed the work of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs and UNODC, focusing on the preparations for the mid-term review and the 67th Session of the CND, including the High-Level Segment, and adopted the Annual Report for the period from 1 June 2022 to 31 December 2023<sup>2</sup>. The CELAC Co-Presidency of the Mechanism was handed over to Colombia, represented by H.E. Elizabeth Taylor Jay, Vice-minister of Multilateral Affairs.

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<sup>2</sup> ST 6905/24

**Two meetings of the Technical Committee of the Mechanism** were held on 13 June 2024 in Brussels in hybrid format under the co-Presidency of Belgium and Colombia<sup>3</sup>, and on 10 October 2024 in Brussels in person under the co-Presidency of Hungary and Colombia<sup>4</sup>.

The **Technical Committee meeting on 13 June 2024** discussed the drug situation and policy developments in the EU and CELAC countries as well as the follow-up to the mid-term review of the international drug policy commitments and the 67th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs. The most extensive debate focused on the follow up to the La Paz Declaration of the XXIVth High Level Meeting of the Mechanism, endorsing as a living document the short-term objectives of the La Paz declaration / indicative actions until the next High-Level Meeting in 2025. In this context, a thematic debate on topic 3 of the La Paz declaration was also held, focusing on the theme of persons in vulnerable situations - women, and people living in prison and other custodial settings from an evidence-based approach, as well as on the theme of harm reduction and its relevance to guarantee the right to health and other political, civil, economic, social and cultural rights. Updates on COPOLAD, EL PACCTO, Global Illicit Flows Programme (GIFP) and other regional programmes were also presented.

The **Technical Committee meeting on 10 October 2024** was a full day meeting held in person, with the participation of the Heads of the national Drugs Agencies from the CELAC region. It was preceded by a seminar organised by COPOLAD on shared challenges among EU and CELAC countries in the field of drugs on 8 October 2024 and institutional meetings on 9 October 2024.

The Technical Committee meeting addressed the latest updates on the drug situation and policy developments in both regions as the preparations for the thematic session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (12-14 November 2024) and for the 68th session of the CND (March 2025). As a follow up to the La Paz Declaration of the XXIVth High Level Meeting of the Mechanism, two thematic debates were held. The first thematic debate addressed topic 1 of the La Paz declaration, focusing on the exchange of best practices in identifying and reducing violence linked to the trafficking of cocaine and other drugs, and on information and knowledge-sharing on policies dealing with the reduction of drug demand.

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<sup>3</sup> CM 3175/24

<sup>4</sup> CM 4312/24

The second thematic debate addressed topic 4 of the La Paz declaration, focusing on COPOLAD's report on environment and drugs in Latin America and the Caribbean, on environmentally sound policy responses to address drugs, and on the COPOLAD's Study on "Innovative Alternative Development Approaches", which identified the opportunities, challenges and stakes of innovative Alternative Development (AD) beyond traditional models and rural contexts of illicit cultivation, building on existing knowledge and focusing on the relevance, adaptability, and viability of AD across various terrains and more diversified social contexts affected by illicit drug supply activities in Latin America and the Caribbean.

During the meeting, several CELAC delegations highlighted the value of COPOLAD as an effective bi-regional cooperation programme for the exchange of information and capabilities in addressing drug-related issues from a balanced perspective based on available evidence and, therefore, the importance of its continuation in a fourth phase.

## **II. EU-CELAC Cooperation: Cooperation Programme on drugs policies between Latin America, the Caribbean, and the European Union - COPOLAD**

COPOLAD is the only EU-funded programme covering the entire CELAC region and providing support for a balanced, integrated, comprehensive, multidisciplinary, and scientific evidence-based approach to address the world drug problem in Latin American and Caribbean<sup>5</sup> countries. COPOLAD covers the various fields of drugs policy from both a drug demand and a drug supply reduction perspective, as well as promotes evidence-based policies, with monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, and with the task of providing technical support to the EU-CELAC Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism on Drugs.

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<sup>5</sup> An initial phase of the programme (2011 to 2015) covered all Latin American countries and – based on the evaluation of its results – a second phase was launched, including all CELAC countries, in response to the demand of Caribbean countries.

## COPOLAD III

The third phase of COPOLAD started in February 2021 for a period of 48 months and with a budget of EUR 15 million. In August 2024 a non-cost extension of the Programme until December 2025 was approved.

COPOLAD III is managed by a consortium formed by the International Ibero-American Foundation for Public Policies and Administrations, Spanish Cooperation (FIIAPP) and the Italian-Latin American International Organization (IILA), with the participation of the European Union Drugs Agency (EUDA) - former European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) and the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

Building on the achievements of its previous phases<sup>6</sup>, COPOLAD III continues to promote technical and political dialogue between CELAC and the EU. COPOLAD III is aligned to the EU Drugs Strategy 2021-2025, and delivers a balanced approach to positively impact public policies related to drugs supply, demand and harm-reduction in the following fields:

Supply reduction:

- sustainable and integrated alternative development;
- cooperation in drug trafficking investigations,
- fight against illicit capital and money laundering,
- control of chemical precursors,
- penal law reforms and alternatives to imprisonment.

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<sup>6</sup> COPOLAD II (2016-2019) was a regional cooperation programme funded by the European Union, with a total budget of EUR 10 000 000, and managed by the International and Ibero-American Foundation for Public Administration and Policies, Spanish Cooperation (FIIAPP). The first phase (COPOLAD I), also managed by FIIAP, ended in June 2015.

Demand and harm reduction:

- Comprehensive prevention and care,
- Harm reduction programmes and services,
- Social inclusion for persons with problematic drug use,
- Territorial approaches in demand reduction policies.

COPOLAD's activities incorporate issues of gender equality, human rights, environmental impact and innovation.

COPOLAD also supports National Drugs Observatories in evidence-based policy making and in identifying new threats (Early Warning Systems). In addition, the programme has been supporting the EU-CELAC Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism on drugs for 13 years<sup>7</sup>.

COPOLAD III covers the entire CELAC region and provides support for an integrated, comprehensive, multidisciplinary development and with an approach to address the world drug problem in the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean based on scientific evidence. In addition, the programme is based on a results-oriented methodology based on the demands and needs of partners and on a Team Europe spirit that encourages coordination, complementarities and synergies at EU level.

At **regional level**, the programme operates through the creation of Working Groups (WG) bringing together countries with similar interests, while promoting **south-south or triangular cooperation**. The expertise provided by Task Forces ensure the necessary support for implementing action plans and specific technical assistance. A key approach at regional level are the alliances with the regional organisations operating in Latin America and the Caribbean. In this regard 8 regional roadmaps have been signed with key supranational organisations: Ibero-American Association of Public Prosecutors - AIAMP, Conference of Ibero-American Countries' Ministries of Justice - COMJIB, Inter-American Association of Public Defenders - AIDEF, Latin American Financial Action Task Force - GAFILAT, Caribbean Financial Action Task Force - GAFIC, CARICOM IMPACS Law Enforcement and Security Task Force.

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<sup>7</sup> COPOLAD I started on 31 January 2011

At **national level**, specific technical assistance was offered through roadmaps based on the needs identified by participating countries and their national authorities. 75 national roadmaps are being implemented with the aim to strengthen public drug policies in 25 countries through the different programme components.

Within its cross-cutting issues COPOLAD has fostered a human rights approach to drug policies. The integration of a gender equity perspective is a priority for COPOLAD III. The specific needs of women and girls are being mainstreamed by the programme, and attention is being paid to reducing gender inequality by adopting tailored-made approaches for each component. In addition, social innovation has been an important tool for working at local level in a bottom-up approach which is helping the coordination with national drug policies. Finally, the programme also focuses on the environmental impact of drug production and trafficking.

### **COPOLAD's activities in the implementation of the La Paz Declaration and its short-term objectives**

The following activities have been carried out by COPOLAD in 2024 contributing to the main priorities of La Paz Declaration:

- 1. Addressing and countering the illicit production and trafficking of drugs, including cocaine, its consequences on citizen security and public health, and their social and economic impact on people and communities***
  - *1.4. The adoption and implementation of preventive and law enforcement measures to identify, impair, and dismantle organised transnational criminal groups engaged in drug trafficking*
  - *1.6. Strengthening police and judicial cooperation and assistance in order to guarantee the success of investigations on criminals and organisations, including as regards extradition.*

#### **Activities:**

- Working Group with 11 Antidrug Police Units to effectively strengthen cooperation in drug trafficking investigation activities:



- Elaboration of Regional guidelines to address situations in which women and LGBTBIQ+ trafficked persons are involved in the production, transit or commercialisation of drugs (June 2024). This action was implemented jointly with the Trafficking Network, Anti-Drug Network, Gender Network.
  - Protocol on undercover agents was approved in October 2024. This Action was implemented jointly with the Ibero-American Association of Public Prosecutors (AIAMP) and the Network of Anti-Drug Prosecutors (RFAI).
  - Training courses on instruments to combat drug trafficking mafias and on enforcement strategies for drugs (NPS) were held in October 2024, with the Italian Anti-mafia Investigation Directorate and Central Directorate for Drug Services. This Action was implemented jointly with CARICOM-IMPACS.
  - Training course for LAC experts on strategic analysis of drug markets was provided in April 2024 in Lisbon. This Action was implemented jointly with European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL).
- *1.7. The strengthening of our bi-regional and international cooperation in the field of drug policies within programmes such as COPOLAD, to improve the design and implementation of policies dealing with reduction of drug demand and supply, including to promote research, and information- and knowledge-sharing.*

Activities to support the technical-political dialogue between the EU and CELAC regions on drug-related issues:

- Support to the elaboration of the La Paz Declaration.
- International seminar on recovery, administration and allocation for social and community use of assets confiscated from drug trafficking and organised crime in Buenos Aires on 30-31 May 2024.
- Study “The silent destruction. Environmental impacts of drug trafficking and state responses in Latin America and the Caribbean” in September 2024.

- Seminar between CELAC and EU Drugs Agencies' representatives in Brussels in October 2024, focusing on NPS and the social use of confiscated assets, followed by the Technical Committee Meeting of the Mechanism.
- Support to the Co-presidencies of the Mechanism: Belgium, Bolivia, Colombia, Hungary, Poland.
- Support to the Technical Committee Meetings of the Mechanism on June 2024 and 10 October 2024 by providing expertise on topics of common interest harm reduction, environmental impact of drugs and on social use of confiscated assets.

Activities focusing on research:

- 6 countries (Mexico, Panama, Dominican Republic, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela) have established and launched national research networks and have formed Scientific Advisory Committees (2024).
- México has launched its first national mental health and addictions research agenda (2024).

**2. *Addressing and countering the manufacture and trafficking of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) and other synthetic drugs, their consequences on citizen security, and their social, health and economic impact on people and affected communities, including via early warning.***

- *2.1. The strengthening of bi-regional and international operational cooperation to successfully deal with trafficking of new psychoactive substances and other synthetic drugs, including to exchange on best practices in national and regional approaches concerning chemical precursors.*

Activities focused on strengthening cooperation between the EU and CELAC region on the international control of chemical precursors:

- Working Group with 18 countries to enhance regulatory development:
  - Development of a precursors' protocol (St. Lucia).
  - Updating an existing protocol (Colombia, Dominican Republic, Honduras and Antigua & Barbuda) following CICAD's Regulation Model.

- Working Group with 18 countries to enhance IT development: Technical assistance to improve computer systems for effective and traceable control of transactions in real time (Ecuador).

Activities focused on improving the management and disposal of seized chemicals:

- Technical assistance for the improvement of national systems for the management and final disposition of seized chemicals in Bolivia, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Paraguay, which includes:
  - Diagnosis per country on the situation of seized chemical substances.
  - Preparation of controlled substance management manuals for each country.
  - Study visit to a management and disposal system in Costa Rica in November 2024.
  - Higher University Course of Specialisation in Control and Investigation of Drug Precursors with the Foundation of the National Distance University of Spain: 500-hour training. 46 scholarships, 29 LAC countries in September 2024.
- *2.2. The support of gender-based public health interventions for people who use drugs with a focus on harm reduction measures, rehabilitation, social integration and voluntary access to treatment*

Activities to support the adaptation/ generation of addiction care programmes and services to meet the needs of women and vulnerable populations and measures to facilitate their access and harm reduction:

- 7 countries have mainstreamed the gender approach in their National Drug Observatories (2024).
- Costa Rica has approved an interinstitutional Protocol with gender approach for the Attention to Women involved in the crime of introducing drugs into a penitentiary center.

- European Prevention Curriculum (EUPC) and adaptation of contents to local contexts in the CELAC region:
  - 5 training courses in CELAC countries in 2024 in Spanish, English and Portuguese.
  - EUDA Virtual community of practice
  - Development and launch of Evidencia Viva in August 2024, online platform in Spanish and Portuguese with prevention practices in Latin America.

Activities promoting access to and quality of care (women, vulnerable population) and harm reduction:

- Exchange of regional experiences. Internships of CONASAMA (Mexico) and the Ministry of Justice (Colombia) in Barcelona and from the Ministry of Public Health of Ecuador in Bogotá.
- Support to National Actions in Chile (teen drug abuse), Colombia (harm reduction strategy), Ecuador (telephone hotline service for mental health and problematic drug use), México (harm reduction services in relation to synthetic opioids and access for the LGBTQ+ population) and Uruguay (National Plan to address Drug Use for people in prison)

Activities promoting social inclusion of people with problematic drug use:

- Active training through Working Group sessions.

Activities addressing drug-related vulnerabilities on the territory:

- Working Group with 21 countries: permanent training and country coordination.
- Guide of good practices and intervention models on territorialisation of health and social services for drug-related care in April 2024.
- Technical support to 14 national actions: Bahamas, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Jamaica, Peru, Dominican Republic, Suriname, Trinidad & Tobago, Uruguay.
- Internships between interested countries to Brazil, Portugal and Colombia in August, October and December 2024.

- 2.4. *The adoption and improvement of Early Warning Systems as a tool for generating timely and quality technical information in the detection of synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances.*

Activities focused on the development and strengthening of national Early Warning Systems:

- Two workshops on early warning systems in 2024:
  - March 2024: Capacity building on awareness raising and stakeholder engagement for Early Warning Systems and mapping of actors/Information networks.
  - October 2024: Technical support for the development of future-proof NEWS, focusing on synthetic drugs, with the use of foresight methodology.
- Publication of two EUDA publications in Spanish and respective guidance notes on EWS:
  - [https://www.euda.europa.eu/publications/manuals-and-guidelines/emcdda-risk-assessment-guidelines\\_en](https://www.euda.europa.eu/publications/manuals-and-guidelines/emcdda-risk-assessment-guidelines_en)
  - [https://www.euda.europa.eu/publications/guidelines/operating-guidelines-for-the-european-union-early-warning-system-on-new-psychoactive-substances\\_en](https://www.euda.europa.eu/publications/guidelines/operating-guidelines-for-the-european-union-early-warning-system-on-new-psychoactive-substances_en)
- Mapping of forensic capacities LAC in CELAC region to meet the challenge posed by the emergence of new chemical drug concealment techniques.
- A report from the bi-regional expert meeting on chemical concealment of cocaine.
- Technical assistance for strengthening EWS: in wastewater analysis with support for the development of protocols for the implementation of wastewater studies adapted to the national context (Argentina, Chile, Uruguay) and web surveys (Uruguay).
- Updated report on ‘Monitoring and evaluating changes in cannabis policies: insights from the Americas’ (December, 2024).
- Uruguay: technical support for conceptual and methodological design for the second cannabis policy evaluation, including definition of key dimensions and indicators.
- Cuba is establishing its National Drug Observatory and an early warning system (planned for June 2025).

**3. On addressing substance use and substance use disorders, including abuse, as well as issues related to health, including mental health, and social vulnerabilities, focusing on prevention and treatment quality standards:**

- 3.1. *The promotion, in National Drugs Strategies, of health, safety, welfare and well-being of all individuals, families, communities and societies as a whole, prioritizing persons in vulnerable and marginalised situations.*
- 3.2. *The implementation of the right to equitable and available access to public health, social services, basic treatment, and continuity of care that is gender-sensitive and respects, protects and fulfils human rights, and guarantees broad coverage for people with substance use disorders and persons in vulnerable situations.*

Activities to support gender and human rights as crosscutting issues (in addition to Actions mentioned under priorities 2.2 and 2.4):

- Ensuring the use of a gender perspective within National Drug Observatories and their National Information Systems:
  - Guidelines for incorporating a gender perspective into the NDO information systems;
  - Guide for the application of the differential and rights-based approaches;
  - Methodological Guide for the assessment of the impacts of national drug policies on the different dimensions of sustainable development.
- Technical support to Conference of Ministers of Justice of Ibero-American Countries (COMJIB), for the design and implementation of a "Pact for the humanisation of criminal and penitentiary policy in Ibero-America," towards more humane and inclusive justice systems (particularly for women). 22 Ministries of Justice have defined Minimum Standards for the development of criminal policies consistent with the principles of proportional and alternative penal approaches in relation to minor drug crimes.
- Online training on gender approach in alternative development projects: in 2024, 218 officials from state agencies trained.
- Guide on intervention models in Latin America, the Caribbean and EU for addressing drug-related social vulnerabilities in April 2024.

- Guidelines to address situations in which women and LGTBIQ+ trafficked persons are involved in the production, transit or commercialisation of drugs AIAMP (Ibero-American Association of Public Prosecutors) in June 2024.
- Public Defender offices of 17 countries have adopted ‘Recommendations and practices for the gender-sensitive defense of women criminalized for minor drug offences’ approved by the Inter-American Association of Public Defender’s Offices - AIDEF (2024). Paraguay is already implementing tools for the criminal defense of women criminalised for minor drug offenses
- Support to National Actions with gender focus.

***4. Addressing the link between drugs and crimes that affect the environment, countering such crimes and tackling their negative impacts, including the effects of illicit cultivation of crops used for the production of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.***

- *4.2. Examining, addressing and countering the harmful impact on the environment and biodiversity of illicit cultivation of crops used for the production of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and of illicit laboratories that manufacture narcotic drugs.*

Activities relating to alternative development:

- Working Group to support integral and sustainable alternative development: 17 countries. Permanent training, country exchanges and coordination
- Webinar series (4) on alternative development and the environment.
- 10 countries have integrated or strengthened the gender approach in their alternative development strategies/projects. Guide on gender inclusion in alternative development programmes.
- Training course on gender approach in alternative development: 25 countries with 376 active learners and 218 certificates.

Activities to support innovative alternative development approaches:

- 8 countries have included alternative development strategies for the first time in their Drug Policies

- 4 countries have updated their alternative development strategies
  - 7 Webinar series on innovative approaches (2023-24).
  - Second study visit for countries involved in the Alternative Development Working Group (Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guyana, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Mexico, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, Trinidad and Tobago, Uruguay, Venezuela and Jamaica). in May 2024 to Bogotá and Santa Marta, Colombia.
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Intraregional Dialogue Forum on alternative development in Brazil in April-May 2024.
  - Study on Innovative Alternative Development Approaches (IADA) in September 2024.
- *4.5. The adequate dismantling of illicit laboratories, including those that manufacture cocaine and synthetic drugs, and harm the environment*
  - *4.7. The promotion of bi-regional cooperation between the EU and CELAC and sharing of best practices for final disposal of seized illicit drugs and chemical substances used in the illicit manufacture of drugs.*

See above Activities on priorities 2 and 3.

- *4.8. The consideration of environmental aspects within the framework of drug supply reduction programmes,*
- Study on “The silent Destruction. Environmental impacts of drug trafficking and state responses in Latin America and the Caribbean” in September 2024.

**5. Addressing and countering other forms of organised crime related to drug trafficking such as money laundering and firearms trafficking, and their negative effect on the economy and citizen security**

- *5.4. The development and strengthening, as appropriate, of mechanisms of coordination and timely and efficient information sharing between authorities involved in identifying and countering drug trafficking and related money laundering.*



Activities focused on strategies to combat illicit money and money laundering, through confiscation of assets and management of confiscated assets:

- MoU between COPOLAD and the Financial Action Task Force of Latin America (GAFILAT):
  - Best practices guides on non-conviction-based confiscation and on parallel financial investigations approved by GAFILAT.
  - Supported changes in international standards to strengthen asset recovery in Latin American countries.
- MoU between COPOLAD And the Caribbean Financial Action Task Force (CFATF):
  - Training course on “Financial Investigations and Analysis for Emerging Money Laundering Risks”.
  - Recommendations on new money laundering risks.
  - Policy paper from the International seminar on asset recovery management and social use of confiscated assets, held in Buenos Aires on 30-31 May 2024.
- Technical Assistance on financial and asset investigations: work with Honduras, Chile and Peru.

- 5.5. Comprehensive strategies for subsequent use of the forfeited properties and assets derived from illicit activities linked to drug trafficking

Technical assistance on recovery and management of confiscated assets and recovery for social use:

- At Regional level - policy paper on Recovery, administration and destination for social and community use of assets confiscated from drug trafficking and organised crime.
- Exchange of best practices on use of goods derived from illicit activities linked to drug trafficking at regional level.
- At national level: technical assistance to Colombia, Costa Rica and Uruguay.

### III. Other EU-funded inter-regional initiatives in which some CELAC countries participate

#### A. The EU Global Illicit Flows Programme in CELAC countries

The **Global Illicit Flows Programme (GIFP)** was launched in 2019 as a successor to the former Cocaine Route and Heroin Route programmes, to adapt EU programming and responses to the developing criminal landscape globally. By broadening its scope and remit, the GIFP moved beyond a commodity-based approach to respond to the challenges of global illicit flows and their interdependence. The programme provides support to law enforcement and judicial authorities in partner countries by promoting regional and trans-regional cooperation, information sharing, capacity building, and by providing tools and research to counter organised crime. More specifically actions under the GIFP support partner countries with technical assistance for addressing organised crime comprehensively by focusing on maritime and aviation trafficking, arms trafficking and supporting trans-regional investigative best practices and post-seizure judicial outcomes among others.

CELAC countries participate in the following actions under the GIFP:

**AIRCOP (Airport Communication Project)** implemented by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in partnership with the World Customs Organisation (WCO) and INTERPOL, is the longest running GIFP project (since 2010). It builds interdiction capacities at selected international airports by establishing Joint Airport Interdiction Task Forces (JAITFs), promoting information sharing at international level, as well as intelligence-led approach to countering transnational organised crime and terrorism.

- Currently in phase VI running until 2026, CELAC countries (and airports) covered by AIRCOP include: Argentina (Buenos Aires), Barbados (Bridgetown), Bolivia (Santa Cruz), Brazil (Sao Paulo, associate), Colombia (Bogota, associate), Dominican Republic (Santo Domingo and Punta Cana), Ecuador (Quito), El Salvador (San Salvador), Jamaica (Kingston and Montego Bay), Panama (Panama City), Peru (Lima, associate). Engagement with Paraguay has started most recently as part of AIRCOP's IV expansion, whereas Chile has expressed interest in becoming part of AIRCOP and establishing a JAITF. JAITFs are established in Bolivia (La Paz), Ecuador (Guayaquil) and Trinidad and Tobago with non-EU funding.

- Aircop has established the Africa–Caribbean Intra-Regional Forum for 2024–2025, aimed at strengthening and prioritising South-South cooperation and information sharing among JAITFs in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean. So far, two sessions have been successfully held, bringing together Aircop Task Forces from both regions to discuss issues such as trafficking in persons, smuggling of migrants and drug trafficking. In addition to the Aircop JAITFs, participants have included representatives from CARICOM IMPACS JRCC and INTERPOL, which has enhanced cross-regional discussions, highlighting shared challenges and areas for future cooperation. Participating CELAC countries include Barbados, Bolivia, Cuba (with Canadian funding), the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Jamaica, Panama, Peru, and Trinidad and Tobago (with Canadian funding). The initiative will also include an exchange visit between Aircop Task Forces from Africa and the Caribbean in April 2025.
- In 2024, Aircop conducted over 20 capacity-building activities in CELAC countries, including recent specialised training on behavioural detection and operational reaction (ICARO) for the JAITF at the San Óscar Arnulfo Romero and Galdámez International Airport in El Salvador. Additionally, three specialised training sessions were held for law enforcement officers who will be deployed to the new JAITF at Silvio Pettirossi Airport in Asunción, Paraguay. While the officers in Paraguay have already registered seizures, the unit is expected to formally launch operations by April 2025. Several training sessions on targeting high-risk passengers and detection of fraudulent documents, drug trafficking, smuggling of migrants, preservation of traces and evidence, gender and management of CENcomm (Customs Enforcement Network Communication Platform) were provided in Argentina, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador and Peru.
- JAITFs in Barbados and Jamaica took part in regional training activities and meetings throughout 2024 covering topics such as fraudulent documents, synthetic drug trafficking, firearms trafficking among others. Barbados and Jamaica also took part in WCO Operation of Trafficking of Firearms in the last quarter of 2024.

- In 2024, Aircop JAITFs in LAC have made over 160 seizures of illicit shipments, including 177 kilos of cannabis, 173 kilos of cocaine, 3965 MDMA pills, USD 556 of undeclared cash, 9,6 kg of gold and silver bars, 61 fraudulent or stolen documents (including passports, residence permits and visas), 8 firearms and 1 cultural property.
- Additionally, a successful cooperation between Barbados, Trinidad and the Joint Regional Communication Centre of CARICOM IMPACS (a steady partner of Aircop in the Caribbean region) led to the interception of a high-risk passenger on the basis of document fraud (fraudulently obtained genuine documents). While several cases of document fraud have been detected in the region, this particular case increased regional awareness of a specific potential trend and led to improved targeting for similar cases at the regional level.

**COLIBRI (Monitoring and Controlling General Aviation)**, launched in 2019 and implemented by the WCO, assists in tackling illicit trafficking via general aviation. The second phase of COLIBRI started in April 2023 and will be running until 2026. Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, the Dominican Republic, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, Bolivia and Ecuador are partners in the project. COLIBRI developed the Geoportal, a geolocalisation tool aimed to support surveillance of movements by general aviation to enhance international cooperation and information-sharing among law enforcement agencies.

- In its second phase and as per its Strategy, COLIBRI is focusing its work on consolidating knowledge and practices that were developed for its partners, fostering harmonised approach to the control and monitoring of general aviation throughout the regions, ensuring the sharing of information within the community. A regional meeting of LAC Focal Points was organised in Paraguay in June 2024 that allowed for sharing experiences and align national plans among stakeholders in order to enhance cooperation, including with the judiciary.
- Memoranda of Cooperation (MoC) have been signed between the WCO and Argentina as well as between the WCO and Bolivia. Another one was recently signed with the Colombian Air Force, while the MoC between the WCO and Peru was signed on 21 October 2024.

- Beyond usual training sessions, which have been implemented in Bolivia and Ecuador since they have recently joined the project, COLIBRI has now started implementing **mentoring and IT tutoring missions** to provide tailored support to partner state administrations. The first one implemented in LAC was completed recently in Colombia (September 2024). Others are scheduled for months to come, notably one in the Dominican Republic at the end of November-beginning of December. These mentoring and tutoring missions are critical for identifying the shortcomings in COLIBRI's implementation techniques or in how their partners use the IT platforms. This approach appears to be quite instrumental in fostering increased level of activity and initiative from the project's counterparts.
- In order to further increase its impact among the partners, COLIBRI is also preparing a pool of trainers that can replicate training sessions, using standards and materials provided by the project. A **train-the-trainer pre-accreditation workshop** took place at WCO HQ in Brussels for that purpose (November 2024).
- A second **international law enforcement operation** will be organised by COLIBRI in the first quarter of 2025. Preparation for this intercontinental activity has kicked off and will mobilise stakeholders from LAC in coordination with their counterparts from West and Central Africa as well as from Europe.

**SEACOP (Seaport Cooperation Project)**, implemented by a Consortium of EU Member States led by Expertise France, aims to contribute to the fight against maritime illicit trade and associated criminal networks in Latin America, the Caribbean and West Africa, by improving cooperation and information sharing at national, regional and transregional level, including with Europol and Frontex. Its fifth phase ended in October 2023, but the sixth phase began immediately after. CELAC countries covered by SEACOP include: Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Barbados, Brazil, Colombia, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Grenada, Guyana, Jamaica, Panama, Peru, Paraguay, St Lucia, St Kitts and Nevis, St Vincent, Trinidad and Tobago and Uruguay.

- In April 2024 - International Seminar in Ecuador - “On Intelligence, Investigation and International Cooperation in the maritime domain”. Delivered jointly by SEACOP, CRIMARIO, CRIMJUST, RFAI and EMPACT to strengthen intelligence gathering and joint operations in Ecuador.
- In May 2024 International Seminar in Peru “On Integral Protection in the face of New Threats in the maritime context”. Organised jointly by SEACOP and CRIMJUST to improve intelligence gathering for joint investigations, controlled deliveries and joint investigation teams.
- Case Studies and Threats Initiative - Online seminars on a monthly basis and with special editions jointly with CMCON of National Navies with incidence and impact throughout the region. In which current and emerging threats are analysed with the active participation of CELAC countries.
- SEACOP Strategy - Transregional Intelligence Group-TRIG 2024-Americas-Africa, which began in 2023 and in this new phase aims to strengthen the knowledge of the threat in terms of new modalities and routes used by criminal organisations in the Atlantic route. Participation of the three regions of SEACOP-Americas, Caribbean and Africa together with European partners MAOC-N, EMPACT, FRONTEX.
- June 2024 in Paraguay, the GRES SOUTH ATLANTIC Special Response Group Strategy was launched with the participation of CELAC countries such as Argentina, Paraguay and Brazil. This initiative is intended to strengthen regional work against organised crime in the Atlantic waterway. Operational actions are being carried out by threats and a total of more than 5 tons of cocaine have been seized in several countries, Paraguay, Brazil, Argentina and Uruguay. 1 ton of marijuana was seized in Paraguay with several ongoing investigations and joint operations. Participation of MAOC-N, EMPACT, RFAI and COLIBRI.

- October launching of the GRES PUERTOS Special Response Group Strategy, with the participation of the CELAC countries of Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, Dominican Republic and Panama as observer. The aim is to strengthen the exchange of port information focused on shipping lines that travel the Pacific-Caribbean route to Europe. Prior to its launching, the countries have begun this line of operational action with an exchange that aims to strengthen the work in the region and to be able to carry out joint operations, in fact one of the objects is the realisation of the police investigation technique of controlled delivery. To this end, the network of Anti-Drug Prosecutors and the EMPACT Operational Action, led by the Spanish Prosecutor's Office, are supporting the project.
- SEACOP's key activities for the year in CELAC-affiliated countries included two major "Train the Trainer" (ToT) programs and a SEACOP hosted a senior seminar in Lisbon. The ToT programs targeted Joint Maritime Control Units (JMCUs) for countries that missed last year's initial ToT course and provided essential training for selected members of Maritime Intelligence Units (MIUs) from all SEACOP beneficiary nations. The senior seminar in Lisbon focused on the Atlantic to Africa drug trafficking route. Senior representatives from relevant Ministries involved in SEACOP initiatives participated in this event in order to enhance regional cooperation.
- Operationally, SEACOP VI led Operation Remora: a two weeklong information sharing period of focused activity to facilitate coordinated JMCU and beneficiary country law enforcement controls and rummages on profiled targets. In addition to the seizure of 1600 kilos of cocaine associated with this Operation, there was a marked increase in large seizures in the region by several beneficiary countries, with active participation by JMCU and MIU members in collaboration with other international partners. The specific activities per country are outlined below.

- **Operation Infierno Blanco:** This mega-operation was carried out by agents of Gendarmería Nacional Argentina (GNA) and Prefectura Naval Argentina (PNA). This operation involved the MAOC-N (Centre for Analysis against Maritime Drug Trafficking) and the Prefecture, through the SEACOP (collaboration between ports), and there was an exchange of information with the Federal Police of Brazil, the Investigations Division of the National Naval Prefecture of the Eastern Republic of Uruguay, the National Anti-Drugs Secretariat (SENAD) of the Republic of Paraguay and the National Police of Spain. As a result, they were able to find 700 bales of cocaine in bags and panels of the vans. In addition, seven people suspected of being involved in the operation were arrested.

**CRIMJUST (Global Programme on Criminal Network Disruption)**, implemented by UNODC in collaboration with INTERPOL since 2016, currently in phase III it will run until end of 2025. Initially focused on strengthening criminal investigation and criminal justice cooperation along drug trafficking routes, in third phase it is acknowledging the need to comprehensively address all illicit flows, with increased focus on financial investigations, mainstreaming human rights and gender-sensitive approaches. In CRIMJUST III the following CELAC countries are indicatively identified: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, El Salvador and Uruguay, Guyana, Barbados, Trinidad and Tobago and Saint Lucia (to be refined during inception); with the possibility of involving Chile and Mexico on an ad-hoc basis to share expertise, good practices or to develop criminal justice responses to a specific trafficking issue. The precise list of countries of intervention will be further refined during implementation.

- In December 2023 CRIMJUST held an event to support the implementation and dissemination of the Ethical Principles Charter of Iberoamerican Public Prosecutors in Uruguay and to support the Iberoamerican prosecutors meeting on the elaboration of a protocol for the protection and security of Iberoamerican prosecutors in Paraguay. This event was followed by a General Assembly of AIAMP in Santiago, Chile (February 2024) where the Statutes of the Ethics Commission as well as the reform of the AIAMP Charter of Ethical Principles were approved.



- In the second quarter of 2024 CRIMJUST supported the organisation of a Joint Investigation Team between Argentina and Chile, which led to joint operations that were comprised of 18 raids in Chile and 46 raids in Argentina. These raids resulted in the seizure of 115 million in Chilean pesos, 7699 contraband cigarettes packs, 17 vehicles, and firearms ammunition, with 17 individuals arrested.
- CRIMJUST diligently strives to support the integrity of law enforcement and the judiciary within its partner countries. In the first quarter of 2024, it delivered a training on ethics and integrity in Santo Domingo, Dominican Republic, to AIRCOP and SEACOP units. CRIMJUST then held a conference in August 2024 on judicial integrity, in Brasilia, Brazil for LAC countries, so that stakeholders could have a forum to discuss the emerging challenges to judicial integrity.
- Lastly, CRIMJUST implemented a financial crimes training as well as a workshops on trade base money laundering in the Caribbean. It held the former in Port of Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, in July 2024, and the latter in Kingston, Jamaica, in December 2024, with the workshop in Jamaica having a direct impact on a gold smuggling case. Participants from Guyana who attended the workshop used knowledge gained during it to charged three individuals and intercept a shipment of gold valued at US\$560,000.

**ECO-SOLVE (Disrupting Illicit Environmental Commodity Flows Through Innovative Activities)** has been designed to monitor the illicit online trade of environmental commodities, extract useful and digestible data that can inform law enforcement actions, while driving greater transparency and accountability in tackling illicit online markets. It recently joined the GIFP and will run until August 2026. It will cover multiple regions with focus on the Amazonia basin (Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, and Peru) in Latin America. The project is currently in inception phase and developing its workplan.

- ECO-SOLVE implemented two activities in Brazil, the first was a Scoping Mission which took place in May 2024 and the second was a Community Dialogue which took place later that same month. These are the two activities implemented in a CELAC country since inception in later 2023.

## B. EL PACCTO 2.0

The new **EL PACCTO 2.0 programme, Europe-Latin America Programme of Assistance against Transnational Organised Crime** (EUR 58.8 M for the period from November 2023 to 2027), officially launched in Panama (March 2024), is the EU's flagship programme to foster EU-LAC cooperation in fighting transnational organised crime. It has doubled in budget, and it has expanded its works both in terms of content, covering many more areas and criminal markets, as well as in geographical scope, including also the Caribbean, thus covering the entire LAC region. It covers justice and security-related matters, which is important to guarantee effective policies. The goal of EL PACCTO 2.0 is to establish a robust EU-LAC partnership to strengthen the rule of law and combat transnational organised crime, enhancing citizen security and stability in both regions. The three components of the programme aim to:

- **Strengthen cooperation and bi-regional structures:** Consolidate and strengthen LAC regional and EU-LAC bi-regional structures and mechanisms for cooperation on justice and security matters (e.g., Latin America Committee on Internal Security-CLASI, Justice Policy Cycle, AMERIPOL).
- **Enhance the rule of law and capacities of justice and security institutions:** Improve the overall rule of law environment in LAC and the capacity of justice and security institutions to fight transnational organised crime, including the economic dimension of crime, and also with a focus on women and youth-specific concerns.
- **Address transnational crime:** Tackle specific challenges in major transnational criminal markets in LAC, including drug trafficking, firearms trafficking, human trafficking, cultural goods trafficking, environmental crimes<sup>8</sup>, and cybercrimes.

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<sup>8</sup> In relation to the use of the term “environmental crimes” in this document, the Argentine Republic expresses its preference for “crimes that affect the environment” as expressed in La Paz Declaration.

**EL PACCTO 2.0 also includes a project implemented by INTERPOL focusing on building EU-LAC cooperation to improve fugitive investigations.** This second phase of the project started in January 2024 with operational results. The project facilitates joint fugitive investigations through increased interregional police cooperation and standardised information exchange. For instance, an INTERPOL operation targeting many of the most dangerous fugitives in Latin America, the Caribbean and Europe concluded with the arrest of 56 ‘high-risk criminals’ and the location of 28 more. Working from a list of more than 150 cases regarding individuals wanted for violent and organised crime charges, the international task force in the project shared information and followed up on investigative leads between July and December 2024. The fugitives, some of whom had been wanted for up to 15 years, were all subject to INTERPOL Red Notices – an international wanted persons alert that helps arrest thousands of the world’s most dangerous criminals each year. The operation brought together investigators from 12 countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as 4 countries in Europe. 84 arrests and positive locations were produced under the project, representing the highest ever amount for a single operation.

**Summary of the main activities/actions, including some examples of the work developed in 2024 under EL PACCTO 2.0:**

1) Regional/bi-regional meetings:

- The formal launch of EL PACCTO 2.0 was held in Panama on 11-13 March 2024. The event gathered 30 EU and LAC countries, with high level representation, including Ministers of Interior, Ministers of Justice, National Public Prosecutors, Presidents of Supreme Courts, other representatives from justice and security institutions, as well as civil society organisations from the EU and LAC.

All participants underlined the need for more and better regional and bi-regional cooperation between Latin America, the Caribbean and the EU to combat transnational organised crime. There was also agreement that the first edition of EL PACCTO had proven to be an effective programme to enhance cooperation and coordination, both at technical and political levels. Participants welcomed the extension of the programme to the Caribbean.

The launch event was followed by several high-level meetings, including the Latin American Committee on Internal Security (CLASI) Ministerial Meeting and the EU-Latin America Joint Justice Policy Cycle.

- Two important meetings in the field of security and judicial cooperation took place back-to-back in Brussels end of May 2024, organised by the Belgian Presidency and the EL PACCTO 2.0 programme:

**EU-CLASI Senior Officials' Meeting on 30-31 May 2024:** The aim was to foster operational actions to fight against organised crime, and to agree on working procedures between EU-CLASI (Latin American Committee on Interior Security). It gathered the 16 member countries of CLASI, currently chaired by Ecuador (with its Minister of Interior), and EU Member States as members of the Council's **Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security (COSI)**.

The main achievement of the COSI-CLASI session was the approval of a set of working procedures that commit MS on both sides to an EU-CLASI meeting cycle of 18 months that comprises three meeting configurations (Ministerial, SOM and institutional):

1. EU-CLASI ministerial meeting (next one in the first half of 2025, under Polish EU presidency);
2. EU-CLASI senior officials meeting (next one in the second half of 2025);
3. EU-CLASI institutional meeting, in a "restricted" format including the current and incoming Council and CLASI presidencies, plus relevant EU and Latin American agencies and bodies (held on 28 November 2024).

### **EU-Latin America Senior Officials' Meeting on Justice Cooperation, 30-31 May 2024:**

meeting between the EU and the main three Ibero-American justice institutions: COMJIB, AIAMP and *Cumbre Judicial Iberoamericana* (CJI). The aim was to discuss priority actions and instruments for judicial cooperation between both regions, including topics such as mutual legal assistance, asset recovery, extradition, Joint Investigation Teams, digitisation of judicial systems or electronic evidence.

- **The First Strategic Meeting of Focal Points of the Caribbean** took place in Barbados (July 2024), and the **First Strategic Meeting of Latin American Justice and Security Institutions for the EL PACCTO 2.0** took place in Chile (October 2024). The meetings served to plan actions for 2025, co-creating the specific Strategy for the Caribbean and for Latin America, to reflect the region's main priorities. **Partner countries renewed their commitment to work with EL PACCTO, re-engaging with the programme under its different working areas.** During these meetings with Latin American and Caribbean focal points, bilateral meetings as well as workshop type exchanges were included. Bilateral meetings were held to identify regional cooperation demands on issues such as drug trafficking, cybercrime, environmental crime, arms trafficking, human trafficking, trafficking of cultural goods, corruption, economic crimes, and national penitentiary systems. National demands were also identified, and shared challenges were observed. With the identification of demands and needs received and identified by LAC countries, **EL PACCTO team has designed the Strategic Plan for 2025.**
- Two activities were carried out simultaneously in **Quito, Ecuador, from 2 to 4 October 2024: the meeting of the Support Group of CLASI, chaired by Ecuador as pro-tempore presidency, and the launch of the new IDEAL 3.0** platform, a collaborative technological tool that will help CLASI member countries define priorities and joint operational plans. IDEAL 3.0, inspired by the European SOCTA, enables the collaboration of experts and analysts for the assessment and interpretation of organised serious crime threats among Latin American countries.

- **Brussels, Belgium, 28 November 2024. EU Council and the Latin American Committee on Internal Security (CLASI).** A meeting between the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of EU and CLASI. The purpose of the meeting was to follow up on the 2023 Ministerial Declaration signed between both regions to strengthen cooperation against transnational organised crime, establishing a stable and permanent framework for joint collaboration.
- **San José, Costa Rica, from 2 to 4 December 2024: First Bi-regional Meeting on Artificial Intelligence and Organised Crime of EL PACCTO 2.0:** The objectives of the meeting were to present the study conducted by EL PACCTO 2.0 on artificial intelligence and organised crime; address the regulatory and legislative development of AI in the region; and identify strategic actions for EL PACCTO 2.0. The meeting and the study contribute directly to the [Artificial Intelligence Action Summit](#), which will take place in Paris in February 2025.
- **Buenos Aires, Argentina, from 2 to 5 December 2024: First International Meeting of Focal Points of AMERIPOL's Specialised Centre on Cybercrime:** The meeting facilitated the exchange of experiences and best practices among police officers and some specialised cybercrime prosecutors, providing insights on the latest criminal trends and methods to combat cybercrime. Ameripol's institutional framework was reinforced by updating the network of specialists and adding new focal points to lay the foundation for joint actions and transnational investigations. Mechanisms were also strengthened to enhance the Cybercrime Threat Bulletin for Latin America and Europe.

## 2) Examples of technical support provided:

- **The Latin American Network against Arms Trafficking, ARCO,** met in Quito, Ecuador, from the 18 to 20 October 2024 to plan operational actions for 2025. Representatives from security institutions of Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Paraguay, Portugal, Uruguay, and Peru participated. CARICOM was also present to explore cooperation between Latin American and Caribbean countries. This meeting was held under the executive secretariat of Ecuador for ARCO, which will pass to Costa Rica next year.

- **The first joint meeting on environmental crimes was held in Montevideo, Uruguay, from 20 to 22 October 2024**, between the Jaguar Network (police cooperation on environmental crimes), the AIAMP (Ibero-American Association of Public Prosecutors) and representatives from Europe and Latin America specialised in combating environmental crimes. The event was organised by EL PACCTO 2.0 in collaboration with AECID, EMPACT ENVICRIME and WWF. This activity strengthens collaboration between police and prosecutors specialised in environmental crimes, addressing issues such as illegal fishing, illicit mining, and timber trafficking. One of the highlights of the meeting was the review of joint operational results and the presentation of notable investigations, highlighting the challenges faced and the support needs in the region.
- **Support for Costa Rica's comprehensive strategy for institutional strengthening around penitentiary security.** For a week in October 2024, experts in penitentiary and gender mainstreaming provided technical assistance for the development of an institutional strengthening strategy for the comprehensive management of alternative penal measures. A working group has been created to promote alternative measures to imprisonment for women through the proposal of regulatory changes. This initiative aims to reduce overcrowding and improve prison management.
- **Operational Workshop on Drug Trafficking in Quito, Ecuador, from 20 to 22 October 2024**, gathering police representatives from eight Latin American countries (Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Peru, Uruguay, Brazil, Argentina, Panama, Paraguay, and Ecuador), along with Portugal, Europol, and CARICOM.
- **San José, Costa Rica, 2-6 October 2024:** Since 2022, Costa Rica has been facing an increase in environmental crime, prompting the country to seek support from EL PACCTO 2.0. The aim is to identify, investigate, and dismantle the national and international criminal networks responsible for these activities. Technical support has commenced with specialised training for 26 officials from the National System of Conservation Areas (SINAC), the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Judiciary, and the Ministry of Public Security. This training aims to enhance their investigative skills and improve international police coordination with AMERIPOL, CIVIPOL and Europol.



- **The First Technical Profiling Meeting on High Risk Criminal Groups on 5 October 2024 in San Jose, Costa Rica:** Representatives from police and security ministries of Germany, Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Spain, France, Ireland, Mexico, the Netherlands, Paraguay, Portugal, the Dominican Republic, Romania, and Trinidad and Tobago, along with CARICOM - Implementation Agency for Crime and Security, EMPACT, Maritime Analysis and Operations Centre (Narcotics) MAOC-N, and the European Border and Coast Guard Agency, gathered to share information about the most significant criminal networks operating in Latin America, the Caribbean, and Europe.
- **On 11 November 2024 - the First meeting of the enhanced cooperation mechanism between the prosecutors' offices** of Chile, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Panama, and Peru, established at the programme's focal points meeting in October 2024. The meeting facilitated the co-creation of a flexible mechanism and the identification of specific cases with which these countries will commence joint efforts to combat transnational organised crime in the region. **With the programme's support, these countries have also signed the cooperation agreement with EUROJUST in July 2024.**
- During the week of 25 to 28 November 2024, a delegation of 11 participants representing police forces, justice systems, and environmental agencies from Brazil, Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana took part in a **study visit** to France and the Netherlands. The aim was to present internal and international cooperation models, such as the French and Dutch ones, within the framework of European Union cooperation through Eurojust and Europol. This visit also provided the first opportunity for representatives from the four countries to initiate dialogue on possible joint actions in combating environmental crimes in the region.

### 3) Examples of operational contributions:

The programme is involved in several Operational Actions under EMPACT, for instance on High-Risk Criminal Networks or firearms trafficking, among others. The programme also supports the strengthening of AMERIPOL. Two international police operations were supported:

- AMERIPOL, INTERPOL, Brazil's Federal Police, the National Police of the Dominican Republic, and Madrid's Municipal Police have dismantled an international organisation dedicated to the illegal trafficking of Dominican citizens between the Caribbean country and Spain, with 36 arrests.



- AMERIPOL and officers from Spain's National Police have arrested one of "Europe's Most Wanted", who had two European Arrest Warrants (EAWs) issued by the authorities of Hungary and Romania.

### C. EUROFRONT - Support for Integrated Border Management in Latin America

**EUROFRONT fosters intra-Latin American and bi-regional cooperation in the areas of integrated border management (IBM) and the fight against trafficking in human beings and migrant smuggling.** While the first component, on IBM, is being implemented by a consortium with FIIAPP as leader and IILA and IOM as partners, the second component, on the fight against trafficking in human beings and migrant smuggling, is managed exclusively by IOM. Human rights, gender, and values such as good governance, rule of law and fundamental freedoms, are included as cross-cutting topics in both components. Thus, it complements other programmes of EU cooperation with Latin American countries in the field of justice and security.

EUROFRONT Component 1 provides European expertise to ensure both flexible and secure migration. The following results stand out in 2024:

- The operational launch of the Athens Network, a network of collaboration between countries for the detection of false documents at borders, which has made it possible to identify false documents and EU- LA cooperation for arrests, highlighting those of a member of the Salvatrucha gang travelling to Spain, two members of the terrorist group DAESH claimed in Germany, as well as other criminals in France.
- Launch of a migration intelligence and analysis network, which has, to date, enabled the arrest of two heads of the Tiguerones gang in Spain, involved in the serious violence events that Ecuador suffered in January 2024.
- Support for the Andean Community's Resolutive Action Plan (PAR), its Decision N. 936 on exchange of migration information for the establishment of an Andean Data Bank linked to the prevention and mitigation of crimes, as well as the MERCOSUR Agreement on Linked Border Localities.

EUROFRONT Component 2 finished its activities in February 2025:

- At the national level, responding to the national demands, EUROFRONT has had a strong impact in combating human trafficking and migrant smuggling by strengthening key regulatory frameworks, institutional capacities and information systems. In Ecuador, for example, the regulation of the Organic Law against Trafficking and Illicit Trafficking established a robust legal basis, while in Paraguay, the development of a draft law addresses critical gaps in the fight against these crimes. In Brazil, the National Action Plan against migrant smuggling has become a model that prioritizes human rights and improves the prosecution of cases. The strengthening of information systems, such as SISTRATA in Argentina, SISETEP in Brazil and SNITP in Colombia, has improved data collection, analysis and traceability.
- At the regional level, EUROFRONT has promoted an inter-institutional and collaborative approach that responds to the transnational nature of human trafficking and migrant smuggling crimes, consolidating national and border efforts under an integrated regional cooperation framework. The creation and strengthening of the Regional Platform against Human Trafficking and Migrant Smuggling (PRETT) has been established as a strategic space that articulates actions and facilitates the exchange of good practices between partner countries, recognizing the need for a joint response to criminal networks that operate across borders.