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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
On:	12 June 2025
To:	Delegations

Subject:	Council conclusions on the Pact addressing new synthetic drug and new psychoactive substances threats in the European Union
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Delegations will find in the annex the Council conclusions on the Pact addressing new synthetic drug and new psychoactive substances threats in the European Union, as approved by the Council (Justice and Home Affairs) at its 4102th meeting on 12 June 2025.

The Pact addressing new synthetic drug and new psychoactive substances threats in the European Union Council conclusions

The Council of the European Union

Recognising the achievements of the 2011 European Pact Against Synthetic Drugs¹ and acknowledging the necessity of addressing the rapidly evolving threats posed by synthetic drugs for non-medical and non-scientific purposes, in particular synthetic opioids and synthetic cathinones, as highlighted in the European Drug Report 2024 and the Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (SOCTA) 2025.

Reaffirming the commitment to tackling serious and organised drug-related crime and *acknowledging* the persistent threat it poses to the safety, security, and prosperity of the European Union and its citizens.

Reaffirming the EU's commitment to an evidence-based, integrated, balanced and multidisciplinary approach to the drugs phenomenon that addresses drug supply reduction, drug demand reduction through prevention, treatment and care services, and addressing drug-related harm, in line with the EU Drugs Strategy 2021-2025² and the EU Drugs Action Plan 2021-2025³.

¹ 15544/11.

² EU Drugs Strategy (2021-2025) (OJ C 102I, 24.3.2021, p. 1).

³ EU Drugs Action Plan (2021-2025) (OJ C 272, 8.7.2021, p. 2).

Recalling that the Commission Communication on the EU Roadmap to fight organised crime and drug trafficking⁴, published on 18 October 2023 contains certain actions to address synthetic drug threats, including combating the proliferation of designer precursors, dismantling criminal networks, and forging alliances, in line with the EU Drugs Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2025 as well as the EU Strategy to Tackle Organised Crime 2021-2025⁵.

Noting that the Commission is currently carrying out the evaluation of the implementation of the EU Drugs Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2025, the results of which will support the preparation of the new EU drugs strategic framework.

Aware of the European Union Drugs Agency (EUDA)'s Director Call to action to EU partners and Member States on preparedness for, and response to, new synthetic opioids.

Recognising the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) as one of the key elements of the EU's operational response to organised crime, including synthetic drug and new psychoactive substances threats, through fostering law enforcement cooperation, joint investigations, and intelligence sharing between Member States, EU institutions and international partners.

Emphasising the importance of a mechanism for information exchange amongst others between law enforcement and customs authorities, to enhance the effectiveness of cross-border investigations, disrupt trafficking networks, and improve the detection and prevention of synthetic drug-related crimes.

Noting the critical role of the EU Early Warning System (EWS) in identifying emerging new psychoactive substances (NPS), and in assessing and responding to the risks posed by them by performing formal risk assessments to support control measures.

⁴ 14114/23.

⁵ 8085/21.

Noting the establishment of the European Drug Alert System (EDAS) for identifying and communicating serious drug-related risks to health, social welfare, safety, and security to the national authorities, practitioners, policymakers and the public.

Acknowledging the establishment of the new network of laboratories that can support preparedness in this area, underpinned by analytically confirmed forensic and toxicological data.

Noting the establishment of the new EUDA Threat Assessment mechanism whose role is to assess and identify responses to emerging drug-related health and security threats in Europe.

Acknowledging the risks associated with the proliferation of synthetic drugs and the growing threats they pose to public health and security, particularly synthetic opioids like fentanyl, its analogues, and nitazenes, which are increasingly contributing to overdose fatalities in certain regions of Europe.

Recalling Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) resolution 68/5 of March 2025, which encourages Member States to promote and provide opioid receptor antagonists, such as naloxone or other opioid overdose reversal medications, as an emergency life-saving measure, and previous CND resolutions, such as resolutions 67/4, 62/4, and 55/7, highlighting the importance of opioid receptor antagonists, such as naloxone, in reducing drug-related mortality.

Recognising that synthetic opioids can spread rapidly, and that it is essential that the EU and its Member States are able to respond swiftly and effectively, including by ensuring that professionals in the field are sufficiently available, trained and equipped with detection technology to identify early warning signs and promptly communicate them to the relevant authorities.

Highlighting the proliferation of synthetic and semi-synthetic cannabinoids, synthetic cathinones and ketamine, which remain a significant challenge for public health, law enforcement, and regulatory frameworks.

Highlighting the need for a comprehensive approach to synthetic drug threats by providing evidence-based and accessible care for people who use synthetic drugs and NPS, including treatment, prevention, harm reduction, and recovery, while also integrating public health and law enforcement responses to effectively address the issue and uphold human rights in the development and implementation of drugs policy.

Stressing the EU's responsibility as a major region of both users and producers of synthetic drugs for non-medical and non-scientific purposes, particularly MDMA, amphetamine and methamphetamine as well as synthetic cathinones, and noting the rising misuse of ketamine, which requires a proactive approach.

Acknowledging the advanced methods used by organised crime groups to circumvent existing regulations, including the use of pre-precursors and masked precursors, and *stressing* the need to use the “catch-all” provision, where applicable, and to consider legal and technical updates to EU precursor regulations, building on the outcome of the evaluation of the EU drug precursors regulations.

Stressing the importance of effective customs risk management and control of synthetic drugs, new psychoactive substances and drug precursors, including through international cooperation.

Recognising the role of online platforms, including darknet markets and the open web, in facilitating the sale and distribution of synthetic drugs, NPS and their (pre-)precursors, and *emphasising* the need for enhanced monitoring, effective measures to control online sales, and strengthened cooperation with the private sector.

Stressing the importance of the “follow the money” principle and of financial investigations as a core tool to disrupt the activities of criminal networks involved in synthetic drug production and trafficking, including measures to freeze and confiscate assets, including cryptocurrencies, linked to criminal activities, in line with the EU Anti-Money Laundering package and the Directive on asset recovery and confiscation⁶.

Acknowledging the environmental and health risks posed by the illegal disposal of chemicals and toxic waste from synthetic drug and NPS production, and *stressing* the need for coordinated action to minimise environmental damage. *Noting* that environmental crimes remain one of the most profitable unlawful activities as highlighted in the Council conclusions on combating cross-border environmental crime⁷.

Reaffirming the need for enhanced detection, investigation, and dismantling of illicit synthetic drug, NPS and (pre)precursor laboratories, with an emphasis on ensuring the safety of law enforcement personnel and protecting the environment, as outlined in the CND resolution 68/5 of March 2025.

Recognising the diverse patterns of production of synthetic drugs and NPS across Member States and the importance of enhanced situational awareness, inter alia through data collection, intelligence sharing, and analysis, in monitoring and responding to regional variations effectively.

Underlining the work carried out by Member States, EU Institutions and agencies, in particular Europol, CEPOL and EUDA in providing specialised training programmes for law enforcement officers on detecting, dismantling, and safely handling illicit synthetic drug, NPS and (pre-)precursor laboratories, in order to ensure safe and effective methods for dismantling illicit production facilities.

⁶ Directive (EU) 2024/1260 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 24 April 2024 on asset recovery and confiscation (OJ L, 2024/1260, 2.5.2024).

⁷ 14182/24.

Acknowledging the work of the International Training Centre for Combating Clandestine Laboratories, established in Poland and co-financed by the EU⁸, along with similar training centres in the Netherlands, Belgium, and Germany, in providing specialised training nationally and to Member States law enforcement authorities and in fostering the exchange of best practices, in tackling synthetic drug and NPS production.

Highlighting the importance of creating, synergies, where appropriate, between training centres specialised in the safe dismantling of illicit synthetic drug and NPS laboratories in the EU to strengthen the exchange of expertise, promote consistent and efficient methods and foster a more coordinated approach to effectively tackle synthetic drug production.

Stressing the need for internationally coordinated efforts in addressing synthetic drug and NPS threats by Member States, EU institutions and agencies with international partners, specifically and through dedicated dialogues with priority regions and countries, as well as through the Global Coalition to Address Synthetic Drug Threats and at multilateral level, including at the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

1. *Urges* Member States and EU institutions and agencies to step up efforts to address synthetic drug and NPS threats, with particular attention to synthetic opioids and to synthetic cathinones, due to their high potency and overdose potential.
2. *Urges* Member States, EU institutions, and agencies to enhance their understanding of the production, trafficking, and use of synthetic drugs and NPS, including production methods, trafficking routes, and use patterns.

⁸ Co-financed by the Programme for the Prevention of and Fight against Crime (ISEC).

3. *Recommends* that Member States and relevant EU agencies develop and implement comprehensive, human rights and evidence-based policies to prevent synthetic drug and NPS use and reduce related harms, incorporating education, community involvement, early intervention, ongoing research, targeted policy measures, professional training, and enhanced support services.
4. *Encourages* Member States and relevant EU agencies to improve structured and effective monitoring, communication, coordination and exchange of information, in particular among healthcare professionals, law enforcement, customs authorities and social services, to support the early prevention, early detection, and mitigation of potential synthetic opioid outbreaks.
5. *Invites* the EUDA to continue supporting Member States, in accordance with its mandate, in relation to national monitoring and warning systems regarding synthetic drugs to better meet the new challenges.
6. *Invites* Member States to assess measures and develop best practices aimed at reducing health and social harms through prevention, treatment, care, and recovery services, as well as through risk and harm reduction initiatives such as needle and syringe exchange programmes, opioid substitution therapies, in line with national legislations, and overdose prevention inter alia by promoting and providing training on overdose management and access to opioid receptor antagonists such as naloxone or other opioid overdose reversal medications as an emergency life-saving measure⁹, as part of a balanced and evidence-based approach to addressing synthetic drug threats. Invites Member States and the Commission to continue supporting research and measures to reduce the health and social harms of drug use, including through funding opportunities.

⁹ CND resolution 68/5, op 1 (c), of March 2025.

7. *Invites* Member States, with the aim to increase evidence-based awareness, foresight and preparedness on the health threats caused by the non-medical and non-scientific use of synthetic drugs and NPS, to provide and improve, in accordance with applicable data protection and legal frameworks, forensic examinations, autopsies and toxicological reporting — including through (pseudo -) anonymised data where appropriate — in cases of medical (emergency) treatment or cause of death investigations.
8. *Invites* Member States to closely monitor the prescription of authorised opioid medicines and their use for purposes other than those authorised or prescribed, in particular for non-medical psychotropic effects, and the manufacturing, trafficking and use of counterfeit opioid medicines.
9. *Encourages* the further development of specialised training programmes, based on available evidence in view of the new threat, for law enforcement officers or other relevant personnel, on the detection, and dismantling of illicit synthetic drugs and NPS laboratories and their safe handling in cooperation with Europol, CEPOL and the EUDA, notably such as those developed by the International Training Centre for Combating Clandestine Laboratories established in Poland, and other relevant training centres in the EU, including those based in the Netherlands, Belgium, and Germany.
10. *Encourages* EU agencies, in particular Europol, CEPOL and the EUDA to coordinate in accordance with their respective mandates the development of standardised guidelines for dismantling illicit synthetic drug laboratories, ensuring the safety of law enforcement personnel and minimising environmental damage caused by toxic waste, inter alia, in view of being adopted by the relevant training centres in the EU.
11. *Invites* the European Commission, in close cooperation with Member States and relevant EU agencies, such as the EUDA, to review and assess the need for updates to the legislative framework on drug and NPS precursors to address new threats and emerging challenges such as the use of pre-precursors and masked precursors, ensuring the effective monitoring and prevention of their diversion.

12. *Invites* Member States to foster intelligence-sharing and Europol to enhance operational support for Member States in combating synthetic drug, NPS and (pre)precursor production and trafficking, with a particular focus on cross-border criminal groups and supply chains.
13. *Calls* upon the European Commission and Member States to strengthen cooperation with the European Network on the Administrative Approach tackling serious and organised crime (ENAA) and private sector entities, including chemical and pharmaceutical companies, postal and delivery services, as well as Member States' environmental protection agencies, to prevent the false declaration and diversion of precursors and enhance the monitoring of suspicious transactions, while avoiding unnecessary administrative burdens for legitimate trade.
14. *Encourages* the effective implementation of the Digital Services Act and other relevant legislation to safeguard the digital space from synthetic drug and NPS threats.
15. *Urges* Member States to intensify efforts to track, freeze, and confiscate criminal proceeds, including cryptocurrencies, stemming from illegal synthetic drug, NPS and (pre)precursor production and trafficking in line with the EU Anti-Money Laundering package and the Directive on asset recovery and confiscation, and to make use of the possibility to establish Public Private Partnerships between law enforcement authorities and the private sector in line with the EU Anti-Money Laundering package.
16. *Invites* Member States, relevant EU institutions and agencies to intensify political and operational cooperation with third countries, at bilateral and multilateral level to take into account the new threats and disrupt precursor and synthetic drug and NPS trafficking routes, also building on the expertise of EU Liaison Officers and existing bilateral agreements.
17. *Recommends* addressing synthetic drug threats, NPS (pre-)precursor in EU and Member States' external actions on drugs, including capacity-building programmes for transit and source countries, whilst ensuring coherence with the EU Drugs Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2025 and subsequent strategic framework.

18. Recommends the Horizontal Working Party on Drugs (HDG) as the main coordinating body on drugs policy to monitor the developments related to the Pact addressing new synthetic drug and new psychoactive substances threats in the European Union.
 19. *Encourages* Member States to align their national efforts with EMPACT's strategic goals and operational action plans on synthetic drugs.
 20. *Recommends* the introduction of specific measures to address synthetic drug threats in the future EU drugs strategic framework including the new Action Plan on the fight against drugs trafficking.
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