Council of the European Union

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COVER NOTE

From:	Secretary-General of the European Commission, signed by Ms Martine DEPREZ, Director
date of receipt:	8 July 2025
To:	Ms Thérèse BLANCHET, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union
Subject:	COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Evaluation of the EU Drugs Strategy 2021-2025 and EU Drugs Action Plan 2021-2025 - Regulatory scrutiny board opinion

Delegations will find attached document SEC(2025) 210 final .

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 18.6.2025
SEC(2025) 210 final

REGULATORY SCRUTINY BOARD OPINION

Commission Staff Working Document – Evaluation of the EU Drugs Strategy 2021-2025 and EU Drugs Action Plan 2021-2025

{SWD(2025) 187 final}
{SWD(2025) 188 final}

EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Regulatory Scrutiny Board

Brussels,
Ares(2025)

Opinion

Title: Evaluation of the implementation of the EU Drugs Strategy 2021-2025 and of its Action Plan

Overall opinion: POSITIVE

(A) Policy context

The December 2020 EU Drugs Strategy for 2021-2025 was based on three pillars: (i) reducing drug supply, (ii) reducing demand, and (iii) addressing drug-related harm. The complementary EU Drugs Action Plan for 2021-2025 set out 85 actions to achieve the 11 strategic priorities listed by the strategy.

This evaluation draws conclusions on progress to date and seeks to provide inputs and recommendations for the future development of EU drug policy and the following cycle of the EU Drugs Strategy.

(B) Key issues

The Board notes the additional information provided in advance of the meeting and commitments to make changes to the report.

The Board gives a positive opinion. The Board also considers that the report could further improve with respect to the following aspects:

(1) The report does not sufficiently explain to what extent the Drugs Strategy alone is responsible for delivering certain benefits, particularly taking into account that its actions and implementation are often rooted in other frameworks.

(2) The conclusions do not sufficiently reflect the uneven contribution of the Strategy across Member States.

(C) What to improve

(1) The report should be clear about the Strategy, what it alone delivered, and the extent to which its delivery relied on the actions of existing structures e.g. Europol, Eurojust, etc. It should also be clear on the additionality of the Strategy over and above the work programmes and priorities of these agencies. It should better define the governance of the Strategy, establish who is responsible/can contribute to what, and explain how, using

This opinion concerns a draft evaluation/fitness check which may differ from the final version.

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evidence and case studies, the Strategy and Action Plan contributed to guide the work of the EU, Member States and Commission initiatives (e.g. EUDA and Europol). The report should also better explain how the Roadmap fits in the overall evaluation of the Strategy.
(2) Conclusions and lessons learned should better reflect the uneven contribution of the Strategy across Member States, the changing drug-related challenges and corresponding needs including research needs. The conclusions should be better aligned with the analysis findings and proportionate to the data limitations.
(3) The report could further assess the uneven contribution of the Strategy in Member States by looking at how the Strategy has been reflected in annual programmes and Member States policies. The report could further elaborate the operational analysis of the role of Member States, and whether, how and where it can be improved. The evaluation could show 'case studies' that may serve as best practices.
(4) The report could deepen the analysis of success factors, both at the EU and Member States levels, and explain how the implementation has been made possible e.g. procedures, budget, relationship with Agencies and how they have contributed to the success of the Strategy. The report could analyse in more detail barriers to the implementation.
(5) Given the stated limitations on data collection, evidence gathering and inconsistent reporting among Member States, the lessons learned on monitoring and standardised data collection should identify concrete gaps and corresponding additional indicators in the next strategy which would be RACER (Relevant, Accepted, Credible, Easy to monitor and Robust).
(6) The report should better clarify the baseline. Although the baseline assessment is refered to in the Evaluation matrix as the basis for the data analysis, to allow for a comprehensive comparative analysis, the report should gather the corresponding figures for the 11 overarching indicators (as per Annex I of the Action Plan) and present them in a table.

Some more technical comments have been sent directly to the author DG.

(D) Conclusion

The lead Service may proceed with the initiative.

The lead Service is advised to take these recommendations into account before launching the interservice consultation.

Full title	Evaluation of the implementation of the EU Drugs Strategy 2021-2025 and of its Action Plan
Reference number	PLAN/2023/1722
Submitted to RSB on	4 April 2025
Date of RSB meeting	30 April 2025