
EU Commission: strategies for fight on child sexual abuse, drugs and firearms trafficking

The EU Commission takes action to combat three criminal activities of major concern: child sexual abuse, drugs and illegal firearms trafficking. One in 5 children are victim to some form of sexual violence in Europe today, with indications that the lockdown has exacerbated the problem, said Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva Johansson. Reports of online child sexual abuse in the EU have increased from 23,000 in 2010 to more than 725,000 in 2019, marked by the simultaneous increased dissemination of online child abuse material, with the EU hosting more than two thirds of such material globally, the Commissioner remarked. EU response to this scourge includes effectively combating both its online and offline form in the period 2020-2025, with a view to creating a European centre to prevent and counter child sexual abuse, building on the best practices and lessons learned from similar centres around the world, such as the National Centre for Missing and Exploited Children in the US; catalyzing a coordinated multi-stakeholder action, and, in relation to prevention, stepping up cooperation with other organizations working in this area and rising awareness via dedicated media campaigns. With regard to legal procedures, efforts will focus on defining “detect, report, remove, refer” mechanisms. As for the illicit drug market, which has an estimated retail value of €30 billion per year in Europe alone, and “untold” costs on “social livelihoods and health”, the EU Agenda and Action Plan on Drugs 2021-2025 sets out 53 actions based on two pillars: strengthening security measures focused on all aspects of illicit trafficking of drugs, and prevention. Finally, the new Action Plan on firearms trafficking (it is estimated that 35 million illicit firearms are owned by civilians in the EU), will work towards the improvement of legal frameworks (and their implementation), monitoring activity, international cooperation to apprehend traffickers.

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