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| Speaker | Alexis Goosdeel, EMCDDA Director |
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Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is a great pleasure to be here today with Commissioner Avramopoulos and with my colleague Rob Wainwright, Director of Europol, to launch the second *EU Drug Markets Report*.

I would first like to express our solidarity with Belgian citizens and authorities, with the victims and their families, after the tragic recent events that took place here in the heart of Europe.

I would also like to say how important it is for me and for my team to be in Belgium with you to launch the report today against considerable odds.

What has changed since the publication of the first Drug Markets Report? What is new? What is the new knowledge that, working together with Europol, we will present to you today?

First of all, we have for the first time produced an estimate of the size of the illicit drug market in the EU: this is worth at least EUR 24 billion per annum (range: EUR 21 to 31 billion).

The market share for each of the main drugs being used in Europe is as follows: 38 % for cannabis (9.3 billion €), 28 % for heroin (6.8 billion €), 24 % for cocaine (5.7 billion €), 8 % for amphetamine and methamphetamine (1.8 billion €) and 3 % (0.7 billion €) for ecstasy/MDMA, respectively.

For new psychoactive substances, or NPS, which includes a large number of substances that are sold openly as ‘legal’ replacements for illicit drugs, we do not yet have an estimate. But what is sure is that the number, type and availability of these substances are showing no signs of slowing down in; 100 new substances were reported to us for the first time in 2015 and the EU Early Warning System currently monitors more than 560 substances, of which 78 % have appeared over the last five years.

For each of these substances or groups of substances, the report gives a comprehensive analysis of the situation and proposes points for action.

The report also describes four main ways in which drug markets impact on society, through:

1. their links with other types of criminal activity and terrorism;
2. their impact on legal businesses and the wider economy;
3. the strain on and corruption of government institutions they create;
4. and the negative effects they have on society more broadly (e.g. drug-related crime and violence, environmental damage and harms to families and communities).

We go on to analyse the main drivers of drug market change, showing how the developments associated with globalisation are key drivers for change and innovation in drug markets. As mentioned by Mr Avramopoulos, it is important to highlight **the influential role the internet plays in the drugs business**, providing both sales outlets and opportunities to shorten the supply chain, while reducing opportunities for law-enforcement interventions.

The EU drug market is driven by two simple motives: profit and power. Understanding this, and the wider impact drug markets have on society, is critical if we are to reduce drug-related harm. This knowledge is essential for the development of new strategies for tackling crime and safeguarding the health, security and prosperity of our citizens.

Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, dear colleagues,

Since we last published this report just three years ago, we have witnessed an acceleration in the rate at which the drug market is changing, associating shifting patterns of drug use, cultural and social changes, wider criminal activities, and an increased complexity of the activities of Organised Crime Groups in Europe.

New aggressive marketing strategies and the use of the internet for increased production and reaching/creating new consumer markets have also played a significant role.

Today, we are facing competing priorities: terrorism in the heart of Europe, Member States coping with mass migration; increasing instability and conflict in zones near the EU (Ukraine, Syria, but also the Southern Caucasus).

These factors create a perfect storm that threatens to undermine the successful drug policies in place in Europe and that is why this report is an important and timely reminder that we can not, we will not lose focus of the drugs situation, but continue to work to provide better strategic analysis and added value to our stakeholders.

You can count on the commitment of the EMCDDA to cooperate together with Europol, the other Agencies in the area of Justice and Home Affairs, the EU Institutions and the EU Member States on this important challenge.