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## **Drugs: De Bolle (Europol), “fighting this illegal trade is a key priority” for the EU. Health and security threats**

“Europe is a major synthetic drug producing region, both for domestic and external markets”. This is according to the latest report released today by the EU drugs agency (EMCDDA) and Europol. Indeed, Europe has become a major hub for the drug business. “For both cocaine and methamphetamine, there is evidence that Latin American and European criminal groups are partnering in production, trafficking and distribution”. According to Europol’s Executive Director Catherine De Bolle, the “trade in illegal drugs continues to dominate” organised crime, “and nearly 40% of the criminal networks operating at the international level reported to Europol are active in drug trafficking. Fighting this illegal trade is a key priority for Europol and the EU”. “Today’s analysis - she went on to say - supports us in understanding the market dynamics and is crucial for formulating effective law enforcement responses”. Today’s findings draw on data and information from the EMCDDA’s drug monitoring system and on Europol’s operational intelligence on organised crime. The agencies present key areas for action at EU and Member State level. These include: rapidly identifying emerging health and security threats, investing in forensic and toxicological capacity to keep pace with innovation, targeting the illicit drug supply chain, and reducing vulnerabilities at external borders.

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