

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-000430/24
to the Commission
David McAllister (PPE)
(8 February 2024)**

Subject: European Ports Alliance against drug trafficking

Ports contribute to 75% of EU external trade volumes. As such, they are particularly vulnerable to drug smuggling and exploitation by criminal networks. In recent years, the annual amount of cocaine seized across the EU has been over 300 tonnes. German seaports have not been spared, with the authorities having intercepted several tonnes of drugs over the past years. According to the customs audit, out of a total of approximately 14.4 tonnes of cocaine seized across Germany in 2022, the Hamburg customs area accounted for 9.7 tonnes, and the Bremen customs office, which supervises the port of Bremerhaven, 1 tonne.

Effective protection can only be achieved at EU level. The European Ports Alliance aims bring the EU's ports, policy-makers and security authorities together to strengthen cooperation in the fight against international drug trafficking.

1. What measures will the Commission take to support the European Ports Alliance, with a view to improving the exchange of information between affected ports, while preventing criminals from being able to just change location?
2. What can be done to increase both public and private port staff's awareness of bribery, corruption and threats?
3. When and according to which criteria does the Commission intend to distribute the announced sum of EUR 200 million among EU customs authorities?

Submitted: 8.2.2024

**Answer given by Ms Johansson on behalf of the European Commission
(31 May 2024)**

With the European Ports Alliance, as laid down in the EU Roadmap on the fight against drug trafficking and organised crime ⁽¹⁾, the Commission is setting up a framework to facilitate the effective risk management and customs controls linked to illicit drugs and drug precursors smuggling.

The Commission promotes cooperation between customs and police within the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT).

In January 2024, the Commission launched the European Ports Alliance public private partnership ⁽²⁾, to promote best practices and put in place coordinated measures in cooperation with public and private port operators, including on staff awareness on bribery, corruption and threats.

The Schengen Thematic Evaluation on drug trafficking in ports, conducted in 2023 has gathered information and best practices and will, complemented with the customs' angle to this phenomenon, provide further basis for the development of the European Ports Alliance. The current implementation of the EU legislation on Maritime Security ⁽³⁾ will also be duly taken into consideration.

The Commission has launched the second call under its Customs Control Equipment Instrument (CCEI) ⁽⁴⁾, allocating over EUR 200 million to fund state-of-the-art equipment with a mandatory emphasis on risks related to illicit drugs and precursors.

The proposals are evaluated based on four award criteria: relevance, added value, sustainability and innovation. The results of the evaluation conducted by the Commission to determine the allocation of the funds will be available by mid-2024.

Once the Commission signs the grant agreements with the Member States, they will organise the procurement to purchase the equipment, in compliance with relevant international, EU and national procurement rules.

⁽¹⁾ COM(2023) 641 final.

⁽²⁾ https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_24_344

⁽³⁾ Regulation (EC) No 725/2004 on enhancing ship and port facility security; Directive 2005/65/EC on enhancing port security.

⁽⁴⁾ https://taxation-customs.ec.europa.eu/eu-funding-customs-and-tax/customs-control-equipment-instrument_en