

International drug trafficking network dismantled

The Hague, 16 July 2020

✘ Judicial and law enforcement authorities in Romania, with Eurojust support and the cooperation and assistance of national authorities from several countries, have dismantled an organised criminal network responsible for drug trafficking. 15 people were indicted and almost 2 tons of cocaine, with an estimated value of €600 million, were seized.

15 suspects were indicted earlier this week in Romania for international drug trafficking and the setting up of an organised crime group (OCG).

The OCG members smuggled over 3 tons of cocaine from Brazil to Romania by sea, storing the drugs in Romanian territorial waters with the aim of transporting and distributing them to Western Europe and the Western Balkans. 1.8 tons of cocaine with an estimated value of approximately €600 million were seized by the Romanian authorities. The majority of the remaining drugs were lost by the criminal network during transport by sea.

The Directorate for Investigating Organised Crime and Terrorism – Central Structure initiated the investigation into the OCG and led the operation in Romania. Given the complexity of the case and its international dimension, with members of the criminal network being of various nationalities (Romanian, Lebanese, Brazilian, Spanish, Serbian and Ukrainian) and operating in different parts of the world, the case was referred to Eurojust in May 2019.

In July 2019, a joint investigation team (JIT) was established between Romania and Serbia and benefited from financial and operational support from Eurojust.

The majority of the suspects were active in Romania, where the drugs were brought, and were coordinating the transport of the merchandise to the Western Balkans and other countries in Europe with a criminal cell in Serbia. Some of the suspects fled to Spain after losing an important cargo of the drugs (a ship smuggling approximately 1 ton of cocaine further inland sank in the Danube Delta in Romania). The OCG member in charge of purchasing the drugs from different providers in Latin America and smuggling them from Brazil to Europe was located in Brazil.

In addition to the financial and operational support of the JIT, Eurojust assisted the national authorities with the organisation of a coordination meeting, where team members exchanged crucial information about the case.

Eurojust also facilitated the execution of a Mutual Legal Assistance request to Brazil, relying on the support of the Eurojust contact point in this country. This also enabled the direct exchange between the Romanian

authorities and their counterparts in Brazil, carrying out the hearings and other investigative activities promptly.

Furthermore, Eurojust facilitated the execution of multiple European Investigation Orders and Mutual Legal Assistance Requests in Spain, the execution of a European Investigation Order in Bulgaria (which resulted in a transfer of proceedings to Romania) and a Mutual Legal Assistance request in Ukraine.

Europol contributed to the operation by providing analytical support.

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Article – Medicine shortages in the EU: causes and solutions



Parliament had already called for better traceability of research and development costs, public funding and market expenditure to make medicines more affordable in a [resolution adopted in 2017](#).

The [Commission issued guidelines](#) to tackle shortages due to the coronavirus outbreak in April. It called on member states to lift export bans and avoid stockpiling; increase and reorganise production; ensure optimal use in hospitals by reallocating stocks; consider alternative medicines; and optimise sales in pharmacies.

EU pharmaceutical strategy

The report calls on the Commission to address the issue of medicine availability and accessibility and import dependency in the upcoming [EU pharmaceutical strategy](#).

It is expected to propose measures to help improve and accelerate access to safe and affordable medicines, support innovation in the EU pharmaceutical industry, fill market gaps (for example [new antimicrobials](#)) and reduce direct dependence on raw materials from non-EU countries.

Next steps

MEPs are expected to vote on the report during the September plenary session.

"A deal is essential. Now is the time" – Invitation letter by President Charles Michel to the members of the European Council ahead of their meeting on 17-18 July 2020



On Friday, for the first time since the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, we will be able to meet again here in Brussels.

The COVID-19 pandemic has claimed many lives across Europe and dealt a serious blow to our economies and societies. It continues to impact our lives. All our efforts must focus on building a sustainable recovery. To that end, our meeting this week will be dedicated to the Multiannual Financial Framework and the Recovery Plan.

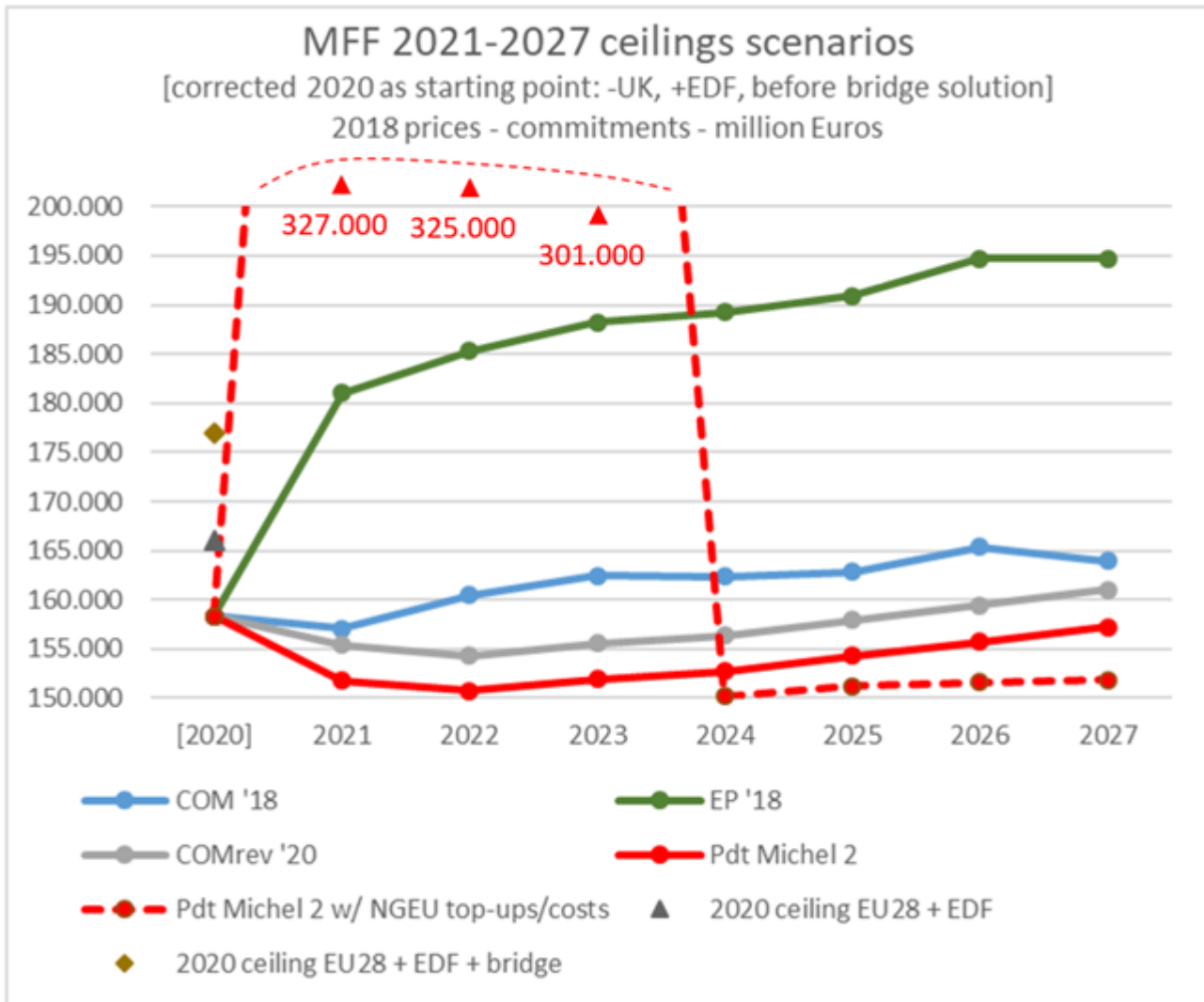
Since our last summit in June, we have worked intensively with all of you and taken due note of your concerns. On that basis I have put forward a proposal to address the key difficulties and to build bridges between the different positions. Finding agreement will require hard work and political will on the part of all. Now is the time. A deal is essential. We will need to find workable solutions and come to an agreement, for the greater benefit of our citizens.

Our meeting will start on Friday at 10.00 a.m. with the traditional exchange of views with the President of the European Parliament, David Sassoli. We will then hold our first working session and take it from there.

I look forward to welcoming you again in Brussels!

[Visit the meeting page](#)

Press release – Recovery effort will fizzle out quickly if there is no long-term perspective



Ahead of [Wednesday's meeting of the General Affairs Council \(GAC\)](#), the European Parliament's negotiating team on the MFF and the Own Resources met with German Minister for European Affairs Michael Roth. EP negotiators delivered Parliament's detailed comments on the 65-page draft conclusions ('negotiating box') presented by European Council President Charles Michel last Friday, which will form the basis of the summit starting on 17 July.

"We have conveyed at record speed our position and reacted to every item of the latest negotiating box. The leaders cannot disregard Parliament's views, and we urge them to improve the proposals on the table. Then we expect real negotiations on the Multiannual Financial Framework, the own resources and the recovery instrument so that we can provide our consent by the end of the year. Furthermore, Parliament will negotiate the expenditure programmes and rule of law instrument in co-decision, on an equal footing with the Council."

In parallel, EP negotiators unveiled the outcome of a [more detailed analysis of the proposed MFF figures](#) : "Cuts after cuts, some flagship programmes such as Erasmus+ are now at risk of experiencing an immediate drop from 2020 to 2021. As of 2023, the EU budget as a whole could plunge well below current levels, including in research and development and other key areas. This is in outright contradiction with the European Union's commitments and priorities, notably on the green, digital and geopolitical agendas."

“A long-lasting reduction of the European Union budget cannot be the answer to the refinancing of the short-term recovery instrument. New streams of revenue, or ‘own resources’, are necessary to repay the debt without harming the national taxpayer.”

Referring to the [new survey that shows that a majority of citizens expect more financial means](#) to overcome the impact of the pandemic, EP negotiators declared: “Our common objective is to deliver a recovery strategy that works for the next generations, and a long-term budget that meets our commitments and lives up to citizens’ expectations.”

The negotiating team’s analysis of the figures in the draft European Council conclusions is [set out in this document](#) published on Wednesday.

The EP’s negotiating team for the next long-term EU budget and Own Resources reform

[Johan Van Overtveldt](#) (ECR, BE), Chair of the Committee on Budgets

[Jan Olbrycht](#) (EPP, PL), MFF co-rapporteur

[Margarida Marques](#) (S&D, PT), MFF co-rapporteur

[José Manuel Fernandes](#) (EPP, PT), Own Resources co-rapporteur

[Valérie Hayer](#) (RENEW, FR), Own Resources co-rapporteur

[Rasmus Andresen](#) (Greens/EFA, DE)

Follow them on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/i/lists/1205126942384676866?s=20>

Next steps

EP President David Sassoli will address EU heads of state or government at the European Council meeting on Friday at 10:00 and hold a press conference at 11:00 in the Parliament’s press room and online (media advisory will follow).

Once EU countries have agreed a common position, they will have a mandate to enter negotiations with Parliament, which will have a final say before the 2021-2027 budget can enter into force. The current multiannual budget runs out on 31 December 2020.