

[Drug trafficking ring taken down in Norway and Germany](#)



The Hague, 6 March 2020

German and Norwegian authorities have taken down an organised criminal group (OCG), involved in the trafficking of illicit drugs between the two countries. Eurojust actively supported this coordinated operation, in which five suspects were arrested, three in Germany and two in Norway. During the investigations, 27 kilos of heroin and one kilo of cocaine were found in a car on the way to Norway. Several places have been searched and more drugs have been seized during following actions in Germany.

Investigations into the OCG started summer last year and indicated an Albanian criminal network was trafficking drugs from Germany to Norway. In close cooperation between the authorities and with support from the German and Norwegian Liaison Bureaus at Europol, a covert operation was started, which led to the arrests and showed the involvement of the OCG.

Eurojust coordinated investigations and actions between the two countries, with involvement of the German desk and Norwegian Liaison Prosecutor at the Agency. Eurojust organised a coordination meeting at its premises and assisted in overcoming legal obstacles, providing judicial advice, including on the agreements of where to prosecute.



Photos © Norwegian Police

[Article – Coming up: long-term budget, climate law, COVID-19](#)



Following the rapid spread of the **Coronavirus**, MEPs will assess EU efforts to come up with a coherent EU-wide response on Tuesday. They will vote on a resolution on Thursday.

On Wednesday morning, members will assess the situation of refugees at the **Greek-Turkish border** following Ankara's decision at the weekend to lift barriers to migrants and asylum seekers seeking access to the EU.

Also on Wednesday morning, MEPs will discuss with Council President Charles Michel the failure of the February budget summit to reach an agreement on the [EU's long-term budget](#), which would allow negotiations between member states and the Parliament to start.

Last year, the Parliament declared a [climate emergency](#). On Monday, they will assess whether the European Commission's **climate law** proposal will make the EU carbon neutral by 2050. They will discuss the Commission's new [circular economy](#) plan on Wednesday.

MEPs will vote on the post-2020 **disability strategy** on Wednesday. They are expected to call for disability rights to be integrated in all EU policy and for concrete action on issues including employment, accessibility, poverty and education.

To mark [International Women's Day](#) the Parliament is holding a debate on Tuesday about the role of women as agents for change with Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

Energy projects that receive EU funding should be in line with the EU's 2050 climate neutrality objectives, according to a resolution to be voted on Wednesday.

On Thursday MEPs will vote on a resolution calling for better protection of

EU funds against [misuse in the Czech Republic](#), including by the Czech prime minister.

Other items on the agenda include:

- The situation in **Ukraine** six years after the Minsk peace agreement
- Debate on whether EU action is needed to prevent a **shortage of medicines**
- The future of EU **competition policy**

Exceptionally, the [plenary will take place in Brussels](#) instead of Strasbourg because of concerns linked to the spread of the Coronavirus.

[Press release – European mayors to gather in Parliament to discuss climate-neutral cities](#)



European Parliament President David Sassoli will open the 2020 Covenant of Mayors ceremony in the Parliament's hemicycle with a speech at 14.00, and at 16.00 Executive Vice-President of the Commission Frans Timmermans will hold a Citizen's Dialogue with participants on the Climate Pact.

The purpose of the event is to exchange views on how different cities and towns are dealing with climate change and how to scale up their efforts.

Speakers also include Commissioner for Energy, Kadri Simson, mayors and representatives from Lisbon, Warsaw, Barcelona and Stockholm as well as the President of the European Committee of the Regions, Apostolos Tzitzikostas.

The mayors will also attend a morning session at the European Committee of

the Regions. See more in [the event programme](#).

You can follow the [Covenant of Mayors 2020 Ceremony here](#) and the [European Climate Pact Citizen's Dialogue here](#).

Background

The Covenant of Mayors is a European initiative that connects [more than 10.000 towns and cities](#), in Europe and beyond, that are committed to reducing CO2 emissions and increasing their resilience to climate change. It was launched in Europe in 2008.

[Article – MEPs call for at least €1.4 billion for EU disaster management](#)



EU defence mechanism to save lives

Since its creation in 2001, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, a collaborative system of mutual aid, has been activated more than 330 times to

respond to natural and man-made disasters, inside and outside the EU, such as forest fires, floods, marine pollution, earthquakes, hurricanes, industrial accidents and crisis situation, including health crisis.

During the **current coronavirus outbreak**, it has been used to coordinate and co-finance the delivery of emergency medical supplies to China and protective material to Italy.

It has also helped to repatriate EU citizens from the Wuhan area, China, and the Diamond Princess cruise ship docked in Yokohama, Japan.

Strengthening emergency response capacity

When a member state is overwhelmed by a disaster, it can ask for help via the Mechanism. The Commission coordinates the response and covers at least 75% of the transport and operational costs.

In 2019, the EU developed a new [European reserve of additional capacities called RescEU](#) to directly assist when the resources deployed by member states are not enough.

MEPs want to allocate a larger amount of the funding to preparedness in the 2021-2027 programme, including funds to purchase needed new *RescEU* equipment and materials, such as forest fire-fighting planes, special water pumps, field hospitals and special medical equipment.

Next steps

After a debate and vote in plenary on the 2021-2027 programme for the Civil Protection Mechanism, Parliament will start negotiations with the Council of Ministers.

[Press release – EU-UK future relations: crucial to ensure EU leverage and unity](#)



“With negotiations kicking off today, we are entering into a crucial phase that will set the tone for the future EU-UK relationship. The European Union is united; mutual trust and respect should prevail to ensure the best possible outcome for both parties. EU negotiator Michel Barnier and his team can count on the European Parliament’s full support”.

“As stated in our latest resolution, the EU must do its utmost when negotiating with the UK to guarantee the European Union’s interests. We take note of the UK’s mandate published on 27 February. Members reiterated in their resolution their determination to establish a future relationship with the UK that is as close as possible, noting nonetheless that this will have to be different from that enjoyed by the UK as a member state of the EU. To this end, trust is essential. It is also crucial that the UK government, in the upcoming negotiations, quickly clarifies its approach to the implementation of the Withdrawal Agreement, particularly with regard to the protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland.”

Background

The European Parliament adopted its [latest resolution on EU-UK future relations](#) on 12 February. In the text, [MEPs called for future fair competition and a “level playing field” to be guaranteed through robust commitments](#), and “dynamic alignment” of EU-UK rules.

EU government representatives in the Council gave the go-ahead for talks to start and [adopted the EU’s negotiating directives on 25 February](#), effectively allowing the European Commission to begin negotiating with the British government on behalf of the EU.

Parliament’s “UK Coordination Group”, led by Foreign Affairs Committee Chair [David McAllister](#) (EPP, DE), will liaise with the EU [Task Force for Relations with the United Kingdom](#). The EP will follow closely the work of the EU negotiator Michel Barnier and continue to influence the negotiations through resolutions. The final agreement will need the approval of the Parliament as a whole.