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| Speaker | Ylva Johansson, European Commissioner for Home Affairs |
| Title of speech | European Drug Report 2024: Trends and Developments |
| Occasion | Launch of the European Drug Report 2024 (video transcript) |
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You've done it again!

Thank you for an excellent drug report warning us that many new drugs are entering the market, often very pure and potent drugs. Increasingly, people in Europe are mixing drugs, taking potentially deadly cocktails of different kinds of drugs like 'pink cocaine', a dangerous mix that changes every time you take it, including MDMA, cocaine, ketamine and more.

Drugs have no labels or health warnings. People have no idea what they are taking. These mixes can make people very sick, and even kill them, and it will be more difficult to save people if no one knows what they have actually taken. Criminals are constantly creating new drugs to avoid detection. At the drugs agency, you are now monitoring over 950 different drugs. You are warning us of synthetic opioids: 81 new ones in the last 15 years. Last year, especially nitazenes — highly potent and extremely deadly — causing death in Estonia and Latvia, and poisoning in Ireland and France.

Drug use is getting worse in Europe. Half a million people in the EU injected drugs last year. Traditionally heroin, but nowadays also other drugs, like amphetamines and cocaine. At least 6 400 people died of an overdose, 20 % of these deaths involved cocaine. After cannabis, cocaine is the second most common drug used in the EU. Record quantities are being seized: 116 tonnes in Antwerp harbour alone last year. But while seizures are up, purity remains high and prices are stable, showing that huge amounts of cocaine are available. With successful efforts in big ports to prevent criminal infiltration, traffickers are now moving to smaller ports to smuggle drugs. But we are tightening the net. We are improving cooperation with Latin American partner countries, and in January, I launched the European Ports Alliance precisely to prevent criminals moving from port to port. And now 31 European ports have joined and the alliance is becoming operational. It takes a network to fight a network!

The last four years, I put forward 25 initiatives and laws in the field of security and one of those is the new and better mandate for you. In less than three weeks, you will start operating as the EU Drugs Agency. You will be able to examine the danger of drug mixing, poly-substance use and how we can counter it. You will have a stronger analytical capacity thanks to a network of laboratories. You will be able to work more internationally with key partners like Colombia and Ecuador. You will be able to issue early warnings with the new European Drug Alert System and have the capacity to make health and security threat assessments.

I am very proud of you, of what you have achieved so far. And I am so much looking forward to witnessing what you will be capable of doing with your new resources and powers. I am delighted to soon be meeting you in Lisbon to celebrate with you the launch of the European Union Drugs Agency.

Thank you!