

Prevention-first and health-centred EU drug strategy

Adopted by the General Assembly of NordAN in Riga, Latvia, on 13 November 2025.

recalls that drug-related harms extend beyond deaths to include health problems, family disruption, economic hardship, and community impacts,

notes that the current EU focus on drug trafficking must be matched by equally strong efforts in health-centred responses, requiring a balanced approach to protect both health and human rights,

recognises that rapid changes in drug markets - including stronger synthetic substances, polydrug use, and online supply - demand faster, coordinated public health action,

underlines that youth are often first affected by new substances, and that effective policies involve those most impacted in their development,

stresses that health services remain unevenly available across EU member states, with waiting lists and service gaps undermining the right to health,

emphasises the vital role of families, schools, workplaces, and civil society in building protective factors and supporting recovery,

highlights that social and economic inequalities increase vulnerability to substance use, requiring drug policy to connect with broader social and health efforts,

calls attention to inadequate funding for health actions, as these budgets are often first to be cut during fiscal pressure.

Therefore, the NordAN General Assembly calls on EU institutions and member states to:

Put prevention at the centre of the next EU Drugs Strategy with clear objectives, measurable targets, and dedicated resources for evidence-based action in schools, families, workplaces, and communities, addressing alcohol where it appears in polydrug patterns.

Develop a comprehensive health action plan to complement supply control efforts, covering all aspects of the public health response.

Modernise responses to polydrug use and synthetics by strengthening early warning systems, rapid risk communication, and practical guidance for municipalities, schools, nightlife settings, prisons, and emergency services.

Improve access to quality services by reducing waiting times and increasing youth-sensitive, gender-responsive, and trauma-informed options, including low-threshold support, helplines, and structured aftercare that involves families and communities.

Embed meaningful participation through formal mechanisms for youth, people in recovery, families, and civil society in designing, implementing, and evaluating the EU Drugs Strategy at all levels.

Address gender and inequality systematically across all strategy pillars, ensuring funding reflects these priorities.

Provide stable, long-term funding for municipalities, community organisations, and NGOs to deliver high-quality programmes, ensuring EU funding is accessible to smaller actors.

Promote policy coherence by linking EU policies on licit and illicit substances where they interact, avoiding gaps and strengthening public health protection.

Protect health budgets during crises, recognising their long-term benefits for health, security, and social cohesion.

Report regularly and transparently on strategy implementation, with independent input from civil society and affected groups.

This resolution calls for a shift in EU drug policy: from a security-dominated approach to one that prioritizes prevention and health. By investing in evidence-based services, ensuring meaningful participation of affected communities, and addressing the social roots of vulnerability, Europe can build a drug strategy that protects both current and future generations while upholding human rights and dignity for all.