

# Brexit will affect the UK's ability to tackle illicit drugs trade, warn experts

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Exclusion from the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) because of Brexit will have serious consequences for public health in the UK, warn experts in a letter to *The BMJ* this week.

The EMCDDA is responsible for conducting surveillance, establishing best practice, facilitating data exchange, providing leadership on new psychoactive substances, and assisting policy makers, they explain.

The intelligence assembled by the EMCDDA and Europol "has been crucial in the UK's response to organised crime and illicit trade in drugs," they add.

They argue that the challenges of Brexit arrive when the UK relies most heavily on the EMCDDA to tackle the trade of illicit substances, especially involving organised crime, the consequences of which are seen on the streets and in emergency departments every week.

They believe that failure to ensure continued cooperation with the EMCDDA after Brexit "presents substantial risks to public health and safety."

As such, they call on the government to take "all necessary action" to enable [health](#) professionals to continue participating in surveillance systems, respond appropriately to emerging threats, and support policy and operational responses.

"Ministers have committed to ensuring that Brexit will not undermine [public health](#). This is an opportunity to show that commitment," they conclude.

**More information:** European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction has a vital role in the UK's ability to respond to illicit drugs and organised crime, *BMJ*, [www.bmj.com/content/362/bmj.k4003](http://www.bmj.com/content/362/bmj.k4003)

Provided by British Medical Journal

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