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Drugnet Europe

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Drugs in Europe cheaper than ever

The price of illicit drugs on Europe's streets has fallen over the last five years and drugs today are now probably cheaper across Europe than ever before, according to the EMCDDA 2006 *Annual report on the state of the drugs problem in Europe* launched on 23 November at the European Parliament in Brussels. The announcement comes after a five-year trend analysis (1999–2004) of street prices of drugs in Europe revealed that average prices were falling in most countries and for most substances, in some cases by almost half. The research is the first of its kind carried out at European level.

Prices in Europe as a whole fell in this period for cannabis resin (19%), herbal cannabis (12%), cocaine (22%) and brown heroin (45%) as well as for amphetamine (20%) and ecstasy (47%). All prices were corrected for inflation to assess 'real' prices more accurately. Although long-term data on drug prices are still not widely available, existing information suggests that prices may have fallen over the last decade. For example, there are signs that ecstasy and cocaine are cheaper today in some countries than in the late 1980s and early 1990s.

Drug prices may be influenced by a variety of factors including: fluctuations in supply, level of purity, type of product and volume purchased. Price analyses are further complicated by the hidden nature of the illicit drug market, national variations in data quality and data-collection methods. Current data show no direct relationship between falling drug prices and the fluctuating or upward trend in drug seizures over the same five-year period. Neither do the data reveal any simple link between price and overall levels of drug use. Nevertheless, the current overview provides a sound basis for important future work by the agency and EU Member States to better understand the dynamics of the European illicit drug market and assess the impact of measures to reduce supply and demand.

Despite an overall downward trend in drug prices across Europe, considerable country variations are reported. Whilst, typically, most countries reported prices for cannabis resin to be between €5 and €10 per gram, prices were as low as



Average drug prices falling in most countries and for most substances.

Drug strategies broadening in scope

An in-depth analysis of drug policy published by the EMCDDA this year alongside the 2006 *Annual report*, reveals that there are strong signs of a broadening of the scope of drug strategies to encompass licit addictive substances, such as alcohol, tobacco and medicines, as well as illicit drugs (1). Over two-thirds of the countries surveyed now either cite both types of substance explicitly in their drug policy documents or include links to licit substances in the context of prevention and treatment.

In his message launching the report, EMCDDA Director Wolfgang Götz referred to this as 'clearly a timely development when the multiple use of licit and/or illicit substances ('polydrug use') is becoming ever more visible within the European drug culture'. The EMCDDA currently faces the challenge of monitoring a much broader spectrum of substances than a decade ago and polydrug use presents big challenges to drug monitoring systems that traditionally have focused on the use of individual substances. 'Developing new methodologies to understand this pattern of drug use must be high on our future agenda', said the Director, 'if we are to meet the needs of the growing number of people whose problems stem from using a range of drugs'.

(1) 'European drug policies: extended beyond illicit drugs?' — <http://issues06.emcdda.europa.eu>

See also 'Message from the EMCDDA Director' at <http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/?nodeid=875>

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October–December

2006

2006 Annual report

Drug treatment services for women still limited

Health services across Europe are waking up to the fact that women with drug problems have special needs and that these needs require specialised interventions, but women-only treatment services remain extremely limited. 'A gender perspective on drug use and responding to drug problems' is one of three *Selected issues* (1) subjected to an in-depth analysis by the EMCDDA this year alongside its 2006 *Annual report*.

According to the review, drug treatment facilities are usually organised around the needs of opioid addicts, who are mainly men, with 'gender-specific treatment' generally referring to interventions targeted at female drug users. But while nearly all EU Member States and Norway now offer at least one drug treatment unit exclusively for women, or for women with children, such services remain an exception and are often limited to major urban centres. As a result, the majority of women are still assisted through generic services.

Commenting Wolfgang Götz said: 'Our report clearly documents that across Europe today examples of good treatment practice exist to guide us. Services are offered that work effectively with pregnant women, are sensitive to the concerns of women with children, and even work with the complex issues surrounding those whose drug problems are related to physical or sexual abuse. The issue we must address then is not the type of services women need, but rather how we can ensure that this type of specialised care becomes more accessible and widely available'.

Currently around 20% of those entering drug treatment in Europe are women. Studies have identified childcare concerns as a key factor discouraging women from seeking help — nearly one in four (23%) women accessing drug outpatient treatment services is currently living with children. Addressing childcare issues is therefore a central element in developing women-friendly services that can attract and retain female drug users in treatment. Several countries now offer programmes with a parenting component.

(1) 'A gender perspective on drug use and responding to drug problems' – <http://issues06.emcdda.europa.eu>
Articles on this page are based on news release No 5/2006 at <http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/?nnodeid=875>

Is the gender gap narrowing?

'There are marked differences between the genders in almost all aspects of the drug phenomenon', according to the review. Males still outnumber females among drug users in all European countries, particularly when use is frequent, intensive and problematic.

An EMCDDA analysis of survey data on the adult population (15–64 years) found no strong evidence that the gap is narrowing between levels of male and female drug use. However, data on drug use among school students (15–16 years) do reveal some worrying trends. In some Member States, girls appear to be catching up with boys in their lifetime use of drugs and alcohol, raising questions about the likely impact on future levels of drug use.

In the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Ireland, Latvia, Poland, Slovakia and Norway, for example, recent surveys show that the gender gap has narrowed between school students who have ever tried cannabis. And in three countries — Ireland, Finland and Norway — roughly equal numbers of male and female students report ever using the drug. Similarly, gender ratios were approximately equal for lifetime use of ecstasy in the Czech Republic, Germany, Spain, Estonia, Ireland, Latvia, Hungary, Slovakia, Finland and the UK (ESPAD — <http://www.espad.org/index.html>).

Across Europe, binge drinking (five or more alcoholic drinks in one session in the last month) remains more commonly reported by boys, except in Ireland, the UK and Norway, where girls are catching up or overtaking. The only type of drug use where girls regularly take the lead is in the lifetime use of tranquilisers and sedatives without a medical prescription. Here levels can be high: over half the reporting countries presented lifetime prevalence rates of 5% or over, rising to 18% among girls in Lithuania and 22% in Poland.

Harm-reduction measures may be failing women

In all EU countries, more men than women die from drug overdose, with women accounting for between 7% and 35% of drug-related deaths, depending on the country. However the review points to 'notable differences' between the genders in drug-related death trends. While overdose deaths in the EU fell among males by around 30% between 2000 and 2003 (EU-15), the number of deaths reported among females fell by only 1.5% over the same period. This raises the question of whether harm-reduction measures targeted at high-risk drug users are impacting less on women than on men.

Concerns also surround the relatively high rates of HIV infection found among women who inject drugs. Female injecting drug users (IDUs) are more often involved in sex work and are more vulnerable to HIV infection. Recent data from studies of IDUs in nine EU countries showed HIV prevalence to be on average 13.6% among male IDUs and 21.5% among females.

The EMCDDA warns that although, overall, more men inject drugs and die from using them, one cannot ignore the fact that female injectors may be at greater risk and harder to reach.



No strong evidence that the gap is narrowing between levels of male and female drug use

2006 Annual report

Surveys find club-goers over 10 times more likely to have tried stimulant drugs

Surveys of young people in dance music settings find them to be 10 times more likely than those in the general population to have ever tried stimulant drugs. In some cases around two thirds of club-goers reported using these substances at least once in their lifetime.

'Developments in drug use within recreational settings' is one of three *Selected issues* (1) subjected to an in-depth analysis by the EMCDDA this year alongside its 2006 Annual report.

According to the review, dance music settings in the EU have become increasingly diverse 'especially since the enlargement of 2004'. Events can range from large-scale commercial music festivals — attracting thousands — to an array of smaller-scale dance parties and clubs. Added to this, settings are also in constant flux: many of the large dance venues popular in the 1990s have now closed down, making way in some parts of Europe for a burgeoning number of small clubs and esoteric festivals.

The review presents an analysis of drug use in targeted dance music and club surveys carried out across Europe. But such surveys have to be interpreted with caution, being only available for some countries and often targeting events where drug use is known to be high. Despite these limitations, however, they do provide 'a valuable window on the drug using behaviour of young people in these environments'.

Over 60% of club-goers surveyed in some settings in France, Italy and the UK said they had ever tried cocaine. Meanwhile more than half the club-goers surveyed in the Czech Republic, France, Hungary, the Netherlands and the UK reported to have used ecstasy at some point in their life — a drug now generally more popular than amphetamines in most settings.

Less widely used than ecstasy, but regularly reported in the club scene, are ketamine and GHB. Some surveys report lifetime use of ketamine ranging from 7% in the Czech Republic to 21% in Hungary and lifetime use of GHB ranging from 6% in the UK to 17% in the Netherlands. For hallucinogenic drugs, high figures were recorded in club surveys in the Czech Republic, where 45% of those surveyed had ever tried LSD, and in France, where 55% had ever tried 'magic mushrooms'.

(1) 'Developments in drug use within recreational settings', <http://issues06.emcdda.europa.eu>



Research shows that young people are more likely to try drugs, or to use them more often, when holidaying abroad

Club tourism and holiday drug use

According to the review, drug users in recreational settings tend to be young, socially integrated, in employment or education and with a disposable income. This spending power, along with cheaper travel options and open internal borders within the EU, have all stimulated the development of the club scene and associated tourism.

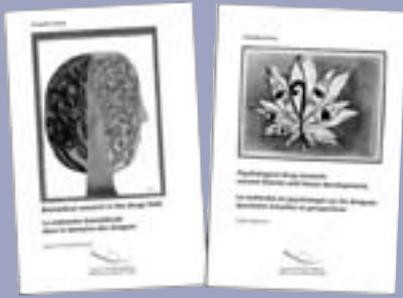
Research shows that young people are more likely to try drugs, or to use them more often, when holidaying abroad. In Spain, recreational drug use is highest near Mediterranean tourist resorts and, in Sweden, where levels of drug use are low by European standards, one study found that, of young people who had tried illegal drugs, 23% did so for the first time while outside the country. Interviews conducted with young holiday-makers returning from Ibiza, as part of a UK study, found that the frequency of all drug use was higher on holiday than at home — for example over a third of ecstasy users (37%) had taken the drug on five or more days per week while on holiday — a rate at least five times higher than was typical (7% while in the UK).

Long-term risks of alcohol often ignored

The review underlines that: 'For the majority of young people across the EU, drug use is still not necessarily an integral element of dance music settings'. For most young people it is the music, social aspects and use of alcohol that are the most central experiences in this environment.

Drinks manufacturers are now tapping into the lucrative dance music market, targeting new drinks at younger age groups, especially young women. This raises important concerns about the health risks of club-goers' often excessive drinking, sometimes combined with illegal drugs (e.g. cocaine is commonly consumed with alcohol, which may increase its toxicity). And while interviews revealed club-goers to be generally aware of the health and legal risks associated with drug use, they were less aware, or concerned about, alcohol-related problems and the related long-term risks.

Bookshelf



Biomedical research in the drugs field

Why is it that certain people use drugs in the first place? Why do some go on to become dependent following repeated use and others not? Will an understanding of the brain's mechanisms for dependence and susceptibility to it help scientists develop novel drug treatments? These are some of the questions addressed in this volume by Richard Muscat, Professor in Behavioural Neuroscience at the University of Malta. Themes addressed include: the genetics of dependence; imaging techniques examining brain function; ethics and neuroscience.

Author: Richard Muscat, Coordinator of the Pompidou Group research platform; EMCDDA Management Board member.

Languages: English and French (1 volume)

Date: 2006 • **Price:** € 15

ISBN 10: 92-871-6017-1

ISBN 13: 978-92-871-6017-1

Psychological drug research: current themes and future developments

In this volume, Jorge Negreiros, Professor in Psychology at the University of Oporto, provides an overview of current findings of psychological research in the drugs field. Three major themes are reviewed: personality traits; personality disorders and co-morbid psychopathology; and alcohol and drug-related expectancies.

Author: Jorge Negreiros, Member of the Pompidou Group research platform

Languages: English and French (1 volume)

Date: 2006 • **Price:** € 12

ISBN 10: 92-871-6032-5

ISBN 13: 978-92-871-6032-4

Publisher: Council of Europe Publishing

Website: <http://book.coe.int>

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Feature

Drug-related deaths — 'downward trend may be faltering'

The 2006 *Annual report* underlines that heroin use and drug injecting will remain major public health issues in Europe for the foreseeable future, incurring long-term costs for European healthcare systems. New data presented this year partly call into question the relatively positive assessment of these behaviours reported in 2005, with heroin production and seizures on the rise, continuing transmission of infectious diseases and new concerns around drug-related deaths.

In its last two *Annual reports*, the EMCDDA recorded an ongoing decline in acute drug-related deaths: from 2000–2001 (6%), 2001–2002 (13%) and 2002–2003 (7%), possibly resulting from increased access to treatment and harm-reduction measures. The decline in these deaths followed a 14% increase during the period 1995–2000.

In this year's report, however, the EMCDDA warns of 'worrying indicators' that this downward trend in the number of drug-related deaths since 2000 may be faltering (1). In the available data for 2003–2004, the number of deaths reported rose by 3%. 'It is too early to judge whether these small changes herald a long-term shift', says the report, but it is of concern that 13 out of 19 reporting countries recorded an increase of some degree.

On average between 7,000 and 8,000 drug-related deaths are reported each year in Europe. Latest data show that they accounted for 3% of all deaths among adults under 40, although this figure rises to more than 7% in Denmark, Greece, Luxembourg, Malta, Austria, the UK and Norway. These (minimum) estimates are directly related to drug use, mainly opioid use, but do not include deaths related to accidents, violence or chronic diseases.

Despite public concerns about drug-related deaths in the very young, in reality the typical overdose victim in Europe is now a male in his mid-thirties. And for men under 45, particularly urban males, drug-related death ranks as one of the main causes of mortality. While across Europe the age of overdose victims is rising, in some of the new EU Member States and acceding countries — Cyprus, Estonia, Latvia, Slovakia, Bulgaria and Romania — a high proportion were under 25, possibly indicating a younger heroin using population in these countries.



In the available data for 2003–2004, the number of deaths reported rose by 3%

New in this year's report are accounts from several countries of the presence of methadone in a substantial proportion of drug-related deaths (although the role it played in these deaths is not always clear). Methadone and buprenorphine are the most commonly used drugs in substitution treatment but, as with other prescribed medicines, misuse can be dangerous. These findings demonstrate the importance of monitoring the deaths related to the misuse of substitution drugs and the circumstances surrounding them.

(1) See News release No 4/2006 at <http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/?nnodeid=875>
See 2006 *Annual report*, Chapter 7, Figure 13.

International

Russian delegation visits EMCDDA

The EMCDDA and the Federal Drug Control Service (FDCS) of the Russian Federation are currently drafting a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which is expected to be signed in early 2007. The details of the MoU were discussed by both parties at a meeting hosted by the EMCDDA from 25–27 September. The Russian delegation was led by Dmitry Kostennikov, Head of the FDCS International and Legal Department.

Cooperation activities expected to be covered by the agreement include the exchange of information on: drug use and trafficking; drug-related crime; and new drugs and associated patterns of use. The MoU will also provide for the exchange of expertise and knowledge between the two bodies.

During the visit, the Russian delegation discussed with EMCDDA staff the agency's ongoing projects on drug prevention, treatment and harm reduction, drug-related infectious diseases and the monitoring of drug legislation and of young people's drug use. Also discussed were the EU drugs action plan and drug coordination mechanisms in the EU Member States.

Finally, a representative of the FDCS delivered a presentation at the 'Treatment demand indicator' experts meeting (see p.6) covering drug use and related problems in the Russian Federation. The delegation also held talks with João Goulão, Chairman of the Portuguese *Instituto da Droga e da Toxicodependência* and the national law enforcement authorities.

Ignacio Vázquez Molini

Drugs-Lex

A focus on substitution treatment

Three years ago, the EMCDDA published a report in its European Legal Database on Drugs (ELDD) on the legal aspects of substitution treatment in nine EU countries. In the report, experts recommended that substitution treatment programmes should have a formal, yet flexible, legal foundation, and that substitution treatment regulations should be less restrictive.

The EMCDDA expert network of Legal correspondents — responsible for national inputs to the ELDD — met in Lisbon on 2 October. They focused on how and whether different European countries had regulated such treatment and identified common ground and national differences. Five presentations and preliminary information from 18 EU Member States revealed that countries regulate this type of treatment in very different ways, whether through parliamentary laws, ministerial decrees or clinical guidelines.

Criteria frequently defined in legal frameworks for substitution treatment include: admission policies for clients (age, level of addiction); types of entity or professional licensed to prescribe and dispense substitution drugs (doctors, treatment centres); and systems for controlling prescriptions (registers, ID cards). Particularly diverse was legislation regulating systems for taking home limited doses and defining infractions or sanctions for clients in such programmes. Legislation, however, is rarely the option for fixing the duration of treatment or dose.

Brendan Hughes

<http://eldd.emcdda.europa.eu/?nnodeid=5175>

EU conference on drugs 'Moving forward together'

Drug problems are administered by a wide variety of agencies and actors each representing their own specific competencies. To promote cooperation between drug authorities and services operating at national and international level, the Finnish Ministries of the Interior and of Health and Social Affairs organised with the European Commission from 6–7 September an EU conference on drugs: 'Moving forward together'. The 180-strong event, held in Turku under the Finnish Presidency of the EU, brought together experts from 35 countries and international organisations and focused on forging partnerships between stakeholders working in the drugs field.

The proceedings were organised around five workshops covering: crime prevention

and outreach work; treatment referral; low-threshold prevention services and interventions; surveillance for the prevention of infectious diseases; and developing partnership structures in response to drug-related problems. The conference stressed the importance of cooperation between public health and police services to improve drug prevention, treatment and law enforcement work.

Three EMCDDA delegates attended the event as workshop rapporteurs and guest speaker. Also attending the event were Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and Alexander Vladychenko, Director General of Social Cohesion of the Council of Europe.

The conference called for the creation of a 'European network on partnerships between stakeholders at frontline level responding to drug problems'. The Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe is expected to take on the establishment and coordination of this network in its next work programme. The group also presented its plans to develop a city-based network on HIV and drugs in Europe. The Council of the EU and the European Commission will consider the results of the conference in the mid-term review of the EU drugs action plan (2005–2008).

Danilo Ballotta, Dominique Lopez, Lucas Wiessing

For more see: <http://www.stm.fi/Resource.phx/eng/subjt/inter/eu2006/drugs/drugs1.htm>

Spotlight

Presenting ISAJE



Addiction science has grown tremendously in the past 25 years, and addiction publishing has been no exception. The International Society of Addiction Journal Editors (ISAJE) was established in 2001 to promote excellence in the communication and dissemination of information on addiction and related sciences. Based in London, it now represents around 35 peer-reviewed addiction journals worldwide, 20 of which are European. Among the activities offered by ISAJE are training initiatives for authors and editorial staff and support programmes for non-English-language addiction journals.

A central area of ISAJE's work is to improve the quality of addiction publishing. In this context it has released *Publishing Addiction Science*, a set of guidelines designed to advise potential authors (including students, and professional researchers whose first language is not English) on the opportunities for publishing their work in addiction journals. The guidelines also address ethical and professional issues that affect scientific integrity, such as scientific misconduct. <http://www.parint.org/isajewebsite/isajebook/isajewebbook.htm>.

The ethics of addiction publishing was the topic of ISAJE's latest annual meeting held in Helsinki (31 August–2 September) and attended by the EMCDDA. Gerhard Bühringer, editor of the German journal *Sucht*, was elected as the organisation's president for the coming year and presented the organisation's strategy for 2006–2008. Various quality standards and guidelines have been established by the organisation over the last five years. It will now focus on implementing these, targeting editors and publishers, on the one hand, and authors and peer reviewers, on the other.

Margareta Nilson

Drug treatment

Monitoring data on drug treatment

Experts from 30 European countries, Latin America, the United States and South Africa met in Lisbon from 25–26 September for their annual meeting to examine the profiles and characteristics of those seeking treatment for drug problems. The inaugural session focused on the state of progress of the EMCDDA's 'Treatment demand indicator' (TDI), one of the agency's most established tools for monitoring the drug problem. The experts addressed issues of quality and methodology, examining in three workshops: data coverage assessment; the improvement of treatment demand data quality; and outcome following treatment demand.

Methodologies and instruments for evaluating treatment outcome were examined at the meeting. These included the Addiction Severity Index (ASI) — currently being revised by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) — and the Vedette study (Rome Health Authority), based on a cross-analysis of drug-related death and treatment data, which showed a relation between treatment duration and outcome. The findings of the Isadora European project on co-morbidity (<http://isadora.advsh.net>) were also presented, underlining the importance of considering drug users' psychiatric disorders.

The experts were joined on 26 September by scientists from the following bodies: the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD); the US White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP); the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC); and the Federal Drug Control Service of the Russian Federation (FDCS). This year the meeting focused specifically on demand for drug treatment by the under-20s. Worldwide, cannabis is the drug most frequently used by this group, although other substances are also becoming prominent. The primary problem drug among the under 20s varies according to geography. While in parts of Europe the main problem drug is largely heroin; in Latin America it is cocaine and crack cocaine; in the US, inhalants, and in South Africa, methamphetamine. However methodological and data coverage limitations have to be considered in the analysis.

Linda Montanari

A meeting report is available at <http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/?nnodeid=1420>

Global treatment capacity-building

'Treatnet', the international network of drug dependence treatment and rehabilitation resource centres, is an initiative to support the provision of quality drug treatment and rehabilitation services in UN member countries. Launched in 2005 by UNODC, it aims to improve the quality of treatment for drug dependence by working with, and through, a network of 20 resource centres across the globe.

As a Treatnet partner, the EMCDDA supports the project in its aim to provide quality services that are evidence-based, accessible, affordable and diverse. Treatnet's four priority topics are: community-based treatment; treatment and rehabilitation in prison; the role of drug dependence treatment in HIV/AIDS prevention and care; and sustainable livelihoods, rehabilitation and reintegration.

The Treatnet resource centres are at the core of the project, disseminating state-of-the-art interventions in their respective areas and supporting at local level appropriate, evidence-based treatment and rehabilitation opportunities. Participating centres are located in Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Colombia, Egypt, Germany, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia, Spain, Sweden, the UK and the US.

One of the project's main tools is its portal which promotes dialogue, good practice and the sharing of experience among the project's members and partners (<http://www.unodc.org/treatnet>). Treatment centres and experts interested in international networking are invited to contact UNODC or the resource centres in their region.

Dagmar Hedrich and Juana Tomás-Rosselló

Products and services

2006 Annual report information package



To mark the launch of its 2006 *Annual report* on 23 November, the EMCDDA released a comprehensive, multilingual information package offering the latest findings on the drug phenomenon across Europe.

2006 Annual report on the state of the drugs problem in Europe — The printed version of the report, available in 23 languages (19 EU + NO, BG, RO, TR), is complemented by a multilingual 2006 *Annual report* website offering full online versions of the report as well as downloadable pdf files of the publication and interactive graphics. The report carries four chapters dedicated to individual drugs, as well as further chapters relating to: policies and laws; responding to drug problems; infectious diseases and drug-related deaths; and

monitoring problem and multiple drug use (<http://annualreport.emcdda.europa.eu>).

2006 Selected issues — The report is complemented by three *Selected issues* in English. Available as printed and online versions, these address the following topics: 'European drug policies: extended beyond illicit drugs?'; 'A gender perspective on drug use and responding to drug problems'; and 'Developments in drug use within recreational settings' (<http://issues06.emcdda.europa.eu>).

2006 Statistical bulletin — This year's 'Statistical bulletin' offers over 300 tables and statistical graphics on the European drug situation, underpinning much of the analysis in the 2006 *Annual report*. Developed as a research tool, this online product in English enables users to access and extract data according to their needs (<http://stats06.emcdda.europa.eu>).

2006 Country data profiles — A set of online 'Country data profiles' present key aspects of national drug situations in a graphical way. The data profiles provide visual summaries of recent drug use patterns, drawing on the latest country information available. The profiles, available in English, also allow country comparisons to be made within the overall EU drug use picture (<http://dataprofiles06.emcdda.europa.eu>).

2006 press pack and audio material — The 2006 *Annual report* press pack, available in 23 languages, contains a 'Message from the EMCDDA Director', a 'Facts and figures' summary and news releases covering the main report and *Selected issues*. Also available online this year is an audio package designed for radio. (<http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/?nnodeid=875>).

News conference — A news conference launching the report was organised by the EMCDDA at the European Parliament on 23 November and attended by journalists from across the EU.

National launches — Over a dozen Member States marked the release of the report with national launches and events combining European and national drugs perspectives.

PowerPoint presentations — These are available online in 23 languages, highlighting the key points of the report (<http://annualreport.emcdda.europa.eu>).

Exhibition — The EMCDDA mounted an exhibition of its latest products at the European Parliament during the launch week.

Resources



Druglink survey

Druglink magazine, published by the UK drugs charity DrugScope, has recently published the results of its third annual 'Street drug prices' survey carried out in 20 UK towns and cities in July and August 2006. The purpose of the survey was to investigate the latest average street prices for 10 illicit drug varieties. Information was gathered by speaking to local agencies including police forces and drug service providers. The survey revealed that although overall prices have remained stable since 2005, certain areas reported dramatic drops in the price of heroin and crack.

The survey also throws up interesting patterns and trends in UK drug use. For example the research highlights the worrying rise in 'speedballing', where heroin and crack are simultaneously injected from the same syringe.

http://www.drugscope.org.uk/news_item.asp?intID=1369
<http://www.drugscope.org.uk/druglink/default.asp>

ONDCP on YouTube.com

The US White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) is now posting videos of award-winning anti-drug advertising and national drug policy announcements on YouTube.com, the website providing video content to Internet users worldwide. Over the past two years, ONDCP has implemented use of various new media technologies, launching a blog and offering podcasts of speeches, events and interviews.

<http://www.PushingBack.com>
<http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/podcast>
<http://www.WhiteHouseDrugPolicy.gov>

Organisations wishing to publicise their newsletters, magazines, websites, CD-ROMs or any other resources are invited to contact Kathryn.Robertson@emcdda.europa.eu

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Calendar 2006

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15
16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

EMCDDA meetings

- 15 November: UNODC-CICAD-EMCDDA meeting to draft a handbook on the establishment and assessment of drug monitoring centres, Lisbon.
- 16 November: EMCDDA expert meeting on the implementation of laws, Lisbon.
- 16–17 November: EMCDDA expert meeting on drug-related deaths and mortality, Lisbon.
- 22 November: Presentation of the 2006 *Annual report*, European Parliament, Brussels.
- 23 November: Public press launch of the 2006 *Annual report*, Brussels.
- 27–28 November: EMCDDA expert meeting on methodology and the use of cost-of-illness results in the drugs field in the EU, Lisbon.
- 4–5 December: EMCDDA Scientific Committee, Lisbon.
- 13–15 December: EMCDDA Management Board, Lisbon.

External meetings

- 27–28 November: Pompidou Group Ministerial Conference 'New signals for drug policies across Europe', Strasbourg (http://www.coe.int/T/dg3/pompidou/Default_en.asp).
- 29 November–1 December: 40th regular session of CICAD, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia.

EU meetings

- 22–23 November: Horizontal working party on drugs, Brussels.
- 23 November: National drug coordinators meeting, Brussels.
- 19 December: Horizontal working party on drugs, Brussels.

Continued from page 1

€2.3 per gram in Portugal and over €12 per gram in Norway. Cocaine prices also varied substantially: from €41 per gram in Belgium to over €100 per gram in Cyprus, Romania and Norway. Similarly, reported ecstasy prices per tablet were as low as €3 in Lithuania and Poland, but ranged to €15–€25 in Greece and Italy. Prices for the most common form of heroin (brown heroin from South-West Asia) also varied from €12 per gram in Turkey to €141 per gram in Sweden.

Commenting, EMCDDA Chairman Marcel Reimen said: 'Price is just one of many factors influencing people's decision to take drugs, and at present we see no simple relationship between general consumption levels and the price of drugs on the street. Nonetheless we cannot fail to be concerned that across Europe drugs are becoming cheaper in real terms. If this means that those who have a tendency to consume drugs will use them more, then the ultimate cost of drug-taking in terms of healthcare and damage to our communities is likely to be considerable'.

The 2006 *Annual report* press launch, followed a presentation on 22 November to the European Parliament's Committee on Citizens' Freedoms and Rights, Justice and Home Affairs, chaired by Jean-Marie Cavada and attended by national parliamentarians from across Europe.

See news release No 4/2006 at <http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/?nodeid=875>

Cocaine — facts and figures

The most recent data on cocaine use across Europe reveal a picture of wide variation, with some countries having little experience of the drug and others with high prevalence levels. But in countries most affected, there are now signs of a stabilisation within an overall upward trend (1).

Around 10 million Europeans (over 3% of adults 15–64 years) have ever used cocaine and around 3.5 million are likely to have used it in the last year (1%). In terms of absolute numbers, cocaine now ranks in second place as Europe's most used illegal drug after cannabis, slightly ahead of amphetamine and ecstasy. Most national surveys estimate that between 1% and 10% of young Europeans (15–34 years) have ever tried the drug and between 0.2% and 4.8% have used it in the last 12 months. The higher rates of use are found among young adults in Denmark, Ireland, Italy and the Netherlands — where rates of last year use are around 2% — and in Spain and the UK, which stand out with estimates exceeding 4%. However, for these last two countries, big increases in use in the mid- to late-1990s were followed by a more stable situation from around 2001. Moderate increases in last year cocaine use among young adults were recorded in Denmark, Germany, Italy and Hungary, although this trend needs to be interpreted with caution as new surveys are awaited to confirm the current situation.

(1) See news release No 4/2006 and 'Drugs in Europe — Facts and figures' at <http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/?nodeid=875>