Annual report 2012: the state of the drugs problem in Europe

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Setting the scene

- After 30+ years with heroin centre stage in Europe — there are now signs of long-term market decline
- Other ‘old drugs’ seem stable and there are some reductions
- New psychoactive substances are on the increase
Opioids
Opioid use

Still Europe’s biggest drug problem

About 1.4 million problem opioid users (POUs)

0.4 % of adults in the EU and Norway

But… heroin?
Estimates of the annual prevalence of problem opioid use (among the population aged 15-64)
Heroin: is the tide turning?

Recent evidence — drop in availability

• Reduction in seizures
• Declining numbers of drug law offences
• Shortages reported (some countries)
Heroin seizures and quantities seized

Opioids >

- Quantity seized by other countries
- Quantity seized by Italy
- Quantity seized by Turkey
- Number of seizures in Europe

Kg

N

70 000
60 000
50 000
40 000
30 000
20 000
10 000
0
Acute shortages in some countries late 2010/early 2011

Other countries — no change

Replacements: other opioids, amphetamines, synthetic cathinones, benzodiazepines

Fentanyl — a particular concern
Longer term changes:

- Decline in new treatment entrants
- Ageing cohort
- Less injecting
- Increasing treatment coverage
Primary opioid users as a percentage of all reported drug treatment entrants, 2010

![Map showing the percentage of primary opioid users across European countries in 2010.]

Data for Lithuania refer to clients entering treatment for the first time in their lives.
Injecting as usual mode of administration among primary opioid users entering treatment in 2010
Decline in opioid clients

New outpatient clients with opioid as primary drug (2005–10)

18 countries supplying data
Increasing treatment provision

(At least 1.1 million Europeans undergo drug treatment every year)

710,000 received opioid substitution treatment in 2010

Estimated 50% coverage rate for opioid substitution treatment in the EU
Breakdown of treatment coverage

Treatment coverage of problem opioid users in 8 countries

Estimates range from 80 % to < 40 %
Continued decrease in new HIV infections

New EU low of 2.5 per million — around 1,200 new cases (2010)

Compares with 104.3 per million (Russia) and 151.5 per million (Ukraine)

BUT: HIV outbreaks in Greece and Romania
Trends in newly reported HIV infections in injecting drug users in the five EU Member States reporting the highest rates.
Trends in mortality rates among the general population due to drug-induced deaths in a selection of European countries

Mortality rates stable

7 000 reported overdose deaths in 2010
Harm reduction

Over 50 million syringes distributed through specialised programmes

New treatments for drug users with Hepatitis C

Joint guidelines on prevention of infections
635 000 in EU prisons in 2010

High levels of drug use (before and within prison)

High overdose risk after prison release

10 to 25 % incarcerated for drug law offences
Prisons — responses

Setting for contact with ‘hard-to-reach’ problem drug users

Gradual adoption of substitution treatment

Need to improve equivalence of care

Prison health services increasingly under Health Ministries?
Prisons — implementing substitution treatment

Cumulative number of EU countries with opioid substitution treatment in community and prison settings
Prisons — implementing substitution treatment

Cumulative number of EU countries with opioid substitution treatment in community and prison settings.

LT, 1996

Community

Prison
Stimulants
Stimulant of choice: amphetamines, ecstasy or cocaine?

Last-year prevalence among young adults (aged 15–34)
Prevalence of cocaine use

15.5 million (15–64) have ever used cocaine (4.6 %)

4 million in the last year (1.2 %)

3 million young adults (15–34) used in the last year (2.1 %)
Trends in last-year cocaine use among young adults

Stimulants >

- Australia
- United Kingdom
- Spain
- United States
- Italy
- Ireland
- Denmark
- Canada
Number of seizures dropped in 2010 after 20-year increase: 100,000 (2008) to 88,000 (2010)

Quantities seized decreased since 2006
61 tonnes (2010)

 Trafficking expanding eastwards?
Ecstasy and amphetamines

Ecstasy
1.5 million young adults have used ecstasy in the last year

Amphetamines
1.5 million young adults have used amphetamines in the last year
Trends in last-year amphetamines use among young adults

Countries with at least three surveys

Bulgaria
Denmark
United Kingdom
Germany
Finland
Spain
Hungary
Czech Republic
Ireland
Slovakia
Italy
France
(Meth-)amphetamines

Prevalence mostly stable

Increase in methamphetamine seizures (still low)

Northern Europe — methamphetamine replacing amphetamine on some markets

Some overdose deaths — methamphetamine
4-methylamphetamine

- Risk assessment: November 2012
- Prompted by clusters of deaths
- Sold as (mixed with) amphetamine
Cocaine, amphetamines, ecstasy or cathinones?

Competing and interchangeable products

Availability, price and quality key

Increase in high purity ecstasy — MDMA rebound?
Strategies in recreational settings — only 11 countries report

Individual approaches e.g. peer education, target high-risk youth

Environmental approaches e.g. regulation, training, safe transport

Healthy Nightlife Toolbox
Cannabis
Cannabis — Europe’s most used illicit drug

80.5 million Europeans have ever used cannabis (23.7 %)

16 million 15–34 year olds have used it in the last year (12.4 %)
Estimated market shares of cannabis products consumed in Europe, 2008–09

Mainly cannabis herb
- >80 %
- 60–79 %

Mainly cannabis resin
- >80 %
- 55–79 %
Overall — use of cannabis rose from 1995, peaked in 2003, dropped in 2007, then stabilised in 2011 (18%)
Prevalence of last-month daily cannabis use among 15- to 34-year-olds

Around 3 million or 1 % of adults
Increase in cannabis clients entering treatment

Trends in estimated number of clients entering treatment by selected primary drugs

- Heroin
- Cannabis
- Cocaine
- Other drugs
- Unknown or missing data
- Non-cocaine stimulants


Number: 0, 50,000, 100,000, 150,000, 200,000
Cannabis supply

- Increased EU production
- Number of seizures — herbal cannabis now overtakes resin
Drug-law offences (use or possession)

Cannabis >

860 192 reports (2010)
New drugs
Detecting new drugs

New substances reported to the European early warning system — 1 a week

Synthetic cathinones and cannabinoids most common
## Online availability of ‘legal highs’

Ten substances or ‘legal highs’ most commonly offered for sale in online shops surveyed in 2011 and 2012.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRODUCT</th>
<th>Number of online shops offering the product</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kratom (natural)</td>
<td>92</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salvia (natural)</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hallucinogenic mushrooms (natural)</td>
<td>44</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methoxetamine (arylcyclohexylamine)</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDAI (aminooindane)</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-APB (benzofuran)</td>
<td>35</td>
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<tr>
<td>MDPV (cathinone)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-MEC (cathinone)</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methiopropamine (thiophene)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-IAI (aminooindane)</td>
<td>25</td>
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Tracking the older-new drugs

**Ketamine** — increased use and problems in some countries

**GHB** — treatment needs identified for some users

**Mephedrone** — appears to have crossed over to illicit market
## National legal responses to new psychoactive substances (NPS)

### New drugs >

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<tr>
<td><strong>1. New NPS laws:</strong></td>
<td><strong>2. Modifying drug laws:</strong></td>
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<td>Catch-all or listing/group definitions</td>
<td>Risk assessment mechanisms, introducing group definitions (generic/analogue), temporary controls</td>
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<td>Countries have moved from one to another, and/or combined these approaches</td>
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<td><strong>3. Using existing non-drug (other) laws:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Consumer safety, medicinal products, health protection laws</td>
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Conclusions

Evidence from supply and demand indicators that heroin may be a diminishing commodity — is Europe now a less attractive marketplace for heroin?

Links with massive investment in treatment and harm reduction. Rate of progress across countries is uneven — more input needed in prisons

Overall stable and declining trends for other traditional drugs

Increasing number of new psychoactive substances — how to control them is now a major challenge for policymakers
Publications

Annual report

Selected issues
• Prisons and drugs in Europe
• Pregnancy, childcare and the family

Drugnet Europe

Other publications
• Summary of the 2011 ESPAD report
• Trendspotter summary: fentanyl report
• Prevalence of daily cannabis use
• EMCDDA-Europol Joint report: 4-methylamphetamine
• Update on HIV outbreaks in Greece and Romania

emcdda.europa.eu/events/2012/annual-report