



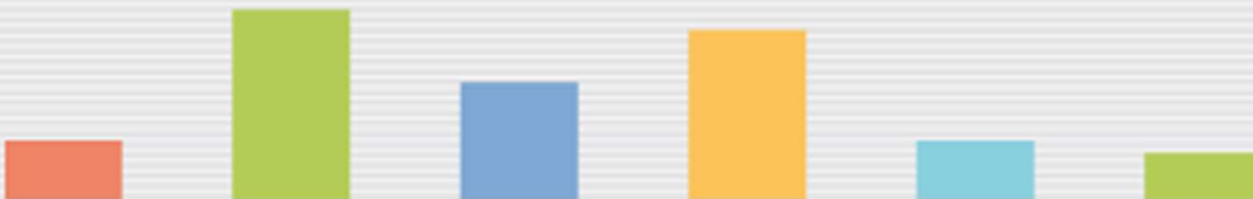
Europäische Beobachtungsstelle
für Drogen und Drogensucht

Relevance of Drug-Checking in the European Union and for the European Drug Report

Iciar Indave, MD MPG, PhD

Frankfurt a. M., 15 Juni 2022

Fachtagung Drug-Checking



- ☐ **EMCDDA und unsere Mission**
- ☐ **EMCDDA Hintergrundinformation zum Drug-Checking**
- ☐ **EMCDDA Überwachungs- und Berichterstattung im Zusammenhang mit Drug-Checking**
- ☐ **Kooperationen und Zukunftsvisionen**

EMCDDA und unsere Mission



Europäische Beobachtungsstelle
für Drogen und Drogensucht

European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA)



Unabhängige Agentur für
illegale Drogen in der
Europäische Union (Lissabon)

🎯 Mission

The EMCDDA supports EU and national policymaking by providing evidence-based information on drugs, drug addiction and their consequences.

🤝 Partners

Cooperation with EU institutions, the Reitox network and regional and international organisations has been an important part of the EMCDDA's work since its creation in 1993





Europäische Beobachtungsstelle
für Drogen und Drogensucht

European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA)



To achieve our mission, we have developed a systemic approach that brings together the human **networks**, **processes** and scientific **tools** necessary for **collecting**, **analysing** and **reporting** on all aspects of the European drugs phenomenon.



Publications database

Searchable catalogue of products published by the EMCDDA.



Statistical Bulletin

Based on national data submitted to the EMCDDA and published yearly.



European Drug Report

The EMCDDA's annual analysis of the drugs problem in Europe.



Europäische Beobachtungsstelle
für Drogen und Drogensucht

European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA)



Europäischer Rat
Rat der Europäischen Union

Über
uns

Themen

Tagungen/Sitzungen

Nachrichten und
Medien

Recherche und
Veröffentlichungen

Suche

DE

Rat der EU Pressemitteilung 9. Juni 2022 10:00

Drogenagentur der EU: Rat legt Verhandlungsmandat für die Stärkung der Rolle der Agentur fest

Um die Bekämpfung illegaler Drogen zu intensivieren, hat der Rat heute sein Verhandlungsmandat zu dem Vorschlag über die Drogenagentur der EU festgelegt, mit dem die bestehende Europäische Beobachtungsstelle für Drogen und Drogensucht in eine eigenständige Agentur umgewandelt und ihre Rolle gestärkt werden soll. Mit der neuen Verordnung werden der Agentur die Mittel an die Hand gegeben, um die neuen Herausforderungen in den Bereichen Gesundheit und Sicherheit, die sich aus illegalen Drogen ergeben, effizienter angehen, die Mitgliedstaaten besser unterstützen und auf internationaler Ebene zu einer Verbesserung der Lage beitragen zu können.

Die Erhebung, Analyse und Verbreitung von Daten wird weiterhin die Hauptaufgabe der Agentur sein, aber im Rahmen des erweiterten Mandats wird sie auch zu Folgendem in der Lage sein:

- Entwicklung allgemeiner Fähigkeiten zur Bewertung der Bedrohungslage in den Bereichen Gesundheit und Sicherheit, um neue Gefahren rasch erkennen zu können, und Durchführung regelmäßiger Vorausschauen zur Ermittlung künftiger Herausforderungen
- Erfassung insbesondere des Mischkonsums, d. h. des Konsums von Drogen zusammen mit anderen legalen oder illegalen Substanzen, der immer häufiger wird
- Verstärkung ihrer Zusammenarbeit mit den nationalen Kontaktstellen, deren Position gestärkt wird, damit sie der Agentur relevante Daten über die nationale Drogensituation bereitstellen können
- Einrichtung eines Netzes von Laboratorien, um die Agentur in die Lage zu versetzen, auf forensische und toxikologische Informationen zuzugreifen
- Entwicklung faktengestützter Interventionen, um zu sensibilisieren und zu warnen, wenn besonders gefährliche Substanzen auf den Markt gelangen

Infografik – Der Drogenmarkt in der EU



Vollständige Infografik

EMCDDA Hintergrundinformation zum Drug-Checking

Drug-checking für das EMCDDA

https://www.emcdda.europa.eu/topics/drug-checking_en

Overview

Drug-checking services enable individual drug users to have their drugs chemically analysed, providing information on the content of the samples as well as advice, and, in some cases, counselling or brief interventions. Service aims vary, ranging from information collection to harm reduction by informing and warning users about the drugs on the market.



Ein wichtiger Aspekt von drug-checking services ist, wie die Ergebnisse kommuniziert werden und ob dies mit Beratung zur Schadensminderung oder Kurzinterventionen einhergeht.

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Drug-Checking services sind noch umstritten:

- Ein wertvollen Beitrag zu Frühwarnsystemen in der EU
- Begrenzte Evidenz für positive Auswirkungen auf Drogenkonsum/Risikoverhalten
- Es gibt Fallbeispiele, in denen sich Drug-Checking services positiv auf die öffentliche Gesundheit ausgewirkt haben und potenziell Schaden reduzieren
- Kritiker fürchten dass das Drug-Checking ein falsches Sicherheitsgefühl vermittelt, den Konsum normalisiert

EMCDDA Überwachungs- und Berichterstattung im Zusammenhang mit Drug-Checking

EMCDDA Überwachungs- und Berichterstattung



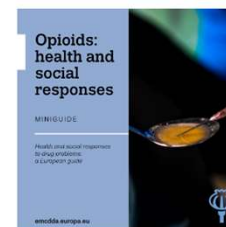
[Cannabis: responses miniguide](#)



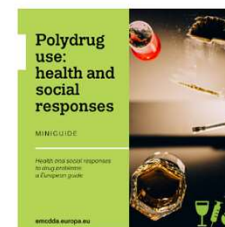
[Medicines: responses miniguide](#)



[NPS: responses miniguide](#)



[Opioids: responses miniguide](#)



[Polydrug use: responses miniguide](#)



[Stimulants: responses miniguide](#)



EMCDDA Überwachungs- und Berichterstattung



Responding to new psychoactive substances (NPS)

With its partners in Member States, Europol and the European Medicines Agency (EMA), the EMCDDA is responsible for ensuring the continuous and robust implementation of the Early Warning System on the information exchange, risk assessment and control of new psychoactive substances (NPS).



Action on new drugs

Information on the Early Warning System on the information exchange, risk assessment and control of NPS.



Risk Assessments

Produced for the European Council to assess the risks associated with NPS.

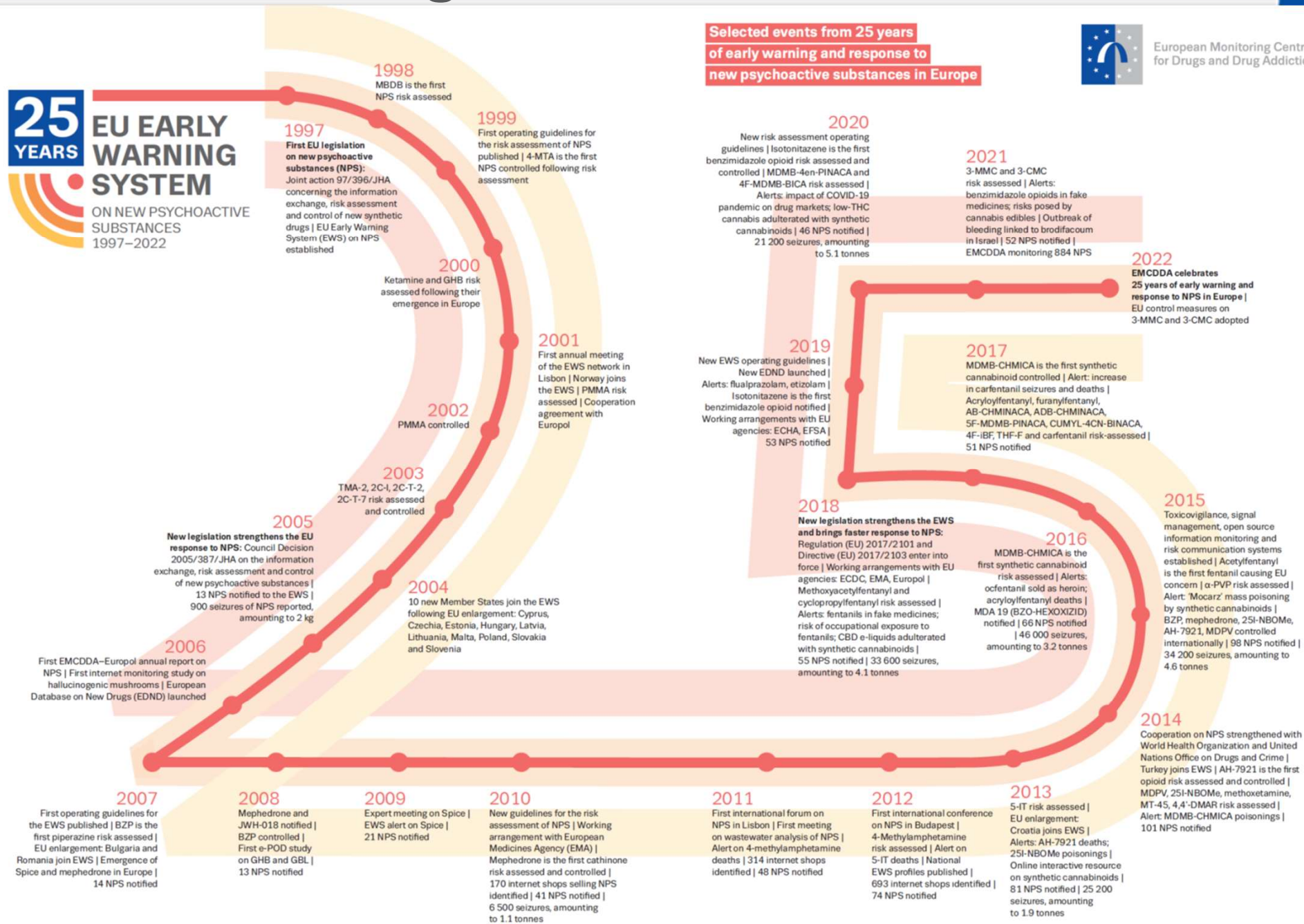


EMCDDA Überwachungs- und Berichterstattung

25
YEARS

EU EARLY WARNING SYSTEM

ON NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES
1997–2022



Selected events from 25 years of early warning and response to new psychoactive substances in Europe



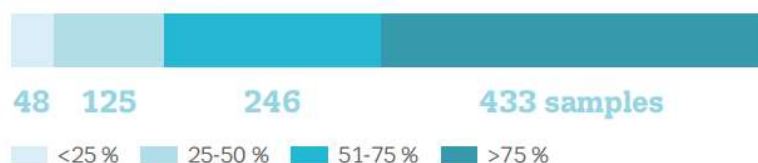
European Monitoring Centre
for Drugs and Drug Addiction



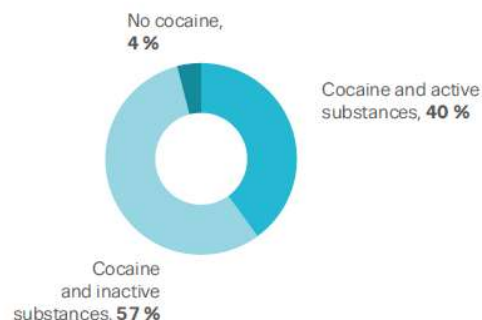
EMCDDA Überwachungs- und Berichterstattung

COCAINE SAMPLES TESTED BY DRUG CHECKING SERVICES BETWEEN JANUARY AND JUNE 2019

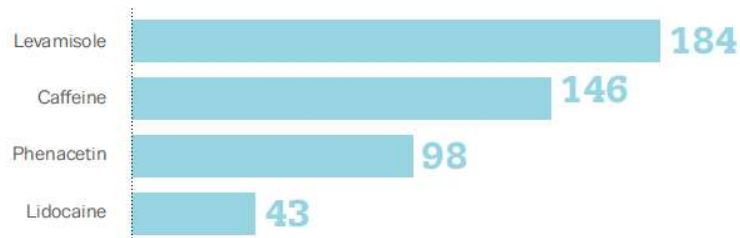
Purity (% cocaine)



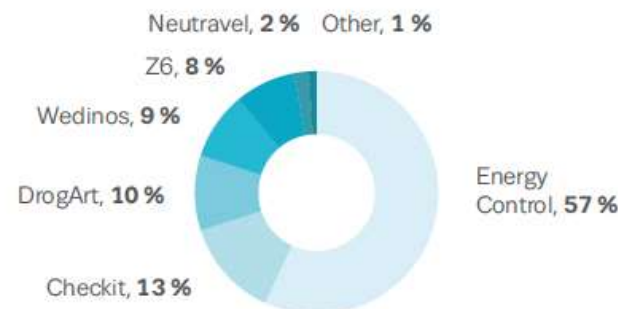
Adulteration (1011 'cocaine' samples)



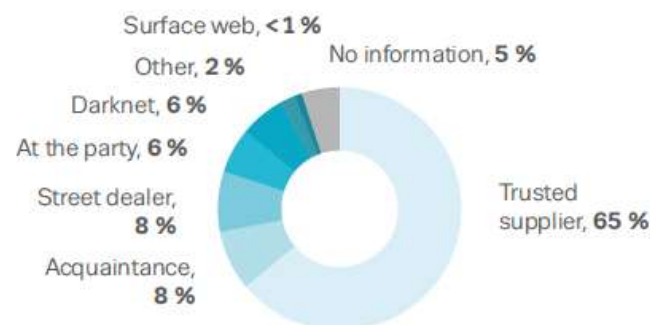
Most frequent adulterants (number of samples)



Services providing samples



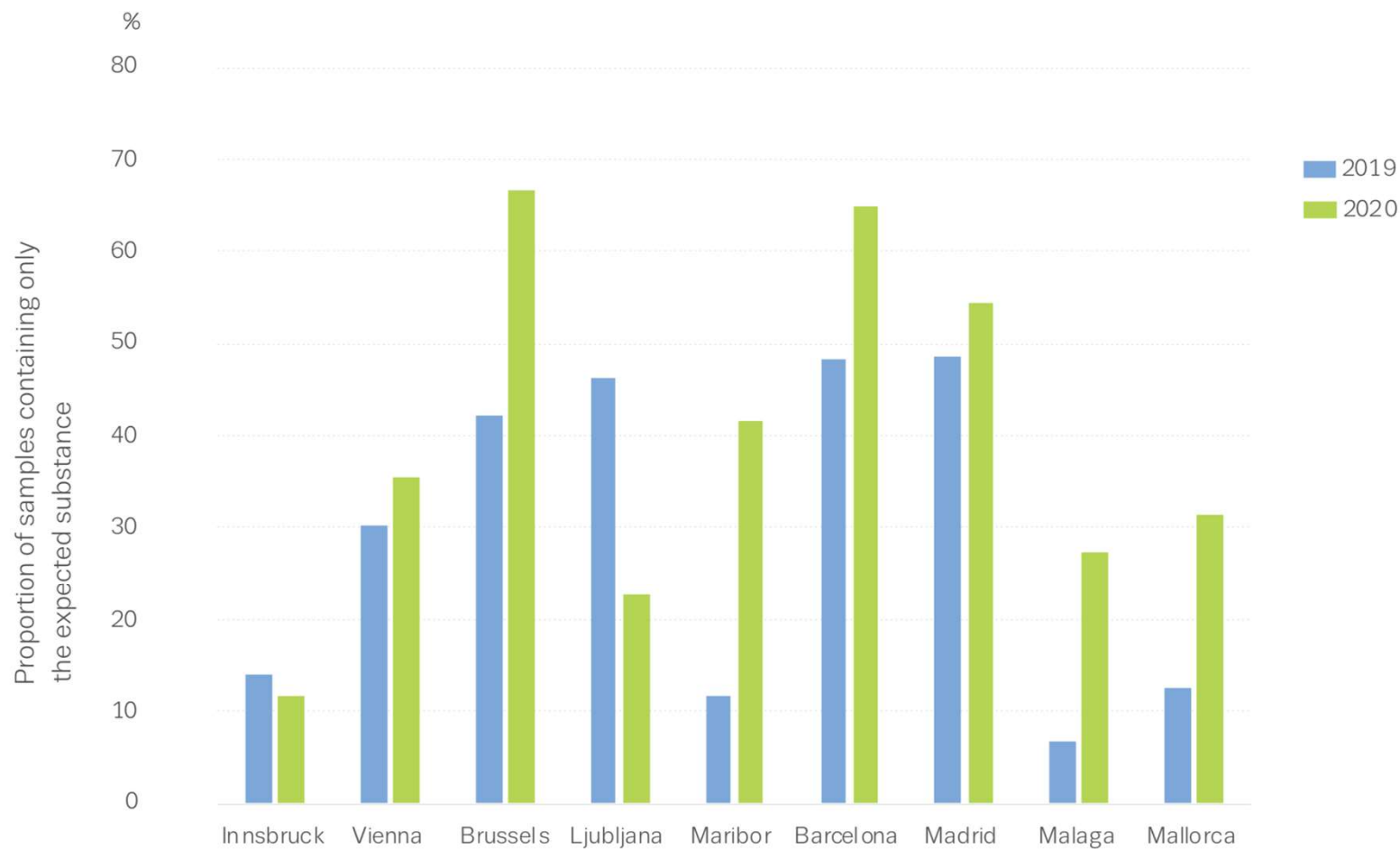
Reported source of the drug



Samples were collected during the period January to June 2019. Data were provided by drug checking services in Austria (Checkit and Z6), Belgium (Modus Vivendi), Italy (Neutravel and Sottokassa), Luxembourg (PiPaPo), Slovenia (DroArt), Spain (Energy Control and Ai Laket) and the United Kingdom (Wedinos) and a research project in Finland (A-Clinic Foundation).

EMCDDA Überwachungs- und Berichterstattung

Proportion of all amphetamine samples submitted for testing to drug-checking services containing only the expected substance (amphetamine) in nine European cities in 2019 and 2020



Source: TEDI.

EMCDDA Überwachungs- und Berichterstattung



Identifying and tracking emerging trends and threats

The detection and monitoring of new trends and threats is one of the EMCDDA's key tasks. The agency is proactively involved in the development of innovative systems for identifying and tracking new and emerging trends.



EMCDDA trendspotter studies

Rapid information assessment that uses multiple social research methods to explore a topic of interest.



European Drug Emergencies Network (Euro-DEN)

Insight into acute health harms related to drug use.



Wastewater-based drug epidemiology

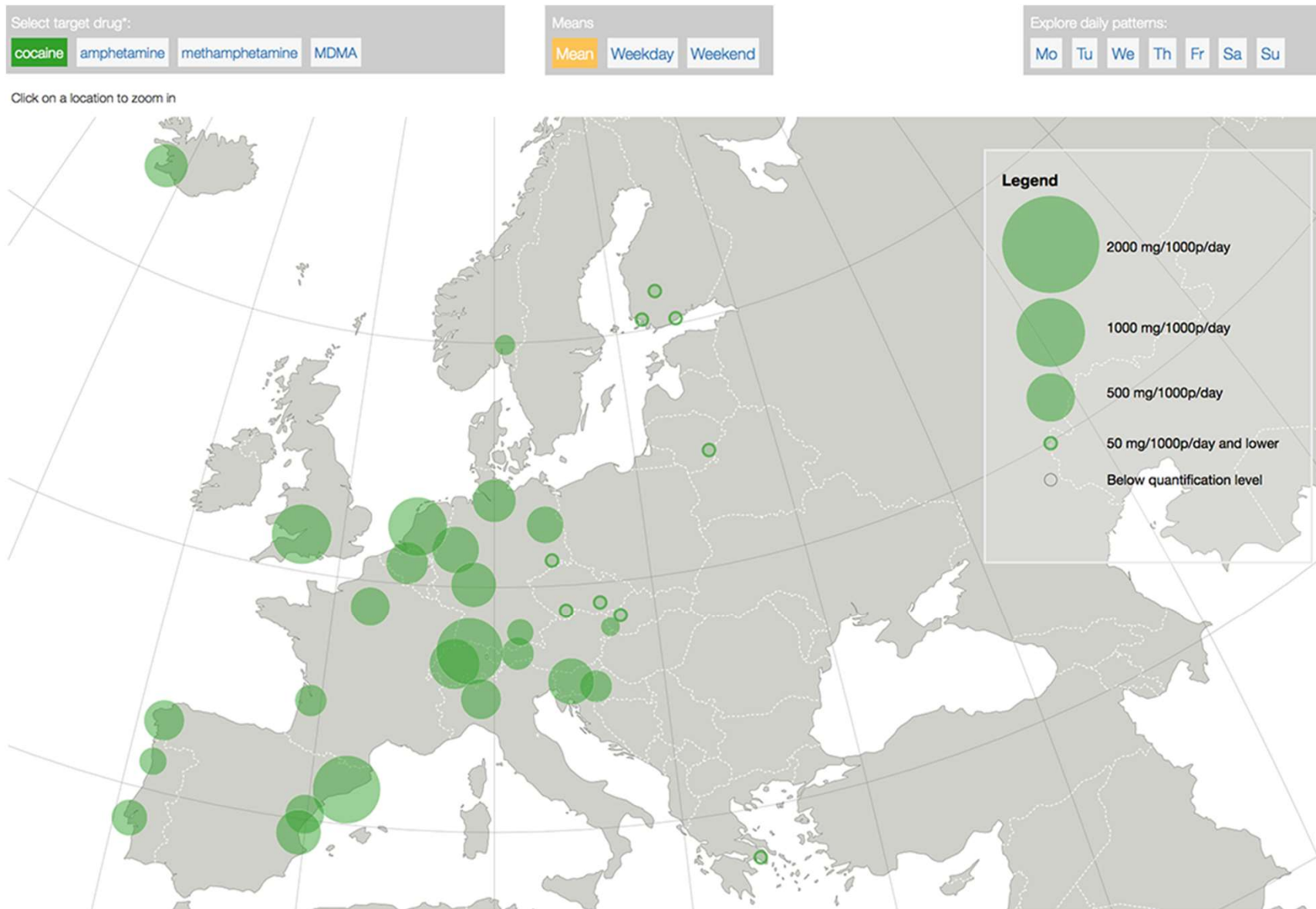
Innovative approach involving 50 European cities and 20 countries.



Hair drug testing

Collecting information on the use of substances through hair samples.

EMCDDA Überwachungs- und Berichterstattung



EMCDDA Überwachungs- und Berichterstattung



Best Practice Portal

A key online resource for practitioners and policymakers.



Evidence database

The latest research on drug-related interventions.



Xchange prevention registry

Database of evidence-based prevention programmes.



Healthy Nightlife Toolbox

Good practice information for nightlife settings.



European Drugs Summer School

One of the EMCDDA's key learning and knowledge-exchange activities.



European Responses Guide

Our state-of-the-art overview of the responses to drug use.



Hepatitis C initiative

Supporting the HCV elimination agenda – an EMCDDA initiative to increase access to testing and treatment through drugs services.



Reitox Academies

Training and capacity-building initiative for partners in Europe and beyond.



CEPOL trainings

Training activities for law enforcement professionals.



Lisbon Addictions

A major date in the global addictions calendar, organised every two years.

EMCDDA Überwachungs- und Berichterstattung



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Health and social responses to drug problems

A EUROPEAN GUIDE

Types or patterns of substance use



Needs of particular groups



Responding in particular settings



PLATO

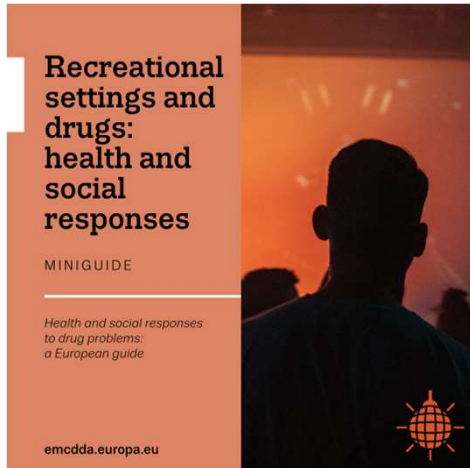
Practice Training Platform

[Home](#) [About](#)

European Prevention Curriculum Basic Training 2022



The miniguide on interventions for recreational settings



European picture

- Es werden verschiedene Ansätze verfolgt um Drogenkonsum im Nachtleben und in anderen Freizeitumgebungen anzugehen.
- Auch Richtlinien und Standards für Präventions- und Schadensminderung (harm reduction interventions) im Nachtleben entwickelt.

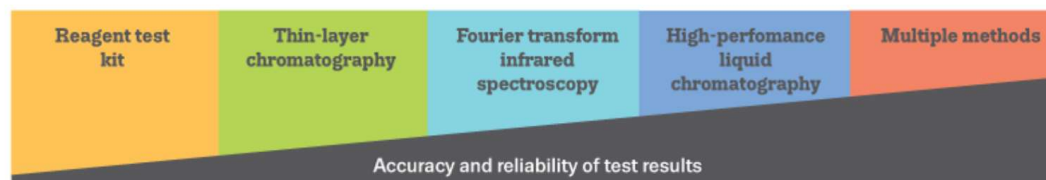
NEW NET (Nightlife Empowerment & Well-being Network) supports the implementation of good practice standards focusing on safer nightlife labels and charters, drug checking and peer education.

A variety of off-site and on-site drug-checking schemes exist in Europe, providing opportunity for brief interventions. **The Trans European Drug Information project (TEDI)** shares their expertise and data within a European monitoring and information system. TEDI's main goal is to improve public health and related programmes by providing relevant analytical data.

Spotlight on... Drug checking



An illustration of the range of drug-checking technologies available and their relative accuracy and reliability



Herausforderungen für Drug-Checking:

- Die verschiedenen Modelle von Drug-Checking-Services sollten evaluiert werden, um die besten Modelle für verschiedene Interventionen zu ermitteln
- Rechtliche Auswirkungen im Umgang mit kontrollierten Substanzen
- Eine genaue Drogenanalyse erfordert fortschrittliche Laborgeräte/technik
- Selbst wenn Substanzen identifiziert werden können, sind die Risiken ihrer Verwendung möglicherweise noch unbekannt



Europäische Beobachtungsstelle
für Drogen und Drogensucht

Europäischer Drogenbericht

Trends und Entwicklungen

14 June 2022

10.00 Lisbon | 11.00 Brussels



European Monitoring Centre
for Drugs and Drug Addiction

EN

ISSN 2184-0086

European Drug Report

Trends and Developments



2022

EDR 2022: einige Bemerkungen

- Verfügbarkeit und der Konsum von Drogen in der Europäischen Union nach wie vor hoch
- Trend zunehmender digitalisierung des Drogenmarkts hat sich beschleunigt
- Innovation im Bereich Drogenhandel und -produktion: verstärkte Produktion synthetischer Drogen, große Beschlagnahmungen und neue Handelswege
- Today, drugs are everywhere, almost everything can be a drug, everyone can be affected, whether directly or indirectly
- Die humanitäre Krise in Afghanistan und der Ukraine kann sich auch auf die Drogenprobleme in Europa auswirken
- Die EU-Drogenstrategie und der Aktionsplan (2021-25) bilden einen zentralen Rahmen für koordinierte Maßnahmen



EDR 2022: einige Bemerkungen

CANNABIS | An increasingly complex cannabis market



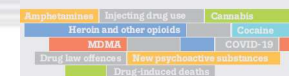
COVID-19 travel restrictions appeared to have some effect on the trafficking of both herbal cannabis from the Western Balkans and resin from Morocco. Domestically produced cannabis may have become a more important source for the European market in 2020. For example, reports of increased large herbal seizures originating in Spain suggest that this country may be becoming a more important supplier for the EU market. We also continued to see increasing diversity in the range of cannabis products available in Europe, with extracts and edibles with a high THC content appearing on the drug market and CBD products with a low THC content being commercially marketed. Worryingly, cannabis products adulterated with dangerous synthetic cannabinoids, posing health risks to consumers, were reported by more countries in 2021. The share of new treatment entrants citing cannabis as their main problem drug fell in one third of EU Member States in 2020. Preliminary data for 2021 suggest this drop is possibly explained by a decrease in help-seeking during the pandemic or services prioritising treatment for other forms of drug use, such as opioids.

KEY DATA AND TRENDS

- In 2020, EU Member States reported 86 000 seizures of cannabis resin amounting to 584 tonnes (464 tonnes in 2019) and 240 000 seizures of herbal cannabis amounting to 155 tonnes (130 tonnes in 2019). Additionally, Turkey reported 8 300 seizures of cannabis resin amounting to 37.5 tonnes and 46 900 seizures of herbal cannabis amounting to 56.3 tonnes.
- Approximately 642 000 cannabis use or possession offences were reported in 2020 (625 000 in 2019), alongside 93 000 supply offences (102 000 in 2019).
- In 2020, the average THC content of cannabis resin was 21 %, almost twice that of herbal cannabis, at 11 %.
- Drug-checking services are receiving more cannabis products for testing, reflecting product diversity and consumer uncertainty, with services in 7 European cities reporting increases in 2021.
- Last year cannabis use among EU inhabitants aged 15–34 is estimated at 15.5 %. Among 15- to 24-year-olds an estimated 19.1 % (9.0 million) used cannabis in the last year and 10.4 % (4.9 million) in the last month.
- The 2021 EU Web Survey on Drugs found that herbal cannabis was used by 95 % of respondents who used cannabis in the last 12 months, compared with 32 % for resin, 25 % for edibles and 17 % for extracts. The pandemic impacted cannabis use patterns, with more-frequent herbal cannabis users consuming more and infrequent users consuming less on average.
- Cannabis was the substance most frequently reported by the Euro-DEN Plus hospital network in 2020. It was involved in 23 % of acute drug toxicity presentations (27 % in 2019), usually in the presence of other substances.
- In 2021, of the 31 cities with comparable data, 13 reported an annual increase in the cannabis metabolite THC-COOH in wastewater samples.
- In 2020, available data from 25 countries show that around 80 000 people entered specialised drug treatment in Europe for problems related to cannabis use, about 43 000 for the first time. Cannabis was the main problem drug most frequently cited by new treatment clients, accounting for 45 % of all first-time treatment entrants in Europe.

European Drug Report

Trends and Developments



2022

Drug-checking services are receiving more cannabis products for testing, reflecting product diversity and consumer uncertainty, with services in 7 European cities reporting increases in 2021.

EDR 2022: einige Bemerkungen

COCAINE | Unprecedented cocaine seizures highlight threats to health



Overall, indicators suggest that the availability and use of cocaine in Europe remains high by historical standards. In 2020, a record high of 213 tonnes of cocaine was seized. Increases in the number of cocaine laboratories dismantled in 2020, seizures of raw materials imported from South America and associated chemicals, together indicate large-scale cocaine processing in Europe. Although some decreases were observed in indicators of cocaine use in 2020, these appear to have been short-lived, with preliminary data for 2021 suggesting a return to pre-pandemic levels. Reports of increased crack cocaine use in a small but growing number of European countries also suggest the spread of cocaine use among people with high-risk drug use patterns. Taken together, the available data highlight that cocaine is now playing a more significant role in drug-related health problems in Europe.

KEY DATA AND TRENDS

- In 2020, EU Member States reported 64 000 seizures of cocaine amounting to 213 tonnes (202 tonnes in 2019). Belgium (70 tonnes), the Netherlands (49 tonnes) and Spain (37 tonnes) accounted for almost 75 % of the total quantity seized.
- The average purity of cocaine at retail level varied from 31 % to 80 % across Europe in 2020, with half the countries reporting an average purity between 54 % and 68 %. The purity of cocaine has been on an upward trend over the past decade, and in 2020 reached a level 40 % higher than the index year of 2010.
- In 2020, the 91 000 use or possession offences involving cocaine continued an upward trend from the previous 4 years.
- In the European Union, surveys indicate that nearly 2.2 million 15- to 34-year-olds (2.2 % of this age group) used cocaine in the last year. Of the 14 European countries that have conducted surveys since 2019 and provided confidence intervals, 8 reported higher estimates than their previous comparable survey, 4 reported a stable trend and 2 a lower estimate.
- Decreases in cocaine residues were observed in 2020 for most cities with data on municipal wastewater for
- In 2020, cocaine was the second most common problem drug for first-time drug treatment entrants, cited by 14 000 clients or 15 % of all first-time entrants.
- Cocaine was the second most common substance reported by Euro-DEN Plus hospitals in 2020, present in 21 % of acute drug toxicity presentations. The number of presentations involving cocaine decreased by 15 % between 2019 and 2020.
- Among 22 countries providing data, cocaine, mostly in the presence of opioids, was involved in 13.4 % of overdose deaths in 2020 (14.3 % in 2019).
- Cocaine was the drug most frequently submitted for testing to drug-checking services in 10 European cities in 2020 (22 %) and 2021 (24 %).
- Just five EU countries accounted for more than 90 % of the 4 000 crack-related treatment entries reported by countries with 2020 data. This suggests that an estimated 7 500 clients entered drug treatment for crack problems in Europe in 2020.

Cocaine is now playing



Drug-checking services are receiving more cannabis products for testing, reflecting product diversity and consumer uncertainty, with services in 7 European cities reporting increases in 2021.

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EDR 2022: einige Bemerkungen

MDMA | Despite pandemic disruption to nightlife, high-strength MDMA products remain a concern



The number of MDMA laboratories dismantled remained relatively stable in 2020 and the quantities of MDMA tablets seized rose, although seizures of powders halved. It is not clear whether these data are indicative of a reduction in the availability of MDMA powder on the drug market. The continued availability of high-strength MDMA tablets puts users at risk of health harms. However, there were signs that levels of MDMA use did experience a decline in 2020, likely associated with severe disruptions of Europe's nightlife economy, which continued into 2021. Reflecting this, non-representative data from wastewater MDMA residue analysis, drug-checking services and focus groups with service providers suggest that levels of MDMA use remained below pre-pandemic levels during 2021. Other data reported by Euro-DEN Plus on the number of MDMA-related emergency hospital visits declined by about a half in 2020. It remains to be seen if MDMA use will start to return to pre-pandemic levels as COVID-19 restrictions around Europe are eased.

KEY DATA AND TRENDS

- In 2020, EU countries reported 13 000 seizures of MDMA (25 000 in 2019). Seizures of MDMA powder in the European Union amounted to 1 tonne (2.2 tonnes in 2019) and seizures of MDMA tablets reached 4.7 million (3.9 million in 2019). Turkey seized a record 11.1 million MDMA tablets (8.7 million in 2019).
- The average MDMA content in tablets and the purity of powders remained stable in 2020, with MDMA tablets seized in Europe containing on average between 125 and 200 milligrams of MDMA, and the average purity of seized MDMA powders ranging from 43 % to 95 %.
- In 2020, the average amount of MDMA per tablet tested by drug-checking services in 17 European cities was 180 milligrams (179 milligrams in 2019). The average purity of MDMA powder reported was 79 % (80 % in 2019).
- Surveys conducted by 26 EU countries between 2015 and 2021 suggest that 1.9 million young adults (15–34) used MDMA in the last year (1.9 % of this age group). Prevalence estimates for those aged 15–24 years are higher with 2.2 % (1.0 million) estimated to
- No overall trend emerges from the data on MDMA use. Of the 14 European countries that undertook surveys since 2019 and provided confidence intervals, 7 reported higher estimates than their previous comparable survey, 6 reported stable estimates and 1 reported a decrease.
- Of the 58 cities that have data on MDMA residues in municipal wastewater for 2020 and 2021, 15 reported an increase, 5 a stable situation and 38 a decrease. Of the 10 cities with data for both 2011 and 2021, 9 had higher MDMA loads in 2021 than in 2011.
- MDMA was the sixth most common drug reported by Euro-DEN Plus hospitals in 2020, present in 6 % of acute drug toxicity presentations. Presentations involving MDMA decreased to 376 in 2020 (661 in 2019).

The continued availability



Drug-checking services are receiving more cannabis products for testing, reflecting product diversity and consumer uncertainty, with services in 7 European cities reporting increases in 2021.

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für Drogen und Drogensucht

emcdda.europa.eu/edr2022


#EuropeanDrugReport2022

#HealthierEurope #MoreSecureEurope



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Kooperationen und Zukunftsvisionen

Kooperationen

Cooperation with EU institutions, the Reitox network (29 national drug monitoring centres), candidate and potential candidates to the EU, European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) area countries, and regional and international organisations has been an important part of the EMCDDA's work since its creation in 1993.

EMCDDA-TEDI network



- Zusammenarbeit, die vor fast 5 Jahren begann
- Halbjährliche Einreichung von Daten von 15 Drug-checking services in ganz Europa
- EMCDDA benutzt neben nationalen Daten von REITOX und anderen Daten auf Stadtebene (Abwasser, Spritzen, Krankenhausnotfälle und bald DCRs)
- Überwachung der Drogensituation in ganz Europa (almost real time)

Kooperationen und Zukunftsvisionen

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EMCDDA-TEDI network



In Kürze Veröffentlichung von “Joint guidance” with TEDI on risk communication for drug checking.

Zusammenarbeit für die Evalaution von Drug-Checking services .



Europäische Beobachtungsstelle
für Drogen und Drogensucht

Thanks!

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Annex

Cathinones: record trafficking to Europe, health harms prompt new controls

Synthetic cathinones: EU EWS monitors 162

Seizures: 3.3 tonnes in 2020 (0.75 tonnes in 2019)

Most bulk quantities originated in India, mainly N-ethylhexedrone, 3-MMC and 3-CMC

Harms: 3-MMC suspected poisonings rose in Netherlands: 10 in 2018 to 64 in 2020. Cathinone injecting linked to high-risk sexual practices and HIV and HCV outbreaks

Risk assessments: 3-MMC and 3-CMC risk assessed in 2021



Cannabis: new developments for Europe's most popular illicit drug

- 15.5 % of 15-34 year olds used cannabis in the last year
- Resin's average THC content now twice herb's: 21 % vs. 11 %
- Cannabis is responsible for 45 % of all first-time treatment entries
- Cannabis products: extracts and edibles (high THC content), CBD products (low THC content)
- Concern about reports of adulteration with synthetic cannabinoids, which can be highly potent and toxic

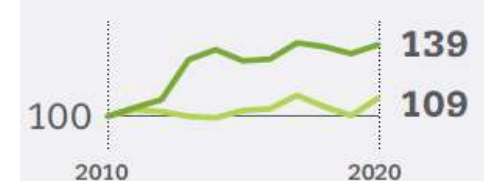
Indexed trends

Retail price
and potency

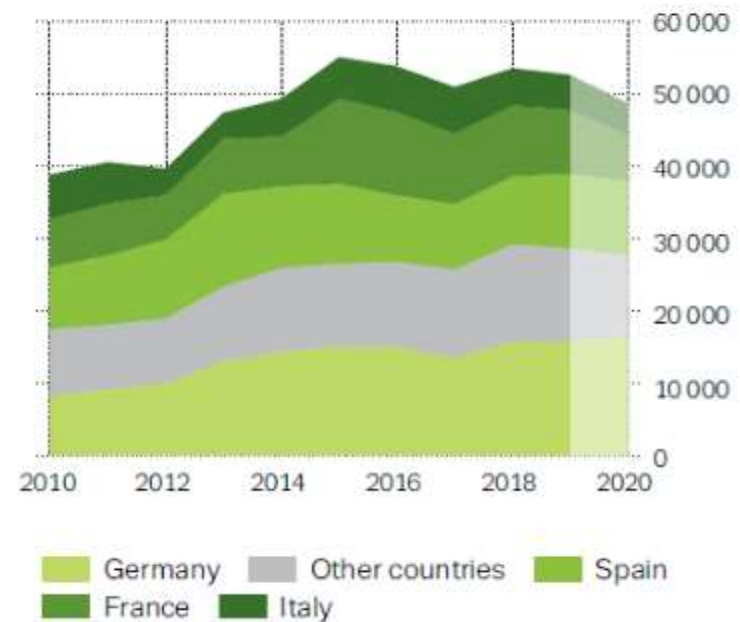
Cannabis resin



Cannabis herb



Trends in first-time entrants



Cannabis policy: increasingly complex in Europe

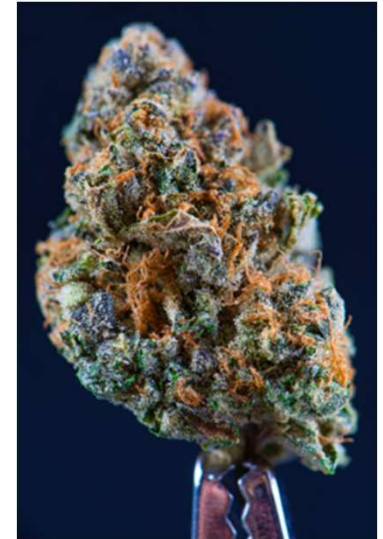
Cannabis policies now encompass:

- control of illicit cannabis
- regulation of cannabis for medical uses
- other emerging uses and forms, including as ingredients in some commercial products

Regulatory status: some EU MS debating adjustments to the status of cannabis

Medical use of cannabis: allowed by most EU MS

Growing complexity in cannabis-based products traded in the EU: more registrations of cannabis plant varieties, product trademarks, hectares of hemp grown and applications for novel food products, shops selling low-THC cannabis products



Cannabis: concern about adulteration with synthetic cannabinoids

Increase in samples containing ADB-BUTINACA in 2021

Purchased as illegal cannabis: people unaware what products contained

Health risks: more intense intoxication, mental, physical and behavioural effects than cannabis, some fatal and non-fatal poisoning reported



EDR 2022: drug production continues to increase in Europe

2020: over 350 laboratories dismantled

Heroin	Cocaine
Amphetamine	Methamphetamine
MDMA	Cathinones
Ketamine	GHB
DMT	



Cocaine: record cocaine seizures highlight threats to health

Seizures

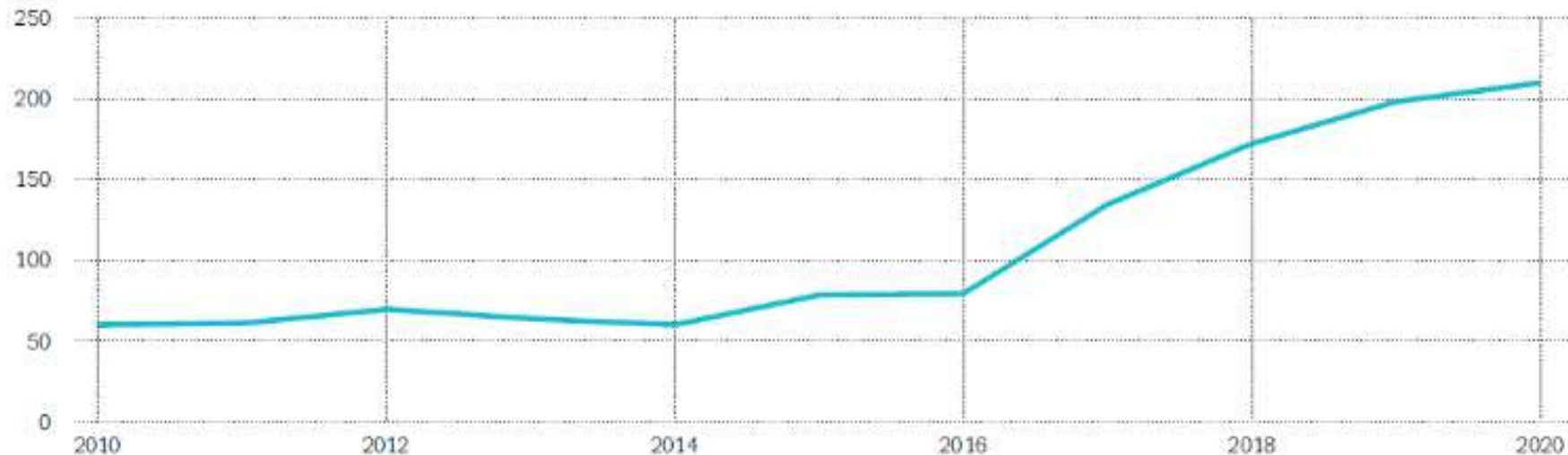
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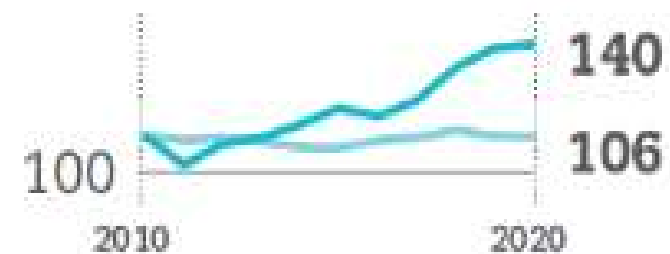


Cocaine seizures (tonnes)



Indexed trends

Retail price and purity



Crack cocaine: signs of use spreading among vulnerable groups

Drivers: high availability of cocaine, economic deprivation and small, cheap crack doses

Crack use: mostly in vulnerable and marginalised groups

Treatment: an estimated 7 000 clients in 2020

Harms: high-frequency use linked to mental and physical health and social problems

Injecting cocaine associated with elevated risk of HIV and HCV infection



Methamphetamine: changed production and supply dynamics raise risk of increased use

Production: large-scale sites now detected; collaboration between European and Mexican criminals

Europe's role: large quantities produced for global export

Consumption in Europe: still low, but potential to grow with diffusion of use to more continues

Harms: acute toxicity, psychotic episodes, polydrug use, blood-borne viruses from injecting and death



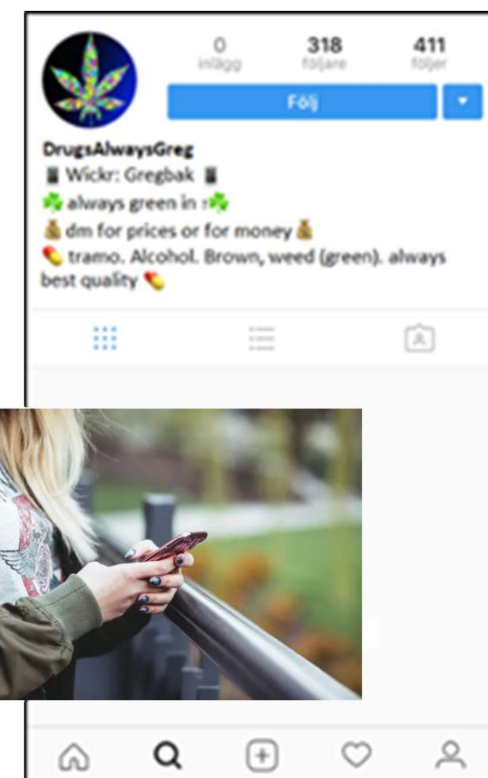
Darknet drug markets: signs of decline

Digitally enabled drug markets: darknet markets, social media and instant messaging apps

Darknet markets impacted by: COVID-19 pandemic, law-enforcement activity, scams, delivery problems and long periods of downtime

Declining revenues: EUR 30 000 per day in 2021 (down from EUR 1 million per day in 2020)

Other technology: sales using social media and instant messaging apps gaining interest



Injecting drug use: declining, but still a concern

Injecting: 22 % of first-time treatment clients with heroin as their primary drug reported injecting as main route of use in 2020 (35 % in 2013)

Drugs injected appear more diverse: opioids, heroin, also amphetamines, cocaine, synthetic cathinones, prescribed opioid medications and other medicines

Syringe residue analysis: out of 1 392 used syringes collected in 2020-21 in 5 cities, half or more contained stimulants, a third contained two or more drugs



Treatment and harm reduction: services still need to be scaled-up

WHO targets: only four reporting countries in 2020 distributed 200 syringes per person who injects and had 40 % of the population of high-risk opioid users in opioid agonist treatment

Prevalence of high-risk opioid use: estimated at 0.34 % for the EU adult population, equivalent to around 1 million high-risk opioid users in 2020

Opioid agonist treatment: 514 000 clients in 2020

Considerable access differences exist between countries.



Drug-induced deaths: driven by opioids and other drugs

Overdose deaths: an estimated 5 800 in EU in 2020

Mortality rate: 16.7 deaths per million

Polydrug toxicity: illicit opioids, other illicit drugs, medicines and alcohol

Benzodiazepines: common in drug-induced-death toxicological reports in some countries

Opioids: present in around three quarters of all drug-induced deaths



Developments in Afghanistan: implications for European drug markets

Production: world's largest producer of illicit opium and heroin, large-scale ephedra-based methamphetamine production also now detected

Economic and humanitarian crisis: could increase drug cultivation, production and trafficking to Europe

Cultivation bans: hard to enforce

Seizures: record amounts of methamphetamine seized on main heroin trafficking routes towards Europe

Future developments currently unclear but require monitoring



War in Ukraine: increases uncertainty of Europe's drug situation

Russia's invasion: triggered a major humanitarian crisis with ongoing implications

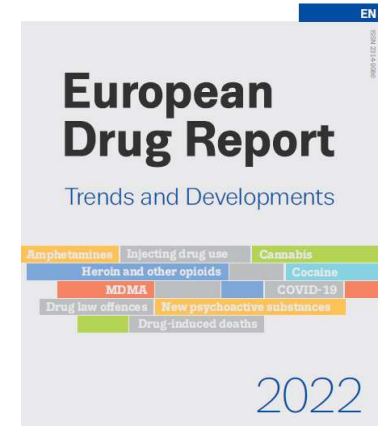
Too soon to assess impact: drug markets, drug use or the provision of services for those with drug problems

Priority needs: continuity of treatment, language services and the provision of accommodation and social welfare support



EDR 2022: concluding remarks

- Drug supply and use bounced back after COVID-19 disruption
- Digitalisation of drug markets may have accelerated
- Innovation driving high availability and greater diversity of substances: increased synthetic drug production, large seizures and new trafficking routes
- Today, drugs are **everywhere**, almost **everything** can be a drug, **everyone** can be affected, whether directly or indirectly
- Humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan and Ukraine also has the potential to impact on Europe's drug problems
- EU Drugs Strategy and Action Plan (2021-25) provides a key framework for coordinated action





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