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DRUGS IN EUROPE – FACTS AND FIGURES

*2006 Annual report on the state of the drugs problem in Europe
and 2006 Statistical bulletin*

Embargo: 11H00 CET – 23.11.2006

The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) hereby presents a selection of 'Facts and figures' from its:

2006 Annual report on the state of the drugs problem in Europe

<http://annualreport.emcdda.europa.eu>

and

2006 Statistical bulletin

<http://stats06.emcdda.europa.eu>

Please note that this text is intended as a quick reference guide only and should be used in conjunction with the relevant sections of the *Annual report* and *Statistical bulletin*, which provide more detailed, contextual information and methodological notes and caveats.

The statistical data reported here relate to the year 2004 (or the last year available). Some information is summarised from reports of other agencies and bodies. Full details of sources used can be found in the *Annual report* and *Statistical bulletin*.

For more detailed information on lifetime, last-year and last-month prevalence rates by drug type and country, see Tables GPS-1, GPS-3 and GPS-5 of the 2006 *Statistical bulletin*.

Cannabis

- Cannabis continues to be the most widely produced and trafficked plant-based illicit drug worldwide and is the most seized drug in the EU.
- Based on provisional data, the number of seizures of cannabis resin and of herbal cannabis increased at EU level in 2004, while the total amount seized of both varieties declined in the majority of EU countries that year (some countries still to report).
- Average retail prices of both cannabis resin and herbal cannabis fell in most EU countries in the period 1999–2004.
- In 2004, cannabis resin at retail level was reported to have an average THC content that varied from less than 1% to 17%, while herbal cannabis potency ranged from 0.6% to 18% (the higher figure mostly relating to herbal cannabis produced under artificially enhanced conditions within the EU).
- In the EU, Bulgaria, Romania and Norway, among all adults (15–64 years), it is estimated that:
 - 65 million adults have used cannabis at least once (lifetime use) – 20% of adults.
 - 22.5 million have used it in the previous year (recent use) – 7% of adults.
 - 12 million have used it in the last month (current use) – 4% of adults.
 - 3 million are using it on a daily/almost daily basis (intensive use) – about 1% of adults.
- Depending on the country surveyed, between 2% and 31% of European adults report ever using cannabis, with most countries reporting prevalence rates of between 10% and 20%.
- Depending on the country surveyed, between 1% and 11% of adults report using cannabis in the last year, with most countries reporting prevalence rates of between 3% and 8%.
- Depending on the country surveyed, between 0.5% and 8% of adults report using cannabis in the last month.
- Cannabis is reported as the main problem drug by around 15% of those seeking treatment for drug problems in Europe, and by 27% of those who are seeking treatment for the first time in their life, making it the next most commonly reported drug after heroin.

Cocaine

- After cannabis, cocaine is the most trafficked drug globally. UNODC reports that Colombia is the largest source of illicit coca in the world, followed by Peru and Bolivia. Global production of cocaine in 2004 was estimated at 687 tonnes.
- Most of the cocaine seized in Europe comes either directly from South America (mainly Colombia) or via Central America and the Caribbean, although parts of Africa are becoming important transit points for cocaine entering Europe.
- In 2004, an estimated 74 tonnes of cocaine were seized in the EU. Most seizures were reported in Western European countries. Over the last five years, Spain has accounted for around half of the seizures and amounts recovered in the EU.
- Based on provisional data, quantities of cocaine seized declined in 2004. Average retail prices of cocaine fell in most EU countries in the period 1999–2004.
- In the EU, Bulgaria, Romania and Norway among all adults (15–64 years), it is estimated that:
 - 10 million have used cocaine at least once (lifetime use) – over 3% of adults.
 - 3.5 million have used it in the previous year (recent use) – 1% of adults.
 - 1.5 million have used it in the last month (current use) – 0.5% of adults.
- Depending on the country surveyed, between 0.4% to 6% of adults report having ever used cocaine.
- Depending on the country surveyed, between 0.1% and 3% of adults report using cocaine in the last year, with most countries reporting prevalence rates of between 0.3% and 1.2%.
- Depending on the country surveyed, between zero and 1% of adults report using cocaine in the last month.
- Cocaine is the third most commonly reported reason for entering drug treatment, after heroin and cannabis. It accounts for around 8% of all treatment requests.
- Of new clients entering treatment for cocaine use in the EU, around 80% report using cocaine powder and 20% crack cocaine.

Amphetamines: amphetamine and methamphetamine

- Western and Central Europe remain an important area for the production and trafficking of amphetamine but not methamphetamine, where use and production is largely limited to a few countries.
- In Europe, production of methamphetamine is largely limited to the Czech Republic, where it has been produced illicitly since the mid-1980s under the local name of 'pervitin'. In 2004, some manufacture was also reported in Slovakia and Bulgaria.
- Of the 6 tonnes of amphetamine seized worldwide in 2004, around 97% was seized in Europe, mostly in Western/Central Europe and South-eastern Europe. Of the 11 tonnes of methamphetamine seized worldwide in 2004, around 59% was seized in East and South-east Asia and 37% in North America.
- At EU level, the number of amphetamine seizures and quantities seized have been increasing since 1999.
- In the EU, Bulgaria, Romania and Norway among all adults (15–64 years), it is estimated that:
 - 10 million adults have used amphetamine at least once (lifetime use) – 3% of adults.
 - 2 million have tried it in the last year (recent use) – 0.6% of adults.
 - 900,000 have tried it in the last month (current use) – 0.3% of adults.
- Depending on the country surveyed, between 0.1% to 6% of adults report ever using amphetamine.
- Depending on the country surveyed, between zero to 1.4% of adults report use of amphetamine in the last year, with most countries reporting prevalence rates of between 0.2% and 1.1%.
- Depending on the country surveyed, between zero and 0.5% of adults report use of amphetamine in the last month.

Ecstasy

- Europe remains the main centre of ecstasy production, although ecstasy manufacture has spread in recent years to other parts of the world, notably to North America and East and South-east Asia.
- Ecstasy trafficking is strongly concentrated in Western Europe, but, like production, it has spread throughout the world in recent years. Of the 8.5 tonnes of ecstasy seized globally in 2004, 50% was recovered in Western and Central Europe, 23% in North America and 16% in Oceania. In 2004, 28.3 million ecstasy tablets were seized in the EU. Numbers of ecstasy seizures and quantities seized appear to be rising.
- In the period 1999–2004, average retail prices of ecstasy fell in most reporting countries.
- Generally in Europe, most tablets sold as ecstasy contained MDMA or another ecstasy-like substance (MDEA, MDA), usually as the only psychoactive substance present.

- In the EU, Bulgaria, Romania and Norway among all adults (15–64 years), it is estimated that:
 - 8.5 million adults have ever used ecstasy (lifetime use) – 2.6% of adults.
 - 3 million adults have used it in the last year (recent use) – around 1% of adults.
 - 1 million have used it in the last month (current use) – 0.3% of adults.
- Depending on the country surveyed, between 0.2% and 7% of European adults report ever having used ecstasy.
- Depending on the country surveyed, between zero and 3.5% of adults report use of ecstasy in the last year, with most countries reporting prevalence rates of between 0.3% to 1.5%.
- Depending on the country surveyed, between zero and 1% of adults report having used it in the last month.
- Among a younger age group (15–24 years), estimated last-year use ranges from 0.3% to 12%.
- Ecstasy use is rarely reported as a reason for entering drug treatment in Europe.

Hallucinogens

- Lifetime prevalence of LSD use among adults (15–64 years) ranges from 0.2% to 6%, with most countries reporting rates between 0.4% and 2%.
- Surveys among school students (15–16 years) show that prevalence estimates on the use of magic mushrooms in the EU are considerably lower than those for cannabis, but are similar to those recorded for ecstasy. Ever-use ranges from less than 1% to 8% for both ecstasy and magic mushrooms, although more typically prevalence lies between 1% and 3%. Use of magic mushrooms is usually experimental, with regular or continued use relatively rare.
- Among school students (15–16 years), lifetime prevalence rates of magic mushroom use exceed that of ecstasy in Belgium, Germany and France.

Heroin and problem drug use

- Heroin consumed in Europe is predominantly manufactured in Afghanistan which remains the world leader in the supply of illicit opium. In 2005, Afghanistan accounted for 89% of the global illicit opium production. UNODC reports that in 2004, 59.2 tonnes of heroin were seized worldwide – 50% in Asia, 40% in Europe.
- Both the numbers of heroin seizures and quantities of heroin seized rose in 2004. Europe's share of global heroin seizures is increasing largely as a result of increased seizures in south-east European countries, notably Turkey.
- The average retail price of heroin fell in most EU countries in the period 1999–2004.
- Generally opioids (mainly heroin) are still the main drugs for which clients seek treatment. Of the total number of requests for drug treatment reported in 2004, opioids were the main drug of choice in around 60% of cases. (For more information, see Tables TDI-2, TDI-19 and TDI-26 in the *2006 Statistical bulletin*).
- The percentage of new treatment demands accounted for by heroin fell from over 60% to around 40% between 1999 and 2004, while the demand for treatment for cocaine and cannabis problems was rising.
- Of clients seeking treatment for heroin use, almost half are over 30. Opioid users typically experience 3–7 years of regular use before seeking treatment. Less than 7% of opioid users new to treatment are under 20 years of age.
- From the latest overview of available data (2003), it is estimated that over half a million opioid users receive substitution treatment in Europe.
- Methadone is Europe's most commonly prescribed drug for the treatment of opioid dependence (predominantly heroin), with around 80% of those in substitution therapy receiving a methadone prescription. Around 20% of clients in substitution treatment now receive buprenorphine which has become an increasingly popular pharmacological option since the mid-1990s.
- Estimates suggest that there are probably some 1.7 million problem drug users (mainly heroin users) in the EU today and estimates of the prevalence of problem opioid use at national level over the period 2000–2004 range between 1 and 8 cases per 1 000 population aged 15–64. (For more information, see Tables PDU-2 and PDU-3 in the *2006 Statistical bulletin*).
- The latest data suggest that there are annually nearly 7000 acute drug-related deaths, with opioids being found in around 70% of them. (For more information, see Tables DRD-1 and DRD-2 in the *2006 Statistical bulletin*).