



Video message — European Drug Report 2014

European Commissioner for Home Affairs

Cecilia Malmström

Dear ladies and gentlemen,

I would like to start by conveying my apologies for not being able to join you in Lisbon in person today to mark the launch of the European Drug Report 2014.

This annual report, published by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, provides us with a wealth of evidence-based information on Europe's ever-shifting drug situation. And I would like to thank the EMCDDA Director, Wolfgang Götz and his team for their excellent work in making this analysis possible.

Although, as we saw last year, there are some encouraging signs that, in some parts of Europe, the use of the more traditional drugs, such as heroin and cocaine, appears to be waning, this year's report does leave me with some serious worries.

I am deeply concerned that the drugs consumed in Europe today may be even more damaging to users' health than in the past.

There are signs that the ecstasy and cannabis sold on the street are getting stronger. I also note that the EU Early Warning System, our first line of defence against emerging drugs, is coming under growing

pressure as the number and diversity of substances continue to rise sharply. This system has already reviewed four new substances this year linked to acute intoxications and deaths in the EU Member States and two more substances will be reviewed later in 2014.

I am also concerned by the sheer number of European adults who have used an illicit drug.

Today's report shows that around one quarter of the adult population of the European Union — over 80 million adults — are estimated to have tried illicit drugs at some point in their lives.

An estimated 73.6 million European adults have tried cannabis in their lifetime; some 18.1 million reporting to have used it in the last year.

Some 14.1 million Europeans have tried cocaine in their lifetime, with a reported 3.1 million having used it in the past 12 months.

It is disturbing that, by historical standards, drug use in some European countries remains high.

We see today that Europe's drugs problem is increasingly complex, with new threats posed by synthetic drugs, including stimulants, new psychoactive substances and medicinal products, all of which are becoming more prominent in a changing European drug market.

A game-changer for law-enforcement bodies is that they are increasingly faced with the fact that small, easily transported packages of seemingly innocuous powders can contain many thousands of individual doses.

The fact that over 80 new drugs were detected for the first time in 2013 is proof in itself that drug policies need to adapt to changing drug markets.

The European Drug Report, the annual analysis from the EMCDDA, provides us with a critically important window on Europe's evolving drugs problem. The valuable information it conveys will serve as a reference for policymakers, specialists and practitioners working on drug-related issues.

It is imperative that this information feeds into the development of effective responses in the areas of law-enforcement, prevention and treatment. This should ensure that European authorities keep pace with the evolving challenges we face.

Thank you very much.