



European Monitoring Centre
for Drugs and Drug Addiction

European Drug Report

2015

What are the latest drug market trends and what are the factors driving them? What are the most recent developments in drug prevention, treatment and policy? How many new drugs were detected in Europe over the last year and what are the consequences for those using them? These are just some of the questions explored in the EMCDDA's *European Drug Report 2015: Trends and Developments*.

This annual overview of the drugs problem offers European-level insights into the latest trends in drug supply, drug use and health and social responses, while highlighting emerging issues in specific countries. Such a perspective is valuable, as it allows differing national experiences to be understood within the broader European context.

The report is accompanied by a *Statistical Bulletin*, containing the full European dataset underpinning the report, and by *Perspectives on Drugs*, online interactive windows on key aspects of the drugs problem. *Country Overviews* complete the picture, showcasing national-level data and analyses.

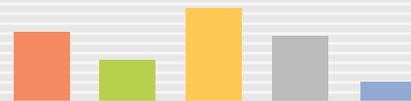
The multilingual, multimedia package offers easy access to evidence-based information on drugs across the 28 EU Member States, Turkey and Norway. The interlinked set of products provides an essential resource for informing European policies and responses and enhancing understanding of a drugs problem in constant evolution.

European Drug Report 2015: Trends and Developments
Available in 24 languages at emcdda.europa.eu/edr2015
An e-publication, including interactive maps and graphics, is available in English.

EUROPEAN DRUG REPORT PACKAGE 2015

A set of interlinked elements allowing full access to the available data and analysis on the drugs problem in Europe





Perspectives on Drugs (PODs)

The EMCDDA releases alongside the *European Drug Report 2015: Trends and Developments* four new additions to its *Perspectives on Drugs* (PODs) series. Outlined below are highlights from these online interactive windows on key aspects of the European drug situation.

Opioid trafficking routes from Asia to Europe

This new analysis reviews the current evidence of how opioids are being trafficked into Europe. It points to a diversification in heroin and morphine production, greater diversity of opioids on the market and innovation in trafficking methods and routes. While the traditional 'Balkan route' remains prominent, there are signs that the 'Southern route' is gaining ground. This originates in Iran and Pakistan and reaches Europe directly or indirectly via countries in the Arabian Peninsula and east, southern and west Africa. The review is set against a backdrop of substantial increases in opium production in Afghanistan in 2013 and 2014, the country supplying most of the heroin used in Europe.

Misuse of benzodiazepines among high-risk opioid users in Europe

With a wide range of clinical uses, benzodiazepines are among the most commonly prescribed medicines in the world. While they have proven useful in treating a variety of health problems — including anxiety, insomnia and alcohol withdrawal — benzodiazepines, like all medicines, can cause side-effects, particularly when misused. This POD places the spotlight on benzodiazepine misuse among high-risk opioid users, who may take these medicines to self-medicate or to enhance the effects of opioids. The analysis shows how the combined use of opioids with benzodiazepines and other central nervous system depressants (e.g. alcohol) contributes to an increased risk of overdose death. It suggests that prescribing and clinical practice guidelines could play a key role in the management of this complex issue (video available).

Drug consumption rooms: an overview of provision and evidence

Supervised 'drug consumption rooms' (DCRs), where illicit drugs can be used under the supervision of trained staff, have been operating in Europe for the last three decades. Primarily these facilities are designed to: reduce the acute risks of disease transmission through unhygienic injecting; prevent drug-related overdose deaths; and connect high-risk drug users with addiction treatment and other health and social services. They may also contribute to a reduction in drug use in public places and the presence of discarded needles and other related public-order problems linked with open drug scenes. Some countries have a long-established practice of providing supervised consumption. Six EMCDDA reporting countries currently provide DCRs, totalling around 70 facilities (Denmark, Germany, Spain, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway), while France recently approved an experimental trial using this approach. This POD reviews services delivered in these settings and explores how DCRs may help reduce drug-related harms and serve as useful spaces to connect hard-to-reach drug users with health services (video available).

The role of psychosocial interventions in drug treatment

Psychosocial interventions are structured psychological or social interventions used to address substance-related problems. These dynamic interventions can be used at different stages of the drug treatment journey to help drug users, for example, to: identify the problem; commit to change; follow a course of treatment; and achieve social reintegration. They can be used independently, or in conjunction with other therapies, and can also support family members in facilitating the recovery process. Evidence supports the use of psychosocial interventions in treating a range of drug problems and addictive behaviours. This analysis explores what they are and to whom they are provided.