



European Monitoring Centre  
for Drugs and Drug Addiction

# **European Drug Report**

Trends and Developments

7 June 2018

# European Drug Report 2018 package

## EUROPEAN DRUG REPORT PACKAGE 2018

Interlinked elements allowing access to available data and analysis on the drugs problem in Europe and at national level



Also published on the day:

NPS in prison (**Rapid communication & video**)

Updates on misuse of benzodiazepines in high-risk opioid users, drug consumption rooms (**Perspectives on Drugs**)

Fentanils and synthetic cannabinoids: driving greater complexity into the drug situation (**EU Early Warning System update 2018**)

# Highlights from the European Drug Report 2018

- **Cocaine:** signs of increased availability
- **Markets and production:** growing concerns over domestic production and the role of internet sales
- **NPS:** more evidence of harms, as reflected in an increase in risk assessments of highly potent substances
- **Prisons:** NPS use an emerging challenge within a setting important for responding to drug problems
- **Overdose deaths:** remain high — overdose prevention a public health priority: report highlights role of naloxone
- **Cannabis:** new policy challenges

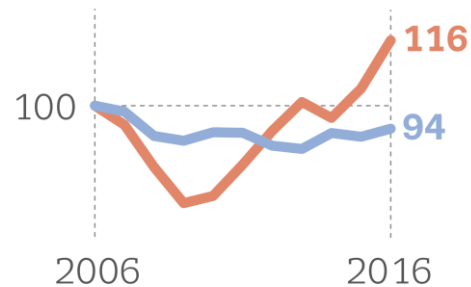


# Cocaine: increased availability, higher purity



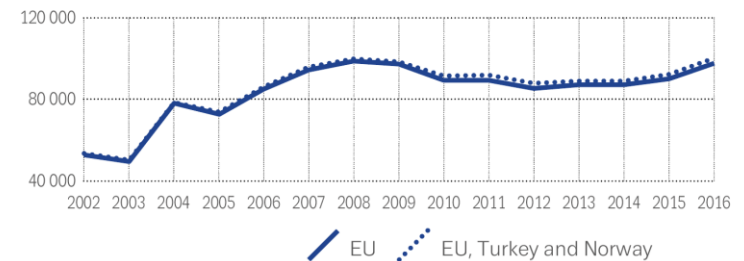
## Indexed trends

### Price and purity

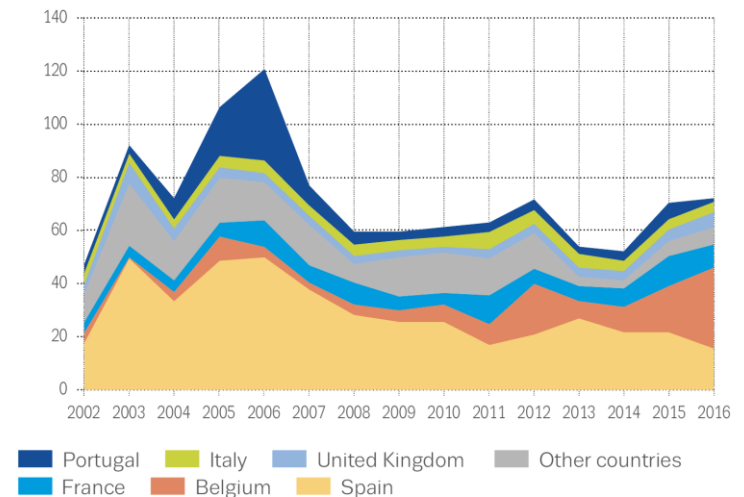


Number of cocaine seizures and quantity seized: trends and 2016 or most recent year

Number of seizures



Tonnes



## Use patterns less clear

- Wastewater analysis of cocaine residues between 2015–17 shows an increase in 26 of 31 cities
- But survey data suggest a mixed picture



# Markets: concerns around drug production in Europe

- **MDMA:** increase in laboratories detected & larger production runs
- Signs that final stages of **cocaine** and **heroin** processing can occur in the EU
  
- **NPS:** some production in the EU
- **Cannabis:** European production displacing imports



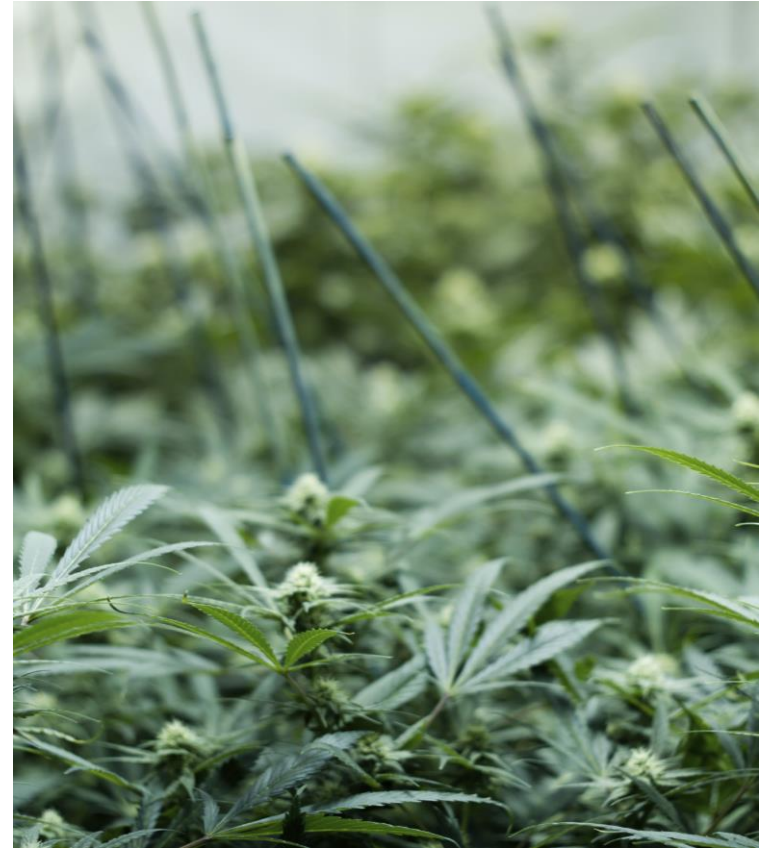
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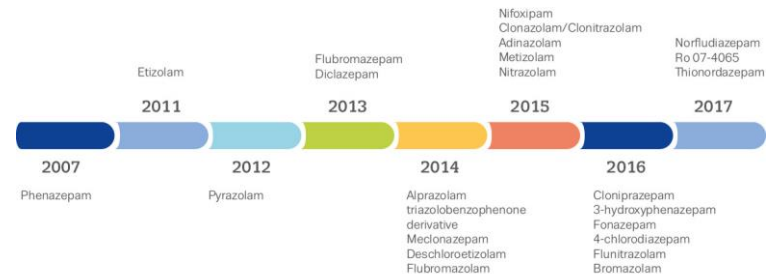
# Cannabis: a more complex set of policy challenges?

- Europe's most used drug
- Increases in new treatments
- Innovation in forms, products & delivery systems
- Global developments
- Cross over with other policy areas (e.g. drugs and driving)



# Drug markets: online sales — a growing challenge to existing drug control models

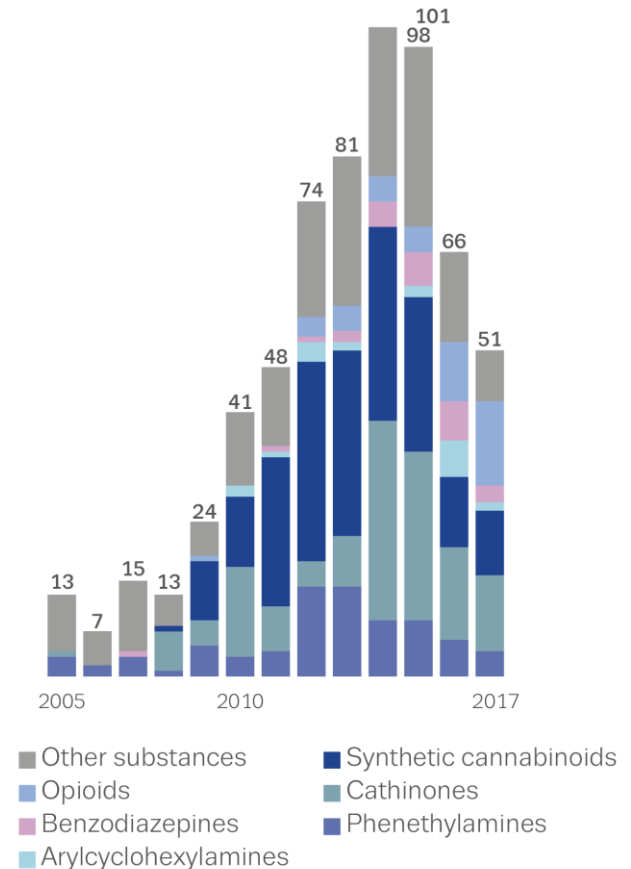
- Darknet markets — over 100 global markets identified
- 2/3rds of purchases are drug-related
- Surface web and social media important sources for NPS and misused medicines
- New benzodiazepines, not authorised as medicines in the EU, sold on- and offline



# NPS: 51 new substances detected in 2017

- Around 350 substances reported annually to the EWS
- 51 of these were new substances detected for the first time in 2017
- Decline from 2014 peak (101)
- Impact of regulation in EU and China?
- Deaths and acute intoxications a growing problem

Number and categories of new psychoactive substances notified to the EU Early Warning System for the first time, 2005–17



# NPS: nine risk assessments in 2017 of highly potent substances

## 4 synthetic cannabinoids

- most frequently seized NPS
- often in the form of herbal smoking mixtures



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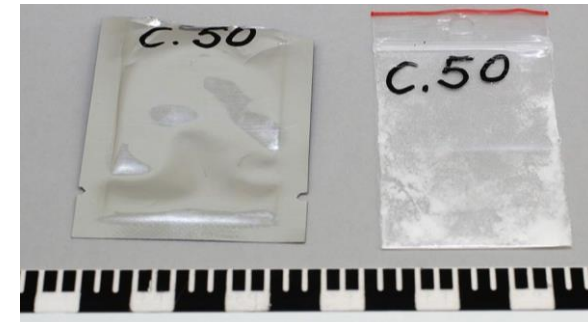
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## 5 fentanyl derivatives

- highly potent
- increasingly misused
- various forms (powders, tablets, nasal sprays)



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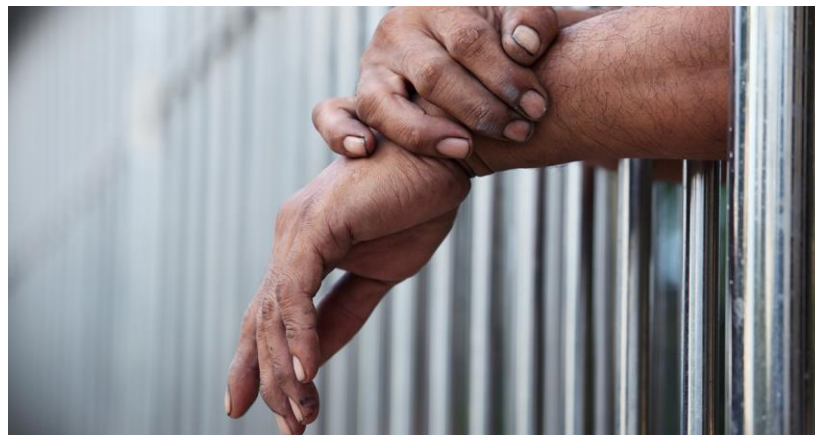
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# NPS in prisons: growing evidence of harms

- A growing problem: in particular synthetic cannabinoids
- Identified in 21 EU countries but may go unobserved elsewhere
- Serious problems reported, deaths, acute intoxications, self-harm and bullying
- Evidence of initiation in prison
- Difficult to detect and innovative methods used for supply



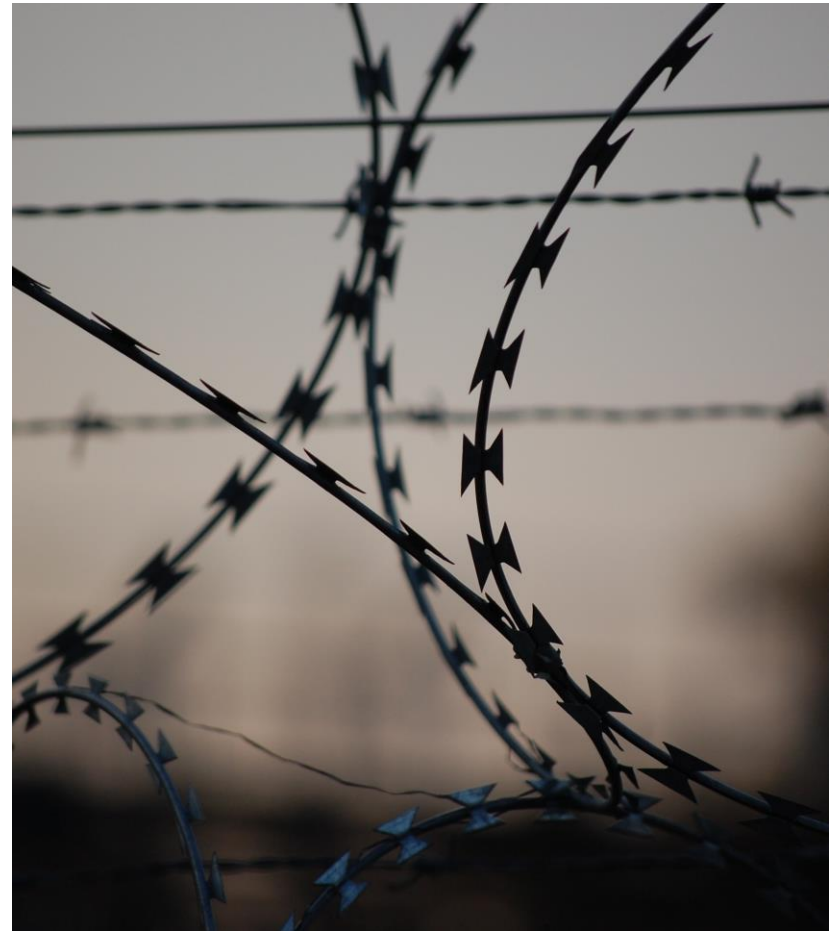
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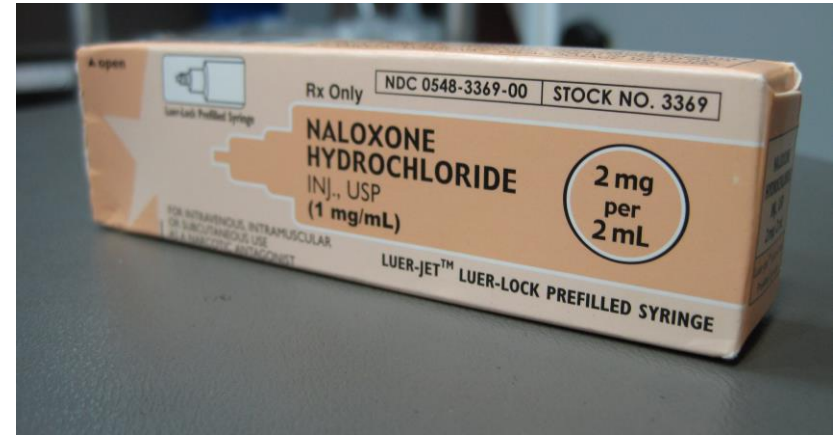
# Prison: an important setting for addressing drug-related problems

- Addressing drug-related problems in prison can improve health and reduce the risk of subsequent offending
- Important to:
  - identify and treat drug problems
  - test and treat for HIV, HCV
- Release from prison — time of increased risk of overdose



# Reducing overdose deaths: remains a critical public health objective

- Over 9 000 overdose deaths in 2016
- Mainly related to heroin and other opioids
- Synthetic opioids a concern (medicines and NPS e.g. fentanyl derivatives)
- Increasing the access to the opioid antidote naloxone is important



## Reducing fatal outcome of overdose

**Supervised drug consumption**  
Immediate first-aid in drug emergencies

**Take-home naloxone programmes**  
Improved bystander response

## Reducing risk of overdose

**Retention in opioid substitution treatment**  
Reduce drug use and injecting

**Overdose risk assessments**  
In treatment facilities and prisons

**Overdose awareness**  
Knowledge of risk and safer use

## Reducing vulnerability

**Outreach and low-threshold services**  
Accessible services

**Enabling environment**  
Removing barriers to service provision

**Empowerment of drug users**  
Enabling drug users to protect themselves

**Public health approach**  
Recognition of wider impact

# Concluding remarks

- In Europe, illicit drugs continue to pose a range of public health and security threats
- The market remains highly dynamic, is more globally linked and developments in information technology are impacting on the problems we face
- The availability and spread of highly potent products is a key policy concern, especially use among vulnerable populations and in high-risk settings
- Reducing drug overdose and eliminating drug-related infectious disease remain important public health challenges
- Preparedness, sensitive monitoring and increasingly agile, evidence-based and rapid responses are required.






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