

730. Seizures of precursors of amphetamine in Eastern European countries have increased in the past few years. According to UNODC, in 2006, major seizures of the precursor P-2-P were reported in Poland (1,085 litres), the Russian Federation (402 litres), Estonia (51 litres) and Bulgaria (32 litres).

5. Missions

731. A mission of the Board visited Romania in October 2008. The Board notes that there has been some improvement and greater commitment by the Government in its efforts to fulfil the objectives of the international drug control treaties. Progress has been made in the Government's efforts to address the drug problem in the country, and the Government's cooperation with the Board has improved since the 2002 mission of the Board to that country. The Board notes that Romania has taken some steps in recent years to strengthen its drug control efforts, but a number of problems continue to exist in that area.

732. In particular, the Board notes that in Romania the existing mechanism for the monitoring and control of internationally controlled substances is neither sufficient nor functioning adequately. The Board requests the Government to take steps to put in place legislation, as well as to provide resources and trained personnel, to enable all drug regulatory authorities, especially the Ministry of Health, to perform their control functions. Moreover, with regard to efforts by the Government to address the challenge of the smuggling of drugs through its territory, the Board encourages the Government to further strengthen customs and border control activities to prevent such trafficking, for example, through capacity-building and increasing the allocation of resources to such activities.

733. The Board notes that the availability of opioids for the treatment of pain does not appear to meet the requirements of the population in Romania. The Board urges the Government to accurately determine the national medical and/or scientific requirements for narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and to take all steps necessary, including the provision of education and training to staff, to ensure that those substances are available for medical purposes.

734. A mission of the Board visited Ukraine in May 2008. The Board notes the commitment of the Government to the objectives of the international drug control conventions. Progress has been made in the

Government's efforts to address the drug problem. Administrative steps have been taken to ensure the implementation of the provisions of the conventions. Ukraine has adopted comprehensive drug control legislation and developed a national drug control strategy. Although a mechanism has been established to coordinate efforts to fight drug trafficking, problems continue to exist, largely because of lack of cooperation among authorities involved in drug control.

735. The transit traffic in heroin and cocaine poses serious drug control problems for Ukraine, particularly with regard to the increasing influence of organized transnational crime on drug trafficking both in and through Ukraine. The Board is of the opinion that that development requires effective inter-ministerial coordination at the policy level, as well as at the operational level. The Board recommends that the Government should clearly define the lines of responsibility between the various law enforcement agencies and improve the coordination of their activities.

736. The intravenous abuse of acetylated opium made of locally produced poppy straw is the most serious drug abuse problem in Ukraine. As needle-sharing is practised among drug abusers, it has contributed to the increase in HIV/AIDS infection in Ukraine. The Board urges the Government to prevent the diversion of poppy straw from farms licensed for cultivating opium poppy. The Board encourages the authorities of Ukraine to develop, if necessary with the help of WHO and UNODC, a consolidated approach towards drug abuse prevention and treatment programmes. Long waiting lists and the increasing rate of HIV/AIDS infection indicate that the treatment programmes presently offered are not sufficient and that the treatment facilities urgently need to be expanded to respond to those problems.

E. Oceania

1. Major developments

737. A recent increase in drug smuggling from Canada to Australia has been noted. Australian law enforcement officials reported having seized cocaine, MDMA and methamphetamine from a sea cargo consignment originating in Canada. Law enforcement

authorities in the United States also seized cocaine, MDMA and methamphetamine from a sea cargo consignment originating in Canada and destined for Australia. While the source country for the majority of seizures of methamphetamine in New Zealand continued to be China, a recent increase in trafficking in that substance from Canada was also noted.

738. While comprehensive seizure data for Australia and New Zealand are available, limited data are available for other countries in Oceania. However, illicit substances including cannabis, cocaine, heroin and precursor chemicals were seized in Fiji, Papua New Guinea and Vanuatu during 2007, confirming concerns that countries in Oceania other than Australia and New Zealand are also vulnerable to drug trafficking.

739. Australia reported a significant increase in seizures of cocaine in the period 2006-2007, compared with the period 2005-2006. Australia also reported an increase in seizures of paramethoxyamphetamine (PMA): six seizures were reported in 2007, compared with only two confirmed seizures prior to that year. In addition, a clandestine PMA laboratory was dismantled in the Australian State of New South Wales in 2007.

2. Regional cooperation

740. The Pacific Islands Forum continued to bring countries in Oceania together to address drug control issues. Australia and New Zealand remained active in supporting capacity-building initiatives in drug control in the region.

741. At the thirty-eighth Pacific Islands Forum, held in Nuku'alofa in October 2007, participants directed relevant national and regional organizations and regional law enforcement secretariats to strengthen the collection and exchange of law enforcement information to combat national and transnational organized crime, including drug trafficking. The annual meeting of the Regional Security Committee of the Pacific Islands Forum was held in Suva in June 2008.

742. The Micronesia Regional Transnational Crime Unit, an initiative involving Australia, the Micronesia (Federated States of) and the United States, was launched in April 2008. The Unit, located in Pohnpei, Federated States of Micronesia, focuses on issues such as drug trafficking and will allow regional law enforcement authorities to share intelligence. The Unit

is linked to a network of transnational crime units in Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu. Cooperation under that network has led to the seizure of 55 kg of cannabis that were being smuggled between Fiji and Tonga.

743. Law enforcement authorities in Australia and New Zealand provided ongoing support to a programme of sniffer dogs, trained to detect drugs, in Samoa. In an effort to combat the growing drug problem in Samoa, Australia and New Zealand each provided a sniffer dog to their Samoan counterparts in May 2007. In Australia from February to April 2007, Samoan law enforcement authorities were given specialized training on handling sniffer dogs and on safely handling drugs. Sniffer dog teams were trained to search people, baggage and cargo at the international airport, seaport and post office in Apia.

744. The third regional workshop of the Pacific Drug and Alcohol Research Network was held in Suva in July 2008. Participants discussed collaborative research opportunities among health, law enforcement and social research professionals in Oceania and shared experiences in the use of rapid assessment methodologies for collecting data on drug abuse.

3. National legislation, policy and action

745. In May 2008, the Government of Australia endorsed the national strategy on amphetamine-type stimulants, which encompasses a comprehensive approach to addressing problems associated with the abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants and recommends action in the areas of prevention, supply reduction and improved access to treatment. The Government also endorsed a National Corrections Drug Strategy for the period 2006-2009, which provides a framework for coordinated, integrated action to address drug-related issues for adults and juveniles in correctional facilities. The objective of the strategy is to promote and enforce laws, policies and practices that detect and reduce the smuggling of drugs into correctional and community-based facilities and services, prevent and reduce drug abuse among adult and juvenile offenders and increase access to a range of prevention and treatment services for adult and juvenile offenders.

746. In Australia in February 2008, the Parliament of Queensland enacted the Drugs Misuse Amendment Act 2008, which amends the Drugs Misuse Act 1986 and

the Drugs Misuse Regulation 1987. MDMA and PMA were rescheduled, so that the maximum penalty for the unlawful possession and supply of and trafficking in those drugs was increased from 20 to 25 years of imprisonment. Ephedrine was also rescheduled; as a result, the maximum penalty for the unlawful possession and supply or trafficking increased to 20 years of imprisonment from two years of imprisonment for possession and five years for the unlawful supply of or trafficking in that substance. The illicit manufacture and supply of substances such as pseudoephedrine or methamphetamine were included in the 2008 act as new offences, as was the possession of equipment, such as tablet presses, used in the illicit production of drugs.

747. The Australian customs authorities established Project Stridor as a pilot project in 2006 and 2007 to test the benefits of having a multidisciplinary law enforcement team involved in combating the emerging threat of precursor chemicals in Australia. Australian customs officers involved in intelligence, investigations and enforcement activities were brought together to monitor and track the trade in selected commodities through the Internet. The Australian customs authorities cooperated with their counterparts in the United Kingdom and utilized software developed by the customs authorities of the Netherlands. As a result of the exercise, two significant consignments of precursor chemicals were detected.

748. In January 2008, 100 people formerly involved in the illicit cultivation, sale and use of cannabis in Simbu Province, Papua New Guinea, gave public testimony of how they became involved in such illicit activities and promised to assist law enforcement authorities in preventing others from becoming involved in such activities.

4. Cultivation, production, manufacture, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

749. Cannabis continued to be illicitly cultivated throughout Oceania. According to UNODC, Australia is the largest producer of cannabis herb in the region.⁸⁸

750. Fiji reported a significant decrease in the number of cannabis plants that were eradicated during 2007,

when 1,353 plants were eradicated compared with 8,542 plants in 2006.

751. In June 2007, the Australian customs authorities at Perth Airport seized 3.5 kg of heroin from a passenger arriving from Malaysia. In December 2007, Australian customs officers seized heroin from two passengers arriving from Dubai, United Arab Emirates. In February 2008, Australian law enforcement authorities found 28 kg of heroin in a sea cargo consignment that had arrived in Sydney; and in August 2008, customs officers at Melbourne Airport reported having seized 2 kg of heroin from a passenger arriving from Thailand.

752. States in Oceania continue to report seizures of cocaine. Australia reported the seizure of 634 kg of cocaine in the period 2006-2007, compared with 46 kg in the period 2005-2006. An additional 610 kg of cocaine were seized at the Australian border in the period 2006-2007, more than seven times the amount seized in the period 2005-2006 (83 kg). Although parcel post continued to be the preferred method of smuggling cocaine into Australia, a recent increase in smuggling by sea cargo was noted. In March 2008, Australian law enforcement authorities in Sydney reported having seized 250 kg of cocaine concealed in a sea cargo container originating in South-East Asia. In July 2008, law enforcement authorities in Australia seized 150 kg of cocaine hidden in a shipping container that had arrived in Melbourne. In June 2008, Australian law enforcement authorities reported having seized 124 kg of cocaine that had been concealed in a sea cargo consignment originating in Canada.

753. Cannabis continued to be the most abused drug in Oceania. A particularly high incidence of abuse was reported in Australia, Micronesia (Federated States of), New Zealand and Papua New Guinea. According to a recent study carried out by the National Centre for Education and Training on Addiction⁸⁹ of Australia, cannabis is the most commonly abused illicit drug among schoolchildren aged 12-17 years in Australia; 3.4 per cent of all students surveyed regularly abused cannabis. Nonetheless, the annual prevalence of cannabis abuse among the Australian population aged 14 and above has gradually decreased from its high

⁸⁸ *World Drug Report 2008 ...*

⁸⁹ Ann M. Roche and others, *Drug Testing in Schools: Evidence, Impacts and Alternatives* (Canberra, Australian National Council on Drugs, 2008).

level of 17.9 per cent in 1998 to 12.9 per cent in 2001, 11.3 per cent in 2004 and 9.1 per cent in 2007. In contrast, the annual prevalence of cocaine abuse in Australia for the same age group increased from 0.5 per cent in 1993 to 1.6 per cent in 2007,⁹⁰ the highest prevalence recorded for that substance in all surveyed years.

Psychotropic substances

754. In Australia and New Zealand, amphetamine-type stimulants continued to be supplied predominantly by clandestine manufacturers operating in those countries. However, the fact that methamphetamine and tablets made of a combination of MDMA and methamphetamine were also regularly seized at those countries' borders indicates that amphetamine-type stimulants are also being smuggled into Oceania.

755. In 2007, the Australian customs authorities seized 4 kg of amphetamine from a postal shipment originating in Thailand. In August 2007, customs authorities in New Zealand seized 17 kg of methamphetamine. In November 2007, New Zealand law enforcement authorities at the Port of Tauranga reported having seized 32 kg of methamphetamine that had been concealed in a sea cargo consignment originating in China. In January 2008, Australian law enforcement authorities in Sydney reported having seized 28 kg of amphetamine that had been hidden in an air cargo consignment originating in Lithuania. In June 2008, Australian law enforcement authorities reported having seized 66 kg of methamphetamine that had been concealed in a sea cargo consignment originating in Canada.

756. Significant quantities of MDMA continued to be seized in Oceania. In a single seizure in 2007, 4.4 tons of MDMA were seized from a shipping container that had arrived in Melbourne, Australia. That was almost the same as the total amount of MDMA seized worldwide in 2006: 4.5 tons. In June 2008, Australian law enforcement authorities reported having seized 121 kg of MDMA that had been concealed in a sea cargo consignment originating in Canada. In May 2008, customs authorities in Perth, Australia, reported having seized, in a clandestine laboratory,

45 kg of MDMA and equipment for manufacturing tablets. In February 2007, the Australian customs authorities at Brisbane Airport reported having seized 80,000 MDMA tablets in parcels originating in the United Kingdom. Following an investigation that lasted 12 months, law enforcement authorities in Australia uncovered an international drug smuggling syndicate, leading to the arrest of 22 persons.

757. While the incidence of abuse of amphetamines among the Australian population aged 14 and above declined from 3.7 per cent in 1998 to 2.3 per cent in 2007,⁹¹ abuse of MDMA surpassed that of other amphetamine-type stimulants, making it the second most abused substance in Australia and New Zealand. In contrast to the general decline in drug abuse in Australia, the annual prevalence of abuse of MDMA among persons in the same age group increased from 0.9 per cent in 1995 to 3.5 per cent in 2007. The annual prevalence of abuse of MDMA among persons aged 15-45 years in New Zealand was 2.6 per cent.

Precursors

758. States in Oceania continued to report seizures of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, substances frequently used in the illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants. Traffickers attempted to smuggle large amounts of the substances in air and sea cargo and smaller amounts through the postal system. In July 2008, Australian law enforcement authorities seized 850 kg of pseudoephedrine, one of the largest seizures of the substance reported in that State to date. The substance was concealed in three sea cargo consignments that had arrived in Port Botany, Sydney, from Thailand. During 2007, reported seizures of ephedrine tablets totalled 167 kg in Australia and 0.5 kg in New Zealand, and reported seizures of pseudoephedrine totalled 266 kg in Australia and 155 kg in New Zealand.

759. In December 2007, the customs authorities at the New Zealand International Mail Centre reported having seized 14.9 kg of ephedrine concealed in two packages originating in India and 2.1 kg of pseudoephedrine concealed in a parcel originating in Singapore.

760. While most of the pseudoephedrine continued to be smuggled into Australia and New Zealand from East

⁹⁰ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare, 2007 *National Drug Strategy Household Survey: First Results*, Drug Statistics Series No. 20 (Canberra, April 2008).

⁹¹ Ibid.

Asia and South-East Asia, in June 2008 law enforcement authorities at Sydney Airport seized 45 kg of pseudoephedrine that had been concealed in an air cargo consignment originating in Lebanon. In November 2007, law enforcement authorities at the Port of Tauranga, New Zealand, reported having seized 127 kg of pseudoephedrine that had been concealed in a sea cargo consignment originating in China. In December 2007, the Australian customs authorities at Sydney seized 105 kg of pseudoephedrine that had been hidden in an air cargo consignment originating in Cambodia. In December 2007, law enforcement authorities in New Zealand seized 44.8 kg of pseudoephedrine that had been concealed in a sea cargo consignment originating in China.

761. In July 2008, law enforcement authorities in New South Wales, Australia, reported having seized 12.6 kg of pseudoephedrine and equipment that had purportedly been used in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine in a private residence.

Substances not under international control

762. Seizures of substances not under international control continued to be reported in Oceania. In 2007, Australian customs authorities seized 45 consignments of GBL, a precursor of GHB, totalling approximately 68 litres. The primary method of transportation continued to be through the postal system. Sixty per cent of the seized consignments originated in the United Kingdom. In July 2008, Australian customs officers in Sydney intercepted a consignment of GBL that had been shipped without the required import permit. The Australian Federal Police searched the premises of the office of the importer and found 3,000 litres of GBL.