

98. For the past several years, the Board has been warning that States in central Asia have been targeted as a source of, or as transit countries for, *acetic anhydride* being used in the illicit manufacture of heroin in both south and west Asia. Its warning was supported by the seizure of 16 tons of acetic anhydride in Uzbekistan in 1998. The Uzbek authorities have now supplied additional data showing that, between 1996 and 1998, four large shipments of acetic anhydride, totalling over 72 tons, were seized in their country. The countries from which the substance was transported were identified as China, the Republic of Korea and the Russian Federation. All four shipments were destined for Afghanistan and three were being smuggled. Furthermore, the Board has been informed of similar seizures of acetic anhydride in Turkmenistan. That information shows that, in 1998, the Turkmen authorities seized over 34 tons of the substance; in 1999, over 15 tons were seized; and for the first half of 2000, over 22 tons have been seized.

99. For 1999, Colombia has, as in 1998, reported significant seizures of *acetic anhydride*, with nearly 10 tons of the substance seized. Colombia has informed the Board that traffickers in that country are not diverting the substance from international trade, but are stealing shipments in transit from the point of entry into Colombia, en route to a legitimate end-user. Such methods of diversion are being observed with other chemicals as well, as discussed below in the section on amphetamine-type stimulants. In addition, the Colombian authorities dismantled a heroin laboratory in May 2000. While the laboratory was not large, with a production capacity of approximately 20 kilograms per week and 3 litres of acetic anhydride seized, it was the first such seizure reported by the Colombian authorities. Other countries in the region also reported seizures of acetic anhydride for the first time in 1999, with Ecuador seizing 2 litres and Panama 600 litres. With more information being obtained on seizures in the region, the Board hopes to develop a better understanding of the illicit manufacture of heroin in South America. The Board urges other countries in the region to remain on the alert against possible diversions of acetic anhydride for use in the illicit manufacture of heroin.

(b) Stopped shipments in international trade

100. In addition to seizures of *acetic anhydride*, several countries have reported stopping, during 1999 and 2000, shipments of acetic anhydride and the other Table II substances used in the illicit manufacture of heroin. Those stopped shipments are shown in figure XII.

101. Of the 11 shipments that the authorities did not authorize to proceed because of a suspicion regarding their legitimacy, four were shipments of *acetic anhydride*, with Germany stopping two of them and Singapore and the United States one each. The other seven shipments involved *acetone*, *hydrochloric acid*, *methyl ethyl ketone* and *sulphuric acid* and were stopped by France, Greece and the United Kingdom. The Board notes that most of the shipments were stopped by States members of the European Union, a fact which indicates that those countries are now extending their scope of control to Table II substances.

3. Substances used in the illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants

(a) Amphetamine and methamphetamine

(i) Ephedrine and pseudoephedrine

Seizures

102. For 1999, 15 countries reported the seizure of over 18 tons of *ephedrine*, as shown in figure XIII (a). While the seizures have been reported from every region, the largest continue to occur in south and south-east Asia, where the majority of the world supply of ephedrine is manufactured, and where methamphetamine has traditionally been abused. For 1999, China, India and Myanmar seized nearly 18 tons, or 97 per cent of the global seizures of the substance.

Figure XII

Countries that have stopped or not authorized shipments of the chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of heroin, 1999-2000

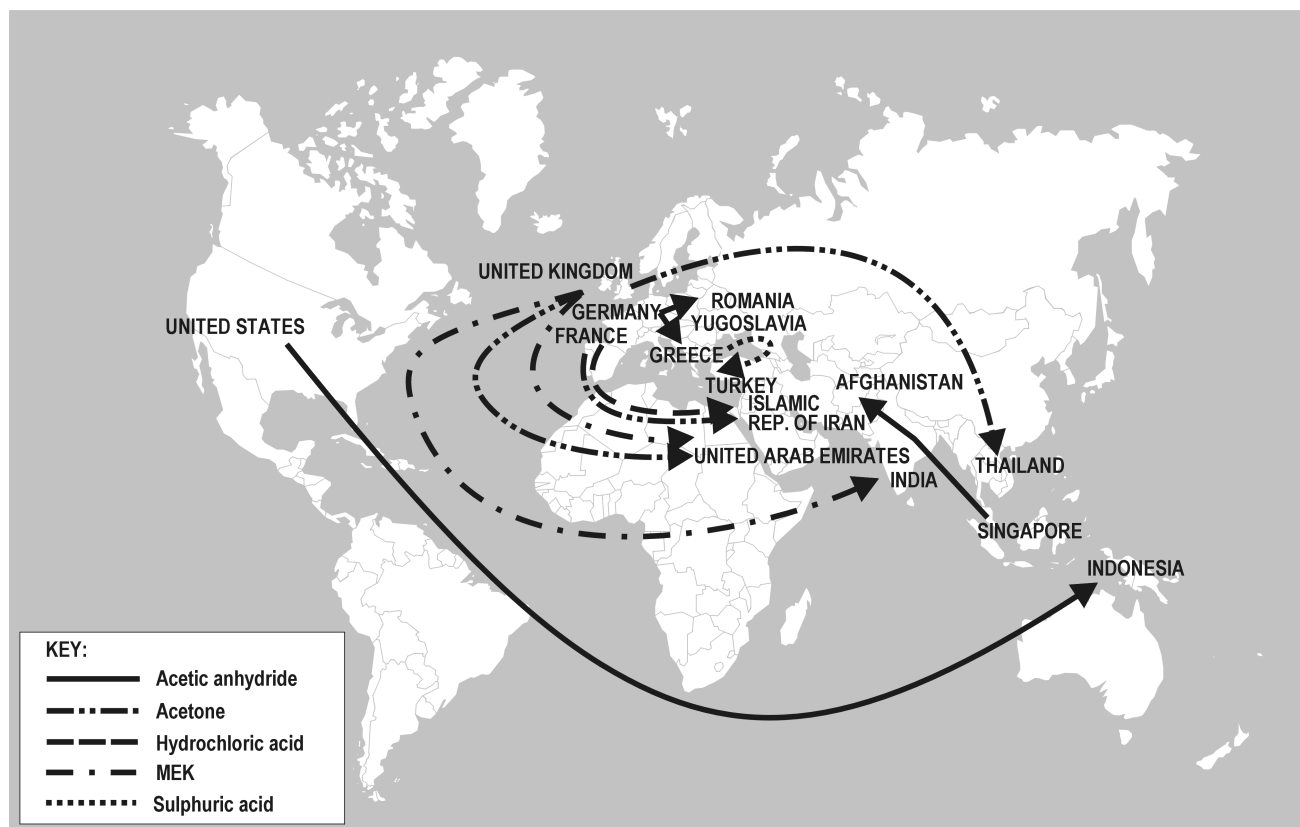
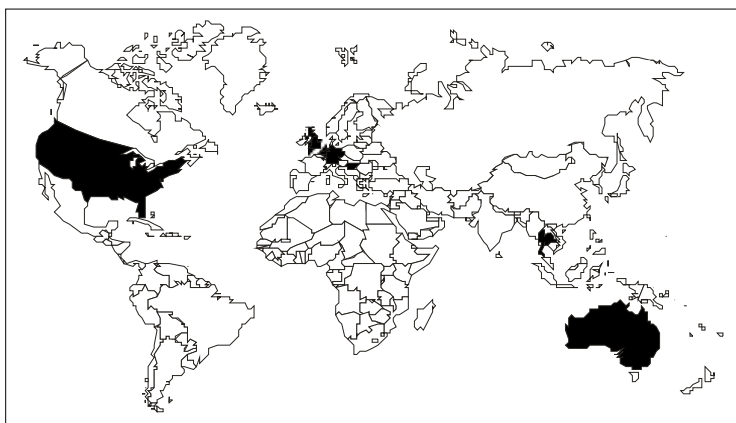


Figure XIII
Seizures of precursors of amphetamine type stimulants in 1999

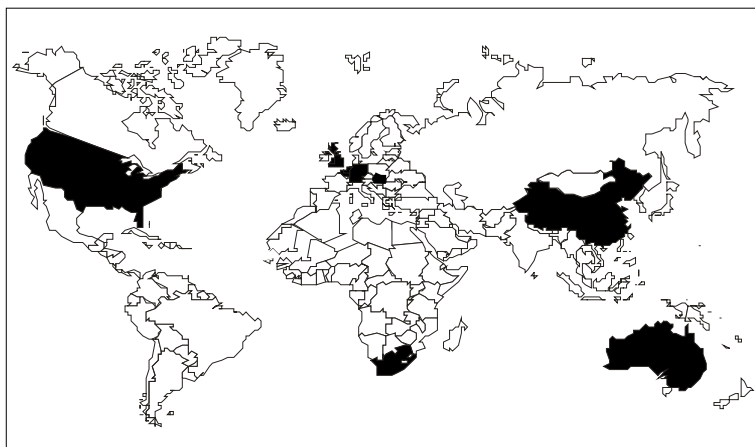
(a) Countries that seized ephedrine and pseudoephedrine



(b) Countries that seized 1-phenyl-2-propanone and phenylacetic acid



(c) Countries that seized precursors used in the illicit manufacture of MDMA



103. The seizures in China, India and Myanmar continue to consist of numerous small amounts of *ephedrine*, diverted from domestic distribution channels and smuggled to the areas where methamphetamine is illicitly manufactured. In recognizing that fact, both China and India made intensive efforts during 1999 and 2000 to prevent diversions from domestic distribution channels. China has issued national directives for the control of the manufacture, sale, use and export of ephedrine, and in India, the manufacture and distribution of ephedrine at the national level are now controlled under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, which provides for up to 10 years of imprisonment for offences.

104. The effects of the controls imposed by China have already been noted in the Russian Federation. The State Customs Committee of the Russian Federation has reported that, between 1998 and 1999, as a direct result of the controls introduced in China, seizures of ephedrine originating in China significantly decreased along the border region between the two countries.

105. The controls at the national level in China and India are expected to result in less ephedrine being available for use in the illicit manufacture of drugs. The Board calls upon those countries, and Myanmar, to further expand their operational activities, through cross-border meetings at the working level, as described in its report for 1999 on the implementation of article 12.²⁹ The utility of such cooperation in the past has been well documented. Moreover, given the methods and routes used by traffickers in the region to smuggle ephedrine, the exchange of information, together with combined operations, remains the most effective tool against trafficking. The Board urges the authorities concerned to step up the exchange of operational information and intelligence on a real-time basis, in order to ensure the increased apprehension of traffickers.

106. Direct contacts have again proved useful with the recent seizure in Myanmar of over 4 million ephedrine tablets (270 kilograms) that had been smuggled into the country from China. The close working relations between the two Governments concerned have enabled follow-up investigations to be initiated in China at both the national and local level to identify the source of the tablets and to take appropriate action to prevent similar diversions in the future. As the first reported case of

the smuggling of ephedrine tablets in the region, it may indicate that, as a result of the new controls, traffickers are finding it difficult to obtain the required raw material. The Board has alerted other Governments in the region to the seizure as a precautionary measure against similar diversions in other countries.

107. For 1999, the United States has again reported large seizures of *ephedrine* and *pseudoephedrine*, with 425 kilograms of ephedrine and over 3 tons of pseudoephedrine being seized. A significant proportion of those seizures were pharmaceutical preparations, with over 200,000 dosage units of ephedrine and about 46 million dosage units of pseudoephedrine being seized. The Board also understands that a major pseudoephedrine trafficking organization was dismantled in the United States in 2000, resulting in the seizure of a further 10 tons of pseudoephedrine, as well as other chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine.

Stopped shipments in international trade

108. In addition to the above-mentioned seizures, the United States, working closely with the competent authorities of China and India, stopped 34 shipments of *ephedrine*, amounting to 67 tons, and 50 shipments of *pseudoephedrine*, amounting to 96 tons, from those countries in 1999. While those entire amounts of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine were not intended for diversion, the standard operating procedures developed between the countries concerned allows for a shipment to be stopped if a suspicion exists that diversion of any portion of a shipment may take place at some point along the distribution chain.

109. The effectiveness of the international controls on the availability of illicit supplies of the substances becomes clearer when the methods that traffickers are being forced to adopt to obtain even small amounts of the substances are studied. The methods currently reported in the United States include the following: the use of private mail firms located outside the United States, from where the consignment can be collected and transported back into the United States; and the use of couriers who purchase tablets in a neighbouring country for smuggling across the border into the United States. There have also been reports of thefts of *pseudoephedrine* by corrupt employees in chemical companies, and of armed robberies at those companies.

110. While much of the diversion of *ephedrine* and *pseudoephedrine* currently appears to be taking place from domestic distribution channels, as mentioned above, traffickers continue to attempt to divert consignments from international trade. Figure XIV shows the stopped shipments and diversion attempts known to the Board for 1999 and 2000. For 1999, excluding the United States data mentioned in paragraph 108 above, five countries have reported stopping seven shipments totalling 2.5 tons of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine. In addition, the Board, working with the Governments concerned, has identified and prevented eight attempts to divert over 57 tons of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine during 1999 and 2000. In particular, the Governments of China and India played a key role in preventing those diversions, which, if effected, would have been sufficient to manufacture nearly 40 tons of methamphetamine.

111. In view of the reported manufacture of methamphetamine in Canada and Mexico, the Board is concerned that Canada has not supplied information for 1999 under article 12, and that Mexico has reported no seizure data. Without information from those two countries, it is not possible to evaluate the regional situation concerning the diversion of *ephedrine* and *pseudoephedrine* and the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine.

112. In Europe, no large-scale manufacture of methamphetamine via the *ephedrine/pseudoephedrine* reduction method has been reported, and seizure data show that illicit manufacture is restricted to personal abuse or used for the supply of small groups. The increase in both the trafficking of methamphetamine and the number of countries seizing ephedrine in the region is of concern. Governments in Europe should take appropriate action to prevent the situation from escalating to the proportions seen elsewhere in the world.

(ii) *1-phenyl-2-propanone and phenylacetic acid*

Seizures

113. Seizures of *1-phenyl-2-propanone (P-2-P)* and *phenylacetic acid* are limited, as reflected in figure XIII (b). In the early to middle 1990s *P-2-P* was the chemical of choice sought by traffickers in Europe for use in the illicit manufacture of amphetamine. Because of increasingly tight controls and monitoring of the substance, however, traffickers began to use

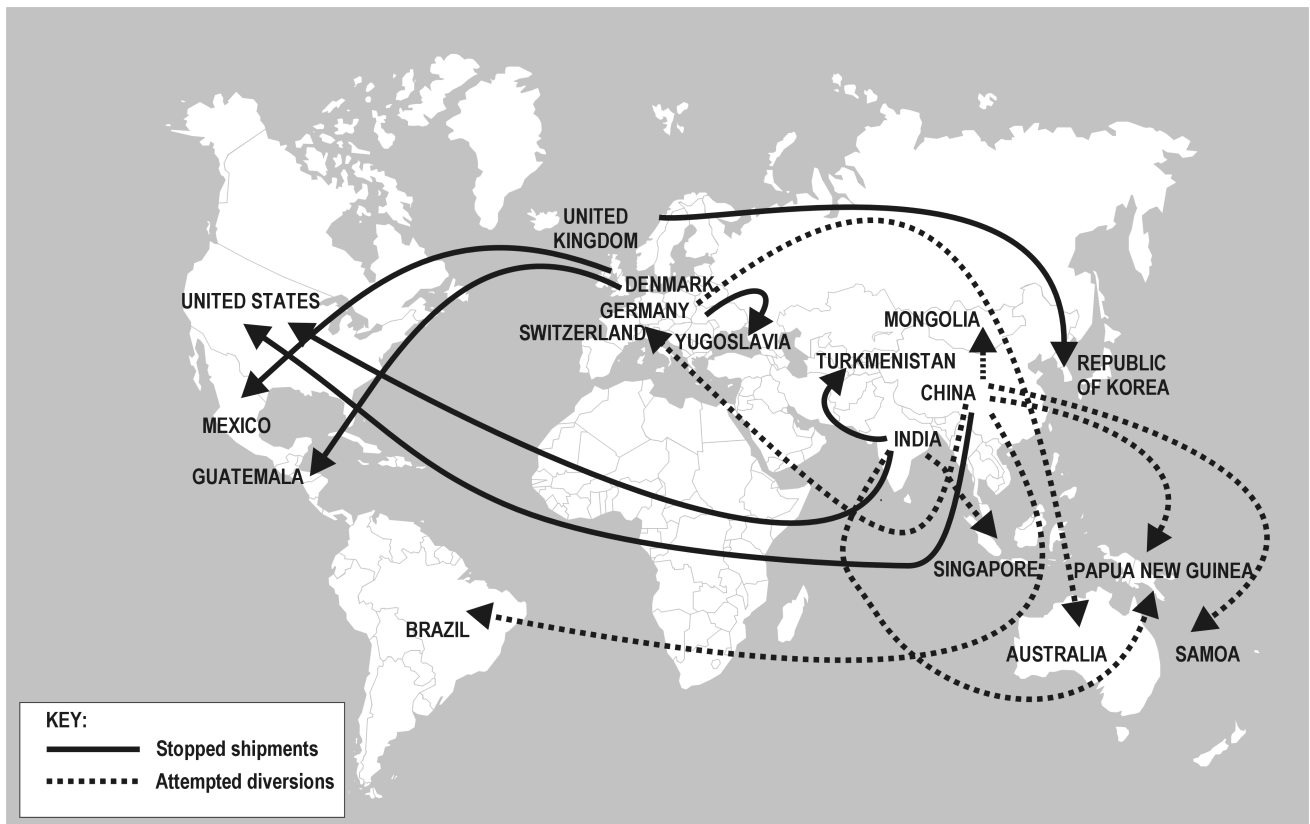
non-controlled substitutes, such as benzaldehyde, in illicit manufacture. Seizures are now increasing slightly in both Europe and the United States. That could be due to the fact that traffickers have found alternative sources of the substance in south and south-east Asia, as indicated when India uncovered a series of diversions of the substance to Europe during the late 1990s, and also that an attempt to divert the substance from China was brought to light in 1999.

114. In Europe, Germany has reported the dismantling, in 1999, of a large scale laboratory using *P-2-P* to manufacture methamphetamine, the first time since 1996 that *P-2-P* had been detected in illicit manufacture in that country.³⁰ The dismantling of the laboratory was the result of an investigation involving the authorities of Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary and India, and was initiated when India discovered suspicious orders of *P-2-P* being placed by companies in Europe, as referred to in the previous paragraph.

115. Hungary reported seizures of *P-2-P* in 1999,³¹ the first time such seizures have been made in that country. A total of 110 kilograms were seized in two consignments, with the substance being smuggled from Romania to Poland for use in the illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants. There are increasing reports of diversions of the precursors of amphetamine-type stimulants through eastern European countries and also reports of the illicit manufacture of amphetamine in Poland. The Board wishes to urge countries in the region to be vigilant in identifying diversions that may be taking place and also in taking action to locate and dismantle any laboratories involved in illicit manufacture of drugs.

116. Of the countries that had previously reported seizures of *phenylacetic acid*, only Australia and the United States have reported seizures for 1999, although Myanmar was new in reporting the seizure of phenylacetic acid on three occasions in 1999 and 2000. In January and April 1999, 20 litres and 8 litres were seized, respectively, and nearly 600 litres were seized in March 2000. While those seizures are small when compared with the amounts of *ephedrine* seized, it will be important to monitor the use of substitute chemicals as controls over *ephedrine* start to restrict the availability of the substance.

Figure XIV
Countries that have stopped shipments and prevented diversions of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, 1999-2000



Stopped shipments in international trade

117. For 1999, the only countries that reported stopping shipments of *P-2-P* were in western Europe. Germany reported stopping five shipments to France, Poland, Romania, Slovenia and Turkey, amounting to nearly 7 tons; Belgium stopped two shipments to Germany and Romania, amounting to nearly 1 ton; and Romania stopped a shipment of 10 tons to Yugoslavia.

118. Other developments concerning *P-2-P* should be noted. The Government of China has reported that the substance is increasingly being used in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine in that country. While the Government has not previously reported seizures of *P-2-P*, the country was, during 1999 and 2000, successful in dismantling large clandestine laboratories for the manufacture of methamphetamine, with 1.5 tons of methamphetamine being seized in a single laboratory in 1999. More recently, over 16 tons of methamphetamine have been seized in clandestine laboratories involving front companies manufacturing the substance. From preliminary reports, it appears that the clandestine laboratories have been using *P-2-P*, as opposed to ephedrine, in the manufacturing process.

119. A further consideration is that Ecuador has reported large seizures of a non-controlled chemical, formic acid, which can be used with *P-2-P* to manufacture methamphetamine. While no reports of the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine have been received from Ecuador, seizures of acetic acid and *acetic anhydride*, which can be used in the illicit manufacture of amphetamine and methamphetamine, as well as seizures of the bulking and binding agents and lubricants used in tableting processes, have been reported. The Board is requesting additional details on those seizures to determine whether such illicit manufacture is actually taking place.

(iii) Norephedrine

Seizures

120. For 1999, only the United States has reported seizing *norephedrine*. The seizure of 1 million dosage units containing 17 kilograms of the substance shows that the traffickers may not be able to obtain the raw material and are turning to pharmaceutical preparations, as already noted, containing both *ephedrine* and *pseudoephedrine*.

Stopped shipments in international trade

121. No diversions of the substance from international trade were reported, although an attempted diversion from Germany to Mexico was detected and stopped in 1999 and 2000. The Board trusts that with the inclusion of *norephedrine* in Table I of the 1988 Convention (see chapter II above), Governments will exercise the same caution with regard to shipments of the substance, in particular sending, and responding to, pre-export notifications, as is currently applied to *ephedrine* and *pseudoephedrine*.

(b) MDMA and its analogues*Seizures*

122. Whereas seizures of MDMA and its analogues reached record amounts in 1999, seizures of the controlled precursors (*isosafrole*, *3,4-methylenedioxyphenyl-2-propanone* (*3,4-MDP-2-P*), *piperonal* and *safrole*) used in the illicit manufacture of those drugs have remained small in comparison. The manufacturing, trading and consumer countries should make an intensive effort to identify the methods and routes used by traffickers to obtain those chemicals, and should develop appropriate methods to stop the diversions. That holds true in particular for *3,4-MDP-2-P*, which appears to be emerging as the chemical of choice sought by traffickers in the illicit manufacture of MDMA.

123. For 1999, the largest seizures were reported for *3,4-MDP-2-P* (7 tons), followed by *piperonal* (4 tons). Only 84 kilograms of *isosafrole* and 20 kilograms of *safrole*, including *safrole* in the form of *sassafras* oil, were seized. The countries reporting seizures for 1999 are shown in figure XIII (c).

124. The seizure by the Slovak authorities of 5,800 litres of *3,4-MDP-2-P* is the largest ever reported to the Board. The substance had been smuggled through Romania before being seized in Slovakia, and it has not been possible to determine whether it was intended for use in illicit manufacture in Slovakia or for smuggling to laboratories elsewhere in Europe.

125. More recently, in June 2000, the authorities in Belgium discovered 2,200 litres of *3,4-MDP-2-P* concealed in a cargo of detergent. The substance had been smuggled from China, and investigations have shown that the traffickers involved had previously used the same method and route.

126. In addition to those large seizures of 3,4-MDP-2-P, the authorities in the Netherlands have made five seizures totalling 1 kilogram, which had been sent by post from Hong Kong SAR of China.

Stopped shipments in international trade

127. During 1999 and 2000, Governments have also reported stopping shipments of the MDMA precursors. Large shipments of 3,4-MDP-2-P (16 tons), *piperonal* (63 tons) and *safrole* (17 tons) were stopped. Figure XV shows the countries that stopped, or refused to authorize, the shipments.

128. The shipments traced in figure XV show that both the exporting and importing countries are exercising control over the international trade in MDMA precursors. However, the above-mentioned interception of shipments of smuggled substances indicates that the precursors are being diverted, but that the actual points of diversion, possibly from domestic distribution channels, still need to be identified. The Board urges all countries to identify and monitor the operators involved in either the manufacture or distribution of the substances, in order to determine how and from where the precursors used in the illicit manufacture of MDMA are being obtained.

129. Finally, in previous years the Board has warned that the illicit manufacture of MDMA may spread from Europe to other regions of the world. In 1999, reports were received of the dismantling of an MDMA laboratory in Colombia and the seizure of 30,000 tablets. Furthermore, the United States has reported dismantling, during 1999, 14 laboratories manufacturing MDMA or its analogues, which is twice the number of laboratories manufacturing the substance that were dismantled in 1997 and 1998. Given the large amounts of MDMA currently being smuggled into the United States from Europe, illicit manufacture may continue to increase in the country if the traffickers decide to move their operations closer to the user market in North America.

Figure XV
Countries that have stopped or not authorized shipments of MDMA precursors, 1999-2000

