

D. Europe

Major developments

478. Cannabis continues to be trafficked throughout Europe. Cannabis herb is increasingly being cultivated locally, particularly in member States of the European Union. It is estimated that more than 200 tons of cocaine are smuggled into Europe every year, entering the region mainly via Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain and the United Kingdom. After three successive years of bumper harvests of opium poppy in Afghanistan, heroin trafficking has regained some momentum in Europe. There continues to be a significant illicit manufacture and abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants, in particular MDMA (Ecstasy) and amphetamines, in the region.

479. The abuse of cannabis has shown an upward trend in almost all countries in Europe over the past 10 years. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Europe currently accounts for an estimated 20 per cent of all cannabis abuse in the world. The number of people in Europe seeking treatment for cannabis abuse has also increased. According to the European Monitoring Centre on Drugs and Drug Addiction, 12 per cent of all drug abusers in treatment and 25 per cent of new drug abusers in treatment in member States of the European Union list cannabis as the primary drug of abuse. Cannabis has the highest prevalence figure in most countries in the region. However, the public debate over cannabis use is dominated more by its alleged potential benefits than by its risks. The above-mentioned upward trend in cannabis use seems to be related to the efforts by some to promote the notion that cannabis use is not harmful.

480. Whereas the abuse of heroin is stable or declining in most countries in Western Europe, the abuse of heroin in countries in Eastern Europe and in member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) continues to increase. The abuse of heroin has overtaken the abuse of "kompot" (concentrate of poppy straw) in the Russian Federation, which is becoming the largest heroin market in Europe.

481. Although methamphetamine accounts for the bulk of the amphetamine-type stimulants manufactured in the world, in Europe the clandestine manufacture of methamphetamine and its abuse appear to be limited to a few countries only. While the levels of abuse in

Western Europe appears to have stabilized, Eastern Europe is becoming increasingly important in terms of the manufacture, as well as the abuse potential, of amphetamines and MDMA (Ecstasy), which are rapidly becoming popular drugs of choice. In the Czech Republic and Poland, as well as the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), the incidence of the clandestine manufacture of amphetamines and MDMA (Ecstasy) has increased, as the number of detected illicit manufacturing factories and laboratories and the quantity of drugs seized continue to grow; such drugs are increasingly being manufactured on a large scale. Increased domestic demand has resulted in a shift towards illicit manufacture of synthetic drugs, while local illicit manufacture has fuelled the spread of their abuse in the region.

482. The use of contaminated injection equipment among drug users continues to fuel the spread of HIV/AIDS; the Baltic States and the CIS member States have the highest growth rate of HIV cases among injecting drug abusers. About 80-90 per cent of new HIV cases in those countries are the result of injecting drug abuse, and the prevalence of injecting drug abuse among the adult population (persons 15-64 years old) is estimated to be as high as 2.5 per cent in Estonia, 2 per cent in the Russian Federation and 1.2 per cent in Ukraine. Furthermore, the observed spread of injecting drug abuse among sex workers and in prisons has exacerbated the situation, keeping the growth rate of registered HIV cases high or climbing. In 2003, 4 per cent of the prison population in the Russian Federation (or 37,240 persons) were infected with HIV: 95 per cent of the persons infected were injecting drug abusers. The proportion of the prison population infected with HIV was 3 per cent in the Republic of Moldova, 2 per cent in Belarus and 1 per cent in Ukraine.

483. The number of member States of the European Union increased from 15 to 25 on 1 May 2004; that development has resulted in the removal of border controls at many more borders of European Union member States. Several member States of the European Union are therefore in the process of reorganizing their customs services and significantly reducing their staff. The Board emphasizes that such adjustments should not have any adverse impact on the control of illicit drugs and precursors and the capacity to act against drug trafficking. Similarly, in many of the States that acceded to the European Union in 2004, controls over

chemicals used in the illicit manufacture of drugs have been stricter than those required by European Commission regulations. The Board is concerned that the enlargement of the European Union membership may lead to a weakening of existing import or export controls throughout Europe. The Board calls on Governments of European countries to continue to enforce provisions relating to international trade in controlled substances.

484. Countries along the Balkan route continue to be vulnerable to illicit crop cultivation, the illicit production or manufacture of and transit trafficking in cannabis, heroin and synthetic drugs and the spread of organized crime, as a result of the continued unstable security situation, poor coordination of law enforcement efforts, lack of resources and widespread corruption in the public sector. The northern and southern branches of the Balkan route continue to supply up to 80 per cent of the heroin distributed in Europe.

485. The availability of treatment for drug addicts has increased steadily over the past few years, particularly in the member States of the European Union. Drug abuse treatment has also become more diverse: whereas, in the past, such treatment was largely for opiate dependence, more individuals are now seeking treatment for the abuse of other substances, such as cannabis and cocaine. In countries with economies in transition, however, drug abuse treatment services continue to face the consequences of restructuring and may, as a result, have to reduce their services or compete with private treatment providers, to the detriment of the increasing number of drug abusers seeking treatment. The Board urges Governments to allocate adequate resources and expand treatment services for drug addicts.

486. The Board welcomes the publication of initial results from one of the largest international studies ever to be carried out on drug abuse. The quadrennial European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD), which has been carried out under the auspices of the Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe since 1995 in some 30 European countries, is a cross-sectional survey undertaken in the school environment, covering more than 90,000 middle-school and secondary-school students aged 15-16. The results provide valuable information to policy makers about

the development attitudes and opinions regarding drugs over time.

Treaty adherence

487. Of the 44 States in Europe, 43 are parties to the 1961 Convention and the 1971 Convention and 41 States and the European Community are parties to the 1988 Convention.

488. Andorra remains the only State in Europe that is not a party to the 1961 Convention or the 1971 Convention. The Board invites Andorra to accede to both conventions as soon as possible.

489. The Board strongly encourages the Holy See, Liechtenstein and Switzerland to become parties to the 1988 Convention and reiterates that the 1988 Convention is the basis for effectively addressing illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and other related issues such as money-laundering.

Regional cooperation

490. In March 2004, the European Parliament approved the proposal for a Council of the European Union framework decision laying down minimum provisions on the constituent elements of criminal acts and penalties in the field of illicit drug trafficking. In accordance with that decision, member States of the European Union must take the necessary measures to ensure that serious trafficking offences are punishable by effective, proportionate and dissuasive criminal penalties, ranging from 1 to 10 years of imprisonment. The decision further requires member States to take the necessary measures to make incitement to commit, aiding and abetting or attempting illicit drug trafficking a criminal offence. The Board notes that possession and related offences of small quantities of drugs for "personal use" are excluded from the scope of the decision.

491. In July 2004, the Council of the European Union adopted a resolution on cannabis. The resolution calls for a variety of measures to be undertaken by member States of the European Union to address the problems of abuse of and trafficking in that substance. The resolution also calls for further research on cannabis and invites member States of the European Union to encourage new and ongoing research activities

involving cannabis, especially regarding its dependency and health risks. Furthermore, in its resolution, the Council encourages member States of the European Union, in accordance with their national legislation, to consider taking measures against Internet sites providing information on cannabis cultivation and promoting the abuse of cannabis.

492. Under the European Commission framework programme for police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters the European Conference on Money Laundering was held in Santander, Spain, from 26 to 29 April 2004. Organized by the Government of Spain, the event brought together customs and police service representatives from all member States of the European Union, as well as the European Commission, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, FATF, Interpol, the European Police Office (Europol) and the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction. Participants explored how illicit drug demand and market data could contribute to a better understanding of the magnitude of the phenomenon of money-laundering. They also exchanged views on international intelligence-sharing, implementing legal frameworks and dealing with methods used by those engaged in money-laundering.

493. Regional cooperation remains strong with the eastward expansion of the European Union; countries in Southern Europe and CIS member States are becoming increasingly open to regional partnerships, especially in the areas of information exchange, law enforcement and supply and demand reduction. In 2004, the Russian Federation joined Operation Purple, which provides for international control over shipments of potassium permanganate, and Serbia and Montenegro joined Operation Topaz, which facilitates cross-border tracking of consignments of acetic anhydride. Ukraine participates in Project Prism and Operation Purple and takes part in Operation Topaz as an observer; furthermore, Ukraine continues to participate actively in the activities of the Southeast European Cooperative Initiative and other regional operations, such as the second phase of Operation Containment, Operation Redoubt and Operation Channel. The Board notes the openness to international cooperation of the Government of Ukraine and, given the importance of establishing adequate controls over acetic anhydride, urges Ukraine to become a full participant in Operation Topaz.

494. The drug control authorities of the new member States of the European Union have continued their cooperation within the framework of the Phare programme (which will be phased out by 2006 for eight of the new European Union member States), workshops of the Council of Europe, and projects of the European Union, FATF and Interpol. Joint efforts have been undertaken in such areas as implementing measures against the illicit drug supply and money-laundering, emphasizing drug abuse prevention and treatment components of national strategies and integrating drug control activities of the national competent authorities of the new member States of the European Union into the framework of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction.

495. The Russian Federation continues to make efforts to contain the threat of opiate trafficking following another massive harvest of opium in Afghanistan. The competent authorities of the Russian Federation, jointly with the other CIS member States in the Collective Security Treaty Organization and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, undertook measures to disrupt international drug trafficking, including by using the technique of controlled delivery; those efforts resulted in significant drug seizures. Operation Channel, conducted in September 2004 by the competent authorities of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, the Russian Federation and Tajikistan within the framework of the Collective Security Treaty Organization, effectively improved interdiction capabilities and communication and coordination arrangements among participating law enforcement agencies. Particular attention was paid to the links between drug production and trafficking, involvement of banks in money-laundering schemes, financing of terrorist activities and the need to step up drug control operations.

496. The Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, within the framework of activities of the GUUAM States (Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova, Ukraine and Uzbekistan), have continued to strengthen their cooperation in pursuing the common objectives of strengthening regional security and combating international drug trafficking, money-laundering and international terrorism. The activities of the GUUAM States are aimed at enhancing the ability of CIS member States in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia to respond effectively to new challenges and threats. The Board notes that the GUUAM States

are establishing a virtual law enforcement centre and an inter-State information analysis system that will foster the exchange of data and the coordination of border and customs control measures for tackling illicit drug trafficking.

National legislation, policy and action

497. In May 2004, the Government of the Russian Federation adopted a decree amending the criminal code and administrative regulations, which, inter alia, establish average single doses of narcotic drugs and psychoactive substances for the purpose of defining penalties for possession for personal use of and trafficking in illicit drugs. The decree stipulates that possession of illicit substances and related offences involving amounts of less than 10 average single doses will no longer be considered a criminal violation; instead it will be treated as an administrative infraction. The amendments will contribute to placing the emphasis of law enforcement efforts on pursuing drug traffickers rather than on drug abusers, while promoting the use of medical and social intervention programmes to mitigate the negative consequences of drug abuse. The Board notes that the amendments will allow heavier penalties to be imposed for trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, which is appropriate in view of the fact that there has been a significant increase in illicit drug trafficking in the Russian Federation.

498. In an effort to further align national legislation with the provisions of the international drug control treaties, the Government of the Russian Federation adopted in September 2004 a decree addressing the problem of domestic production of plant-based narcotics. The new decree makes it illegal to cultivate any plants containing narcotics, including cannabis, coca bush, all varieties of opium poppy, khat, psilocybin (hallucinogenic mushroom) and mescaline (peyote).

499. In France, a new government plan against illicit drugs, tobacco and alcohol for the period 2004-2008 was launched in July 2004 to ensure more homogeneous application of the law of 31 December 1970 on measures against drug abuse and drug trafficking, which makes possession of illicit drugs for any purposes a criminal offence. The Board notes that the Government of France decided against a change in the law itself, as that might have given the wrong

signal to the population regarding the danger of drugs, leading to a further increase in drug abuse. The new policy foresees the introduction of sanctions that are to have a deterrent effect, thereby reducing recidivism.

500. In Switzerland, the Parliament rejected a draft drug bill in June 2004 that, inter alia, would have led to the decriminalization of cannabis possession and related offences.

501. Several countries in Europe have taken measures aimed at reducing the demand for cannabis. In Switzerland, an action plan for the period 2004-2007 was launched to reduce cannabis abuse, particularly among young people, and to direct heavy cannabis abusers to counselling and treatment centres; each year, 1 million Swiss francs will be allocated to the action plan, which will make use of primary prevention measures, information campaigns and counselling services for adolescents and young adults, as well as their parents. In September 2004, "Realize it", a project to reduce cannabis abuse and cannabis dependence, was launched jointly by the Governments of Germany and Switzerland. The project involves using a 10-week counselling session to motivate young people who are regular or heavy cannabis abusers to reduce the amount of cannabis that they abuse or to stop abusing the drug altogether. In Germany, three drug counselling centres in cities close to the Swiss border are participating in the project. The Board welcomes the above-mentioned initiatives in the area of cannabis abuse prevention. The Board encourages the Government of the Netherlands to conclude its action plan against cannabis abuse, which is currently being developed.

502. In Ireland, the second phase of the National Drug Awareness Campaign was launched in January 2004. The campaign is an important component of the National Drugs Strategy of Ireland, which involves making a concerted effort in the areas of supply reduction, prevention, treatment and research in order to achieve the overall aim of reducing significantly the harm caused to individuals and society. One of the keys to achieving the overall aim of the campaign is to promote throughout society greater awareness, understanding and clarity about the dangers of drug abuse.

503. For the past two years, countries in Central and Eastern Europe have been actively strengthening their legislative base and action plans for addressing illicit

drug abuse and trafficking. The Government of the Czech Republic has presented its new national drug control strategy for the period 2005-2009, aimed at shifting the focus of competent authorities and institution in the field of drug control from supply reduction to the prevention and treatment of drug abuse, in particular among adolescents. The Governments of Latvia and Lithuania have continued to implement their new drug control strategies for the period 2004-2008, which have a common objective: promoting drug abuse prevention initiatives involving local authorities and civil society. In February 2004, the Parliament of Slovenia approved a new national drug control programme for the period 2004-2009, which envisages further strengthening of programmes for the reduction of illicit drug demand and supply, the development of drug control information systems, the coordination of prevention, evaluation and research programmes at the interministerial level and the promotion of international cooperation.

504. The restructuring of the competent drug control authorities of the Russian Federation continues. In July 2004, the State Committee of the Russian Federation on Narcotics and Psychotropics Control (Gosnarkokontrol), established in March 2003, was transformed into the Federal Drug Control Service and given a broad mandate to fight illicit drug trafficking, control the licit movement of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and promote inter-agency cooperation in the area of drug abuse prevention. The Board notes, however, that the legislative and operational aspects of the national drug control system need to be strengthened further to ensure co-operation among the newly structured competent authorities and government institutions involved in drug control.

505. Governments of the CIS member States continued strengthening their capacity to counter money-laundering by improving national legislative bases and institutional structures. An agreement was reached in October 2004 to create an FATF-type regional body in Moscow that would coordinate the efforts of CIS member States to combat money-laundering and financial crime. The Board notes that, in Belarus, following a revision of the relevant legislation, a financial investigation unit which is to facilitate cooperation with international agencies, as well as regional and bilateral partners, became operational.

506. In March 2004, the Government of Italy set up a national department for drug control policy in the Office of the Prime Minister to coordinate initiatives to deal with drug problems and to develop a three-year national drug control action plan.

507. In Spain, Royal Decree No. 1555/2004 was adopted in June 2004, making the Plan Nacional Sobre Drogas a part of the Ministry of Health and Consumer Affairs. Previously, the National Plan on Drugs had been an organizational entity of the Ministry of the Interior.

508. The Netherlands continues to implement an action plan against MDMA (Ecstasy). In March 2004, a progress report indicated that the implementation of the action plan, which is to run until 2006, had led to an increase in the quantity of raw materials seized and in the number of suspects detained. Furthermore, the formation of specialized investigative teams yielded positive results, such as the dismantling of an internationally drug trafficking network in December 2003.

509. According to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, the availability of drug substitution treatment in 15 European Union member States and Norway has increased by 34 per cent over the last five years. Some 400,000 people currently receive such treatment. Over 60 per cent of the treatment facilities are in France, Italy and Spain. The biggest increase in the availability of drug addiction treatment has been in countries that initially had few facilities for such treatment. The Board urges Governments of member States of the European Union to assess the impact of such programmes on the illicit market for and the abuse of heroin.

510. The establishment of rooms for drug injection, consumption and/or inhalation or other facilities where illicit drugs are administered continues to be a contentious issue, particularly in the member States of the European Union. While it is sometimes argued that drug injection rooms have some positive effects, such as establishing contact between social services and the hard-to-reach population of injecting drug abusers, the provision of such facilities raises legal and ethical issues. Drug injection rooms are legal facilities for the purpose of facilitating behaviour that is both illegal and damaging. The drugs used in those facilities come from the illicit market. The Board notes that the Governments of many European countries with drug

control policies as diverse as those of Denmark and Portugal have opted against the establishment of drug injection rooms, and the Board strongly supports their decisions. The Board also reiterates that drug injection rooms are against the central principle embodied in the international drug control treaties, namely that the use of drugs should be limited to medical and scientific purposes only.

511. The Board notes with concern that cannabis seeds and drug abuse paraphernalia continue to be sold over the Internet, often through advertisements specifically targeting young people. Moreover, drug abuse is presented as a desirable activity in magazines, other printed matter and on Internet sites. The Board notes that article 3, paragraph 1 (c) (iii), of the 1988 Convention requires States parties to establish as a criminal offence, inter alia, public incitement or inducement of others to engage in illicit drug use or drug trafficking. The Board appeals to Governments to apply that provision of the 1988 Convention, especially when minors are involved.

Cultivation, production, trafficking and abuse

Narcotic drugs

512. Albania and other countries in the area of the Balkans (Bulgaria, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) as well as the Russian Federation and Slovenia, remain the main suppliers of cannabis in Eastern Europe. In 2002, a total of 35 tons of cannabis were seized in Eastern Europe and an additional 30 tons were seized in the Russian Federation. Cannabis continues to be cultivated in Western Europe, mainly in the Netherlands and, to a lesser extent, in its neighbouring countries as well as in Switzerland. The Board appreciates the action of Switzerland against the illicit cultivation of cannabis, such as Operation Indoor, which resulted in the dismantling of 60 cannabis cultivation sites and the closure of 70 hemp shops in Switzerland; in addition, 4.2 tons of cannabis were seized.

513. Morocco remains a major source of cannabis resin abused in Western Europe. Cannabis resin from Morocco is smuggled into Spain in freight or other motor vehicles by ferry or on small boats. The drug is then transported by land to Belgium, France, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom. The Russian

Federation continues to be an important supplier of cannabis resin, reporting in 2002 the largest amount of cannabis resin seized in Eastern Europe—a total of over 1.4 tons. A total of over 2 tons of cannabis resin were seized in Eastern Europe in 2002.

514. Cannabis is the most widely abused illicit drug in Europe (and in all other regions). In Europe, an estimated 28.8 million people, or 5.3 per cent of the total population, abused cannabis during the last 12 months. Cannabis abuse continued to increase in 2003 and 2004 in Eastern Europe, where 3.6 per cent of the adult population, or about 8.5 million people, reportedly abuse cannabis. In the Czech Republic, the average annual prevalence rate for cannabis abuse is 11 per cent. In Eastern Europe, the average annual prevalence rate for cannabis abuse among persons 15-16 years old has doubled in the last decade.

515. Portugal and Spain continue to be used as main points of entry for cocaine consignments from South America, accounting for 5 per cent of the cocaine seized worldwide. There was an increase in the total amount of cocaine seized in some Western European countries (Belgium, France and Italy); that figure also increased in some Eastern European countries, albeit from a lower level. In Estonia, 30 kg of cocaine were seized in 2003, the largest figure ever recorded in that country.

516. In Europe, cocaine abuse has increased since 1998, with a tendency towards stabilization. In Eastern Europe, cocaine abuse is still at a level well below that of Western Europe. Cocaine abuse appears to be increasing in the United Kingdom and, to a lesser extent, in Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain and Switzerland. Data show that 1-9 per cent of persons aged 15 to 34 have abused cocaine in their lifetime.

517. The illicit cultivation of opium poppy is at a low level in countries in Central and Eastern Europe and in the CIS member States; however, reported seizures of opiates indicate that the trafficking volume is high. In 2002, almost 2.5 tons of opium were seized in Eastern Europe. A total of 1,505 kg of opium were seized in the Republic of Moldova, 445 kg in the Russian Federation, 261 kg in Lithuania and 170 kg in Estonia. Over 2.7 tons of heroin and morphine were seized in Eastern Europe in 2002; 844 kg of heroin and morphine were seized in the Russian Federation.

518. After a recent decline, heroin seizures have increased again in Europe. Some 90 per cent of the opiates destined for illicit drug markets in Europe are estimated to have come from Afghanistan. Examination of the European seizures indicates that the so-called southern branch of the Balkan route, leading to Italy via Greece, Albania or the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, decreased in importance in 2003. The traditional northern branch of the Balkan route, a land route that passes through Turkey, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Austria, is playing a more significant role than it did in 2002. Partly as a result of improved law enforcement measures, the total volume of heroin seized is reported to have increased in most countries on the traditional route; the total quantity of heroin seized in Bosnia and Herzegovina doubled in 2003 and an increase in heroin trafficking has been noted in Croatia. The United Kingdom, Italy and the Netherlands (in that order) account for most of the heroin seized in Europe. In February 2004, some 113 kg of heroin were seized in Austria, the largest heroin seizure ever made in that country. Ferry connections between Albania and Italy are increasingly being used for smuggling heroin. Albania and the Kosovo area (in Serbia and Montenegro) are increasingly being used for storing and trans-shipping heroin destined for member States of the European Union.

519. In addition to heroin, amphetamines, MDMA (Ecstasy) and LSD are becoming more popular as drugs of choice in some countries in Central and Eastern Europe. Synthetic drugs are increasingly being illicitly manufactured locally, as evidenced by the fact that the number of detected illicit drug laboratories has continued to grow. In the Czech Republic, 32 illicit drug manufacturing laboratories were dismantled in 2003 and over 35,000 MDMA (Ecstasy) tablets and 7,300 doses of methamphetamine were seized. Poland continues to be a major supplier of amphetamines and MDMA (Ecstasy), mostly due to increased domestic demand. Seizures indicate that synthetic drugs are being illicitly manufactured on a large scale in Bulgaria, and that that country is becoming a major source of amphetamines, MDMA (Ecstasy) and precursors in Europe, having seized 350 kg of amphetamines and 1.5 tons of precursors in 2003. There has been a similar increase in the illicit manufacture of synthetic drugs in the Baltic States, where many clandestine laboratories for large-scale

illicit drug manufacture were dismantled and record quantities of illicit drugs were seized in 2003. There has also been a shift in the amounts of the various drugs seized: the total volume of seizures of locally manufactured amphetamines and MDMA (Ecstasy) is overtaking that of heroin and other opiates in Estonia and Lithuania.

520. Russian border guards stationed on the 800-mile border between Afghanistan and Tajikistan have continued to be effective in fighting illicit drug trafficking, as they seized 5.3 tons of illicit drugs, including 2.7 tons of heroin, in 2003. Although that figure is only a fraction of the total amount being smuggled, it represents an increase of 33 per cent over the figure for 2002. According to the Russian Federal Drug Control Service, over 70 per cent of the opiates seized on the Russian border and inside the country originate in Afghanistan.

521. According to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, some 4 million people in Europe abuse opiates; two thirds of those people are in countries in Eastern Europe, primarily in the Russia Federation where the level of opiate abuse is very high. According to official estimates, there are over 1 million heroin abusers in the Russian Federation; thus, that country has become the largest heroin market in Europe. In Western Europe the country with the highest level of opiate abuse is Luxembourg, followed by Portugal, the United Kingdom, Italy and Switzerland. Whereas heroin abuse is stable or declining in Western Europe, it has been increasing in most countries in Eastern Europe.

522. The ongoing illicit production of poppy straw in the Russian Federation, supplemented by illicit imports, the availability of heroin of lower purity and a fivefold drop in prices in recent years may be some of the causes of the sudden increase in the abuse of opiates in that country.

523. The Board is concerned about a recently revealed fact: fentanyl, a synthetic opioid, has been illicitly manufactured in Ukraine. The fentanyl from Ukraine was reportedly illicitly supplied to the Baltic States and to Scandinavian countries. Given the potency of that substance and the immediate proximity of large consumer markets, the Board requests the Government of Ukraine to monitor the situation closely and to take the necessary measures to eliminate the illicit manufacture of fentanyl.

Psychotropic substances

524. The Netherlands continues to be the country most frequently reported by other countries as being the main source of MDMA (Ecstasy) and amphetamine; however, the frequency of those reports is declining and the manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants is increasingly being reported in Central and Eastern Europe. Estonia and Poland have been identified as the main sources of amphetamines and MDMA (Ecstasy). The Polish law enforcement authorities report the dismantling of an average of 10 clandestine amphetamine laboratories every year; however, 8 such laboratories were dismantled already in the first quarter of 2004. In Ukraine, several well-equipped clandestine laboratories, manufacturing amphetamine-type stimulants and phencyclidine, a psychotropic hallucinogen, have been detected and dismantled in recent months. The fact that nine laboratories for the small-scale manufacture of GHB were discovered in Germany in 2003 indicates the increasing importance of that substance for the illicit drug market in that country.

525. Polish amphetamine is smuggled into Germany, Norway, Sweden and Ukraine, as well as the Baltic States, while an estimated 65 per cent of illicitly manufactured amphetamine is abused locally. Similarly, in most countries in Central and Eastern Europe and CIS member States, the abuse of stimulants has increased. Stimulants are becoming the most common drug of abuse among registered first-time drug abusers.

526. The abuse of both MDMA (Ecstasy) and amphetamine appears to have stabilized in most European countries. The level of abuse of MDMA (Ecstasy) in European countries is among the highest in the world, second only to the level in Australia. In Europe, the level of abuse of MDMA (Ecstasy) is reportedly highest in Ireland, followed by the Czech Republic, the United Kingdom and Spain. The highest level of amphetamine abuse in Europe is reportedly in the following European Union member States (listed in decreasing order): United Kingdom, Ireland, Denmark, Spain, Czech Republic, Estonia and Poland. In Sweden, one of the first countries in Europe to be seriously affected by amphetamine abuse, a survey undertaken among military conscripts suggested that in 2003, amphetamine abuse in that subpopulation had reached its lowest level since 1996.

527. Psychotropic substances from the Balkan countries, as well as the Netherlands and Poland,

continue to be smuggled into Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. Furthermore, flunitrazepam (Rohypnol) tablets have been diverted from licit trade in that area and have been appearing on the illicit markets of the Baltic States and the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden). Flunitrazepam is smuggled into Sweden, usually using Lithuanian couriers, by ferry either via the other Baltic States or via Germany and Denmark. Some of the shipments are also destined for Norway. Buprenorphine (opioid analgesic) reportedly originating in France is frequently seized in Finland. The Board urges Governments to intensify their efforts to maintain effective control over international trade in psychotropic substances and to strengthen international cooperation aimed at preventing or reducing the illicit manufacture of and trafficking in those substances. The Board also encourages law enforcement agencies in Europe to keep statistics on the different types of psychotropic substances seized.

528. Preparations containing psychotropic substances continue to be abused in several countries in Europe. The abuse of tranquillizers and sedatives has been reported in the Baltic States; as in Latvia, the lifetime prevalence rate for the abuse of such substances among persons aged 15-64 reached 22 per cent in 2003.

529. Several countries in Western Europe have placed khat under national control and regularly seize significant quantities of the substance. In Sweden, for example, the quantity of khat seized has steadily increased over the past few years, reaching almost 7 tons in 2003. In Norway, dried khat is reportedly either smoked in a mixture with tobacco or drunk as tea.

Missions

530. The Board sent a mission to Belgium in September 2004 to review the drug control situation and the progress made by the Government following its mission to that country in 1994. The Board notes with satisfaction that the Government of Belgium continues to be committed to addressing all aspects of the drug problem through an integrated and balanced approach.

531. The Board notes that, under the new legislation adopted by the Government of Belgium in January 2001, while the penalty for abuse of cannabis by an adult under specific circumstances has been reduced to administrative sanctions, the illicit manufacture of,

trafficking in and possession of drugs with the intent to resell or distribute remain prohibited. The Board encourages the Government to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the effects of the implementation of the new legislation on the consumption and possession of or trafficking in cannabis, as well as on demand reduction, in order to ensure that the new legislation is achieving the desired results through the provision of treatment to, and assistance in the social reintegration of, the offender rather than through imprisonment.

532. The Board notes with concern that a Belgian pharmaceutical company continues to use seized cocaine materials for the licit manufacture of pharmaceuticals for export, reportedly because of problems regarding the quality of cocaine materials licitly manufactured in and exported from Peru. The Board urges the Government of Belgium to explore alternatives to the use of seized cocaine materials for such purposes. The Board notes the intention of the Belgian authorities to assist in resolving the issue of the quality of imported cocaine materials.

533. The Board notes with concern that the illicit manufacture of MDMA (Ecstasy) has apparently shifted from the Netherlands to Belgium. The Government of Belgium has placed a high priority on the suppression of illicit manufacture of and trafficking in synthetic drugs, including MDMA, in particular the detection and dismantling of clandestine drug laboratories and the interception of illicit drug consignments along the border. The Board notes with appreciation the efforts of the Belgian authorities in the prevention of illicit manufacture of and trafficking in synthetic drugs and, in view of the increasing illicit manufacture of MDMA in Belgium, encourages the authorities to continue to strengthen drug control efforts focusing on that substance.

534. A mission of the Board visited Denmark in September 2004. The Board commends the Government of Denmark for the development of the action plan against drug abuse entitled "The Fight against Drugs", which is based on the international drug control treaties and rejects any legalization of drugs. The Board also welcomes the considerable progress that has been made in the implementation of the initiatives of the action plan. The Board commends the Government of Denmark for the introduction of a "treatment guarantee", which requires municipalities to

provide a variety of options for the treatment of drug addicts within 14 days of each addict's request for such treatment.

535. The Board welcomes action taken by the Government of Denmark against the trafficking of cannabis in the district of Christiania in Copenhagen, which has reduced the availability of the drug in Copenhagen, as well as in the south of Sweden. The Board invites the Government to communicate to the general public the objectives and results achieved by bringing drug trafficking under control in that area.

536. The high level of khat seizures in Denmark indicates that there may be a problem involving the abuse of that substance, and the Board requests the Government to investigate the matter. As khat is not controlled under the international drug control treaties, problems with trafficking in the substance, which are experienced in all Scandinavian countries and in many other countries in Europe, may exacerbate. The Government may also wish to notify the Secretary-General of the khat problem with a view to initiating the procedure for bringing that substance under international control.

537. It appears that, contrary to Economic and Social Council resolution 1999/32, in which States were called upon to import poppy seeds only from countries where opium poppy was grown licitly in accordance with the provisions of the 1961 Convention, poppy seeds originating in Afghanistan have been exported to Denmark. The Board urges the Government of Denmark to complete its investigation of the matter as soon as possible and to do its utmost to prevent such imports in future.

538. A mission of the Board visited Portugal in April 2004. The Board examined the legal framework that has been applicable to drug-related offences involving small quantities of drugs since July 2001 and noted that the acquisition, possession and abuse of drugs had remained prohibited. While the practice of exempting small quantities of drugs from criminal prosecution is consistent with the international drug control treaties, the Board emphasizes that the objective of the treaties is to prevent drug abuse and to limit the use of controlled substances to medical and scientific purposes. The Board calls on the Government of Portugal to examine ways in which the commissions for the dissuasion of drug abuse can contribute towards preventing drug abuse.

539. The Board notes that the rate of licit consumption of psychotropic substances in Portugal is higher than that of every other European country except Ireland and that the reasons for the high level in Portugal are not known. In Portugal, seizures of medicines containing diazepam, alprazolam or oxazepam indicate that, despite the strict control system in place, there is some diversion of those substances from the licit market to the illicit market. The Board therefore calls on the Government of Portugal to examine the current system of control of the distribution of pharmaceutical products, as well as current practice concerning prescription and use of benzodiazepines. The Board would also like to draw the attention of the Government to Commission on Narcotic Drugs resolution 44/13, entitled "Contribution to the appropriate use of benzodiazepines".

540. A mission of the Board visited Sweden in September 2004. The Board commends the Government of Sweden for its commitment and efforts in the fight against drug abuse and illicit trafficking, in line with the international drug control treaties.

541. The Board welcomes the national drug action plan of Sweden covering the four-year period (2002-2005) which envisages the achievement of a drug-free society by implementing initiatives that will both reduce the demand for and limit the supply of illicit drugs. The Board stresses that drug control efforts can only be effective if they are long-term and sustained. The Board underlines the importance of continuing the coordinating effort of the Office of National Drug Policy Coordination.

542. On licit control, the Board welcomes action by the Government of Sweden that has been successful in curtailing larger-scale diversions of psychotropic substances, particularly flunitrazepam. The Board encourages the Government to strengthen its capacity to monitor prescriptions for internationally controlled drugs in order to detect non-medical use of those drugs.

543. Noting that access to treatment is often difficult for drug abusers in Sweden, the Board strongly encourages the Government to accord higher priority to the treatment of drug abusers, which is one of the pillars of the national drug action plan, and to substantially increase the budgetary allocation to the provision of treatment.

544. A total of almost 7 tons of khat were seized in Sweden in 2003. The Board stresses that those seizures may indicate that there is a problem involving khat abuse and requests the Government to investigate the matter and develop countermeasures. As khat is not controlled under the international drug control treaties, problems with trafficking in the substance, which are experienced in all Scandinavian countries and in many other countries in Europe, may exacerbate. The Government may also wish to notify the Secretary-General of the khat problem, with a view to initiating the procedure for bringing khat under international control.

545. The Board reviewed the drug control situation in Albania and the Government's compliance with the international drug control treaties. Following a mission to Albania in September 2002, the Board had recommended that the Government take various measures to strengthen drug control, including administrative reforms to ensure adequate coordination between government agencies.

546. Despite several communications to the Government of Albania, the Government has failed to provide the Board with any information regarding the implementation of its recommendations. The Board continues to be concerned over persistent reports about the serious drug control problems in the country, including the lack of attention to the widespread smuggling of drugs into other countries. The Board urges the Government to take immediate measures to implement fully the provisions of the international drug control treaties and to provide the Board with detailed information on the steps that have been taken.

547. The Board, while examining the drug control situation in Serbia and Montenegro, reviewed the progress made by the Government in the implementation of the Board's recommendations following its mission to that country in 2001. The Board notes with concern that the Government of Serbia and Montenegro has not established a drug coordinating body at the federal level or adopted a drug control master plan to address the situation with regard to drug abuse and trafficking, although such efforts are being made within the Republic of Serbia pursuant to the Board's recommendations.

548. Given the fact that Serbia and Montenegro is on the traditional Balkan route, the Board urges the Government to take the necessary steps to ensure that

drug control activities are well coordinated and effectively implemented, not only in the area of supply and demand reduction, but also in the control of licit activities related to narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors.

549. The Board notes with appreciation that, despite the lack of human and financial resources, a number of well-coordinated law enforcement activities have taken place in Serbia and Montenegro, resulting in the detection of some illicit laboratories with a large capacity for manufacturing amphetamine-type stimulants. The Board encourages the Government to continue its efforts in that area, with a view to addressing the increasing activities of organized crime, especially those activities related to drug trafficking.

550. The Board reviewed progress made by the Government of Ukraine in the implementation of the Board's recommendations following its mission to that country in July 2001. The Board notes with appreciation that the Government has acted on its recommendations and has made considerable progress in some areas of drug control. In particular, the Board notes that the position of the National Narcotics Control Committee has been improved within the administrative structure, with a view to strengthening its role as coordinator of the relevant drug control agencies within the country. Ukraine has acceded to the 1972 Protocol amending the 1961 Convention, adopted legislation against money-laundering and introduced additional controls over substances such as codeine and phenobarbital.

551. The Board shares the concern of the Government of Ukraine over the worsening drug abuse situation in that country, particularly with regard to the significant increase in the number of heroin addicts, as well as the fact that the majority of registered addicts are adolescents. The Board urges the Government to strengthen its efforts in the area of prevention and demand reduction in order to halt and even reverse that alarming trend.

E. Oceania

Major developments

552. Australia and New Zealand account for the majority of the drug and precursor seizures made in Oceania. There has been a considerable increase in the

illicit manufacture and abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants in those two countries. The total number of clandestine laboratories detected in Australia reached 314 in 2003.

553. In Australia, heroin abuse has declined to a level below the levels recorded prior to the heroin shortage of early 2001. Most (90 per cent) of the heroin abused in Australia originated in South-East Asia; Sydney is the main port of entry for heroin shipments arriving in the country. The reduction in the availability of heroin in Australia has resulted in heroin abusers turning to other drugs.

554. Party drugs such as GHB, as well as ketamine trafficking and abuse, are a cause for serious concern in Australia, as is the abuse of several benzodiazepines diverted from licit distribution channels.

555. Trafficking organizations based outside of New Zealand are shipping into the country large quantities of amphetamine-type stimulants, including MDMA (Ecstasy) tablets (266,000 tablets were seized in 2003). The trafficking organizations include Chinese syndicates that bring in medicines containing ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, which are used for the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine. Seizures of ephedrine and pseudoephedrine are also increasing.

556. Most of the Pacific island countries continue to be vulnerable to drug transit trafficking and the abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants.

Treaty adherence

557. The Board continues to be concerned that, of the 15 States in Oceania, only Australia, Fiji, New Zealand and Tonga are parties to all three international drug control treaties. Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Samoa, Tuvalu and Vanuatu are not parties to any of the three treaties. Of the remaining five States, one (Solomon Islands) is a party only to the 1961 Convention and the others are parties to the 1961 Convention and the 1971 Convention. The Board urges those States to accede to all the international drug control treaties without delay. The Board calls on regional organizations such as the Pacific Islands Forum to support those States in that respect.

Regional cooperation

558. In June 2004, a joint operation involving Interpol and the law enforcement agencies of Australia, the