

646. In view of the lack of comprehensive and reliable data on the extent of drug abuse in the region, INCB urges the Governments concerned to assess the situation in their country by setting up drug monitoring systems and conducting population-based surveys on the extent of drug abuse, in order to develop and implement the appropriate prevention, treatment and rehabilitation programmes.

647. Access to drug dependence treatment is hampered by the limited number of specialized medical facilities in the region, in addition to the stigma associated with drug dependence. Nevertheless, the Board notes that a number of countries in the region established or are in the process of establishing treatment facilities and services to address the negative health and social consequences of drug abuse. INCB is hopeful that this will improve the availability of drug abuse treatment and rehabilitation services.

648. In May 2014, under the auspices of the Palestinian Ministry of Health, an opioid substitution therapy clinic was opened in Ramallah, in which methadone is provided under medical supervision. Prior to the opening of the centre, health professionals conducted a study visit to opioid substitution therapy in Jerusalem and training in collaboration with the Nazareth methadone centre. By mid-June 2015, there were 52 patients benefiting from the centre.

649. The Board also notes that the opioid substitution therapy programme launched in Lebanon in 2011 is now fully operational and serves 1,375 patients, double the number registered by mid-2013. Nearly 95 per cent of the patients are male and more than half are between the ages of 26 and 35. Comprehensive care is provided, including medical treatment, psychiatric evaluation, psychological and social assistance.

## D. Europe

### 1. Major developments

650. Europe continues to be an important market for drugs produced locally and drugs smuggled from other regions, in particular Latin America, West Asia and North Africa. The synthetic drugs manufactured in Western and Central Europe supply illicit markets both in that sub-region and in other parts of the world. In recent years, Eastern Europe has emerged as a transit and destination area for cocaine, although the amounts of cocaine seized in the subregion remain relatively small.

651. In Western and Central Europe, cannabis is the most commonly seized drug, accounting for about 80 per cent of all seizures. Cocaine ranks second overall, accounting for more than double the number of reported seizures of amphetamines or heroin. The number of seizures of MDMA (“ecstasy”), was relatively low in Western and Central Europe.

652. By March 2015, more than 450 new psychoactive substances were being monitored by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA). During 2014 alone, 101 new psychoactive substances were reported for the first time via the European Union early warning system. The increase in the trafficking and abuse of those substances continued to pose a public health challenge in many European countries.

653. Both the purity and the potency of all the drugs of abuse commonly found in Western and Central Europe have increased. The reasons for that increase are complex, and may include advances in technology and market competition. In some countries that produce high-potency cannabis, the share of that substance on the domestic market has increased in recent years. New data indicate that the potency of cannabis resin smuggled in the region has also increased. Recently, EMCDDA and Europol alerted the European Union community to health risks associated with the consumption of high-purity “ecstasy” and tablets containing *para*-methoxymethamphetamine (PMMA) but sold to users as “ecstasy”. In some countries, high-quality synthetic cannabinoids and cathinones offered in the illicit market compete with low-quality and relatively more expensive most commonly abused drugs.

654. The Internet and social media have become important tools in marketing drugs. According to EMCDDA more than 600 websites selling new psychoactive substances, sometimes in amounts in the kilograms, were identified in the European Union in 2013 and 2014. Assessment of the size of the online drug market is not easy and there is a need for further awareness-raising regarding the growing potential role of the Internet and use of cryptocurrencies, such as bitcoin, in drug supply and marketing with respect to both established drugs and new psychoactive substances. There is also a need for a review of existing regulatory models to perform in a global and virtual context.

### 2. Regional cooperation

655. The countries of South-Eastern Europe continued to intensify their regional law enforcement cooperation

in the area of organized crime and drug control. All countries of the region are active participants in the UNODC regional programme for South-Eastern Europe (2012-2015).

656. In September 2014, in Sarajevo, the Southeast European Law Enforcement Center held a workshop on tackling drug trafficking, at which experts from the Center's member States and the United States discussed forfeiture investigations and money-laundering related to drug trafficking. In March 2015, a meeting on facilitation of common and coordinated measures in the western Balkan region, at which the participants agreed on annual plans for common and coordinated operations in 2015, was held in Belgrade within the framework of the Border Security Programme of the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces.

657. In 2014, the Russian Federation continued supporting the provision of law enforcement training in counter-narcotics at its national institutions to the Counter-Narcotics Police of Afghanistan as part of the UNODC regional programme for Afghanistan and neighbouring countries. That joint cooperation will be extended into 2016 and expanded to include assistance to the five countries of Central Asia. Moreover, the Russian Federation informed the Board about a number of initiatives to strengthen joint efforts to tackle the world drug problem, including the international conference of the Russian-African Anti-Drug Dialogue, held in Banjul on 23 July 2015, and the regional anti-drug operation, "Operation Channel", for the period 2014-2015.

658. Large-scale international counter-narcotics operations were carried out in 2014 by the member States of CSTO and Afghanistan, in cooperation with the Federal Drug Control Service of the Russian Federation. As a result of those operations, 16.5 tons of narcotic drugs were seized.

659. The European Union continued intensive cooperation among its member States and with third countries and other regions. The Horizontal Working Party on Drugs, a working group of the Council of the European Union, held talks with third countries, namely Brazil, the Russian Federation, the United States and the States of the Western Balkans and Central Asia.

660. In July 2015, the European Union and the Government of Afghanistan signed a cooperation agreement on partnership and development, the first official contractual framework governing cooperation between the European Union and Afghanistan. The agreement builds on the European Union strategy for Afghanistan

for the period 2014-2016 and enshrines the Union's commitment to a partnership with Afghanistan in order to fulfil the Government's vision of "realizing self-reliance".

661. "Shaping our common future: working for prosperous, cohesive and sustainable societies for our citizens" was the theme of the second European Union-Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) summit, held in Brussels on 10 and 11 June 2015, which adopted a declaration on a "Partnership for the next generation", the Brussels declaration entitled "Shaping our common future" and an updated European Union-CELAC action plan.

662. The Cooperation Group to Combat Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in Drugs (Pompidou Group) of the Council of Europe, at its sixteenth Ministerial Conference, adopted its working programme for the period 2015-2018, entitled "Drug policy and human rights: new trends in a globalised context". The work programme establishes the following thematic priorities: bringing human rights to the forefront of drug policy; analysing policy coherence, costs, impact and potentially adverse effects of drug policy measures; addressing changing patterns and context of drug use, production and supply; and identifying opportunities and challenges for drug policies arising from the Internet. Furthermore, the States members of the Pompidou Group continued to foster the exchange of information on drugs and addictions with and within countries of the Mediterranean basin through the Mediterranean Network (MedNET).<sup>40</sup> The activities of MedNET network include the establishment of country profiles for Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia with a view to sharing information on the drug control situation in those countries, including information on the drug trafficking situation and drug prevention and treatment programmes.

### 3. National legislation, policy and action

663. During the reporting period, the European countries continued to adopt measures to counteract the spread of new psychoactive substances. Germany, Lithuania, Romania and Slovenia added 32, 31, 30 and 9 new psychoactive substances, respectively, to their lists of nationally controlled substances.

664. In 2014, Belarus addressed the growing threat of new psychoactive substances to public health by adding

<sup>40</sup> MedNET countries include Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Portugal and Tunisia.

nine new substances to its National List of Narcotic Drugs, Psychotropic Substances, their Precursors and Analogues Subject to State Control. Sweden placed 11 substances under control as narcotic drugs and an additional 21 substances as “goods dangerous to health”. In the same year, 36 substances were added to the list of substances subject to control in the Russian Federation, including 27 new psychoactive substances. In addition, Belgium adopted a law providing for the listing of controlled substances according to definitions for generic groups. In December 2014, Finland brought into force new legislation introducing a definition of “new psychoactive substance” and listing 294 substances as psychoactive substances banned from the consumer market. The new legislation prohibits the production and supply of those substances, although it does not establish criminal liability for their possession or use.

665. The Board recommends that countries continue to monitor trends and collect data on the use, abuse, illicit domestic and international distribution and manufacture of new psychoactive substances and share those data with the Board.

666. In March 2014, an action plan to prevent and suppress criminal activity relating to the cultivation of plants containing narcotic substances was approved by the State Police of Albania. The action plan provides for measures aimed at discouraging illicit cultivation of such plants and increasing awareness—among youth, State administration entities and locally elected officials—of illicit cultivation and State Police operations to eradicate such cultivation.

667. In Belarus, a system of measures to stabilize the drug situation and a comprehensive action plan to counter drug trafficking, prevent drug abuse and facilitate the social rehabilitation of drug abusers were approved in 2014.

668. The National Committee for the Coordination and Planning of Drug Responses of Greece drafted a new national strategy on drugs (for the period 2014-2020) and a new action plan (for 2014-2016).

669. In 2014, Italy launched a national action plan to address the threat posed by the illicit sale and distribution of new psychoactive substances via the Internet.

670. In Malta, the Drug Dependence (Treatment not Imprisonment) Act came into force in April 2015. Pursuant to the Act, drug possession for personal use is not a criminal offence and any person found in possession is tried before a Commissioner for Justice and subject to a fine. If the person reoffends within a two-year

period, he or she is called before the Drug Offenders Rehabilitation Board, which determines whether the offender is drug-dependent and issues any necessary orders accordingly. Failure to comply with such orders is punishable by a fine or three months’ imprisonment.

671. In September 2014, the Republic of Moldova adopted a national action plan to combat drug trafficking for the period 2014-2016. The plan provides for a wide range of measures aimed at reducing drug abuse, especially among youth, addressing the economic, health and social impact of drug abuse, strengthening prescription regulations and combating illicit cultivation and trafficking.

672. Several legislative acts were adopted in Romania with the aim of strengthening the drug control regime. Legislation on preventing and countering drug abuse and trafficking, together with provisions on the legal regime governing plants and preparations containing narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, were amended with a view to the further protection of public health, especially the health of young people. The Government amended administrative regulations to optimize the licensing regime and improve the access of drug-dependent persons to medical and social programmes. In 2014, an interministerial office was established to coordinate drug policy and oversee the activities of the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of the Interior.

673. In December 2014, the Government of the Russian Federation approved legislative amendments setting out legal conditions facilitating the assistance provided by non-commercial organizations involved in drug demand reduction activities and establishing priority access to controlled substances for patients in need of pain relief. Furthermore, in response to increased trafficking of new psychoactive substances into the country, in January 2015, the Government adopted a law introducing criminal liability for offences involving new psychoactive substances and authorizing the drug control authorities to impose a temporary ban on any potentially dangerous psychoactive substances.

674. In December 2014, Serbia adopted a national drug strategy (for 2014-2021) and an action plan for its implementation (2014-2017).

675. The National Assembly of Slovenia adopted a new resolution on the National Programme on Drugs for 2014-2020. The goals of the Programme include reducing the number of new drug users among youth and the number of drug-related offences and reducing the number of deaths caused by overdose.

676. In June 2015, the European Commission approved implementing Regulation (EU) 2015/1013 laying down rules for the monitoring of trade in drug precursors between the Union and third countries. The Regulation, which applies to all member States of the European Union, also establishes uniform procedural rules for the licensing and registration of operators and users and their listing in the European database on drug precursors.

## 4. Cultivation, production, manufacture and trafficking

### (a) Narcotic drugs

677. There are two main cannabis products found on the European illicit drug market: cannabis herb and cannabis resin. Cannabis is both illicitly cultivated in countries of the region and also trafficked, in sizeable amounts, within the region and from other regions. There is an increasing tendency for criminal groups operating in the region to run numerous small-scale cannabis plant cultivation sites, usually indoors, rather than fewer but large-scale outdoor plantations, in order to mitigate the risk of detection. Most cannabis resin destined for Europe is smuggled from Morocco.

678. According to the *European Drug Report 2015*, in 2013, the European Union countries reported 431,000 individual seizures of cannabis herb and 240,000 seizures of cannabis resin.

679. The total amount of cannabis resin seized in the European Union in 2013 (460 tons) was much higher than that of cannabis herb (130 tons). Spain, a major point of entry for cannabis produced in Morocco, reported more than two thirds of the total quantity of cannabis resin seized in Europe that year. Afghanistan, Lebanon, Morocco and Pakistan were among the countries of origin or departure of shipments of cannabis resin seized in Western Europe in 2014. Analysis of trafficking trends in those European countries that regularly report seizures of cannabis shows a large increase from 2006 to 2013 in the potency (level of THC) of both herbal cannabis and cannabis resin. Among the causes of that increasing potency may be the introduction of intensive production techniques in Europe and, more recently, the introduction of high-potency plants in Morocco.

680. South-Eastern Europe continued to see an expansion in the trafficking of cannabis produced in Albania in 2014. The State Police of Albania continued its efforts to contain cannabis cultivation following its successful

operations carried out in the southern region and other parts of the country. The Albanian authorities have intensified cooperation with their Italian counterparts in mapping illicit cultivation areas through aerial surveys. The quantity of cannabis seized in Albania in 2014 (101.7 tons) exceeded the total quantity seized during the previous nine years (96 tons).

681. Seizures of cannabis plants in a country may indicate the production of the drug in its territory. According to EMCDDA, seizures of cannabis plants have significantly increased in Western and Central Europe since 2002. In 2013, Italy and Belgium each identified 1,100 illicit outdoor cannabis plant cultivation sites and eradicated 885,000 and 394,000 plants respectively. In the same year, the eradication of cannabis plants cultivated indoors was reported by Germany (94,000 plants), the Czech Republic (66,000 plants), Ireland (29,000 plants), Latvia (14,000 plants) and Italy (10,300 plants). In 2014, eradication of cannabis plants were reported by the United Kingdom (461,300 plants), Germany (131,800 plants), Greece (52,300 plants) and Finland (21,800 plants). According to the Finnish drug control authorities, small-scale domestic cultivation has recently become more common in Finland. Cannabis growers usually grow up to 20-30 cannabis plants in their homes for personal use.

682. With the increasing involvement of organized criminal groups in the production and trafficking of cannabis, the drug plays a major role in drug-related crime in Western and Central Europe, where it accounts for 80 per cent of drug seizures and cannabis use or possession for personal use accounts for more than 60 per cent of all reported drug-related offences. However, there are considerable differences between European countries with respect to practice in sentencing for offences relating to cannabis supply; for example, the penalties for a first-time offence of supplying 1 kilogram of cannabis in Europe may range from less than 1 year to 10 years in prison.

683. Since 2010, several Western and Central European countries have reported declining trends with respect to heroin, inter alia, in the number of seizures and the amounts of the drug seized, the number of offences relating to supply, heroin prices and scale of abuse. According to the latest EMCDDA report on opioid trafficking routes from Asia to Europe, published in 2015, there has been an overall increase in the purity of heroin in the region in recent years.

684. According to EMCDDA, there is also evidence of an increased range of opioids appearing on the European market. Since 2005, 14 new synthetic opioids have been

reported via the European Union early warning system. In 2014, seizures of diverted or counterfeit pharmaceutical products containing opioids, such as methadone, buprenorphine, fentanyl and tramadol, were reported by competent national authorities of several European countries, including Austria, Finland, Greece and Sweden.

685. According to the *World Drug Report 2015* heroin seizures have recently increased slightly in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe.<sup>41</sup> In particular, in 2013, heroin seizures in South-Eastern Europe increased slightly in comparison to 2012, although they remained below the levels observed in the subregion between 2007 and 2009. The amounts of heroin seized in Eastern Europe increased slightly in 2013, but remained stable from the long-term perspective.

686. The three main routes used by trafficking rings to smuggle heroin to Europe are: (a) the traditional Balkan route, a major heroin trafficking route into the European Union that links Afghanistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran and passes through Turkey and the Balkans; (b) the southern route, which has been used in recent years to smuggle heroin to Europe directly from ports in the Islamic Republic of Iran and Pakistan, or via the Arabian Peninsula or Africa; and (c) the northern route, which, according to EMCDDA, is used for heroin trafficking by land from the northern borders of Afghanistan to supply illicit drug markets in Belarus, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and countries in Central Asia.

687. The discovery of heroin processing laboratories in Europe, in particular two laboratories processing morphine into heroin, dismantled in Spain in late 2013 and early 2014, may indicate possible shifts in heroin supply channels. Greece reported that it had destroyed facilities involved in cutting and packaging heroin from Afghanistan or Pakistan that had been intended for illicit drug markets in other European Union countries.

688. In December 2014, an extensive network engaged in trafficking heroin into the European Union was dismantled by a joint investigation team, facilitated by Eurojust and supported by Europol. Some 400 suspects were arrested and 100 kg of heroin were seized together with cocaine, cannabis and cash. The network, operating from Austria, Germany and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, brought heroin into the European Union along the Balkan route and distributed it in several European countries.

689. According to figures released in 2015, cocaine and “crack” cocaine accounted for 10 per cent of the total number of seizures in Western and Central Europe. Overall, the purity of cocaine seized in the European Union has increased in recent years, while its price has remained relatively stable. In most parts of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe the availability of cocaine remained limited.

690. Africa continued to be used as a trans-shipment area for the smuggling of cocaine across the Atlantic Ocean into Europe. An example of involvement of the African region in cocaine trafficking is the seizure, in April 2015, of 3 tons of cocaine on a vessel registered in Tanzania. The vessel was intercepted by the authorities of the United Kingdom 100 miles east of the coast of Scotland. The interdiction was conducted in cooperation with the French customs service and other international partners, and represents one of the largest cocaine seizures in the history of the United Kingdom.

691. Of the European countries, Spain has seized the most cocaine in recent years. In 2013, Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands, France and Italy together accounted for more than 80 per cent of the 62.6 tons seized in the European Union. In 2014, seizures of cocaine in quantities exceeding 100 kg were reported by Spain, France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Greece, Lithuania and Sweden (listed in descending order).

692. Organized criminal groups from South-Eastern Europe, closely connected with cocaine producers in South America, have been actively involved in trafficking cocaine to Western and Central European ports. Recent seizures of cocaine, albeit in small quantities, in ports on the eastern Mediterranean, Baltic and Black seas have provided new evidence of the diversification of cocaine trafficking routes into Europe.

693. In 2013, a total of 478 kg of cocaine was seized in Eastern Europe and more than 100 kg in South-Eastern Europe. Seizure data show that cocaine traffickers continue to target many parts of those subregions, cocaine seizures being reported by almost all of the countries concerned in 2013. Eastern Europe is emerging both as a transit area and as a destination for cocaine, of which there has been an increased number of seizures (although only in small quantities) in recent years, which points toward the emergence of a cocaine market in the subregion.

## (b) Psychotropic substances

694. Europe is a major illicit manufacturer of amphetamine-type stimulants; most of the amphetamine and

<sup>41</sup> Reported according to the regional groupings of the *World Drug Report*, annex II.

methamphetamine manufactured in Europe is destined for national illicit markets, although some is destined for other regions, particularly East and South-East Asia. Amphetamine manufacture in Europe mainly takes place in Belgium, the Netherlands, Poland and the Baltic States and, to a lesser extent, in Germany; illicit methamphetamine manufacture is concentrated in the Baltic States and Central Europe. Europe is also known as a transit hub for methamphetamine trafficked from Africa and the Islamic Republic of Iran to East and South-East Asia.

695. In 2013, a total of 6.7 tons of amphetamine was seized in the European Union, exceeding the figure for the period 2010-2012. Germany, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom accounted for more than half of that amount. Both the number of methamphetamine seizures and the amount of methamphetamine seized in the European Union increased in 2013 compared with the previous year. In 2013, seizures of methamphetamine reported in the European Union amounted to 0.5 tons. In 2014, the following Western and Central European countries reported seizures of amphetamine exceeding 100 kg: Germany (1,336 kg), the United Kingdom (1,225 kg), Poland (783 kg), Spain (562 kg), the Czech Republic (442 kg), Sweden (412 kg), Finland (298 kg), Denmark (292 kg) and France (268 kg). Romania reported that the quantity of amphetamine-type stimulants seized in 2014 was almost 11 times greater than that seized in 2013.

696. In 2014, Austria reported the detection of three amphetamine and nine methamphetamine laboratories, while German authorities dismantled 11 amphetamine laboratories and three laboratories that had been manufacturing methamphetamine from pseudoephedrine extracted from nasal decongestants. In the Czech Republic, the number of dismantled methamphetamine laboratories slightly increased to 272 in 2014, compared with 262 laboratories dismantled in 2013. An amphetamine-refining laboratory was also discovered in Sweden. Bulgaria continued to seize methamphetamine, which, according to the Bulgarian authorities, had been dispatched from the Netherlands and Turkey. It also dismantled 12 clandestine laboratories producing methamphetamine in 2014.

697. There was a significant increase in the smuggling of amphetamine and methamphetamine into the Russian Federation in 2014, while the smuggling of "ecstasy"-type substances into that country has substantially decreased. The Russian Federation reported that amphetamine-type stimulants seized by its authorities had been illicitly manufactured in European Union countries, the Islamic Republic of Iran and China and were destined for illicit markets in the Russian Federation, Belarus and Kazakhstan.

698. Ukraine observed an increase in illicit home-based production of amphetamine-type stimulants. At the same time, Ukraine reported that the amphetamine seized by its authorities had been sourced mainly from Poland and Belarus and had been intended for the illicit market in Ukraine.

699. In Europe, illicit manufacture of "ecstasy" has for a number of years been associated mainly with two countries, Belgium and the Netherlands. European experts recently expressed concerns that high-purity "ecstasy" powder and tablets appearing on the European market had started replacing tablets that were previously being sold on the market as "ecstasy" but often contained only little or none of that substance and had consequently fallen out of favour with consumers on account of their poor quality and high adulteration.

700. Seizures of "ecstasy"-type substances in South-Eastern Europe, while low in number compared to seizures of other substances, increased in 2014 compared with the previous year, reaching their highest number since 2006.

701. Bulgaria reported that seizures of "ecstasy"-type substances, originating in the Netherlands and Bulgaria itself, increased in 2014. The trafficking of "ecstasy" via Bulgaria has been affected by the growing illicit markets in the Middle East. According to Bulgarian authorities, a proportion of the "ecstasy" smuggled through the country was exchanged for heroin in barter deals. In 2014, the country also observed an increasing trend in "ecstasy" trafficking via surface predominantly from the Netherlands via Bulgaria and Turkey along the Balkan route. In 2014, there were 37 seizures of "ecstasy"-type substances, a total of 148 kg (16,845 pills) being seized.

702. Similarly, Moldova reported a large increase in seizures of "ecstasy"-type substances in 2014, those substances having been dispatched mainly from France, transiting Romania before entering Moldova.

703. In 2014, seizures of "ecstasy" tablets exceeding 100,000 units were also reported by France, Germany, Spain, the United Kingdom, Ireland, Finland and Greece (listed in descending order).

### (c) Precursors

704. For several years, large-scale trafficking in APAAN, a pre-precursor of amphetamine and methamphetamine, has been of concern to drug control authorities worldwide. In March 2014, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs

decided to include APAAN and its optical isomers in Table I of the 1988 Convention, that decision taking effect on 6 October 2014. In the European Union, following control measures implemented in member States from January 2014, both the number of seizures and the amounts of APAAN seized have decreased gradually from 34 seizures (a total of 28.7 tons) in 2012 to 9 seizures (8.1 tons) in 2014. In the first half of 2015, five incidents involving a total of 1,250 kg of the substance were reported.

705. In December 2013, the European Union adopted new control measures aimed at preventing the large-scale diversion of acetic anhydride from the European Union market. Since then, the number of attempts to divert supplies from trade among European Union-based trading companies have decreased considerably, although they have not ceased altogether, as was evidenced by a seizure of 2.2 tons of the substance in Austria in April 2015. New control measures have also led traffickers to revert to other forms of crime to secure supplies. For example, in 2015, the Netherlands reported that 18,000 litres of acetic anhydride had been stolen during transportation between two companies in that country.

706. In 2014 and 2015, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands and Spain reported seizures of large amounts of diverse “designer” precursors, derivatives of internationally controlled precursors included in Table I of the 1988 Convention. Those seizures corroborate continued concerns that traffickers are attempting to trade in purpose-made precursor derivatives with a view to circumventing existing precursor control mechanisms and using those substances in the illicit manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants.<sup>42</sup>

707. In 2014, Bulgarian authorities prevented a number of attempts to smuggle pseudoephedrine (approximately 500 kg in total) in the form of pharmaceutical preparations. The preparations were legally produced in Turkey but then trafficked via Bulgaria for use in the illicit synthesis of methamphetamine in the Czech Republic and Poland.

708. A comprehensive review of the situation with respect to the control of precursors and chemicals frequently used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances in the region can be found in the report of the Board for 2015 on the implementation of article 12 of the 1988 Convention.

#### (d) Substances not under international control

709. Seizure data provided by Governments and information gathered through the European Union early warning system indicate the increased diversification and availability and continued proliferation of new psychoactive substances in Western and Central Europe. As at March 2015, more than 450 new psychoactive substances were being monitored by EMCDDA, 101 new substances being reported via the European Union early warning system for the first time during 2014. Most of those substances were synthetic cathinones (31 substances)—often sold as replacements for “ecstasy”, amphetamine and cocaine—and synthetic cannabinoids (30 substances), which are sold as replacements for cannabis.

710. Seizures of new psychoactive substances increased seven-fold across Europe between 2008 and 2013. In 2013, some 47,000 seizures of new psychoactive substances—a total of more than 3.1 tons—were reported by the 28 European Union member States, Norway and Turkey, including 21,500 seizures of synthetic cannabinoids (almost 1.6 tons) and 10,700 seizures of synthetic cathinones (more than 1.1 tons). Seizures of synthetic cannabinoids have risen sharply since 2011.

711. In 2014, the Romanian authorities reported seizures of 5 kg of tryptamines and 75 kg of khat (*Catha edulis*). Nineteen incidents involving seizures of dried khat amounting to 664 kg were also reported by Bulgarian customs authorities in 2014. The khat seized in Bulgaria originated in Kenya and Uganda.

712. Many of the new psychoactive substances that were destined for European markets were reported to have been manufactured, in bulk, by chemical companies established in China and India and shipped to Europe by air freight, where they were processed, packaged and then sold to consumers. In 2013, EMCDDA identified more than 600 websites selling new psychoactive substances to consumers in the European Union.

### 5. Abuse and treatment

713. Drug abuse is one of the major causes of mortality among European youth, both directly through overdose and indirectly through drug-related diseases, accidents, violence and suicide. Every year in the European Union, more than 6,000 drug users die as a result of overdose, most of those cases involving opioids. According to a recent EMCDDA paper entitled “Mortality among drug users in Europe: new and old challenges for public health”,

<sup>42</sup> For more information, see E/INCB/2015/4.

published in 2015, the risk of death among problem drug users is at least 10 times higher than that among their peers in the general population.

714. Almost a quarter of the adult population in the European Union, or over 80 million adults, have tried illicit drugs at least once in their lives. The most commonly used drug in the European Union (according to past-year prevalence among adults between 15 and 64 years of age) is cannabis (19.3 million), followed by cocaine (3.4 million), “ecstasy” (2.1 million) and amphetamines (1.6 million). Denmark, France and the United Kingdom are among the European Union countries with the highest lifetime prevalence of drug abuse among the general population.

715. According to an EMCDDA report entitled “Drug use and its consequences in the Western Balkans 2006-14”, the lifetime prevalence of illicit drug use among the general population in the Western Balkan region appears to be lower than the European average. There are no marked differences between the Western Balkan countries with respect to lifetime prevalence of drug abuse among school students aged 15-16 years, all estimates of lifetime illicit drug use falling between 4 per cent and 8 per cent, which is 2.5 times lower than the European average. The drug most commonly used is cannabis, between 2 per cent and 8 per cent of those surveyed reporting lifetime cannabis use—a range considerably lower than the 17 per cent European average.

716. The relatively high annual prevalence of cannabis abuse (5.7 per cent) among the general population in Western and Central Europe has stabilized or in some cases decreased, in particular in countries where cannabis consumption is long-established. It is not clear, however, whether that decrease could be linked to the emerging use of synthetic cannabinoids or other new psychoactive substances.

717. The overall number of first-time treatment admissions for cannabis abuse in the European Union increased from 45,000 to 61,000 between 2006 and 2013. The increase in demand for cannabis abuse treatment, however, has to be understood in the context of service provision and referral practice. For example, in some countries, direct referrals from the criminal justice system account for a high proportion of treatment admissions.

718. The abuse of heroin and synthetic opioids remains relatively low in the European Union. The average annual prevalence of opioid use, mainly of heroin, among the general population between 15 and 64 years of age was estimated at about 0.4 per cent. Nonetheless, opioids

continue to be the drugs associated with the greatest proportion of morbidity, mortality and treatment costs relating to drug abuse in the region.

719. In 2013, opioids were the primary drug of abuse for 41 per cent of all those receiving drug abuse treatment in Western and Central Europe. While the number of new first-time treatment admissions for heroin abuse has more than halved from a peak of 59,000 in 2007 to 23,000 in 2013, the consumption of opioids other than heroin raises concerns. Eleven countries in Western and Central Europe reported that more than 10 per cent of all opioid users who received drug abuse treatment in 2013 were treated for problems primarily related to opioids other than heroin.

720. The high prevalence of opioid abuse in Eastern Europe overall is mainly due to high levels of such abuse in the Russian Federation and Ukraine: an estimated 2.4 million persons, representing a prevalence rate of 2.3 per cent. According to the *World Drug Report 2015*, the proportion of persons in treatment for opioid abuse in Eastern Europe continues to be high, which reflects the extent of problem opioid abuse, particularly problem abuse of heroin, in the subregion. Ukraine reported that more than 25,000 persons received drug treatment for opioid abuse in 2014. Also of concern is the reported suspension of opioid substitution treatment in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the city of Sevastopol<sup>43</sup> since March 2014, which reportedly has had serious consequences on the patients who were receiving such treatment.

721. Worldwide, the highest prevalence rates of persons who inject drugs continue to be found in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. Approximately 40 per cent of the estimated global number of persons who abuse drugs by injection and are living with HIV reside in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. For example, Ukraine reported a prevalence rate of HIV infection of 6.7 per cent among injecting drug users. According to WHO, the Russian Federation and Ukraine have rates of mortality due to HIV/AIDS of over 40 per 100,000 population. According to the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, 18 countries benefited from the 45 million dollars in aid that was provided by the European Commission to support national responses to HIV in the European Union and in European Neighbourhood Policy countries and the Russian Federation; of which the largest amount was allocated for Ukraine and the Russian Federation. There have also been epidemics of hepatitis C among persons who inject drugs in the Western Balkans, where the

<sup>43</sup>In accordance with General Assembly resolution 68/262 on the territorial integrity of Ukraine.

prevalence of that virus ranges from 12 per cent to more than 77 per cent.

722. Overall, the cocaine market in the European Union remained stable in 2013. The annual prevalence of cocaine abuse among the general population aged 15-64 remained high, at around 1 per cent, in Western and Central Europe. In some countries with high levels of abuse, such as Denmark, Italy and Spain, the prevalence of cocaine abuse has decreased since 2008. The demand for treatment for cocaine abuse in the region indicates an overall declining trend.

723. In many countries of Western and Central Europe, the abuse of amphetamines remained stable. EMCDDA estimates that 1.3 million (1.0 per cent) of young adults between 15 and 34 years of age have used amphetamine or methamphetamine in the past year. Methamphetamine abuse was predominant in the Czech Republic and, more recently, Slovakia, although there are also indications of increasing abuse of the substance in other countries. Between 2007 and 2013, the Czech authorities observed an increasing prevalence of high-risk methamphetamine abuse, including by injection. In 2014, an increase in amphetamine abuse was reported by Germany while stable or decreasing trends in amphetamine abuse were reported by Cyprus, Finland, Portugal and the United Kingdom.

724. It is estimated that some 1.8 million Western and Central European young adults between 15 and 34 years of age have used “ecstasy” in the past year. In 2014, a slight increase in “ecstasy” abuse was reported by Finland and Germany, while stable or decreasing trends were reported by Lithuania, Portugal and the United Kingdom. The demand for treatment for “ecstasy” abuse is not very high in Western and Eastern Europe, accounting for less than 1 per cent of reported first-time treatment entrants in 2013.

725. For a number of years the prevalence rates of hallucinogenic mushroom and LSD abuse in Europe have been low and stable; according to the latest national surveys, the past-year prevalence of abuse of both substances was estimated to be less than 1 per cent among young adults between 15 and 34 years of age.

726. Overall, estimating the prevalence of abuse of new psychoactive substances remains a challenge. A Flash Eurobarometer survey conducted in 2014, entitled “Young people and drugs”, showed that 8 per cent of 13,000 respondents between the ages of 15 and 24 in the European Union member States had used a new psychoactive substance at least once in their lives, compared to 5 per cent in 2011, 3 per cent having used the substance in the past year. The highest levels of past-year prevalence of use were

recorded in Ireland (9 per cent), Spain (8 per cent), France (8 per cent) and Slovenia (7 per cent).

727. Belarus reported that, in 2014, the number of individuals abusing cannabinoids increased by 9 per cent, mainly as a result of the increase in the number of persons using synthetic cannabinoids compared to the previous year. The main trend of 2014 was a significant increase in the number of persons abusing new psychoactive substances, mostly synthetic cannabinoids, and other psychoactive substances.

728. The number of persons who abuse drugs by injection residing in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe is estimated to be 2.91 million, which is 24 per cent of the global total number of persons who abuse drugs by injection.

729. The *World Drug Report 2015* suggests that in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, 1.27 per cent of the general population aged 15-64 years is estimated to use drugs by injection, a rate nearly five times the global average. The estimate for Eastern Europe is heavily influenced by the high prevalence of drug abuse by injection in the Russian Federation (2.29 per cent of the population aged 15-64 years). This high level of drug abuse continued to constitute a challenge to public health in the Russian Federation, despite a trend towards a stabilization of the situation. According to the State Anti-Drug Committee of the Russian Federation, in recent years the number of individuals abusing narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances has reached about 6 per cent of the country’s population, or 8 million to 8.5 million people.

730. According to the EMCDDA report “Perspectives on drugs: injection of synthetic cathinones”, the abuse of synthetic cathinones by injection has emerged among high-risk drug abusers in Austria, Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Ireland, Poland, Romania, Spain and the United Kingdom, but is considered to be a relatively low-level and localized phenomenon.

## E. Oceania

### 1. Major developments

731. The region of Oceania is vulnerable to the trafficking, manufacture and abuse of a wide range of drugs, with countries reporting significant seizures of many substances, including cocaine, heroin, MDMA (“ecstasy”), and precursor chemicals. Cannabis continues to be the most trafficked and abused drug in the region, mainly due to domestic cultivation.