

# New Reports on European Illicit Markets for Cocaine and Methamphetamine



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## News

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On 6 May 2022, Europol together with the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) published two new [online modules](#) of reports taking a detailed look at the illicit EU markets for cocaine and for methamphetamine. The reports provide broad analyses of these markets following the supply chain from production and trafficking to distribution and use.

According to [the report on the EU drug market for cocaine](#), cocaine is the most commonly used illicit stimulant drug in Europe with an estimated retail market worth at least €10.5 billion in 2020. It is estimated that about 5 % of adults (aged 15-64) in Europe have tried cocaine during their lives with data suggesting an increasing trend. Looking at coca and cocaine production, the global cocaine trade, its criminal networks, and the retail markets, the report concludes that, due to high availability, the use of cocaine is spreading geographically to new markets and socially to new groups. There is also a tendency to more harmful patterns of use, e.g. smoking or injection. The cocaine market appears to be resilient to control efforts and at the same time innovative in developing new methods to avoid detection and increase profits. These profits tend to create further security threats, such as corruption, violence and the undermining of legitimate business activities. Furthermore, alliances between European-based crime groups and those operating from outside of the EU are increasing. Against this background, the report recommends numerous measures under the following headings:

- Improve the intelligence picture;
- Strengthen responses to reduce supply and enhancing security;
- Strengthen international cooperation;
- Invest in capacity-building;
- Strengthen policy, public health, and safety responses.

Examples for such measures include, for instance:

- Gaining the capability to chemically profile cocaine at European level;
- Improving the targeting of illicit revenues;
- Making full use of existing EU-funded operational coordination platforms and programmes;
- Improving forensic testing capabilities at European and Member State level;
- Raising better awareness of cocaine threats at policy level.

The [report on the EU drug market for methamphetamine](#) looks at the main production methods, Europe as a producer, prices and purities, signals of spreading use, the relevant criminal networks as well as the global

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context of methamphetamine. While methamphetamine is reported to be the most widely consumed synthetic stimulant drug in the world, Europe remains a relatively small market for the consumption of methamphetamine; however, there are signals of increasing use. Nevertheless, Europe emerges as a globally important producer of methamphetamine with production sites located in countries such as the Netherlands, Belgium, and the Czech Republic. As a response to these emerging threats, the report recommends several measures, e.g.:

- Increasing the forensic and toxicological capacity at European and Member State level;
- Targeting key EU locations for methamphetamine production and increasing capacities to safely dismantle such sites;
- Intensifying cooperation efforts with countries on heroin trafficking routes to Europe to also address methamphetamine-related threats.

The EU Drug Markets modules utilise data from multiple sources. Primarily, this include data and information reported to the EMCDDA and Europol. Global data are sourced from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB). It is planned that [further material](#) supporting the analyses is made available to the public. The reports on the cocaine and methamphetamine markets will be supplemented by further reports on the illicit markets for amphetamine, cannabis, heroin, MDMA (3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine), and NPS (New Psychoactive Substances), which are to be published in 2023.

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