

Amphetamine is 'a European drug'

A two-speed Europe?

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The latest report from the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) analyses the production and use of amphetamines in Europe.

According to the report, amphetamine can be termed a "European drug", with data suggesting Europe to be world's number-one producer of the substance and a major consumer market. Amphetamine has stabilised as the most widely consumed stimulant drug in Europe today after cocaine, say the authors. And in many countries, especially in the north and east of Europe, it is the second most widely used illicit drug after cannabis.

Around 12.5 million Europeans have used amphetamines in their lifetime, some 2 million having used it in the past year. European amphetamine markets are therefore "highly profitable business opportunities" for organised crime, states the report. Although some amphetamine is manufactured in small 'kitchen' laboratories, the vast majority is produced in middle to large or 'industrial size' facilities run by criminals operating across Europe and beyond.

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Large-scale production and organised crime involvement are found mainly in northern Europe, notably in the “north-west criminal hub,” says the report, naming the Netherlands and Belgium. In the ‘north-west hub’, use of industrial equipment may increase the production capacity and subsequent yield from around 5–8kg of amphetamine per production batch to up to 30–40kg, the agency discovered.

EMCDDA Director Wolfgang Göttsaid said: “Amphetamine is a drug warranting careful attention, despite the fact that its use has remained relatively stable in most European countries over the past decade. I am particularly concerned by our latest analysis identifying the growing scale and sophistication of some producers. With this publication we hope to enhance the understanding of an often overlooked, but nevertheless key, component on the European scene for stimulant drugs.”

Experts feel that the use of the stimulant, seen as a ‘poor man’s cocaine’ could increase during darker economic times. The report says that most users of the drug are “socially relatively integrated occasional users”, but that there are also marginalised users with grave problems caused by their drug use.

In 2009, more than 34,000 seizures resulted in the interception of an estimated eight tonnes of amphetamine powder and 3 million amphetamine tablets in Europe.

In the fight against the drug, EMCDDA says that the drug can be produced at low cost, but campaigns against ‘precursor’ chemicals, used in the manufacturing process seem to be effective.

#BIBLIO

Wikipedia [Amphetamine](#)

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