

Ireland top of cocaine league

By [Fiona Dillon](#)

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COCAINE is more prevalent in Ireland than most other European countries, a new report shows.

The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction and Europol said the number of cocaine seizures here reflected the high level of supply.

It said that "supply as measured by the number of seizures is above EU average in Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Spain and the UK".

In four of these countries, the prevalence of cocaine use is also above the EU average.

"This suggests that there are several links between supply and use," it stated.

The report, Cocaine: A European Union Perspective In The Global Context, noted how increasingly sophisticated techniques were being used to conceal and smuggle cocaine into Europe.

The report said that Europe had become an important destination for cocaine manufactured in South America.

It said that "with a significant proportion of the global cocaine output now destined for Europe, new cross-Atlantic trafficking routes have emerged".

Increased

The centre's director, Wolfgang Gotz, said: "Cocaine use and cocaine-related problems have increased markedly in Europe since the mid-1990s and around three million young adults report to have used the drug in the last year.

"I am particularly concerned by our latest analysis which illustrates the growing sophistication and innovation of cocaine traffickers in circumventing the law and the potential for the supply-led diffusion of cocaine into central and eastern European countries."

Surveys have shown that in many EU countries, and in Europe overall, cocaine is now the second most commonly used illicit substance after cannabis.

Three million, or 2.2pc of young adults aged between 15 and 34 are reported to have used cocaine in the previous year.

In addition, several studies have observed high levels of cocaine use in recreational settings.

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