

European Update

EMCDDA

Responding to Drug Driving in Europe - report

Many of the accidents and deaths that occur on European roads are caused by drivers whose performance is impaired by a psychoactive substance. Alcohol alone is estimated to account for up to 10 000 road deaths a year in the European Union, one quarter of all road deaths. No comparable figures are available for road accidents related to illicit drugs and psychoactive medicines, though these have been receiving increasing attention over the past decade.

<http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/drugs-in-focus/driving>

Europe

'Cocaine Trafficking to Europe' Options of Supply Control. 37-page PDF [German Institute for International and Security Affairs]

http://www.swp-berlin.org/en/common/get_document.php?asset_id=6361

Belgium

Belgian Airport Federal Police discovered four suitcases containing 100 packets full of cocaine, with a total weight of 116 kilos. Three suitcases were found in the baggage hold of a plane coming from the Dominican Republic and the fourth one was discovered among the non retrieved luggage.

http://www.rtlinfo.be/info/belgique/faits_divers/275242/decouverte-de-116-kg-de-cocaine-au-brussels-airport

Bulgaria

Death rate for Bulgarian addicts is Europe's fifth highest. Bulgaria now has more than 30 000 drug addicts of which just 3000 undergo treatment each year, according to recent statistics.

http://www.sofiaecho.com/2009/09/21/787717_death-rate-for-bulgarian-addicts-is-europes-fifth-highest

Croatia

Republic of Croatia to become member of EMCDDA. Deputy Prime Minister of Croatia, Đurđica Adlešić, visited the EMCDDA as the country prepares for membership of this EU agency. The purpose of today's visit was to prepare for the country's formal participation in the work of the agency. Practically, this means that the country will become member of the agency, will participate as observer in its Management Board and will formally report national data into the European monitoring system.

http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/attachements.cfm/att_91529_EN_CroatiaVisit2009_ENFinal_Final.pdf

France

Over 315 kg of cocaine were seized by Customs and 4 Ecuador nationals arrested on the A10 road that connects Spain to France. The drugs were estimated to be worth 15 million euros. The A10 has been nicknamed the 'Highway of Drugs'. <http://www.leparisien.fr/faits-divers/315-kilos-de-cocaine-saisis-sur-l-a10-21-10-2009-682875.php> (translate)

Ireland

National Drug Strategy Launch 2 - video. Initial briefing session & background to the new National Drug Strategy. Presented by Michael Conroy, Department of Community Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs.

<http://www.drugs.ie/media/?id=270>

Malta

Malta finds itself in the middle of an immigration and drug smuggling route, which connects Africa with mainland Europe. A Europol report, "EU organized crime Threat assessment 2009", said that the southern and south west criminal hubs are both influenced by the re-activation of a smuggling route passing through Libya and Algeria to Spain, Malta and Italy.

<http://www.maltastar.com/pages/ms09dart.asp?a=5045>

United Kingdom

'Guidance for the pharmacological management of substance misuse among young people'

Until now there has been no formal guidance to help clinicians to manage substance dependence among young people. This has left practitioners concerned that their practice may not accord with the developing evidence base. This document describes good practice on the best ways to manage a clinically complex condition.

http://www.dh.gov.uk/prod_consum_dh/groups/dh_digitalassets/documents/digitalasset/dh_106429.pdf

United Kingdom

Navy seizes cocaine 'worth £240m'. The Portsmouth-based frigate HMS Iron Duke seized more than five-and-a-half tonnes of the drug from a 138ft fishing boat off the coast of South America.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/8277483.stm>

United Kingdom

'Seizures of Drugs in England and Wales', 2008/09. This publication presents figures for drug seizures made by law enforcement agencies in England and Wales during 2008/09 [Home Office, UK]

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs09/hosb1609.pdf>

World Update

WADA

The 2010 List of Prohibited Substances and Methods has been approved by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) Executive Committee. The list will come into force on 1 January 2010. The Prohibited List specifies substances and methods prohibited in sport. http://www.ukssport.gov.uk/news/2010_prohibited_list_approved_by_wada/

Afghanistan

A major opium producer just a few years ago, Afghanistan's eastern province of Nangarhar is now believed to be opium free, amid signs the once flourishing olive business is undergoing a revival. Nangarhar is set to harvest about 400 tons of olives this year. <http://www.irinnews.org/report.aspx?ReportID=86735>

Australia

National Drug Research Institute Annual Report 2008: Preventing harmful drug use in Australia. http://ndri.curtin.edu.au/local/docs/pdf/annual_reports/anrep2008.pdf

New Zealand

New Zealand is seen as a soft target by gangs, which launder millions of dollars through the country. Detective Inspector Bernie Edwards of Victoria Police told the Police Association conference in Wellington that New Zealand needed to do more to crack down on organised crime. <http://www.mapinc.org/drugnews/v09/n937/a03.html>

Colombia

Colombian crackdown appears to be paying off. So far this year, they've also impounded a record 30 tons of cocaine at the port or in its immediate vicinity. Since April, Colombia's armed forces have arrested 26 port workers and eight members of the port police on suspicion of involvement with the narcos. <http://www.mapinc.org/drugnews/v09.n885.a04.html>

Colombia

Colombia's Supreme Court ruled that possession of illegal drugs for personal use is not a criminal offense.. Drug consumption "generates in a person problems of addiction and slavery that turn one into a sick, compulsive individual deserving of therapeutic medical treatment instead of a punishment," the judges said. <http://www.ihrablog.net/2009/09/colombian-court-rules-against.html>

India

Drugs and HIV: voices of hope in India. UNODC Representative for South Asia, recently visited the north-east of India, where they met determined men and women dealing with drug use, HIV and AIDS. <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2009/September/drugs-and-hiv-voices-of-hope-in-india.html?newsletter=true>

Panama

As part of a two-year operation spanning three conti-

nents, a number of reputed crime bosses have been arrested over the past few weeks for attempting to smuggle 108 kilograms of cocaine from Panama to Israel. Two years of surveillance operations in Panama and France, as well as analysis of hundreds of wiretaps in those countries and Spain led to a raid on a warehouse in Panama where the drug was being stored. <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1118008.html>

Myanmar

Myanmar Drug Trade Surges Along Thai Border. Anti-narcotics officials are rubbing their eyes at the spectacle they are now witnessing: a flood of heroin and methamphetamines is spilling across from Myanmar as traffickers slash their inventories in a panicked sell-off. http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/01/world/asia/01iht-drugs.html?_r=2

Papua New Guinea

The National Narcotics Bureau exists in name only. Its annual budgetary allocation is miniscule to the point of it being useless. It is seriously understaffed. Government policy in the area does not exist or if it does, it has never been announced. Laws governing trafficking and use of drugs are lax. Yet, drug use and abuse, as a proportion of the social and law and order problems in the country, has reached emergency proportions. <http://www.thenational.com.pg/?q=node/2109>

Peru

Surging cocaine production is rattling Peru after years of relative calm, raising fears that the associated increase in violence and corruption could derail one of the fastest-growing economies in Latin America. A Peruvian anti-drug agency called Devida has sought to carry out specific measures to fight drug use. But an official said central government funding promised for 2009 of some \$50 million for the program hasn't been disbursed. <http://www.mapinc.org/drugnews/v09.n879.a10.html>

Russia

Russian teenagers will be tested for drugs during their regular medical examinations at school, Russia's anti-narcotics agency chief said. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev proposed the mandatory drug screenings warning that addiction was a threat to national security. <http://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/russian-teens-to-be-tested-for-drugs-at-school-1799405.html>

USA

U.S. cocaine use falls but too soon to claim victory. As U.S. cocaine use falls and security is tightened on its border with Mexico, more drugs are flowing toward Africa, a top U.S. official said, although he warned Americans should not be complacent about the shift. <http://www.reuters.com/article/reutersEdge/idUSTRE5916YX20091002>

Drug Update

Conferences

Police Drug and Alcohol Conference, DeVere Stanton Park, Daventry, 10th-11th November 2009

Police from across England and Wales will be coming together to address drug and alcohol use at work, and the role of an effective and active testing policy.

The Police Drug and Alcohol Conference is a free event offering forces the chance to better understand policy introduction and implementation – from tender to contract award, to service roll-out. It is hoped that this will be of particular interest to those who are interested but may not have yet started a formal procedure.

The conference will also provide an opportunity for police forces to share their experiences and best practice, in terms of what they have done and how it has worked for them. Content will include 'for cause' testing – situations where there is a reason to suspect impairment from substance abuse; drug and alcohol testing in the context of tribunals; and testing for steroid use. There will be a dedicated MRO briefing, and separate breakout sessions on a number of related topics. To register for the Police Drug and Alcohol Conference, contact 0207 712 8000, or email mo.whitelaw@medscreen.com

Briefing Paper

'Comparing the drug situation across countries: Problems, Pitfalls and Possibilities' Problems, Pitfalls and Possibilities - Briefing Number 19 [Beckley Foundation]

This briefing paper seeks to compare the drugs situation in a number of developed countries. Data from six European countries, the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand are included. The European element comprises six countries selected to represent both the social and geographical heterogeneity of the continent and the diverse drug strategies employed across it: Denmark, Germany, The Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and the United Kingdom. The Netherlands and Sweden are usually signified as representing different poles in terms of their drugs policies, with the Dutch having a pragmatic, liberal approach and Sweden's restrictive policies being grounded in their vision of a drug-free society. The policy landscape in the United Kingdom, meanwhile, demonstrates elements found in both approaches, and, as with Denmark, relatively high levels of drug use are found in its population. Portugal has adopted some singular legal measures in recent years, and Germany has been particularly innovative in its treatment and public health policies. <http://www.idpc.net/sites/default/files/library/Beckley%20Briefing%2019.pdf>

Future Issues

I would like to express thanks to those persons around the world who have contributed to this issue in particular to **Jim Young and Tim Manhire**

Items for inclusion in future issues should be forwarded to paul@paul-cook.net

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