



SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST



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KEY FIGURES AT A GLANCE DRUG USE

People who use drugs, 2022 (in million)

292
million people

↑ 20%
over 10 years



228
cannabis



60
opiods
(of which 30 opiates)



30
amphetamines



23.5
cocaine



20
"ecstasy"

People with drug use disorders, 2022 (in million)

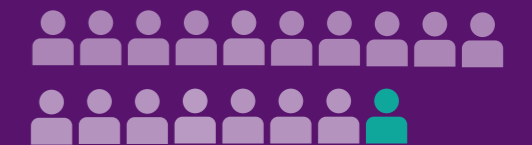
64
million people

↑ 3%
over 5 years, 2018-2022

1 in 11
in treatment



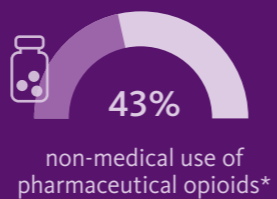
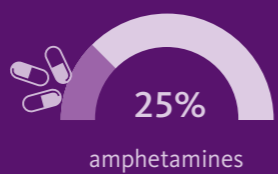
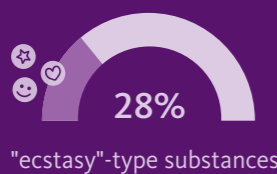
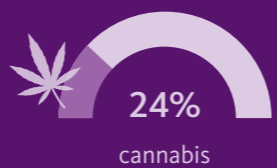
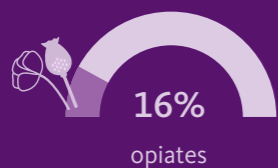
1 in 18 among women
in treatment



1 in 7 among men
in treatment



Women among people who use drugs, 2022



*estimate not global, based on a few countries only

People who inject drugs, 2022

13.9
million people who
inject drugs

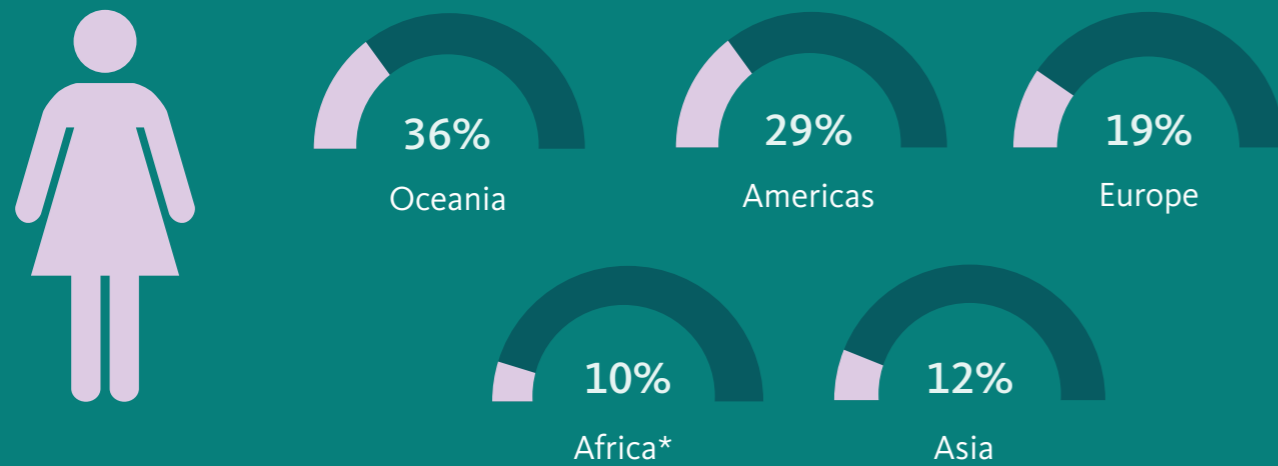
6.8 million
living with hepatitis C

1.6 million
living with HIV

1.4 million
living with HIV
and hepatitis C

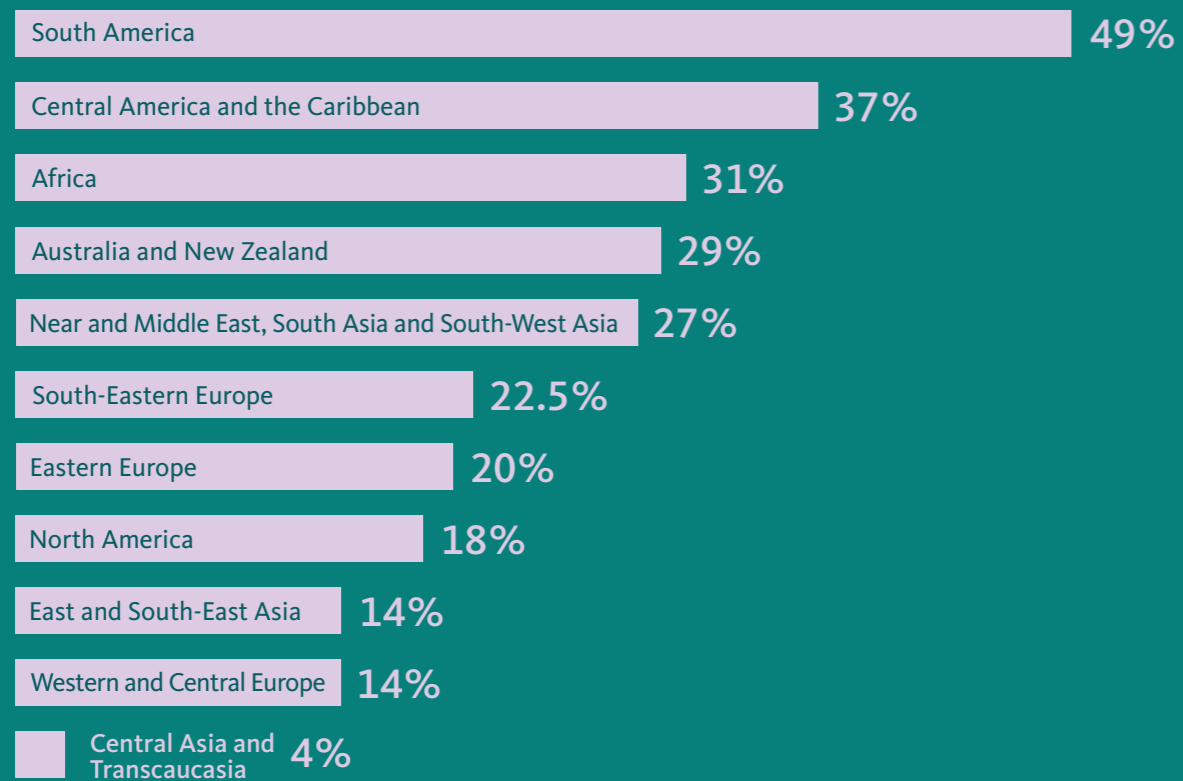
KEY FIGURES AT A GLANCE DRUG TREATMENT

Women in treatment, 2022

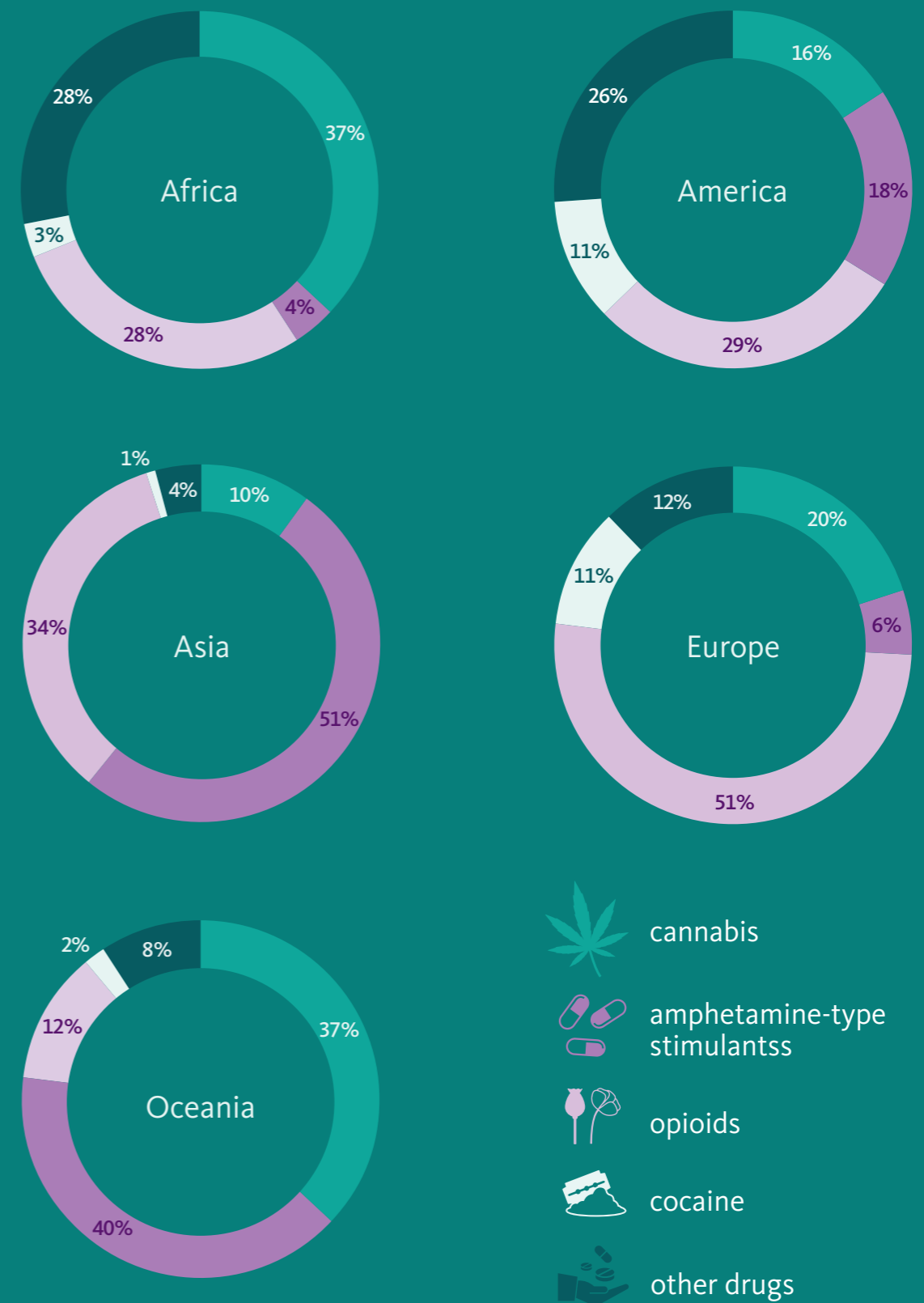


* estimate based on a limited number of countries

People under 25 years old in treatment, 2022



Primary drug of people in treatment, 2022



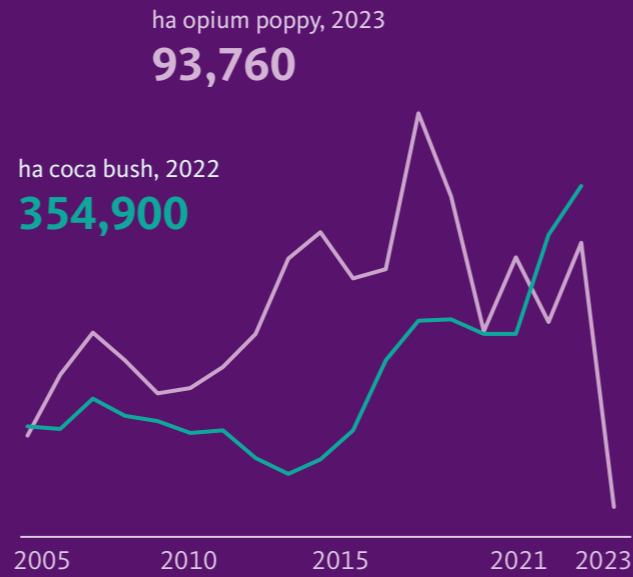
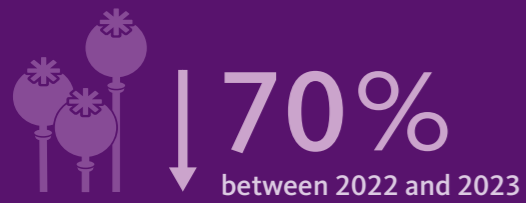
KEY FIGURES AT A GLANCE CULTIVATION AND PRODUCTION

Global cultivation

coca bush

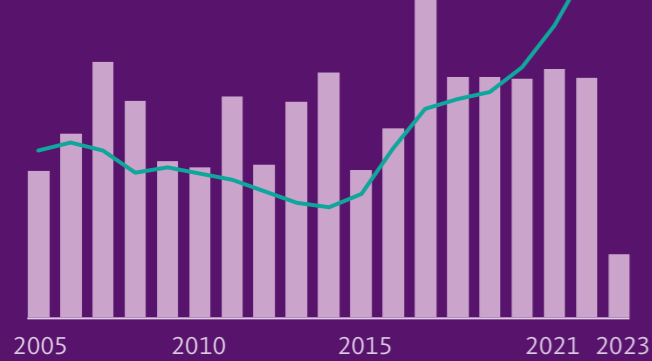


opium poppy



Global production

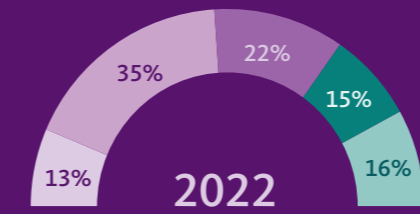
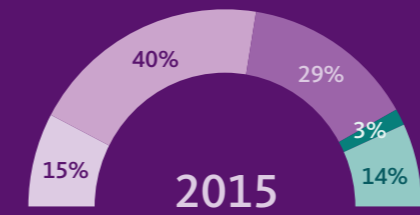
tons of opium, 2023
1,990 ↓74%
between 2022 and 2023



tons of pure cocaine, 2022
2,757 ↑20%
between 2021 and 2022



New psychoactive substances on the global market

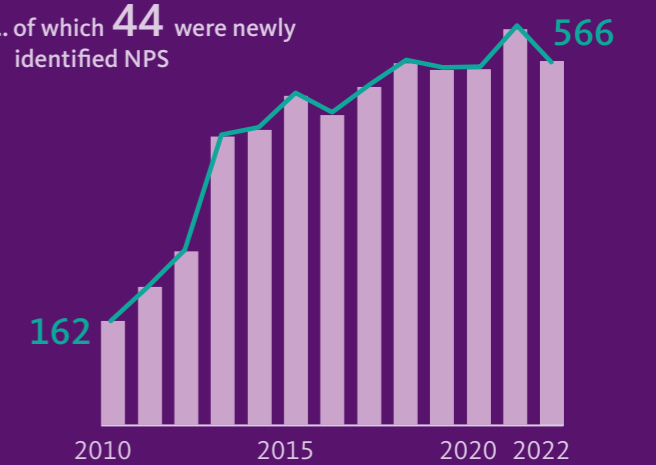


- class hallucinogens
- stimulants
- synthetic cannabinoids
- synthetic opioids
- other NPS

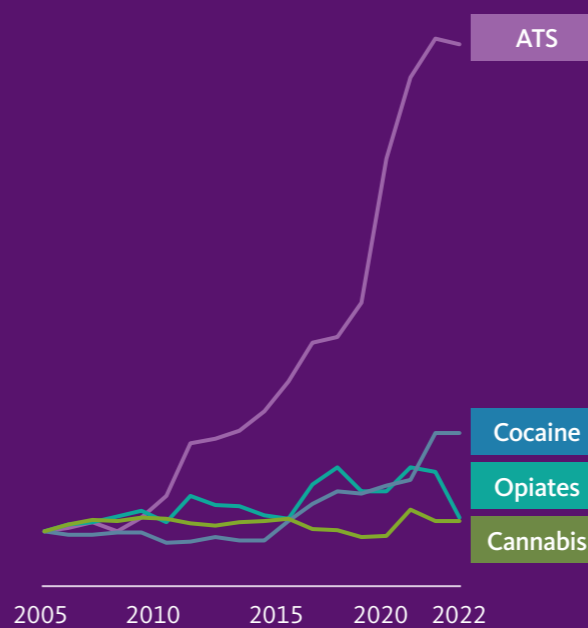
566

NPS on the market in 2022...

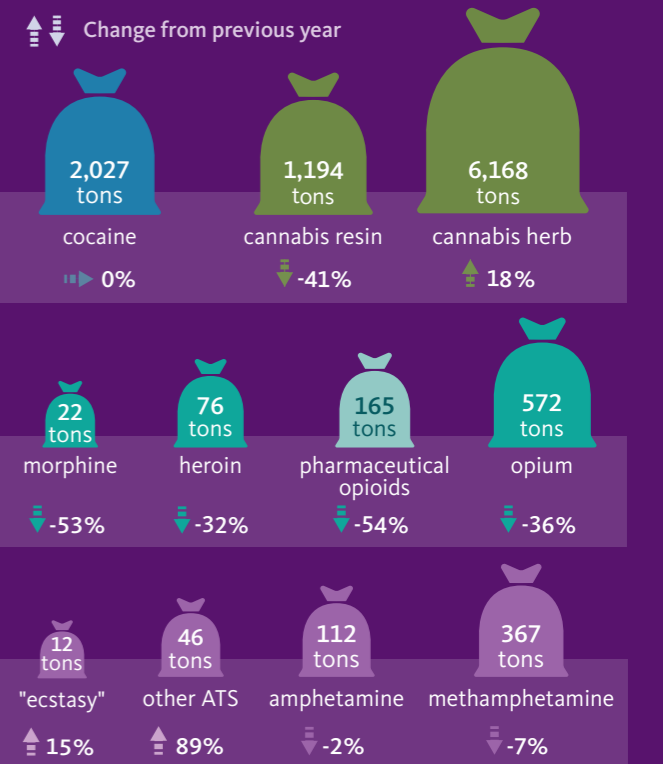
... of which **44** were newly identified NPS



Trends in quantity of drugs seized



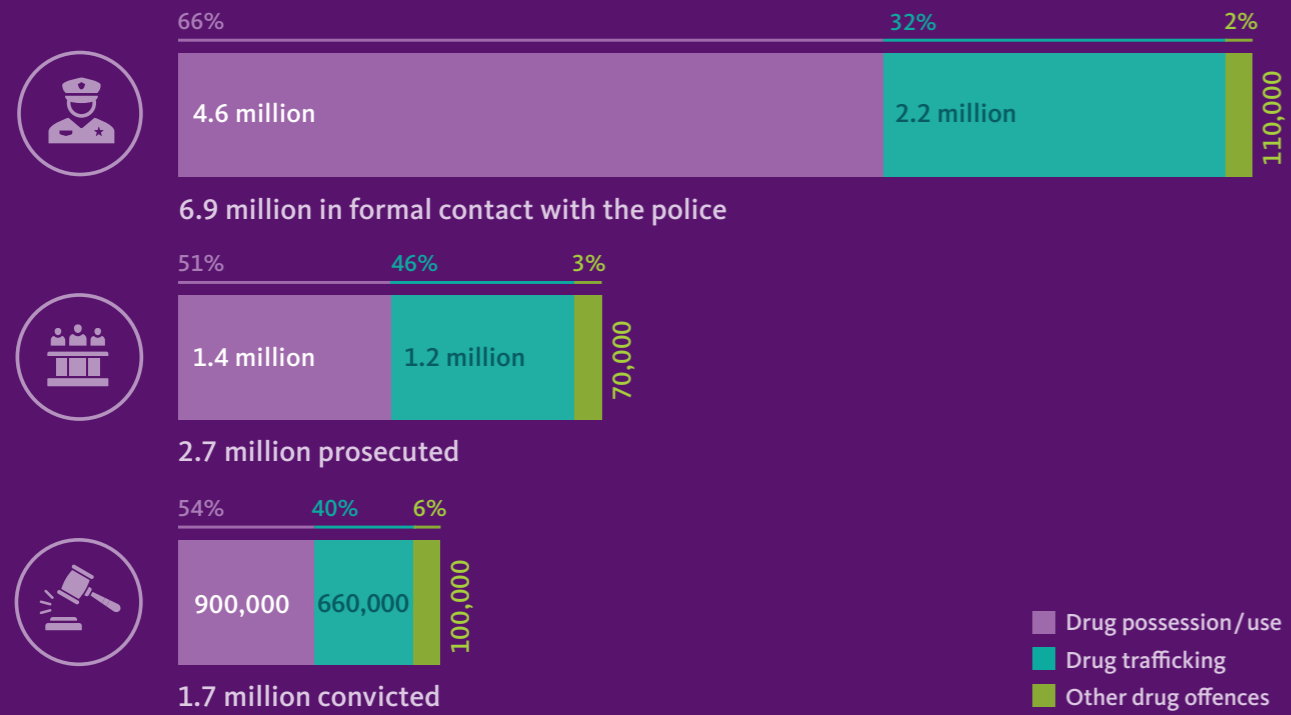
Global quantities of drugs seized, 2022



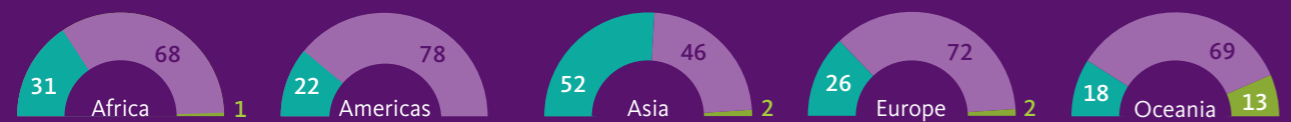
Note: Seizures for 2022 include estimates for non-reporting countries.

KEY FIGURES AT A GLANCE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

People in the criminal justice system for drug offences, 2022



Percentage of types of drug offences among people in formal contact with the police, 2022



Percentage of types of drug offences among people prosecuted*, 2022

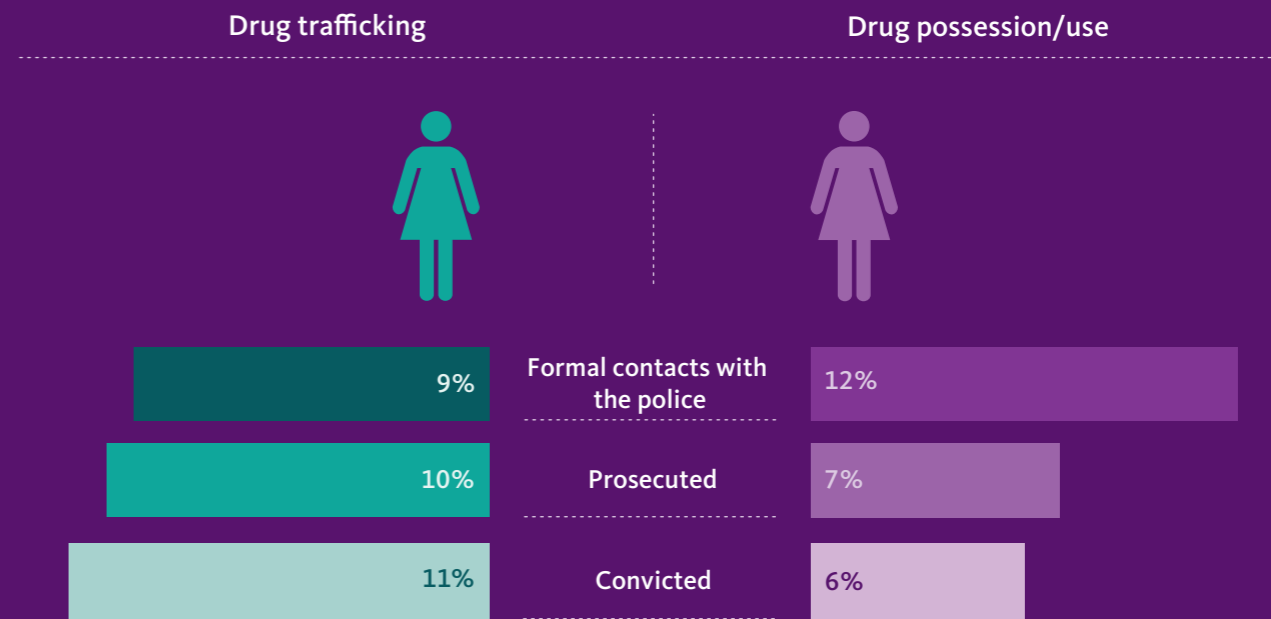


Percentage of types of drug offences among people convicted*, 2022

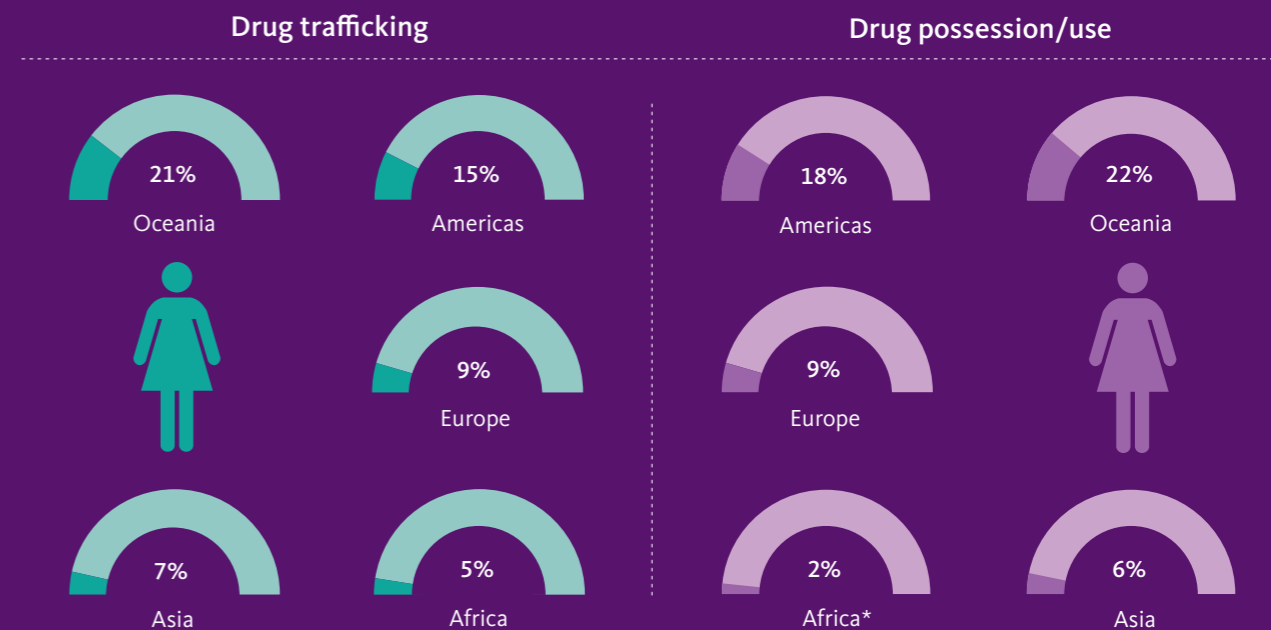


■ Drug possession/use ■ Drug trafficking ■ Other drug offences *Data from Africa are too limited to derive estimates

Women in the criminal justice system for drug offences, 2022



Women in formal contacts with the police for drug offences, 2022



*estimate based on limited data

KEY FINDINGS AND POSSIBLE RESPONSES

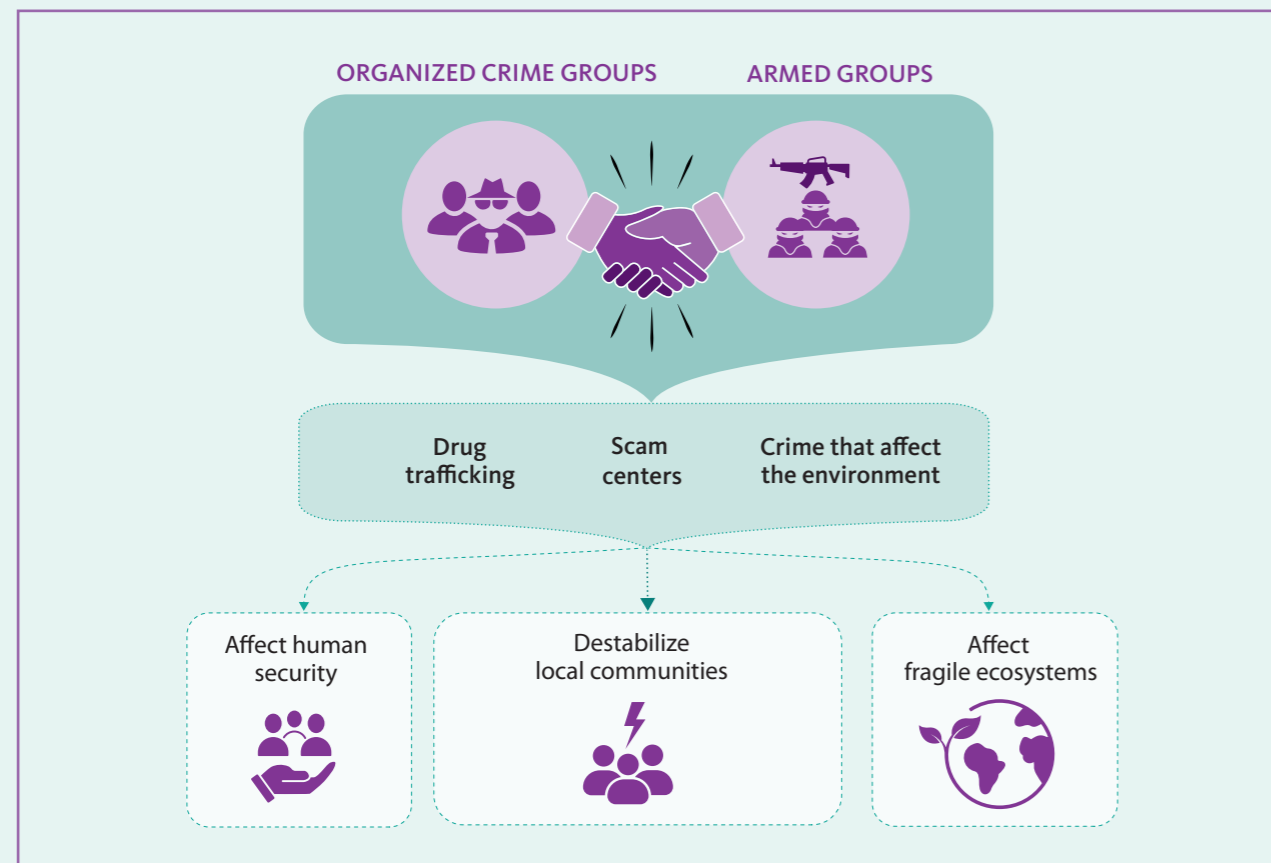
PART 1: WHAT TO WATCH?



PART 1: WHAT TO WATCH?

Organized criminal groups are exploiting instability and challenges related to the rule of law to carry out drug trafficking and other crimes

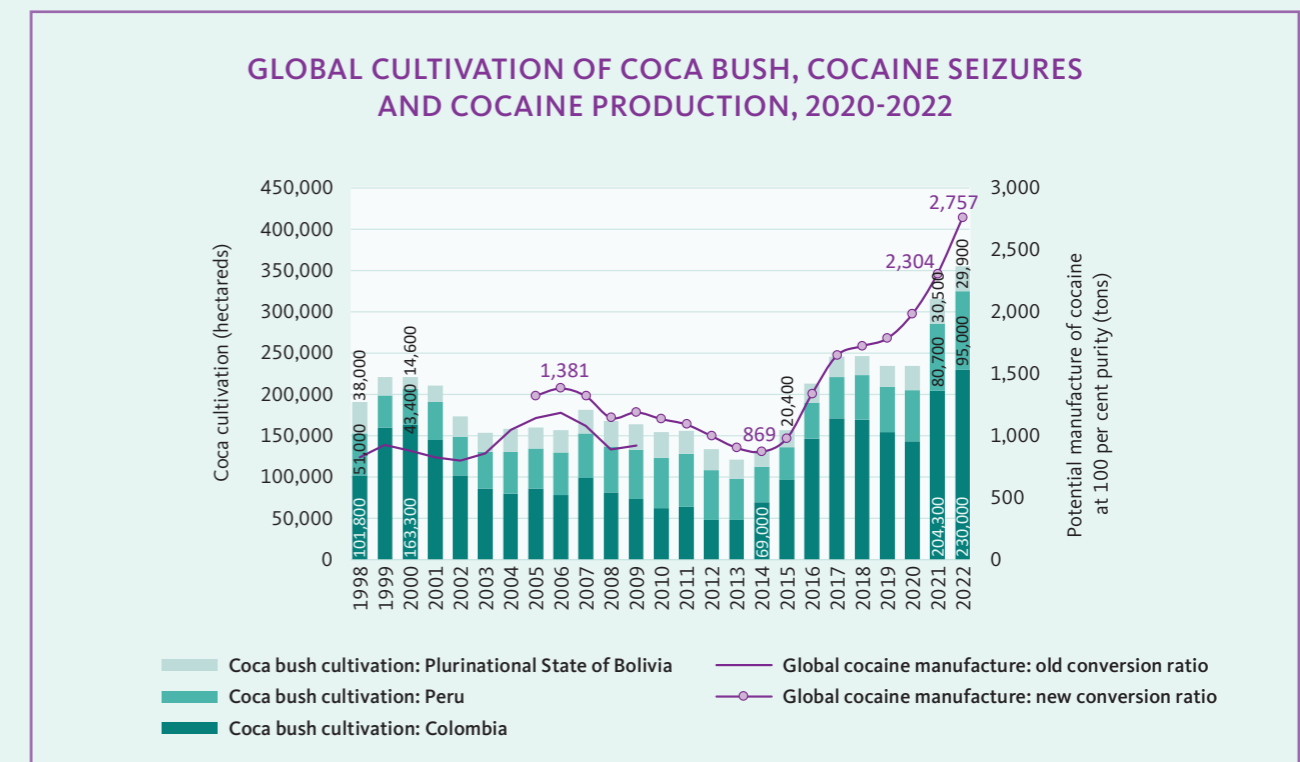
- » Methamphetamine production in the Golden Triangle in South-East Asia has surged in recent years, outpacing the production of traditional opiates such as heroin and opium. Armed groups in the Golden Triangle have diversified their illegal activities beyond drug production, engaging in online criminality and cyber-scamming. Special economic zones have emerged as hotspots for criminal enterprises and financial fraud.
- » Some border areas in Latin America and Asia have become hubs for drug trafficking groups expanding into other forms of crime, including trafficking in persons for forced criminality and crimes that affect the environment, damaging fragile ecosystems and negatively impacting local communities.
- » Startling levels of violence associated with cocaine trafficking and competition between criminal groups and gangs are affecting Latin America and the Caribbean, as well as countries in Western Europe.
- » Africa is increasingly affected by drug trafficking and harm related to drug use as criminal groups are turning to the continent to transit cocaine.
- » Synthetic drugs can be produced anywhere and their illegal manufacture is expanding in low-, middle- and high-income countries. However, large-scale manufacture remains concentrated in areas affected by governance challenges and instability, for example in Afghanistan, Mexico, Myanmar and the Syrian Arab Republic.



PART 1: WHAT TO WATCH?

Cocaine use is at an all-time record level as supply reaches a record high

- » Cocaine supply reached a record high in 2022, with more than 2,700 tons of cocaine manufactured – 20 per cent more than a year earlier and three times the amount manufactured in 2013 and in 2014.
- » Markets are expanding in Western and Central Europe, with more cocaine being trafficked to the subregion, notably via North Sea ports. However, most parts of the world are affected by cocaine trafficking.
- » The main cocaine trafficking flows continue to be from the Andean region to other countries in the Americas and towards Western and Central Europe.
- » Cocaine trafficking has expanded eastwards in the last decade, and some countries in Asia have reported significant instances of cocaine seizures in recent years, with demand for the drug increasing in some emerging markets in the region.
- » The impact of the cocaine trade is visible in countries such as Ecuador where, in recent years, the increased trafficking of cocaine from Colombia has resulted in a wave of lethal violence linked to local and transnational crime groups, with cocaine seizures and homicide rates rising fivefold between 2019 and 2022. The highest such rates were reported in the coastal areas used for trafficking the cocaine to major destination markets in North America and Europe.
- » Demand is also rising, with indicators of cocaine use showing increases after a brief lull during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- » Clear evidence of harm due to cocaine use is becoming more and more evident, particularly in Western and Central Europe. The intensity of use is increasing, as are hospitalizations, treatment demand, including for “crack” cocaine, and fatalities. In addition to the established markets, there is growing evidence of an increase in use and in harms related to cocaine in countries in Africa and Asia.



KEY FINDINGS WHAT TO WATCH?

PART 1: WHAT TO WATCH?

Drastic contraction of the Afghan opiate market with possible dramatic consequences in the country and beyond

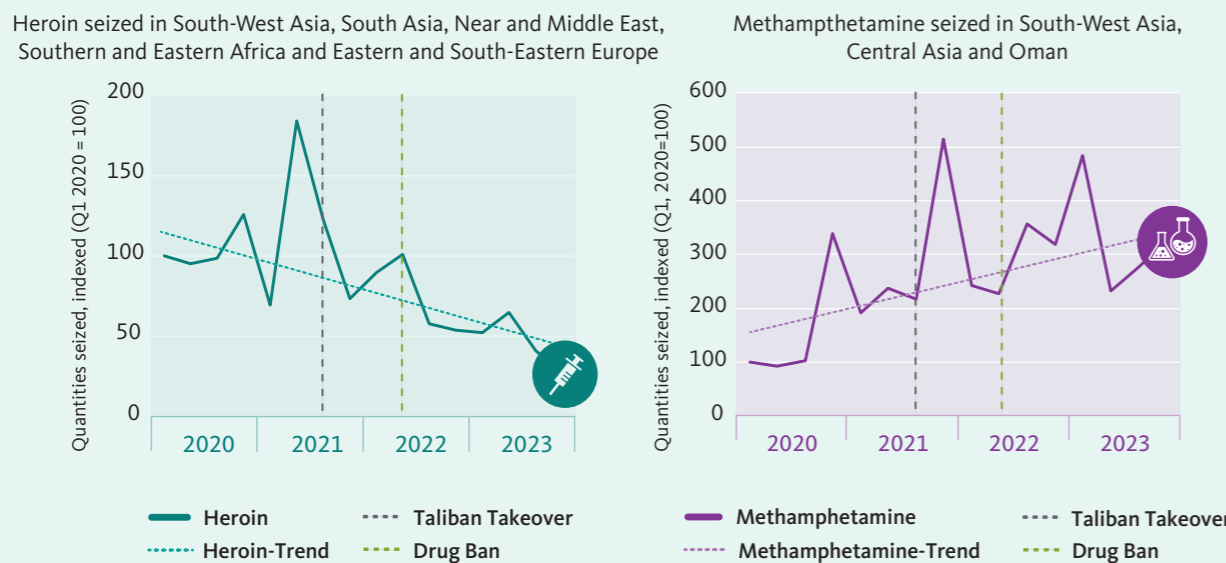
- » In Afghanistan, the cultivation area and production of opium plummeted by 95 per cent from 2022 to 2023, following the 2022 drug ban. Afghanistan has long accounted for the vast majority of global illicit opium production, often upwards of 80 per cent, and shortages will be felt in the main destination markets for Afghan opiates if the ban is sustained.
- » The sharp reduction had immediate consequences for vulnerable rural communities in Afghanistan. Farmers' incomes, which came from selling harvested opium to traders, dropped by more than 92 per cent, falling from an estimated \$1,360 million for the 2022 harvest to \$110 million for the 2023 harvest.
- » Based on preliminary observations, opium production in 2024 may be slightly higher, but likely nowhere near pre-ban levels. It is also unlikely that existing stocks from Afghanistan or increased opium production in other countries will compensate for the shortfall in the long run.
- » As a result, heroin availability is expected to decline and the demand market is expected to adjust in different ways, depending on national circumstances. Demand for opiate-related treatment services is expected to rise, but if these services are insufficient, heroin users may switch to other opioids. New, more potent synthetic opioids could emerge in the market and significantly increase the risks of overdose.
- » It is less clear whether the drug ban announced in April 2022 also impacted Afghan methamphetamine production and exports. By the end of 2023, seizures in neighbouring countries – which report that most methamphetamine continues to originate in Afghanistan – did not indicate a slowdown in methamphetamine trafficking.

PART 1: WHAT TO WATCH?

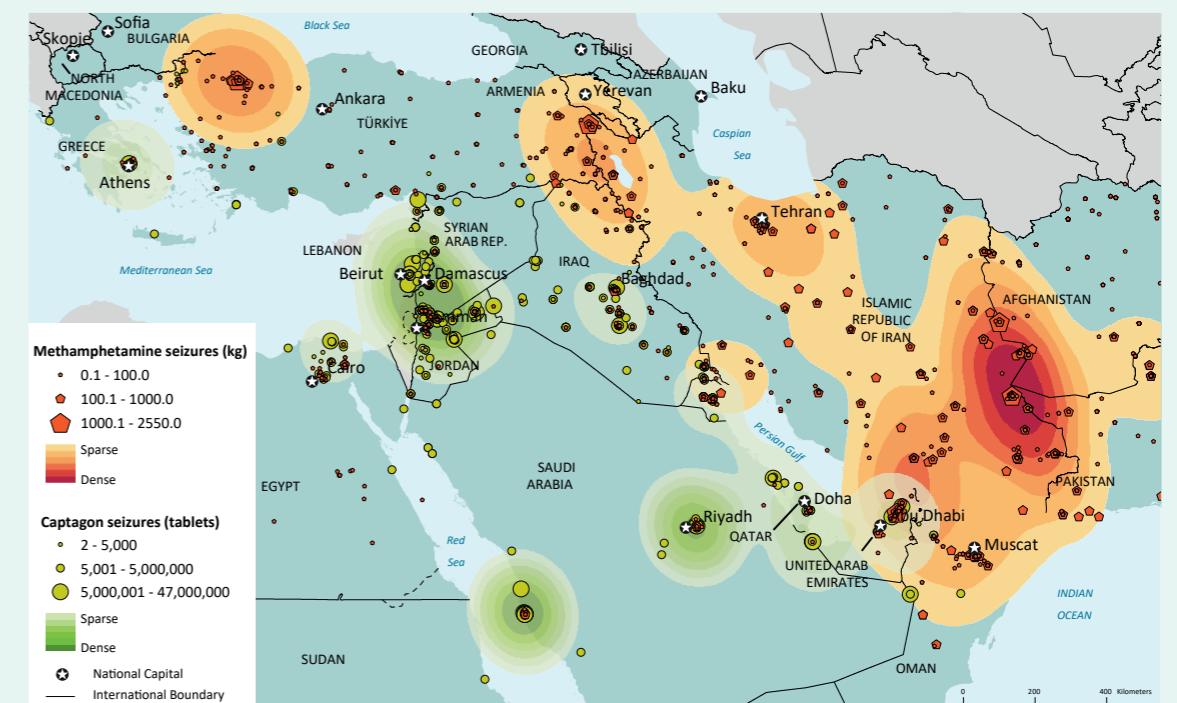
Global methamphetamine seizures have flattened, but markets in the Near and Middle East and in South-West Asia continue to grow

- » Global seizures of amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) remain at historically high levels. Despite a slight decline in 2022, numbers may be rising again based on preliminary data from some regions in 2023. Methamphetamine continues to dominate the ATS market and trafficking is growing in non-traditional markets.
- » Most of the increases in ATS seizures have occurred in East and South-East Asia and South-West Asia, as well as at sea, mainly in the Gulf of Oman, the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean.
- » The two largest emerging methamphetamine markets in recent years have been the Near and Middle East/South-West Asia and South-Eastern Europe.
- » In addition to methamphetamine, the market for "captagon" in the Near and Middle East continues to flourish, with seizures in 2022 remaining at the record high levels reached in 2021. The trafficking of methamphetamine from South-West Asia and that of "captagon" from the Levant are converging in the Near and Middle East.

TREND IN THE QUANTITIES OF HEROIN AND METHAMPHETAMINE SEIZED IN SIGNIFICANT SEIZURE EVENTS, POTENTIALLY LINKED TO PRODUCTION IN AFGHANISTAN, 2020–2023



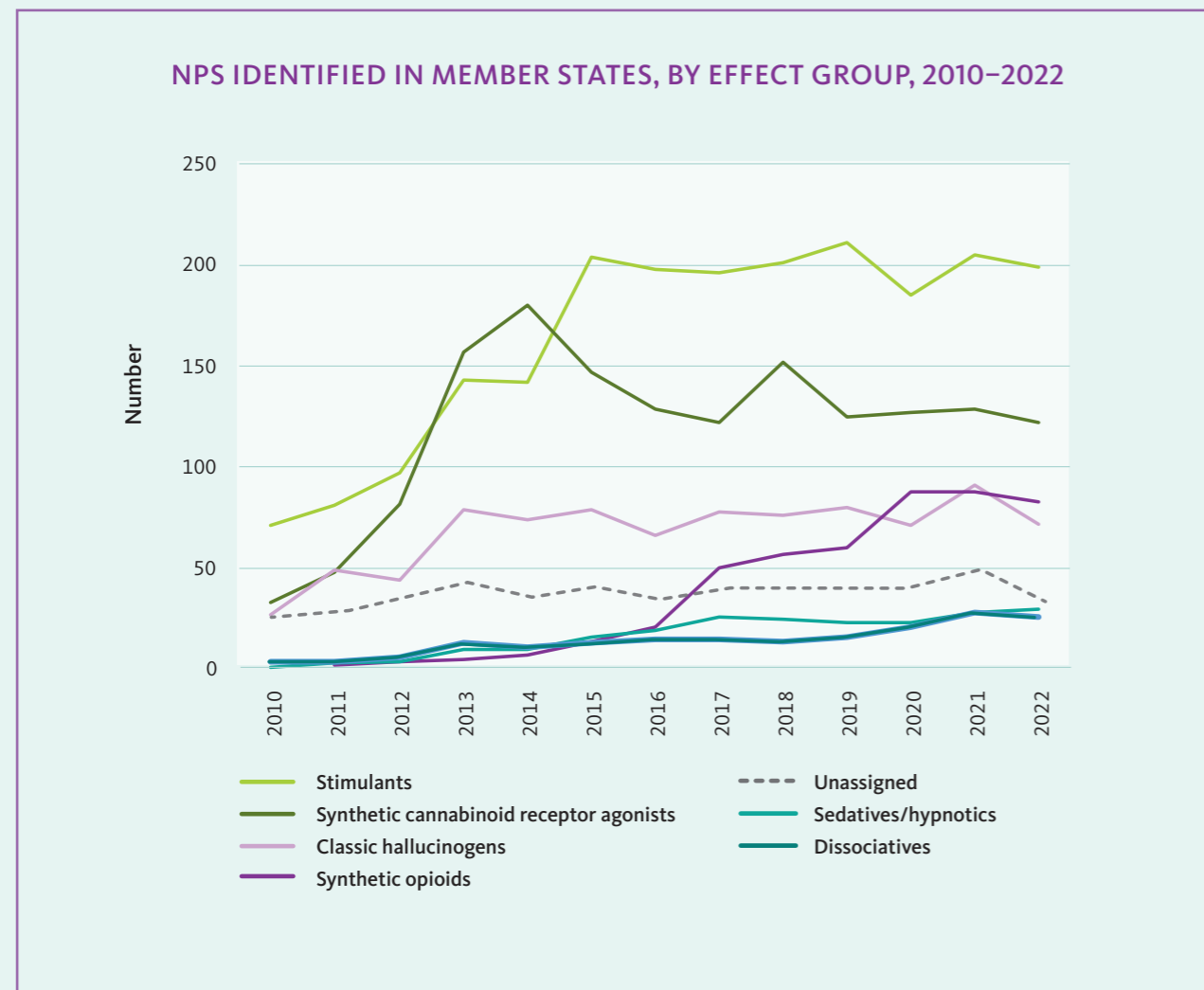
MAIN SEIZURES OF METHAMPHETAMINE AND "CAPTAGON" REPORTED IN THE NEAR AND MIDDLE EAST AND NEIGHBOURING SUBREGIONS, 2019–2023



PART 1: WHAT TO WATCH?

Emergence of new synthetic opioids poses lethal risks

- » The number of new psychoactive substances (NPS) was broadly stable in 2022, with a small decline in the number of newly identified opioid NPS. However, of particular concern are nitazenes, a group of synthetic opioids which, in some cases, are more potent than fentanyl and which have been spreading in markets in North America, Western Europe, South America and Oceania, posing significant health risks.
- » The recent emergence of high-potency nitazenes and the increase in overdose deaths resulting from their use in some countries illustrate how the introduction of these substances can rapidly affect public health and safety. While there is no clear evidence that links the current wave of overdose deaths from nitazenes to the opium ban in Afghanistan, the potential for the further spread of potent and harmful opioids remains a concern.



PART 1: WHAT TO WATCH?

Countries in Africa are increasingly affected by drug trafficking and the use of new and dangerous drug “cocktails”

- » Countries in Africa have not traditionally been a part of the main drug trafficking routes, but criminal groups have increasingly turned to the continent for the transshipment of cocaine, heroin and methamphetamine. The trafficking of these drugs to and from Africa has clearly increased over the last three decades.
- » Cocaine, which was previously believed to only transit the region, is increasingly being used there, with the number of people entering treatment for cocaine use rising. In some countries, cocaine has even become the most commonly reported main drug of use for women in drug treatment. In addition, heroin continues to bring significant number of people to drug treatment in North, East and some parts Southern Africa.
- » This has resulted in a spillover of international drug trafficking flows to local markets, exacerbating drug use harms. According to qualitative data, Africa is the region with the fastest growing cannabis use. Another typical pattern of use found mostly in Africa is the non-medical use of falsified tramadol, an opioid that is not under international control.
- » A growing concern is the use of drug mixtures and concoctions going by names such as “kush”, “karkoubi” and “nyaope”. According to the limited evidence available, they often contain a number of harmful substances, including various illicit drugs, pharmaceuticals such as benzodiazepines, alcohol and solvents.



PART 1: WHAT TO WATCH?

Considering the increased complexity of drug supply dynamics – marked by the agility of traffickers in shifting drugs, routes and methods; the interconnection of drug production and trafficking with other crimes; and the opportunities provided by drug trafficking to non-state armed groups involved in conflict situations – formulating and implementing effective responses requires a comprehensive approach. This approach should have several components:

- » Addressing transnational organized crime more holistically: develop strategies that engage various institutions, with the objectives of:
 - Influencing the market dynamics of the drug and other illicit economies and their replaceability;
 - Understanding and addressing the formation of, recruitment (particularly of young people) within and transnational connections of criminal groups;
 - Identifying effective and constructive entry points for regaining control in territories and communities where organized crime provides livelihoods, especially in conflict and fragile settings;
 - Improving understanding of the impact of organized crime on governance, the rule of law, socioeconomic development, the environment and human rights to recognize the often underestimated widespread threat that it poses.
- » Providing socioeconomic alternatives: offer socioeconomic alternatives to individuals engaged in the lower levels of the drug supply chain, such as farmers and those involved in retail drug sales due to poverty and a lack of options. These alternatives should go beyond merely replacing crops or income and address the root structural causes, such as deep-rooted poverty, underdevelopment and insecurity.

- » Strategic planning of law enforcement and criminal justice resources: prioritize and allocate resources to sustainably dismantle drug supply chains. Where criminal justice resources are unbalanced by focusing on the low-level actors, who can easily be replaced in the drug supply chain, a shift is needed to focus on targeting top-level individuals and groups critical to the drug trade. The use of improved strategic analysis, international judicial cooperation, efforts to reduce corruption and the development of skilled and professional law enforcement forces are also key, particularly in border areas.
- » Technological advancements in law enforcement: ensure that law enforcement authorities and the criminal justice system possess the technological skills and resources to match the sophistication of technology used in the drug supply chain. This includes acquiring new technological skills and proper equipment, and maintaining adequate scientific testing and forensic capacity in order to identify new drugs and emerging health threats.
- » Improving understanding of seizures and law enforcement operations: evaluate the impact and cost-effectiveness of seizures and law enforcement operations to ensure that operations target shipments and routes that most effectively lead to the drug supply being significantly disrupted. Given the agility of traffickers in overcoming seizures, it is crucial to approach operations in such a way that drugs or routes are not merely displaced but gradually destroyed. This requires effective international cooperation, trust in intelligence-sharing, and joint operations, in particular in border areas dominated by organized criminal groups. Early warning and monitoring systems are also essential.

PART 1: WHAT TO WATCH?



KEY FINDINGS AND
POSSIBLE RESPONSES

PART 2:
DRUG USE HARMS
AND IMPACTS



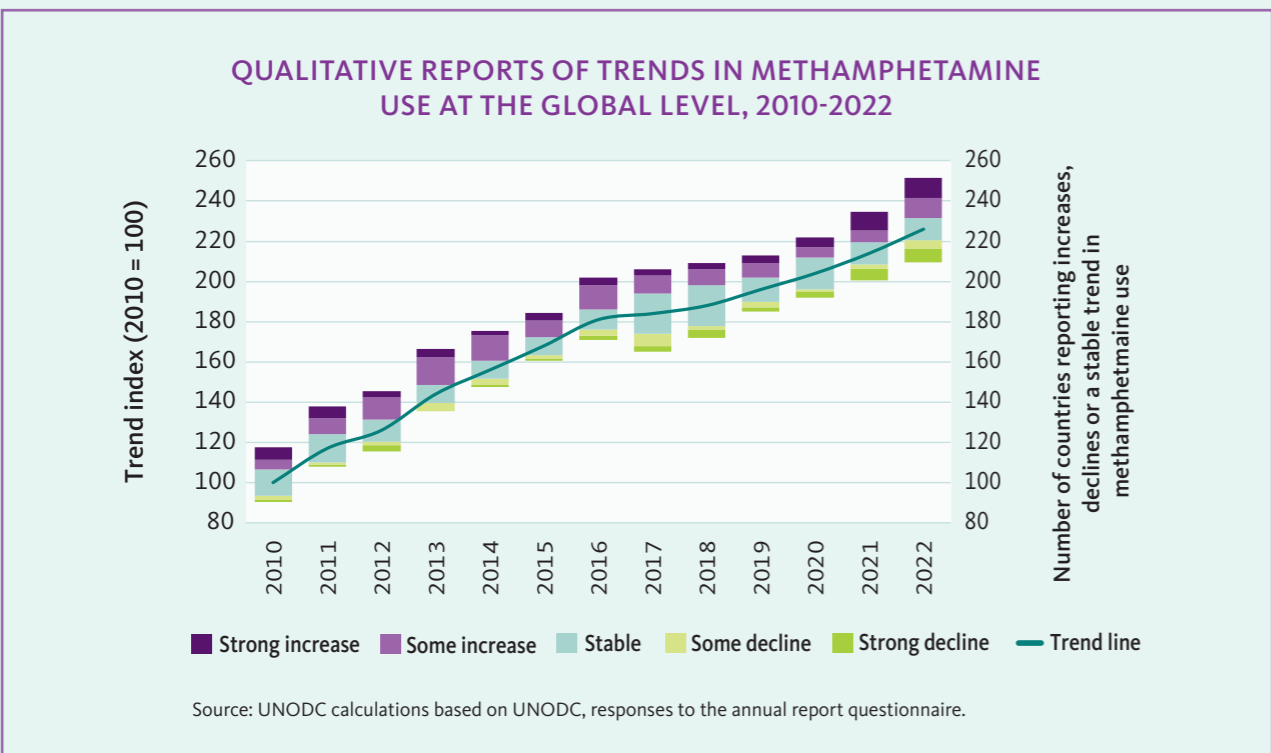
KEY FINDINGS

DRUG USE HARMS AND IMPACTS

PART 2: DRUG USE HARMS AND IMPACTS

Drug use continues to increase, boosted by demand for stimulants

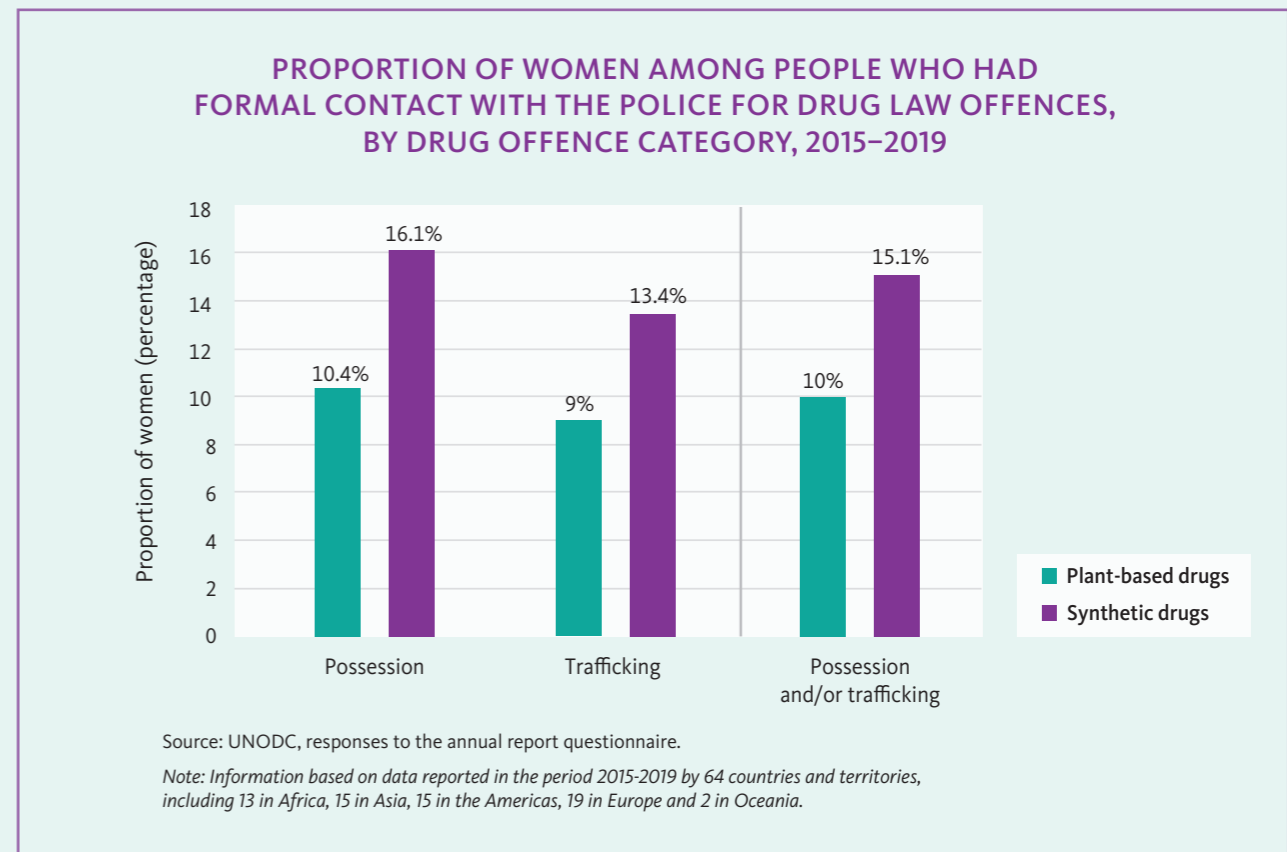
- » In 2022, almost 292 million, or 1 in 18 people, had used a drug in the past year – 20 per cent more than a decade before. Approximately 30 million people had used amphetamines in the past year and 60 million people had used opioids, of which approximately half had used opiates.
- » A factor contributing to the increase in drug use is the revival of stimulant drug use such as cocaine and “ecstasy”, following a decline during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- » The harmful consequences of drug use are myriad. The largest global burden of disease continues to be attributed to opioids, but cannabis is increasingly bringing people into drug treatment services. New estimates based on a new methodology suggest that 1 in 81 people worldwide (64 million) were suffering from a drug use disorder in 2022, and that this was an increase of 3 per cent from 2018.
- » The range of drugs available to consumers has expanded, making patterns of use increasingly complex and polydrug use a common feature in most drug markets.
- » An estimated 13.9 million people injected drugs in 2022. The relative risk of acquiring HIV is 14 times higher for those who inject drugs than in the wider population globally, and about one in eight people who inject drugs were living with HIV in 2022.
- » Injecting drug use continues to be an important facilitating driver of the global epidemic of hepatitis C; the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 23 per cent of new hepatitis C infections are attributable to unsafe drug injection. Nearly every second person injecting drugs is living with hepatitis C. Overall, liver diseases attributed to hepatitis C account for more than half the deaths attributed to the use of drugs.
- » Fentanyl and other potent synthetic opioids continue to be associated with the high levels of drug-related mortality in North America. The overdose crisis in North America appears to have stabilized since 2021, after a decade of year-on-year increases, but opioid related deaths remain at historically high levels.



PART 2: DRUG USE HARMS AND IMPACTS

Synthetic drugs are narrowing the gender gap and harming more women

- » In general, men are more likely than women to use drugs; women account for approximately one in four people who used a drug in the past year. However, the proportion varies by drug and geographical location; for example, only 9 per cent of cannabis users in Asia are women, while in North America, women account for 45 per cent of cannabis users.
- » However, when it comes to the non-medical use of pharmaceutical drugs such as sedatives and tranquillizers, pharmaceutical opioids or stimulants, the share of women using these substances could be substantially higher and, in some cases, nearly equal to those of men.
- » Drug trafficking mainly involves men, but the gender gap is smaller when it comes to synthetics. Data on people who had formal contact with the police for drug law offences show that the proportion of women in such contact is higher overall for synthetic drugs than for plant-based drugs. This applies both to use or possession for personal use and to trafficking.
- » Women progress to problem drug use faster and face disproportionate adverse health outcomes and social consequences. In countries with sex-disaggregated data, approximately one in five people who inject drugs is a woman, but women who inject drugs are 1.2 times more likely than men to be living with HIV.
- » Women also continue to face disproportionate barriers in accessing drug treatment and services, such as a lack of awareness, stigma, a lack of gender-specific facilities and financial constraints.



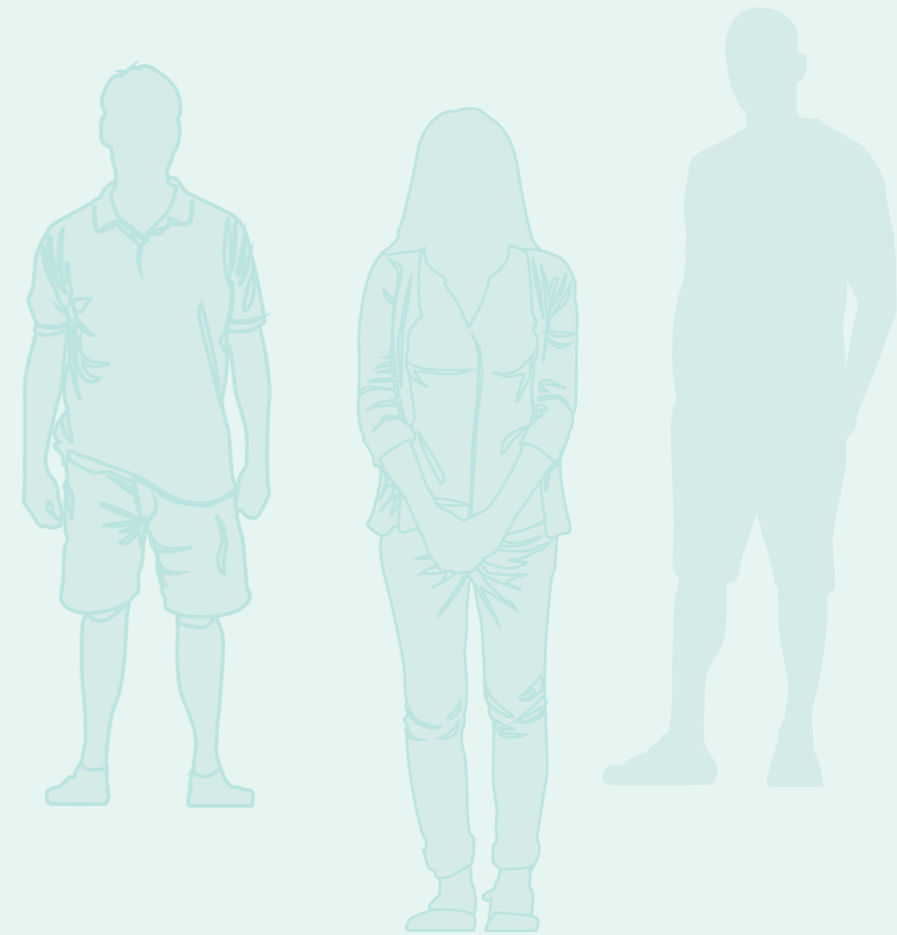
KEY FINDINGS

DRUG USE HARMS AND IMPACTS

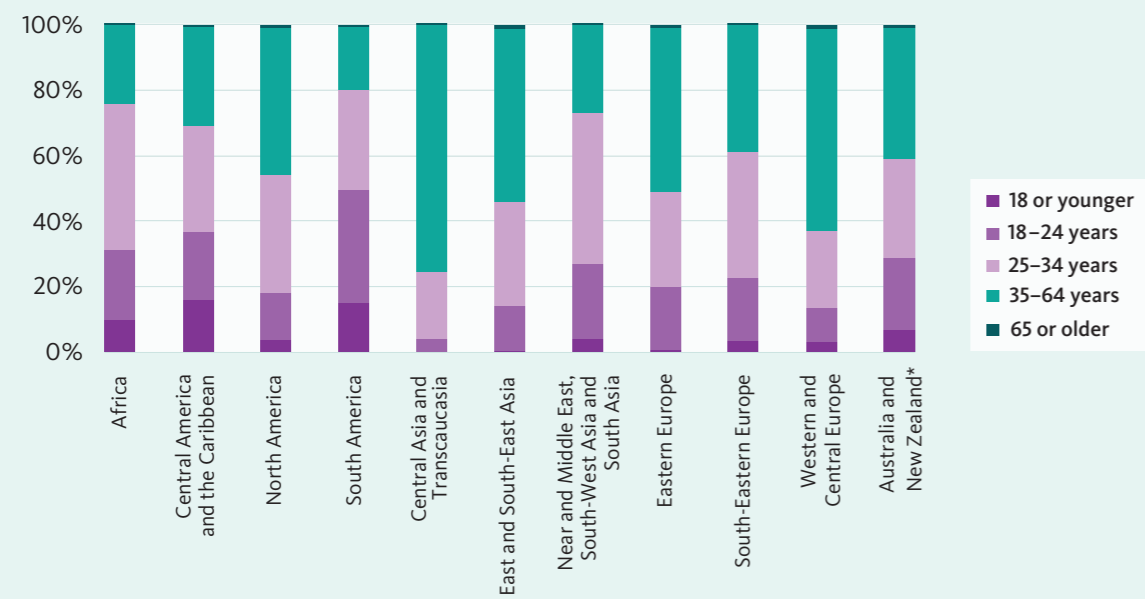
PART 2: DRUG USE HARMS AND IMPACTS

New means of drug delivery are negatively impacting young people

- » The harmful use of cannabis among adolescents remains a concern in many regions. While daily cannabis use among adolescents in North America remains stable, there has been an increase in the regular vaping of cannabis, which has raised concerns about the associated risks at an age when drug use can cause lasting damage on brain development.
- » In Canada and the State of Colorado, hospitalizations related to cannabis use have increased, particularly for cannabis-induced psychosis and withdrawal, with young adults being disproportionately affected. The availability of vapes, concentrates and edibles post-legalization may have increased the overall health harm of cannabis.
- » Moreover, young people, in particular young men, have been identified as a high-risk group for synthetic drug use, due to factors such as peer influence, easy access to newer synthetic drugs and a desire for enhanced performance.
- » Young people buying illicit drugs are more inclined to use home deliveries and social media platforms.



PROPORTION OF PEOPLE IN DRUG-RELATED TREATMENT BY AGE GROUP, BY REGION AND IN SELECTED SUBREGIONS, 2022 OR THE LATEST YEAR FOR WHICH DATA ARE AVAILABLE



Source: UNODC, responses to the annual report questionnaire.

*Values for the Australia and New Zealand subregion are based on data available for Australia

PART 2: DRUG USE HARMS AND IMPACTS

Multilayer responses to drug use

Prevention is the frontline response to drug use. Effective interventions address the underlying conditions contributing to drug use, such as a lack of connection to family or community, instability, insecurity, trauma, poor parenting, negative social norms, peer or familial drug use, mental health issues, conflict and violence. When addressed, these factors can effectively prevent the initiation of drug use and the progression to drug use disorders. The International Standards on Drug Use Prevention provide a scientific basis for guiding evidence-based and age- and gender-appropriate prevention interventions. While all age groups benefit from prevention programmes, prioritizing children and young people is crucial. Adolescence is a peak period for initiating substance use, as it is a time when brain development is still ongoing.

The other pillar of a health-based response to drug use is treatment that includes measures aimed at minimizing the adverse public health and social consequences of drug use. Drug use disorders are multifaceted, often resembling a relapsing and remitting chronic disease that requires a continuum of care. Scientific, evidence-based drug treatment has been shown to improve health outcomes and quality of life for people with drug use disorders. The *International Standards for the Treatment of Drug Use Disorders* detail various evidence-based and age- and gender-appropriate interventions and services for individuals with drug use disorders.

Addressing the harm associated with drug use includes effective measures that can effectively prevent and reduce adverse public health and social consequences, such as overdose prevention and management, and the prevention of infectious diseases. The *WHO, UNODC, UNAIDS Technical Guide for Countries to Set Targets for Universal Access to HIV Prevention, Treatment and Care for Injecting Drug Users: 2012 Revision* is a useful tool in this regard. In addition, the *WHO Consolidated Guidelines on HIV, Viral Hepatitis and STI Prevention, Diagnosis, Treatment and Care for Key Populations* provide a comprehensive package of interventions. When scaled up and provided in sufficient numbers, these interventions can significantly impact the prevalence of HIV and other infections in people who use drugs and aid in preventing and managing overdoses among people who use and inject drugs.

It is also important to make drug-related treatment and care services available and accessible to people in prison settings and to those recently released. Tailored services should be ensured for subpopulations, such as women (especially pregnant women), children, minority groups and rural populations. Removing barriers to access, including stigma and discrimination, and ensuring the participation of people who use drugs in decisions related to their treatment and care is crucial.

PART 2: DRUG USE HARMS AND IMPACTS

Protecting the health of those around people who use drugs

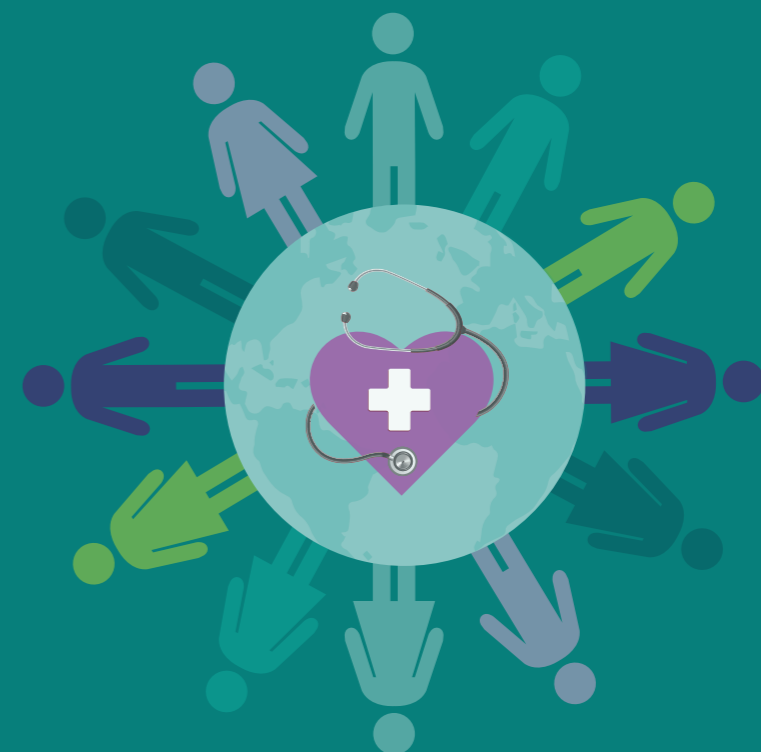
When considering health responses to drug use, it is important to consider the health needs of those around people who use drugs, including children and family members. Protecting the health of drug users, their

families and their communities requires an approach that respects and enhances the well-being of each individual, free from stigma and discrimination. This approach should support and integrate all people affected by drug use.

A rights-based approach to drug use

Addressing drug use through the lens of the right to health requires services that are available, accessible, acceptable and of good quality. These services must ensure non-discrimination, non-stigmatization, full participation, privacy and dignity. The *World Drug Report* offers a multi-dimensional framework on the right to health in the context of drug use. These dimensions include availability, accessibility, acceptability, quality, non-discrimination, non-stigmatization and participation.

By adopting this comprehensive approach, drug use can be effectively and humanely addressed, respecting the rights and dignity of all individuals involved.



KEY FINDINGS AND
POSSIBLE RESPONSES

PART 3:
DRUG POLICY LANDSCAPE
AND RESPONSES



KEY FINDINGS

DRUG POLICY LANDSCAPE AND RESPONSES

PART 3: DRUG POLICY LANDSCAPE AND RESPONSES

Drug use and possession continue to bring the most people into contact with the law

- » In 2022, some 7 million people globally were in formal contact with the police for drug offences, with about two thirds of this total due to drug use or possession for use. Less than half – 2.7 million people – were prosecuted for drug offences and over 1.6 million were convicted.
- » There are significant differences between regions. At the global level, people arrested for drug trafficking are more likely to be prosecuted and convicted for such offences than are those arrested for drug use or possession. However, in regions such as Africa (based on the limited data available) and Asia, the opposite seems to be true: people arrested for drug use or possession are more likely to be prosecuted and convicted than those arrested for drug trafficking.
- » Europe has the highest rates of people arrested, prosecuted and convicted for drug trafficking and use or possession. While the rate of persons arrested for drug use or possession offences in the Americas is one of the highest, at 144 arrests per 100,000 population, second only to Europe, the region has the lowest rate of conviction for such offences. These regional differences are affected by many factors, particularly the size of the population who use drugs and the level of interdictions. Higher rates of drug use and interdiction can result in higher rates of people entering the criminal justice system.
- » Most arrestees for all drug offences combined are men, accounting for around 9 in 10 people in 2022. Women account for some 9 per cent of those arrested for drug trafficking and for 12 per cent of those arrested for drug use or possession.



PART 3: DRUG POLICY LANDSCAPE AND RESPONSES

Many people with drug use disorders receive no treatment and the gap is widening

- » According to newly available estimates, only about 1 in 11 people with drug use disorders received drug treatment globally in 2022, a decrease from 2015.
- » Drug-related treatment coverage is lower among women than among men in all five global regions. Some 1 in 18 women with drug use disorders received treatment globally in 2022, while the ratio was 1 in 7 in the case of men.
- » The treatment gap is widest in Africa and Asia, where drug treatment coverage was 2.8 per cent and 5.1 per cent respectively in 2022.

	TREATMENT COVERAGE	PRIMARY DRUG	PATHWAY OF REFERRAL
Africa	2.8% of people with Drug Use Disorders in treatment in 2022	Cannabis is most common, followed by Opioids	Referral by friends and family and self referral are most common
Americas	10.7% of people with Drug Use Disorders in treatment in 2022 – 7.5% for women, 13.1% for men	Opioids is most common, but ATS and cannabis are also significant	Varies across subregions but referral from other health care service is more common than in other regions
Asia	5.1% of people with Drug Use Disorders in treatment in 2022 – 1.9% for women, 10.5% for men	Amphetamine-type stimulants is most common, followed by Opioids	Criminal justice system is the most common pathway of referral
Europe	25.9% of people with Drug Use Disorders in treatment in 2022 – 13.6% for women, 29.9% for men	Opioids is most common	Self referral and referral by friends and family are the most common
Oceania	14% of people with Drug Use Disorders in treatment in 2022 – 12.5% for women, 14% for men	Amphetamine-type stimulants is the most common, followed by Cannabis	Different pathways of referral observed

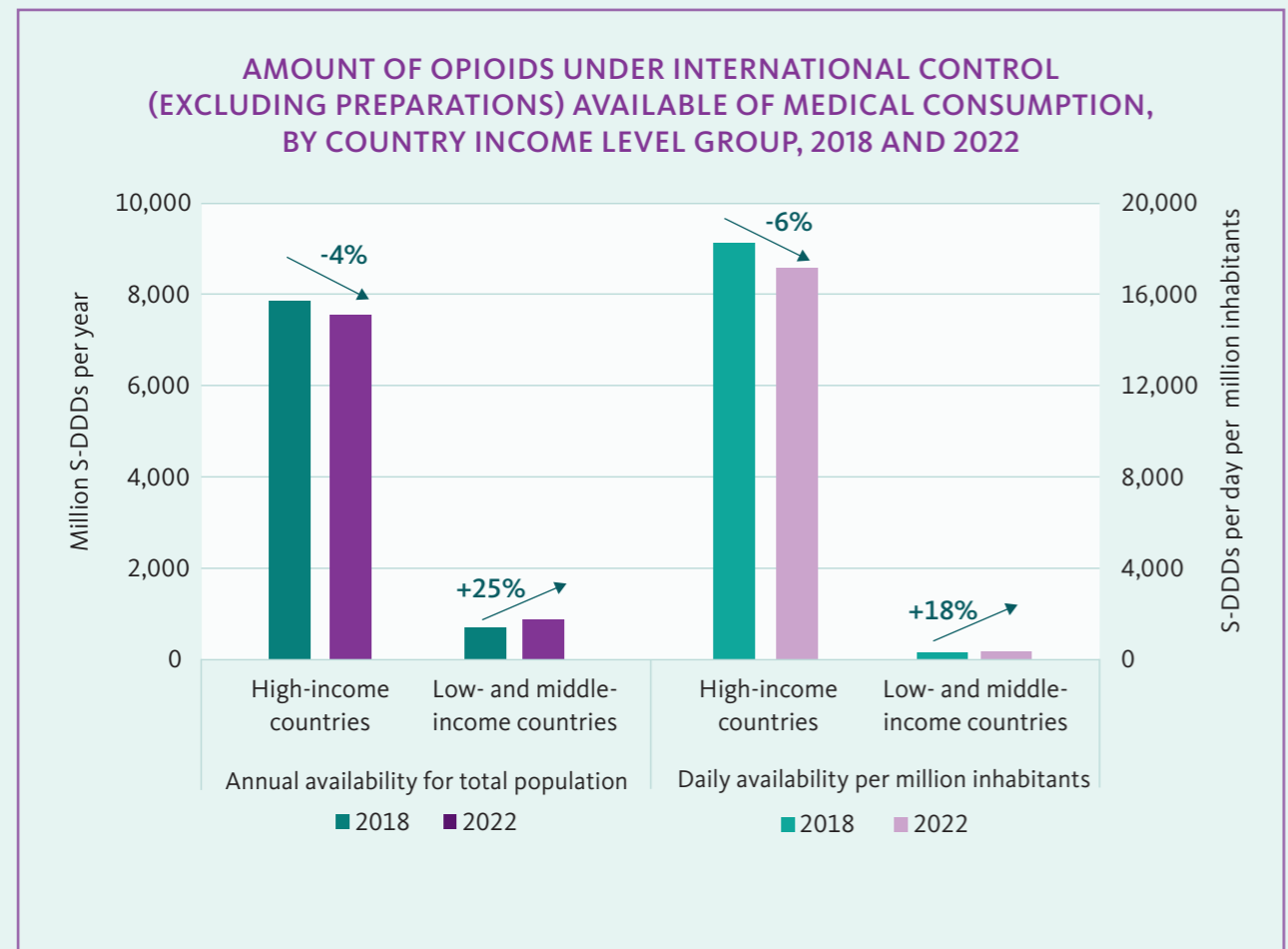
KEY FINDINGS

DRUG POLICY LANDSCAPE AND RESPONSES

PART 3: DRUG POLICY LANDSCAPE AND RESPONSES

The availability of opioids for medical consumption remains limited in the global South

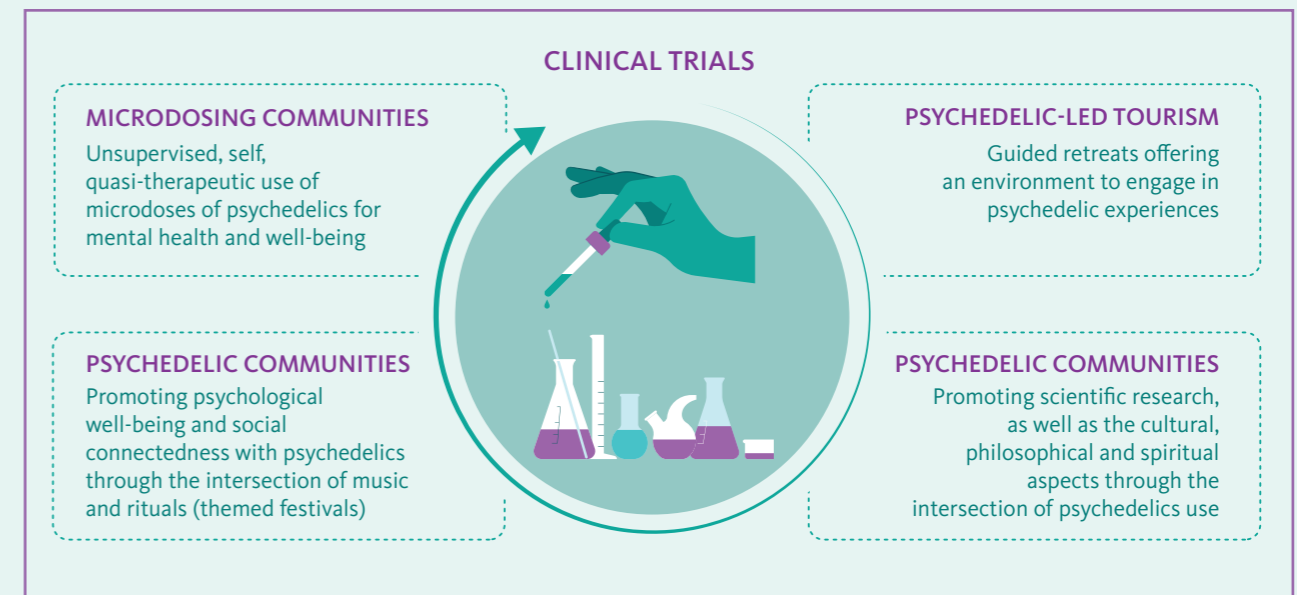
- » Large inequalities remain in the availability of controlled pharmaceutical opioids for medical consumption. Some 87 per cent of the world’s population do not have adequate access to pharmaceutical opioids for pain relief and care.
- » Some progress has been made with regard to the global availability over the last two decades of methadone and buprenorphine, two opioids that are used not only as analgesics but also as opioid agonist medication in the treatment of opioid use disorders. However, their availability for medical use has remained rather stable at the global level since 2019.



PART 3: DRUG POLICY LANDSCAPE AND RESPONSES

Drug policy changes are presenting complex challenges in different contexts

- » Recent changes in drug legislation – from the legalization of social supply for non-medical cannabis use in Germany to the reversal of decriminalization for the possession of all drug types in the State of Oregon and the “quasi-therapeutic” use of psychedelics in some states of the United States of America – highlight the complexities faced by policymakers.
- » As of January 2024, Canada, Uruguay and 27 jurisdictions in the United States had enacted legal provisions allowing the production and sale of cannabis for non-medical use. Other legislative approaches have also emerged recently in other countries, especially in Europe. Some European countries offer varying degrees of regulated access to cannabis for non-medical use (Germany, Luxembourg and Malta), while others (Netherlands (Kingdom of the) and Switzerland) are conducting experiments and trials to better understand the impact of different models of supply and the distribution of non-medical cannabis.
- » In the jurisdictions in Canada and the United States where the supply chain for non-medical cannabis has been legalized, harmful use of the drug has accelerated, as shown in data on hospitalizations and psychiatric disorders. At the same time, in some jurisdictions, the size of the illegal cannabis market appears to be shrinking, and in the United States the number and rate of people arrested for cannabis-related offences to be decreasing, albeit without reducing racial disparities.
- » Meanwhile, a renewed interest in the therapeutic use of different psychedelic substances – controlled under the international drug conventions – for the treatment of a range of mental health disorders has sparked a wave of clinical trials, mainly in high-income countries. Results from the early stages of ongoing medical research have led to policy changes that have allowed access to psychedelics for “quasi-therapeutic” use in a couple of jurisdictions in the United States, as well as for medical use in Australia and in one jurisdiction in Canada.
- » In parallel, some other developments are contributing to the burgeoning commercial interest in and development of an enabling environment that encourages the provision of broad access to the unsupervised, “quasi-therapeutic” and non-medical use of psychedelics. There remains a risk that developments outpace scientific evidence and that the establishment of guidelines for medical use compromise the public health objectives of improving health, social well-being and quality of life, and potentially increase the health risks associated with the unsupervised use of psychedelics.



POSSIBLE RESPONSES DRUG POLICY LANDSCAPE AND RESPONSES

PART 3: DRUG POLICY LANDSCAPE AND RESPONSES

At the core of effective drug policy remains the spirit of the international drug conventions: to balance the availability of controlled substances for medical and scientific purposes with efforts to prevent the diversion of the same substances for non-medical use. Effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem requires a truly comprehensive, balanced and integrated approach.

Promoting a science-based culture and perceptions in relation to drugs can help to address the imbalance and maintain the original objective of the international drug conventions – “the health and welfare of mankind”.

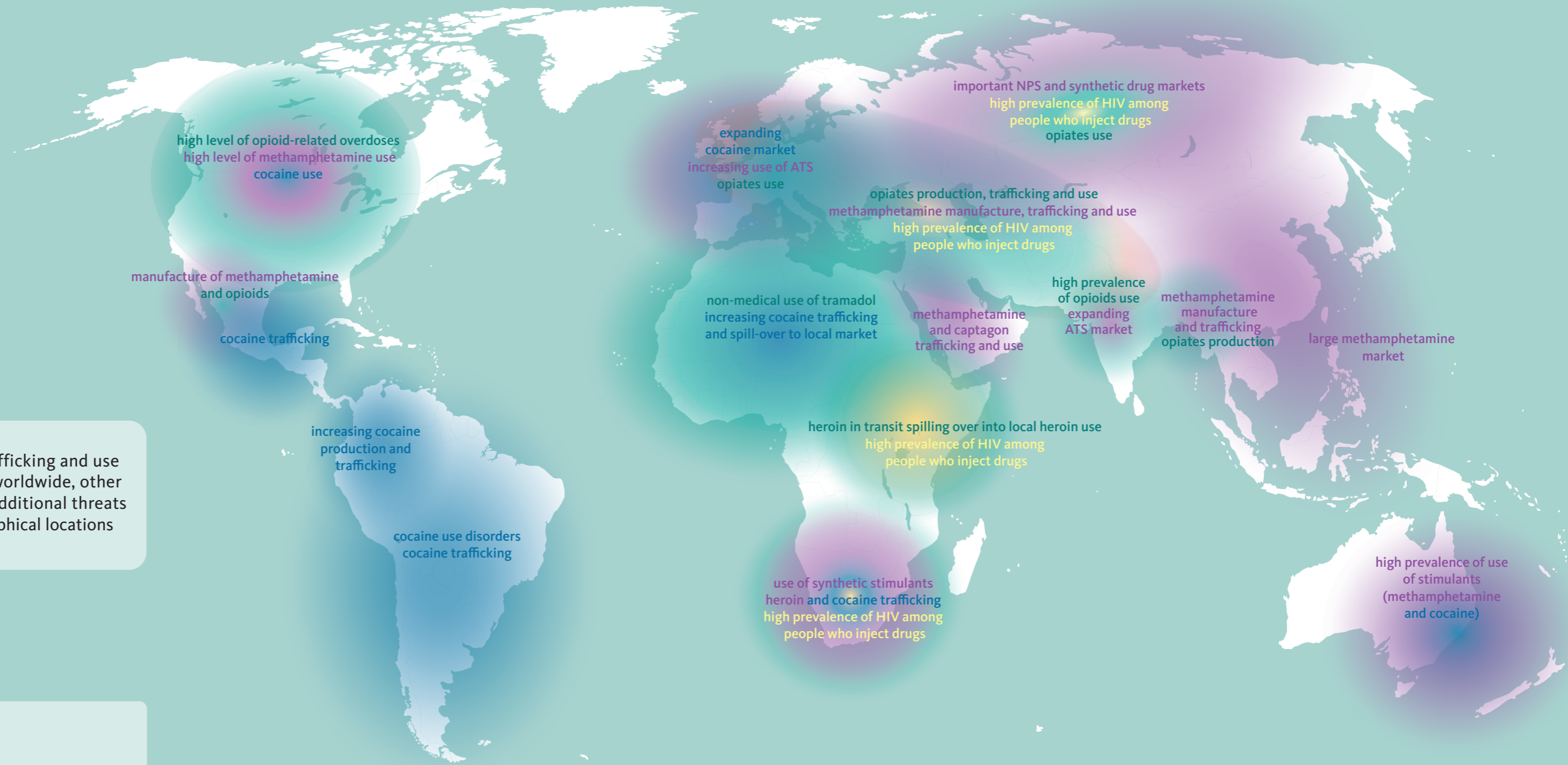
Factual and science-based information can reduce the fear of addiction and diversion that in some cases prevent accessibility to controlled opioids for pain management. At the same time, it can help young people to make an informed assessment of the risks associated with drug use and its consequences.



THE WORLD DRUG PROBLEM COMMON CHALLENGE LOCAL DYNAMICS



THE WORLD DRUG PROBLEM COMMON CHALLENGE, LOCAL DYNAMIC



while cannabis trafficking and use affect all regions worldwide, other drug issues pose additional threats in different geographical locations

- Cocaine
- Opioids/Opiates
- Amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS)
- HIV among people who inject drugs



DRUG-BY-DRUG DEVELOPMENTS IN BRIEF



DRUG-BY-DRUG DEVELOPMENTS IN BRIEF

	Demand	Supply	Key issues
CANNABIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cannabis remains by far the world's most commonly used drug An estimated 228 million people used cannabis in 2022, representing 4 per cent of the global population The number of people who use cannabis has increased by 28 per cent over the past decade Cannabis use remains the highest in North America, where 19.8 per cent of the population aged between 15 and 64 used the drug in 2022 Cannabis remains the main drug of concern for the majority of people in treatment in Africa The percentage of women among those who use cannabis varies across regions and subregions, from 9 per cent in Asia to 45 per cent in North America (2022) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Qualitative assessments suggest that cannabis cultivation did not continue its long-term upward trend in 2022, although output appears to have remained high. While outdoor cannabis cultivation is reported to have declined in 2022, indoor cultivation seems to have remained stable at a high level Following a long-term upward trend that continued until 2020, seizures of cannabis resin dropped in 2021 and even more so in 2022 to the lowest levels since 2017. In contrast, seizures of cannabis herb increased slightly in 2022, following a drop in 2021 as large decreases in seizures were reported in North America as a result of a drive towards legalization in several of its jurisdictions; trafficking trends in cannabis herb in other regions, however, continued to grow over the last decade, including in 2022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cannabis accounts for a substantial share of drug-related harm globally, owing in part to its high prevalence of use: an estimated 41 per cent of drug use disorder cases globally are cannabis use disorders (2019). In 2022, around 49 per cent of countries reported cannabis as the drug associated with the greatest number of drug use disorders and 38 per cent of countries reported it as the main drug of concern for people in drug treatment There is evidence of the effectiveness of cannabinoids in treating a few conditions, but for many other conditions the evidence is limited. Many countries have made provisions for the medical use of cannabis, but the regulatory approaches to medical cannabis differ widely among those countries As at January 2024, Canada, Uruguay and 27 jurisdictions in the United States had enacted legal provisions allowing the production and sale of cannabis for non-medical use. Other legislative approaches have also emerged recently in countries, especially in Europe. Malta, Luxembourg and Germany have regulated access by adults to non-medical cannabis. However, a commercial supply chain for cannabis for non-medical use has not yet been established in these countries
OPIOIDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An estimated 60 million people used opioids in 2022, representing 1.2 per cent of the global population. Half of those were in South Asia and South-West Asia Of those using opioids in 2022, an estimated 30 million used opiates, mainly heroin The global level of opioid use remained stable from 2020 to 2022, after having increased slightly between 2017 and 2019 About 36 per cent of all people in drug treatment in 2022 cited opioids as their primary drug of use Opioids remain the most lethal group of drugs, accounting for two thirds of deaths related directly to drugs (mostly overdoses) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The global area under opium poppy cultivation fell by 70 per cent in 2023 compared with 2022, mainly as a consequence of a 95 per cent decline in Afghanistan due to the Taliban opium ban of April 2022. Similarly, global opium production fell by 74 per cent in 2023 Myanmar emerged in 2023 as the world's largest producer of opium, accounting for 54 per cent of the global total, with Afghanistan accounting for 17 per cent (down from 82 per cent in 2022) The Balkan route remains the main trafficking route for opiates. Overall, heroin seizures linked to Afghan opiates declined in 2022, possibly because drug traffickers anticipated the effect of the opium ban on prices and built up inventories. At the same time, an increase in heroin seizures in Central Asia and Transcaucasia suggests an increase in trafficking along the northern route Seizures of pharmaceutical opioids, which had increased sharply in 2021, fell in 2022 to the levels reported in 2020. This decline does not affect the long-term upward trend in seizures observed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Although opioid use has been stable in recent years, the two developing epidemics of non-medical use of opioids, one related to fentanyl in North America and the other to the non-medical use of tramadol in North Africa, West Africa, the Near and Middle East and South-West Asia, continue to pose significant health risks In North America, overdose deaths, driven by the use of fentanyl, reached unprecedented levels during the COVID-19 pandemic and remained at similarly high levels in 2022 The dramatic decrease in opium production in Afghanistan in 2023 is likely to affect consumer markets beyond the region, if enforcement of the ban is sustained over time Access to pharmaceutical opioids for pain management and palliative care continues to vary considerably between low- and middle-income countries and high-income countries

	Demand	Supply	Key issues
COCAINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An estimated 23.5 million people used cocaine in 2022, representing 0.45 per cent of the global population The Americas and Western and Central Europe remain the two main consumer markets for cocaine Demand in Africa and Asia has risen over the past two decades, but regional demand remains uneven and a lack of data prevents a clear understanding of the level of use in these two regions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The level of cocaine manufacture reached a new record high in 2022 of 2,757 tons of pure cocaine In contrast to ongoing increases in cocaine manufacture, cocaine seizures stabilized in 2022 at a high level. Seizures are also increasingly being made closer to production sites in South America, where the total quantity seized is now four times as high as that seized in North America Cocaine is mostly being trafficked by sea and through a wider geography of routes, with more than 80 per cent of the quantities of cocaine seized linked to maritime trafficking in recent years (rising to 86 per cent in 2022 and more than 90 per cent in 2023) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After a hiatus during the COVID-19 pandemic, the global market for cocaine has continued to expand. Use has been increasing worldwide over the past decade and supply is also on the rise, with a record high in manufacture Markets for cocaine are also expanding outside the traditional markets of North America and Western Europe, into Africa and Asia New cocaine trafficking hubs have emerged, with Africa's role in global supply on the rise
AMPHETAMINE-TYPE STIMULANTS (ATS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An estimated 30 million people used amphetamines in 2022 (new best estimate based on more accurate data, not comparable with previous years), representing 0.6 per cent of the global population Qualitative assessments suggest an increase in the use of amphetamines in 2022 and over the last decade The number of users of amphetamines is highest in East and South-East Asia, with the second largest number of users (and the highest prevalence of use) being in North America An estimated 20 million people used "ecstasy"-type substances in 2022, representing 0.4 per cent of the global population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Following record-high quantities of amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) seized in 2021, seizures in 2022 declined marginally but remained at historically high levels, and continued to be dominated by methamphetamine at the global level Trafficking in ATS, in particular methamphetamine, has spread geographically, with notable growth observed in non-traditional markets The market for "captagon" in the Near and Middle East continues to flourish, with seizures in 2022 remaining at the record levels reached in 2021 For several years until 2021, seizures suggested an ongoing shift in the manufacture of methamphetamine towards the use of precursors of 1-phenyl-2-propanone (P-2-P) and away from the use of ephedrine and pseudo-ephedrine, although the use of the latter two substances remained widespread. Seizure data for 2022, however, suggest a reversal of this trend, with P-2-P-related seizures declining sharply and ephedrine-related seizures remaining stable, accounting for 79 per cent of the total expressed in methamphetamine equivalents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The gender gap in treatment is particularly acute for women who use ATS, as women account for one in four users of amphetamines but only one in six people in treatment for ATS-use disorders Women in treatment for methamphetamine use disorder present with more severe symptoms than men, suffering a greater psychological burden, including greater levels of adverse childhood experiences than men. In addition, compared with men, women who use methamphetamine have a higher propensity for engaging in risky sexual behaviour and are at greater risk of contracting HIV, viral hepatitis and other infectious diseases Methamphetamine manufacture and use have continued to spread beyond the traditional markets for the drug, namely, East and South-East Asia and North America, most notably into South-West Asia, the Near and Middle East, Oceania, Europe and Africa The increase in the use and manufacture of methamphetamine in Afghanistan is of growing concern in South-West Asia, where trafficking in the substance is expanding beyond this region



DRUG-BY-DRUG DEVELOPMENTS IN BRIEF



REGION-BY-REGION DEVELOPMENTS IN BRIEF

	Demand	Supply	Key issues
NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES (NPS)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › The level of use of new psychoactive substances (NPS) is lower than that of drugs under international control › NPS were used in most countries in 2022 › Many users of NPS use them unknowingly, consuming the substances as adulterants or in place of other drugs, sometimes with fatal consequences › The limited data available suggest that the most commonly used NPS are synthetic cannabinoid receptor agonists (“synthetic cannabinoids”) and ketamine › Novel NPS being used by large groups of people in the general population include semi-synthetic cannabinoids, such as delta-8-THC in North America and HHC in Europe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Seizures of plant-based NPS, dominated by khat and kratom, continued to fall in 2022 by more than 40 per cent and reached their lowest level since 2004, 96 per cent less than the quantity reported at the peak in 2019. The decline in 2022 was primarily due to a decrease in kratom seizures › A total of 52 countries reported seizures of synthetic NPS in the period 2020-2022, up from 43 countries a decade earlier (2010-2012). NPS seizures in the period 2020-2022 were small and most commonly involved ketamine (rising significantly in 2022), followed by synthetic cathinones and cannabinoids › The number of different NPS on the market declined from 618 substances in 2021 to 566 in 2022, of which 44 were identified for the first time. Most NPS on the market were stimulants (notably cathinones and, to a lesser extent, phenethylamines), followed by synthetic cannabinoids, synthetic opioids and hallucinogens › Declines on a year earlier were reported for almost all categories of NPS. While the number of fentanyl analogues on the market stabilized in 2022 and declined in 2023, a special issue of concern has been the emergence of nitazenes, another group of synthetic opioids 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Control systems have succeeded in containing the spread of NPS in high-income countries, but the geographical reach of NPS trafficking continues to expand › In some subregions, such as Eastern Europe and Central Asia, NPS have become a major problem › The supply and use of ketamine, which is still among the most used drugs in East and South-East Asia, have started to spread to several other subregions, including Western and Central Europe and Australia. The drug is used both on its own and as part of drug mixtures, the content of which is largely unknown to users › Deaths related to nitazenes, some of which are more potent than fentanyl, have been reported recently in North America and Western and Central Europe

	Demand	Supply	Key issues
AFRICA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Use of cannabis is particularly high in West and Central Africa, with a past-year prevalence of use in 2022 of nearly 10 per cent (31 million people), largely reflecting the prevalence of cannabis use in Nigeria › The estimated prevalence of use of opioids in 2022 (1.3 per cent) is also high in the subregion. Non-medical use of tramadol remains a threat, in particular in North, West and Central Africa › The majority of opioid users in other parts of Africa are opiate users, mostly of heroin and, in a few countries, of codeine and opium › Although data remain scarce, cocaine use appears to be generally increasing across the continent, in particular in West and Southern Africa, as shown by the number of people in drug treatment › Whereas the use of khat, a plant-based NPS, is widespread in East Africa, the use of synthetic NPS is most commonly reported in Southern Africa, but data regarding both remain scarce › Of the estimated 1.37 million people who inject drugs in Africa, 166,000 (12.1 per cent) were living with HIV in 2022. Within the region, West and Central Africa has the highest prevalence of people who inject drugs among the population (0.23 per cent), while Southern Africa has the highest prevalence of HIV among people who inject drugs (22.3 per cent) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › North Africa continues to be a hub for interregional trafficking in cannabis resin to Western Europe › Africa accounted for 44 per cent of the quantities of pharmaceutical opioids seized worldwide between 2018 and 2022, largely due to the non-medical use of tramadol › Most cocaine in Africa is seized near the coast. The region, in particular West Africa, is used as a trans-shipment area for cocaine from South America destined for Europe › Heroin from South-West Asia is trafficked through all of Africa’s subregions, often through East Africa as an entry point, onward to other markets in Africa and consumer markets in Western and Central Europe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Africa has a large gender gap in the use of drugs, with less than one woman for every nine men using cannabis › The majority of people treated for drug use disorders in Africa are under the age of 35 › Cannabis and opioids are the drugs for which most people with drug use disorders seek treatment in Africa › Africa remains a key trafficking region for cocaine in West Africa, heroin in East Africa and cannabis, mostly produced within the region › The opioid epidemic related to the non-medical use of tramadol continues to pose significant health risks in West and Central Africa and North Africa › With an average of 15 standard daily doses per million of the population in 2022, West and Central Africa remains the subregion with the lowest access to internationally controlled medicines for pain management and palliative care › The high prevalence of people who inject drugs remains an issue in West and Central Africa, while the rate of HIV infections in people who inject drugs is of particular concern in Southern Africa › The emerging use of drug mixtures and concoctions, such as nyaope, and more recently karkoubi or kush, is an increasing threat to public health in some African countries. The composition of these preparations may be unknown to users, but limited evidence shows that they contain a number of harmful substances, including illicit drugs, pharmaceutical drugs (e.g. benzodiazepines), alcohol or solvents



REGION-BY-REGION DEVELOPMENTS IN BRIEF



REGION-BY-REGION DEVELOPMENTS IN BRIEF

	Demand	Supply	Key issues
AMERICAS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opioid use in North America remains high, with 2.7 per cent of the adult population reporting past-year use (9 million users) in 2022 South and Central America and the Caribbean are the subregions with the highest proportion of people in drug treatment owing to the use of cocaine products worldwide, and are the subregions with the largest variety of cocaine products available Non-medical use of pharmaceutical stimulants is higher in the Americas than in other regions There has been a significant increase in the number of people in treatment for methamphetamine use disorder in North America over the past decade, in particular in Mexico The prevalence of people who inject drugs in North America is high, with 1 per cent of the adult population (3.4 million people) estimated to inject drugs in 2022; however, the estimated prevalence of HIV among people who inject drugs (nearly 7 per cent) is well below the global average 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interceptions of cannabis have been declining substantially in North America despite a rapidly growing cannabis market, as cannabis interdiction has become less of a priority The manufacture of cocaine in South America reached a record high in 2022 of 2,757 tons (pure cocaine) Cocaine seizures have shifted closer to production sites in South America, where total quantities seized are now four times as large as those in North America Most of the methamphetamine manufactured in North America is for consumption within that subregion. Seizure data suggest that laboratories may be becoming larger and their output increasing, although the number of dismantled laboratories has been decreasing Seizures of methamphetamine in North America reached a record high in 2021, but declined in 2022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The opioid epidemic related to illicitly produced fentanyls in North America has been driving the number of overdose deaths to record highs, with an acceleration during the COVID-19 pandemic to unprecedented levels in 2021 and 2022 The gender gap in cannabis use is closing in North America, where the level of use of the drug is particularly high The Americas are affected by increasing cocaine trafficking, with record levels of manufacture of the drug in South America Illicit drug economies, converging crimes, population displacement and conflict are accelerating environmental devastation and degrading human rights, in particular in vulnerable groups in parts of the Amazon Basin The methamphetamine market is expanding in North America alongside an increase in methamphetamine-related harms, reflected in hospitalizations, drug treatment and overdose deaths
ASIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Over half the estimated number of people who use opioids globally are in Asia (representing 1.1 per cent of the region's adult population), with the prevalence of opioid use in 2022 in South-West Asia being one of the highest worldwide (3.2 per cent) Methamphetamine is the main drug of concern in East and South-East Asia, whereas opiates, in particular opium and heroin, predominate in South-West Asia and South Asia, and "captagon" prevails in the Near and Middle East Methamphetamine use has risen in Afghanistan in recent years, and accounts suggest that use of methamphetamine and "captagon" tablets is rising in the Near and Middle East and South-West Asia, although no recent estimates are available East and South-East Asia has a long-established market for the non-medical use of ketamine The gender gap in drug use is the largest in Asia, where 91 in every 100 people who used cannabis in the past year are men Asia accounts for the largest number of people who inject drugs worldwide (5.2 million in 2022) and, within that group, of those living with HIV (779,000) and hepatitis C (2.8 million). The highest prevalence of HIV among people who inject drugs is in South-West Asia (29.4 per cent) and of hepatitis C in East and South-East Asia (65 per cent) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The production of opiates declined by 74 per cent in South-West Asia in 2023, reflecting the dramatic decline in production in Afghanistan, but increased by 34 per cent in South-East Asia. These two subregions accounted for around three quarters of global opium production in 2023 Seizures of heroin declined across Asia in 2022. Preliminary data on individual heroin seizures suggest, however, an increase in heroin trafficking along the northern route in 2023 There are indications that methamphetamine manufacture has increased in Afghanistan in recent years, despite efforts to reduce ephedra collection and sales in Afghanistan The market for "captagon" in the Near and Middle East continues to flourish; seizures reached a record high in 2021 and remained at a high level in 2022 There is substantial manufacture of methamphetamine in South-East Asia. However, seizures of the substance declined in 2022 Cocaine seizures in recent years suggested a geographical expansion in the trafficking of cocaine to Asia, with a number of large seizures made in the region in the period 2019-2022 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The implementation of the April 2022 ban on opium production in Afghanistan led to a dramatic decline in the cultivation and production of opium in 2023 (a fall of 95 per cent). A shortage of Afghan heroin in consumer markets may have dramatic consequences if enforcement of the ban is sustained over time and heroin is substituted with more harmful substances, such as some synthetic opioids Despite efforts to limit its manufacture in Afghanistan, the market for methamphetamine manufactured in the country may be expanding to South-West Asia and beyond. Trafficking in methamphetamine shows signs of expansion in the Near and Middle East The methamphetamine market in East and South-East Asia, in contrast, seems to show signs of contracting from the high levels observed in recent years Transnational criminal organizations are taking advantage of limited governance and instability in the Golden Triangle, diversifying their portfolios beyond drug trafficking into a growing array of socially and environmentally harmful illicit activities such as wildlife trafficking, illegal resource extraction and financial fraud There are some indications that NPS use in Central Asia and Transcaucasia is continuing to increase "Captagon" tablets manufactured in the Levant continue to supply large consumer markets in countries in the Gulf The opioid crisis related to the non-medical use of tramadol in North and West Africa may also extend to the Near and Middle East South-West Asia has one of the highest levels of prevalence of opioid use and of people who inject drugs living with HIV in the world

	Demand	Supply	Key issues
EUROPE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Western and Central Europe remains the second largest cocaine market worldwide Amphetamine is the second most used stimulant in Europe after cocaine ATS use has been increasing in the region over the past decade Europe remains a major consumer market for "ecstasy" Opioids remain the main drug type for which people are in drug treatment in Europe, but cannabis follows closely and its use is more common among those being treated for the first time Following years of increase, wastewater data point to a potential stabilization in methamphetamine consumption in Western, Central and South-Eastern Europe in 2023 Use of NPS seems to be increasing in Eastern Europe, where it has become a major concern Eastern Europe has the highest prevalence of people who inject drugs (1.3 per cent in 2022), as well as of people who inject drugs living with HIV (25.6 per cent), while the prevalence of hepatitis C among people who inject drugs in Europe is higher than in any other region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trafficking in cannabis herb remains mostly an intraregional issue in Western and Central Europe; there continue to be, however, substantial imports of cannabis resin into the subregion from North Africa Western and Central Europe remains a hub for the manufacture of synthetic drugs, in particular "ecstasy" and amphetamine. There are also signs of a possible expansion in the manufacture of methamphetamine Darknet drug markets around the world were expanding until 2021. In recent years, this was largely due to Hydra Market, the world's largest Russian-language darknet market, which was dismantled in April 2022, giving place to new, smaller darknet markets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The long-term trend of increasing cocaine use paused in 2020 during the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, but has since rebounded in Western and Central Europe There has been a long-term increase in the number of people in treatment for cannabis use disorders in Western and Central Europe; almost half of people accessing drug treatment services for the first time in 2021 were being treated for cannabis use In Eastern Europe, the NPS market expanded in 2021, likely owing to the expansion of online supply, in particular of cathinones. There are indications that these trends continued in 2022 and 2023 The prevalence of people who inject drugs and of people who inject drugs living with HIV in Eastern Europe, and the prevalence of people who inject drugs living with hepatitis C in Europe overall, are of key concern
OCEANIA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Past-year use of cocaine in the subregion of Australia and New Zealand remains the highest worldwide Consumption of cocaine (based on wastewater analysis) is lower than in other parts of the world, suggesting that most users of cocaine are occasional users Past-year use of "ecstasy" in the subregion of Australia and New Zealand remains by far the highest worldwide; this is consistent with MDMA levels found in wastewater analysis Cannabis use is significantly higher than the global average, with prevalence of use exceeding 10 per cent in the subregion of Australia and New Zealand The prevalence of cannabis use among school students aged 15 and 16 is also relatively high in Oceania, at 17 per cent, compared with the global average of 5.5 per cent 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> While seizures of heroin in Oceania declined in 2022 after a temporary increase in 2021, seizures of cocaine and methamphetamine reached record levels in 2022 Methamphetamine is both produced within Oceania and imported to the region from East and South-East Asia and North America. Data suggest that seizure quantities of methamphetamine manufactured from P-2-P precursors increased over the last decade, indicating an increase in the importance of imports of the drug from North America (notably from Mexico, either directly or via the United States) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple drug-related indicators show that cocaine use and associated harm increased in Australia between 2010 and 2021, although the harm from cocaine remains lower than from other stimulants In Australia, the annual use of methamphetamine is decreasing in the general population and among people who regularly use "ecstasy", but among people who inject drugs consumption has become more intensive, causing greater harm. Over 40 per cent of those in drug-related treatment in Australia and New Zealand are being treated for methamphetamine use disorder People in drug-related treatment in the subregion of Australia and New Zealand are relatively young, in particular in Australia, where 60 per cent are under the age of 35



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A global reference on drug markets, trends and policy developments, the *World Drug Report* offers a wealth of data and analysis and in 2024 comprises several elements tailored to different audiences. The web-based **Drug market patterns and trends** module contains the latest analysis of global, regional and subregional estimates of and trends in drug demand and supply in a user-friendly, interactive format supported by graphs, infographics and maps. The **Key findings and conclusions** booklet provides an overview of selected findings from the analysis presented in the **Drug market patterns and trends** module and the thematic **Contemporary issues on drugs** booklet, while the **Special points of interest** fascicle offers a framework for the main takeaways and policy implications that can be drawn from those findings.

As well as providing an in-depth analysis of key developments and emerging trends in selected drug markets, the **Contemporary issues on drugs** booklet looks at several other developments of policy relevance. The booklet opens with a look at the 2022 Taliban ban on the cultivation and production of and trafficking in drugs in Afghanistan and its implications both within the country and in transit and destination markets elsewhere. This is followed by a chapter examining the convergence of drug trafficking and other activities and how they affect natural ecosystems and communities in the Golden Triangle in South-East Asia. The chapter also assesses the extent to which drug production and trafficking are linked with other illicit economies that challenge the rule of law and fuel conflict. Another chapter analyses how the dynamics of demand for and supply of synthetic drugs vary when the gender and age of market participants are considered. The booklet continues with an update on regulatory approaches to and the impact of legalization on the non-medical cannabis market in different countries, and a review of the enabling environment that provides broad access to the unsupervised, “quasi-therapeutic” and non-medical use of psychedelic substances. Finally, the booklet offers a multi-dimensional framework on the right to health in the context of drug use; these dimensions include availability, accessibility, acceptability, quality, non-discrimination, non-stigmatization and participation.

The *World Drug Report 2024* is aimed not only at fostering greater international cooperation to counter the impact of the world drug problem on health, governance and security, but also at assisting Member States in anticipating and addressing threats posed by drug markets and mitigating their consequences.

The *World Drug Report 2024* is published on the UNODC website:

<https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/world-drug-report-2024.html>

