

Forthcoming editions

Forthcoming editions in this series will examine other groups of synthetic stimulants found on illicit drug markets in Europe, as well as cocaine, heroin and cannabis. All titles in the series will focus on production, trafficking, markets and related issues.

Title	Release
Synthetic stimulants – Methamphetamine	2009
Synthetic stimulants – Amphetamine	2009
Synthetic stimulants – Ecstasy	2010
Cocaine	2010
Heroin	2011
Cannabis	2011

Publication dates may change depending on information needs/requests and the availability of new findings.

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About the EMCDDA

The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) is the hub of drug-related information in Europe. Its mission is to provide the EU and its Member States with 'factual, objective, reliable and comparable information' on drugs, drug addiction and their consequences. Established in 1993, it opened its doors in Lisbon in 1995 and is one of the EU's decentralised agencies. With a 100-strong multidisciplinary team, the agency offers policymakers the evidence base they need for drawing up drug laws and strategies. It also helps professionals and researchers pinpoint best practice and new areas for analysis. As well as gathering information on the demand and reduction of the demand for drugs, the agency in recent years has extended its monitoring and reporting on drug supply, supply reduction and illicit drug markets.

www.emcdda.europa.eu

About Europol

Europol is the European Union's law-enforcement organisation handling criminal intelligence. Its aim is to improve the effectiveness of, and cooperation between, the competent authorities in the EU Member States in preventing and combating serious international organised crime and terrorism. Operational since 1999 and based in The Hague, the organisation employs some 600 staff to support national law-enforcement agencies in their everyday work, including efforts to tackle illicit drug trafficking, money laundering, cyber crime and terrorism. Europol comes into play when an organised criminal structure is involved and two or more EU Member States are affected. Among others, it facilitates cross-country information exchange and provides analysis of operations. Europol is set to become an EU agency in 2010.

www.europol.europa.eu

EMCDDA–Europol cooperation

Joint publications on illicit drugs

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Publications Office

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EMCDDA and Europol collaborate on joint publication series

The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) and the European Police Office (Europol), stepped up their cooperation on drugs and crime in the spring of 2009, by defining a series of collaborative activities for the period 2009–12. The commitment was made in the framework of a 'Cooperation Agreement' signed in Brussels in November 2001, under which the organisations exchange information and expertise on drug-related issues, money laundering and the diversion of chemical precursors. The two bodies also collaborate actively in detecting and monitoring new and potentially threatening psychoactive substances and in assessing the involvement of organised crime in their manufacture and trafficking. This activity is carried out under the terms of a specific legal instrument, adopted by the Council of the European Union in 2005 (www.emcdda.europa.eu/drug-situation/new-drugs).

Among the collaborative activities planned for 2009–12 is an EMCDDA–Europol joint publication series covering key aspects of European drug markets. While the first titles in the series are dedicated to individual illicit substances — e.g. amphetamine-type stimulants, cocaine, heroin and cannabis — future editions will be conceived in line with information needs.

Bringing together EMCDDA information and statistics on prevalence, health and drug research, with Europol data and knowledge on production, trafficking, markets and drug-related crime, the publications will offer an integrated analysis of the topics chosen. Complementary information will be furnished by the organisations' respective national networks: the EMCDDA national focal points and the Europol national units.

The series is designed to inform policymakers, drug experts and the general public on specific aspects of the drug situation on which the two bodies have relevant information to contribute. Each title in the series will result from close cooperation between the organisations and will present a joint EMCDDA–Europol view.

All publications will be downloadable from the EMCDDA and Europol websites and, in some cases, print versions will be available. Due to the technical nature of these reports, and taking into account timeliness, costs and expected readership, they will be available in English only.

www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications
www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/illicit-drugs
www.europol.europa.eu

Issue No 1: Methamphetamine

The early editions in this joint publication series are designed to provide an overview of amphetamine-type stimulants. Issue No 1, focusing on methamphetamine, presents information on the substance itself, its history and synthesis, as well as its production and markets in Europe. The most recent information available on methamphetamine is used to analyse possible trends and future developments related to this drug in Europe.

Methamphetamine can be synthesised in illicit laboratories through fairly simple, often one-step, chemical processes involving the drug's two main precursors: ephedrine and pseudo-ephedrine. Large-scale production and trafficking of the drug, as well as high prevalence of use and associated crime and health problems, occur particularly in South-East Asia and North America. However, there are signs that problems may be spreading elsewhere, such as to Australia and South Africa.

In Europe as a whole, the market for stimulant drugs has historically been centred on cocaine and amphetamine, with methamphetamine posing significant problems mainly in the Czech Republic (and to a lesser extent Slovakia). For over 30 years, 'pervitin', as methamphetamine is known locally, has been the second most prevalent drug after cannabis in the Czech Republic. Supply in this country originates in numerous small-scale 'kitchen' laboratories operated mostly by the users themselves.

A series of recent developments, however, suggests a possible deterioration in the European methamphetamine picture. In Sweden and Norway, high levels of seizures of the drug over the last few years could mean that these traditionally amphetamine-based markets are moving towards methamphetamine.

The discovery of fairly large amounts of methamphetamine alongside MDMA in illicit tableting facilities in the Netherlands may mean that the drug is spreading beyond its traditional markets and making inroads into Western Europe. Europol warns that methamphetamine consumed in Sweden and Norway is produced and distributed by criminal gangs, meanwhile the Czech authorities report the increased involvement of organised crime in their national market. Moreover, several seizures have revealed that Europe is used as a transit point for the precursor pseudo-ephedrine, legally produced in Asia — especially China and India — but diverted to illicit methamphetamine laboratories in Mexico.

Methamphetamine is a drug associated with severe public health problems around the world. While in Europe problems related to this drug remain limited to a few countries, the developments described above underscore the need for careful monitoring at European level.

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