



European Monitoring Centre
for Drugs and Drug Addiction

Annual report 2009: the state of the drugs problem in Europe

Alessandro Pirona, Rome 05/11/2009



European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA)

Established: 1993

Seat: Lisbon

Staff: 100

Partners:

REITOX network in 30 countries

Situation

Cocaine

Heroin

Cannabis

Ecstasy and
amphetamines

Cocaine and heroin: no strong signs of a diminishing problem



Situation

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13 million European adults (15–64 years) have tried cocaine in their lifetime (3.9 %)

7.5 million are young adults (15–34 years) have tried cocaine in their lifetime (5.6 %)

3 million young adults have used it in the last year (2.2 %)

Trends in last year prevalence of cocaine among young adults (15–34), measured by population surveys.

Countries with three or more surveys

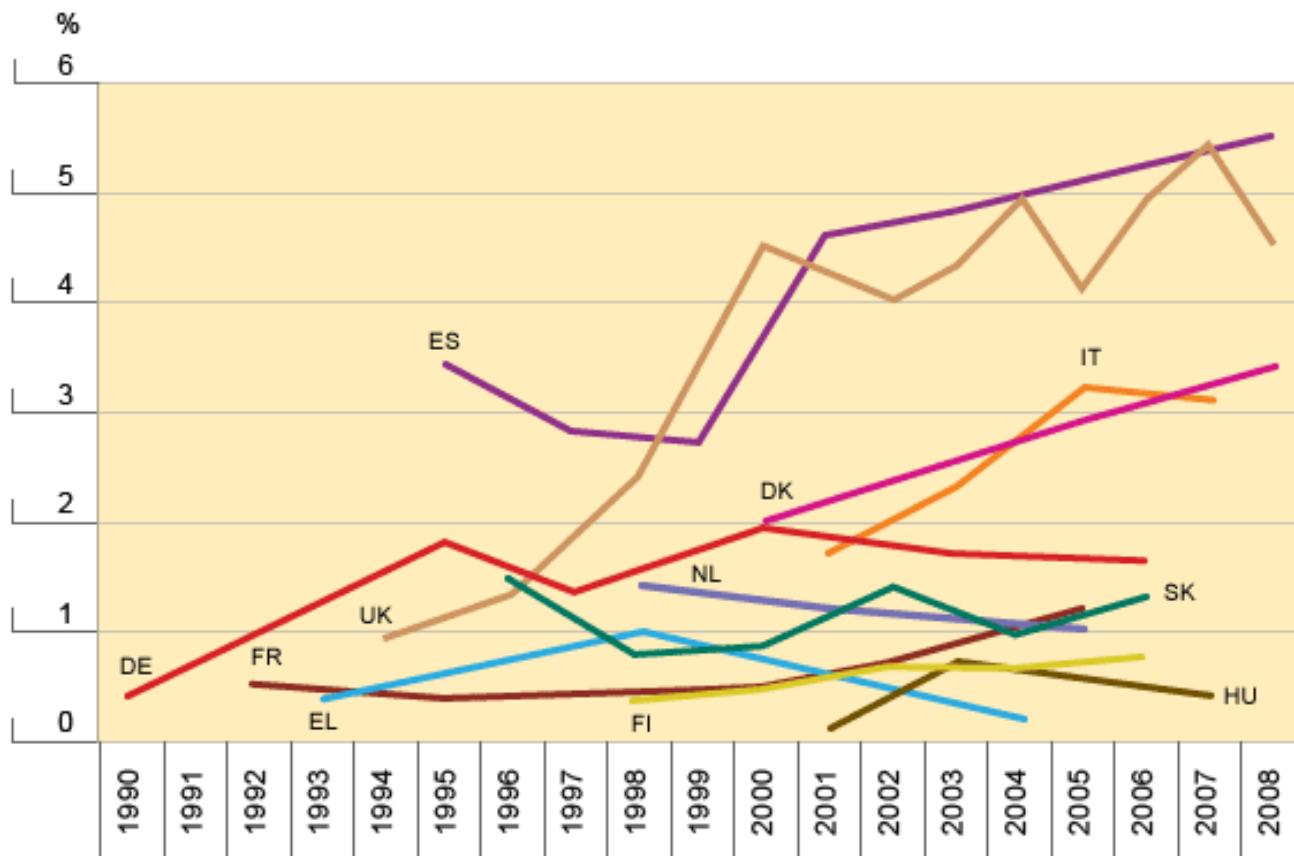
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Situation

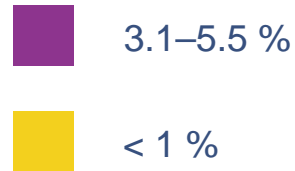
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High level and low level prevalence countries — last year prevalence among young adults (15–34)



Trend in estimated number of new clients entering treatment by primary drug

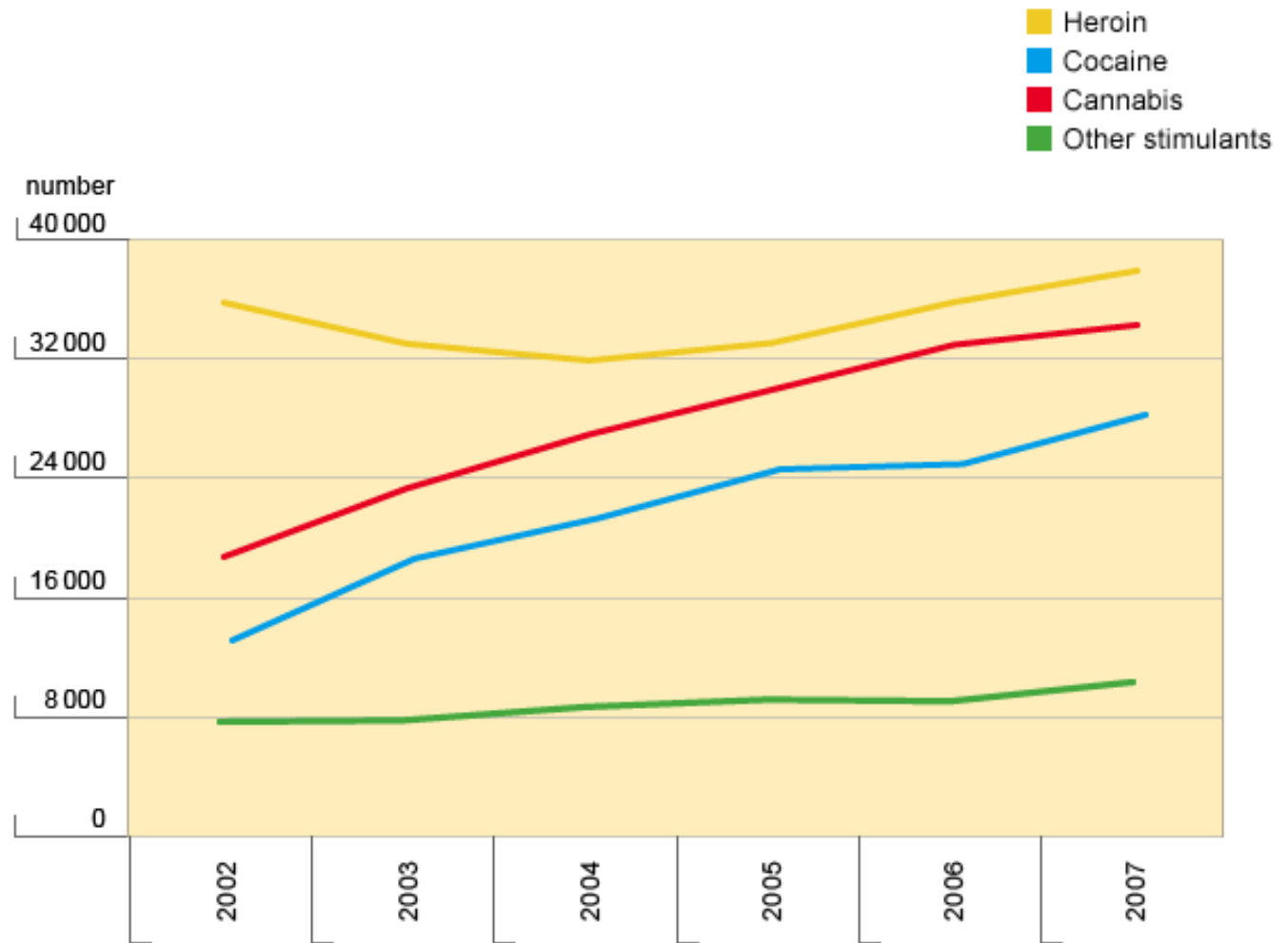
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Cocaine seizures rose to 92 000 in 2007
(84 000 in 2006)

But the quantity seized dropped: to 77 tonnes in
2007 (121 tonnes in 2006)



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A stable, but no longer diminishing problem

- Concerns raised by three indicators of heroin use:

treatment demand
drug-induced deaths
seizures

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Between 1.2 and 1.5 million problem opioid users (EU + Norway)

Number of new demands for treatment (heroin as the primary drug) was 6 % greater in 2007 than in 2002

Eight countries reported that, between 2006 and 2007, users entering treatment for primary heroin use increased:

in number and as a percentage of all clients

Trend in estimated number of new clients entering treatment by primary drugs

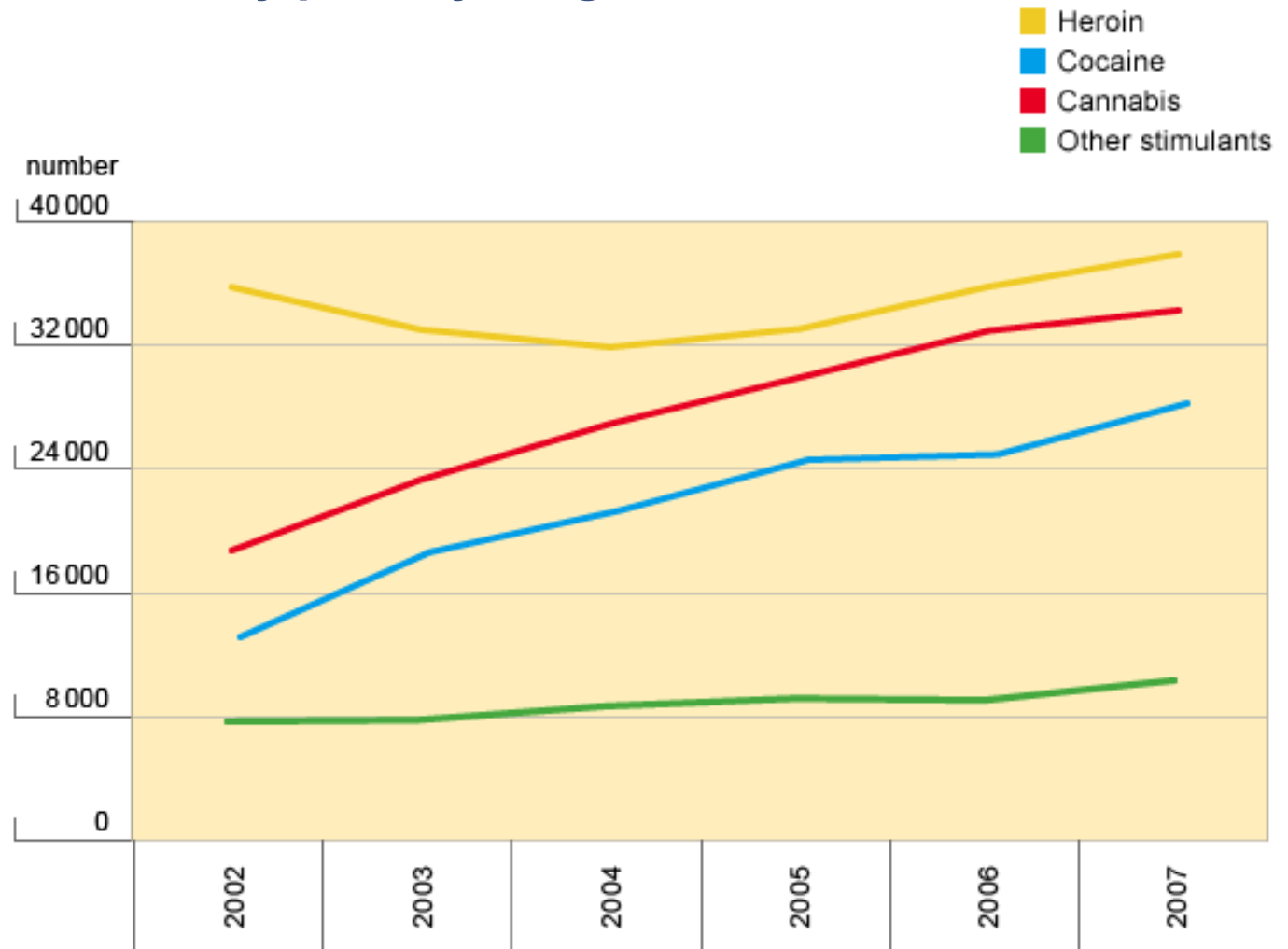
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Change in number of drug-induced deaths (2000–03)



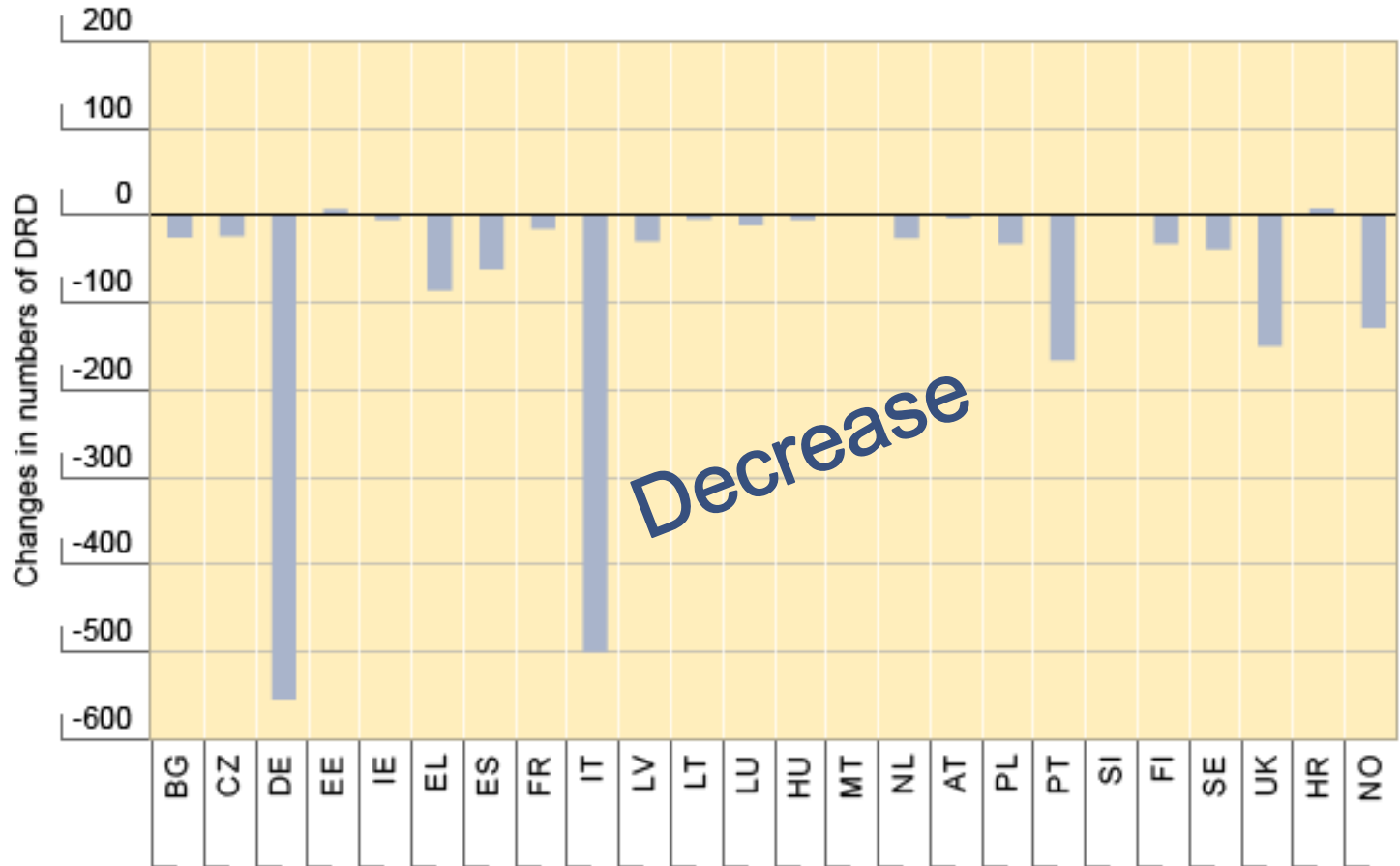
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Change in number of drug-induced deaths (2004–07)

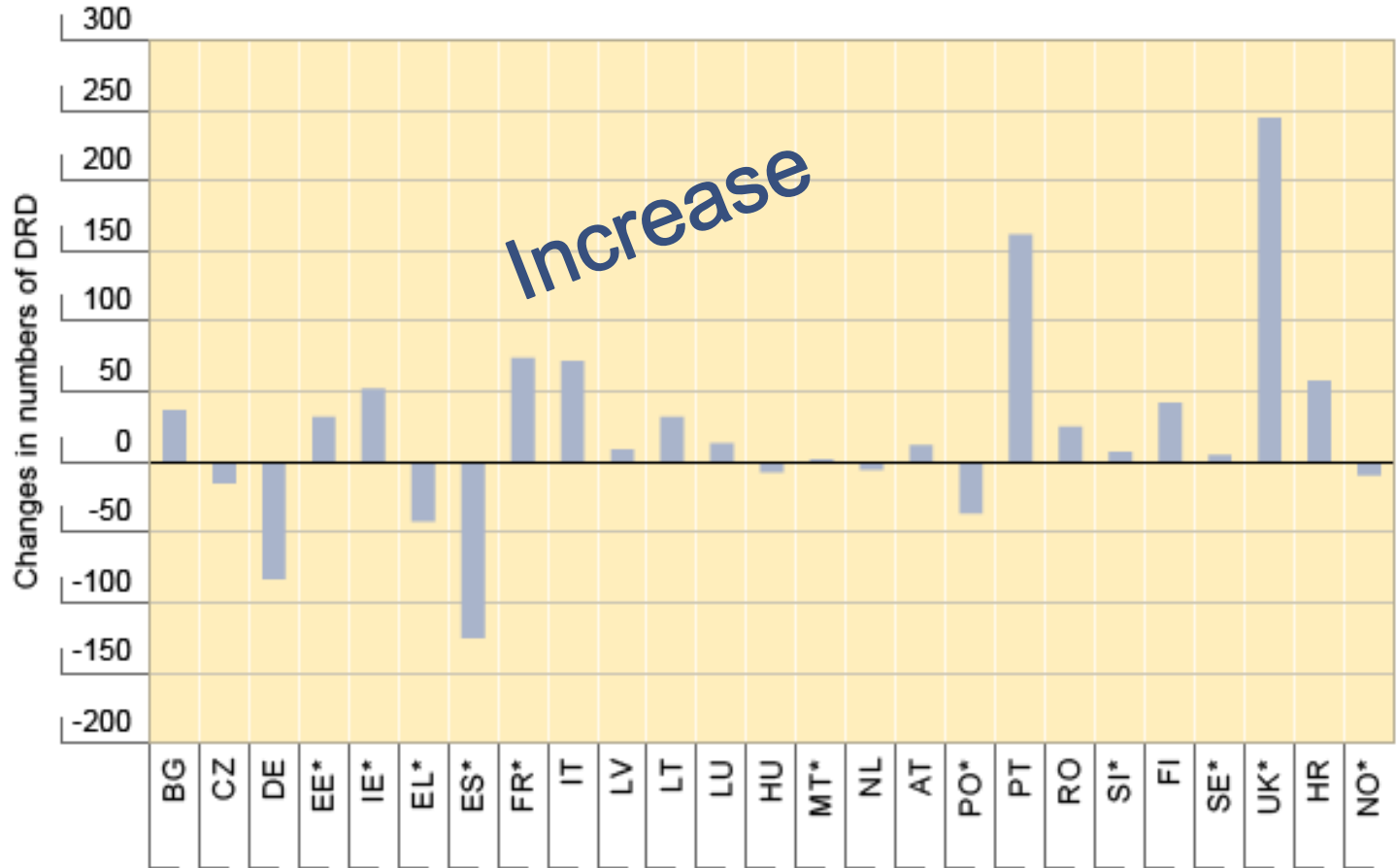
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Number of reported heroin seizures (EU + Norway) rose on average by around 4 % per year between 2002 and 2007

Estimated 56 000 seizures in 2007 (51 000 in 2006)

Amount of heroin seized (EU + Norway) declined after 2002, but increased from 8.1 tonnes in 2006 to 8.8 tonnes in 2007

Turkey, important transit country for heroin entering EU, reported a record 13.2 tonnes seized in 2007 (2.7 tonnes in 2002)



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Declining popularity, particularly among young people

Around 74 million Europeans (15–64 years) have tried cannabis in their lifetime

41.5 million are young adults (15–34 years)

17 million young adults have used it in the last year

Trends in last year prevalence of cannabis among young adults (15–34), measured by national surveys. Countries with three or more surveys

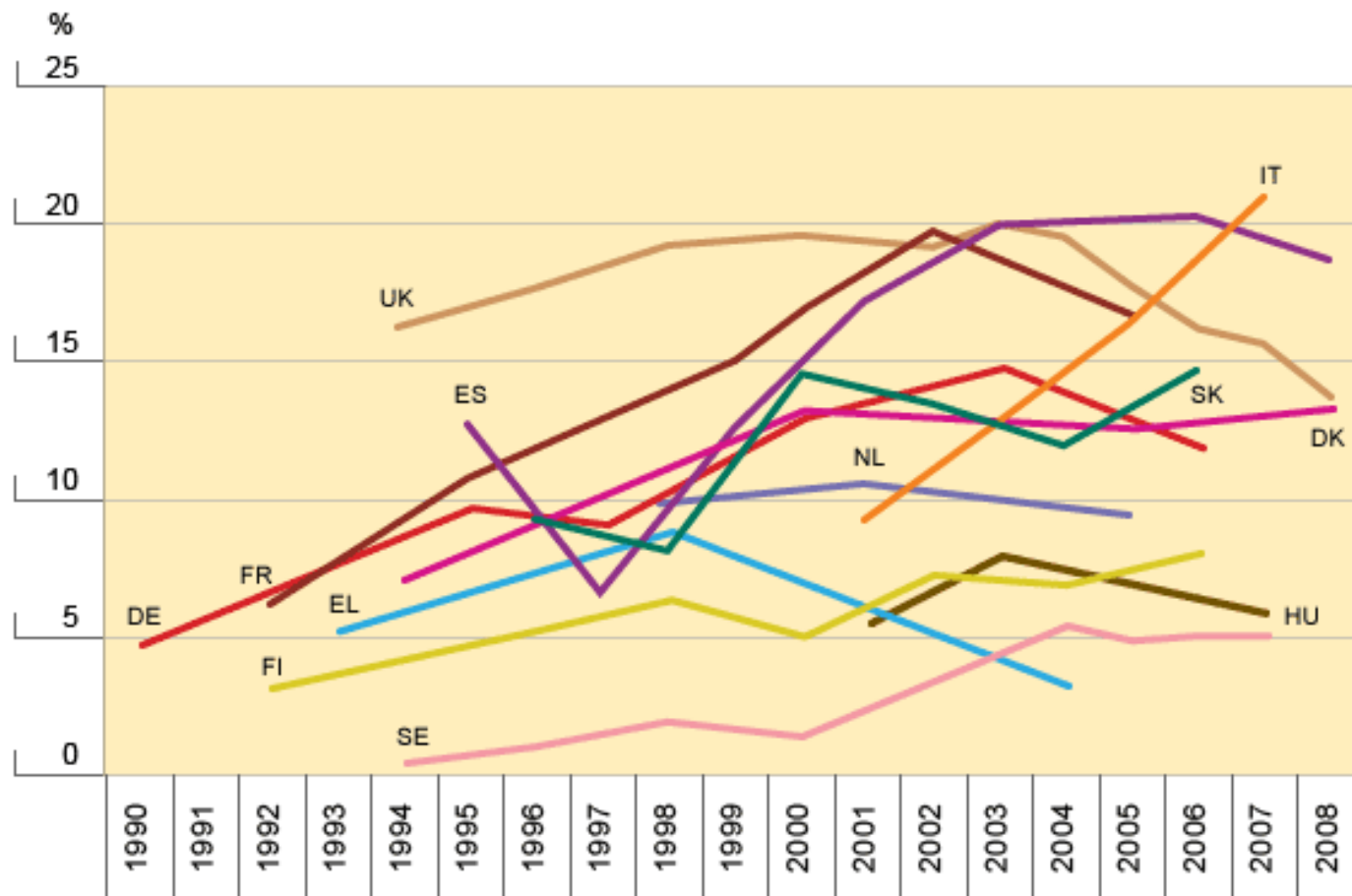
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Different patterns in trends in lifetime prevalence of cannabis use among 15- to 16-year-old school students

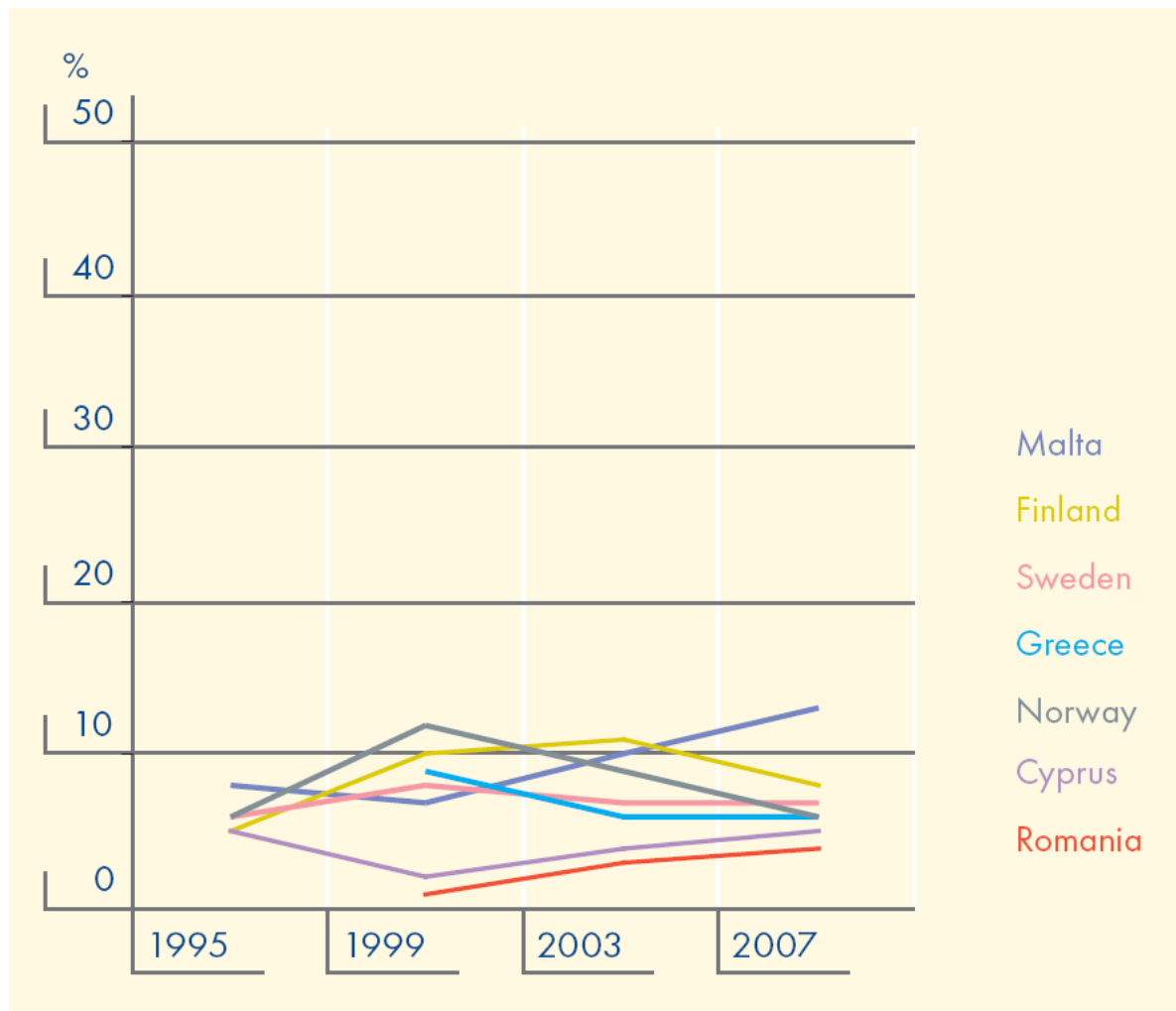
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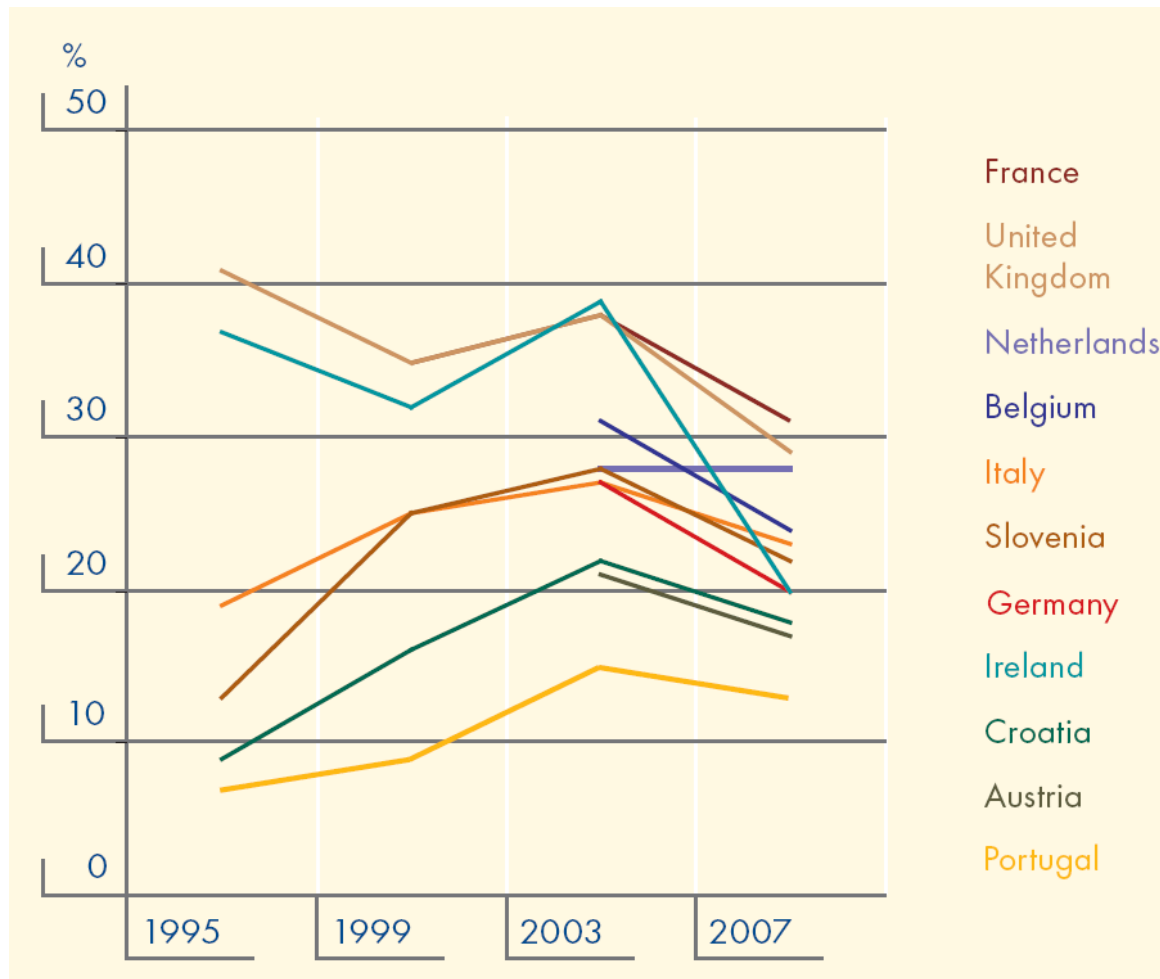
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Different patterns in trends in lifetime prevalence of cannabis use among 15- to 16-year-old school students

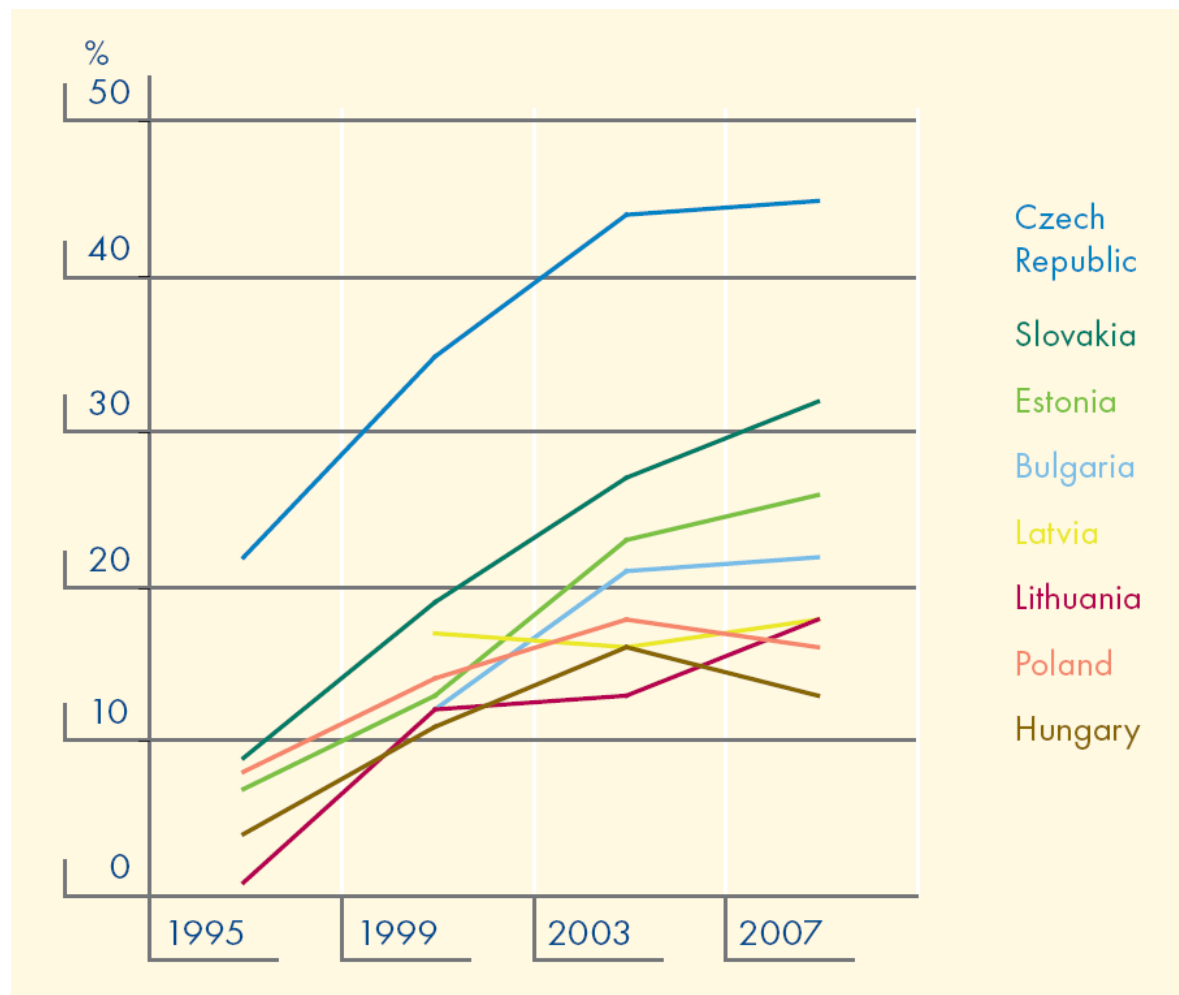
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Up to 2.5 % of all
young Europeans
could be using
cannabis on a daily
basis

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**Ecstasy and
amphetamines**



2 million young adults
have used ecstasy in
the last year



1.5 million young adults
have used amphetamine
in the last year

**Overall stabilisation in the use trends of
ecstasy and amphetamines**

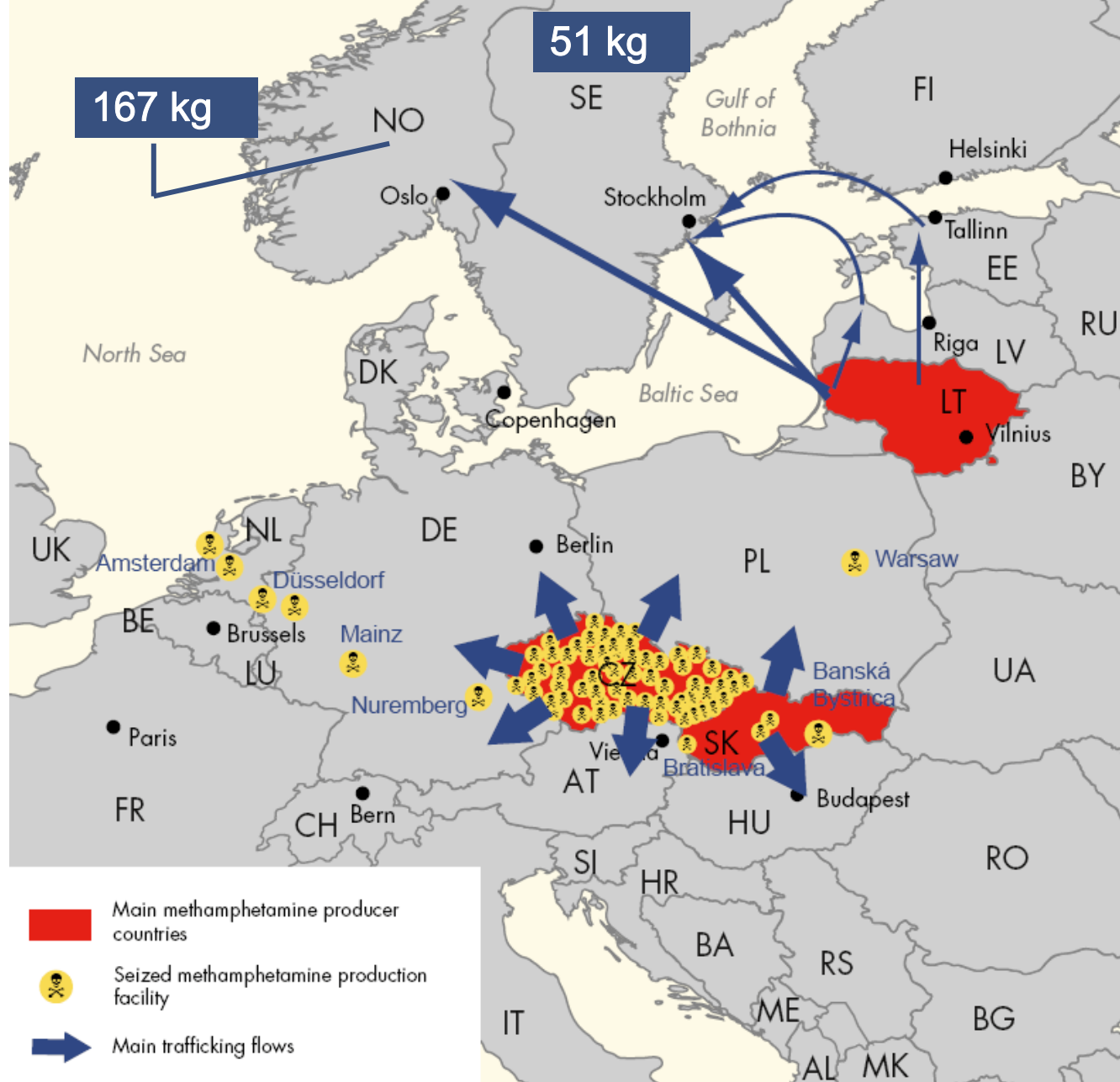
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Responses

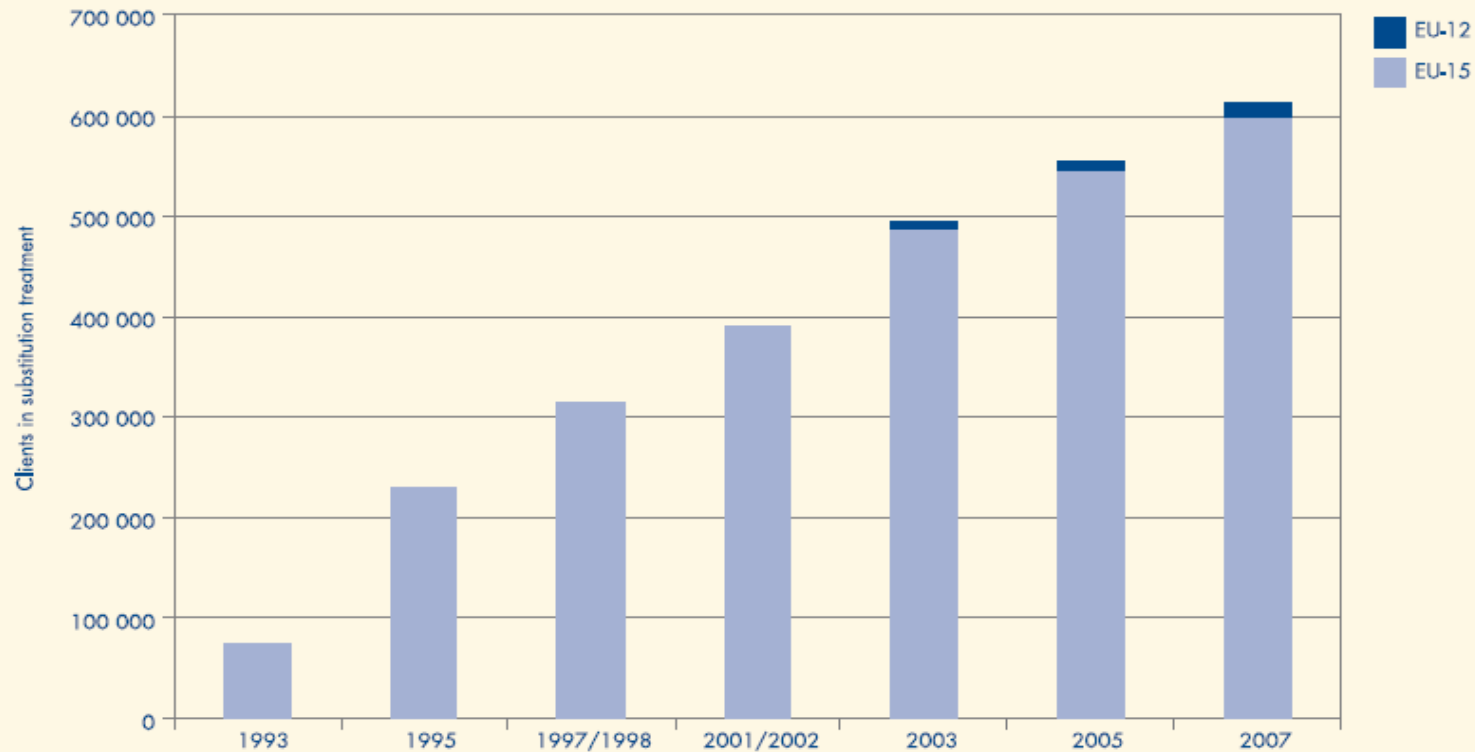
Treatment

Policies

**From
'one size fits all'
to
targeted solutions**



Trend in the number of clients receiving opioid substitution treatment from 1993 to 2007 in the EU-27



NB: Data from 1993 to 2001/2002 represent only the EU-15. For some countries, missing values are estimated using the previous reported value.

Responses

Treatment

Policies



Development of effective drug policies in Europe and beyond

Responses

The European Union and the United Nations have both renewed their drug action plans

Treatment

Balanced approach (the EU trade mark). Importance of monitoring and evaluation to improve drug policies

Policies

Almost all EU Member States have a national drug strategy or action plan

Two thirds of them plan to evaluate these policy documents



Changing market

Internet

New drugs

Difficulties of 'hitting a moving target'



Changing
market

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New drugs

Monitoring the Internet — an increasingly important element in identifying new drug trends

115 online shops in 17 European countries



UK (37 %), Germany (15 %),
Netherlands (14 %) and Romania (7 %)

New products such as 'Spice'

Changing market

Internet

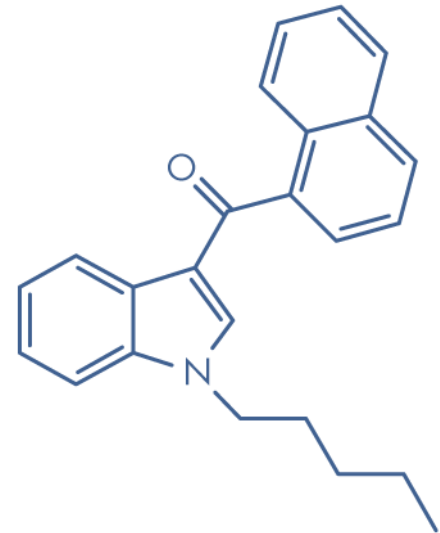
New drugs

Is 'Spice' the taste of things to come?



Some 48 % of the 115 online retailers surveyed were offering 'Spice'

Often sold as incense, some batches contain synthetic cannabinoids (e.g. JWH-018)



Changing market

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New drugs

Detecting new drugs

Europe is making headway in detecting new drugs

EU early-warning system has reported over 90 substances to date

For the first time, a synthetic cannabinoid, JWH-018, was among the reported drugs

Synthetic cannabinoids — latest stage in the development of ‘designer drugs’



Conclusion overview 2009 — challenges

- Cocaine and heroin maintain firm hold on Europe's drug scene, with little sign of improvement
- New drugs: market innovation and sophistication
- Synthetic cannabinoids: latest in 'designer drugs'
- Signs of methamphetamine edging into new territory



Conclusion overview 2009 — progress

- Drug use levels still high in Europe, but no major increases for most forms of use
- Amphetamine and ecstasy use: overall steady or falling
- Cannabis: declining use, particularly in young people
- Services for drug users are increasingly diversified and offered as part of an integrated package of care
- EU is moving faster to detect new drugs (moving target)
- Evaluation of national drug strategies/plans is increasing

