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METHODOLOGY

The 2019 Report on Drug Seizures in Southeast Europe – public version (hereinafter referred to as “Report”) has been drafted to provide a wide-ranging outline on the drugs situation in Southeast Europe and to support the law enforcement community in completing their overview of the situation in Southeast Europe.

The Report is encompassing key findings from the restricted version “2019 Report on Drug Seizures in Southeast Europe” which is available only for law enforcement and judicial authorities from the SELEC Member States and partners.

The report is based mainly on hard data (statistics) and covers relevant aspects occurred during the period January - December 2018. For revealing trends in drug trafficking, data and information related to the previous years have also been used.

The report is based on the following sources:

- Information provided by all 11 SELEC Member States (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, North Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, and Turkey) through the Annual SELEC Questionnaires on Drug Trafficking for 2018;
- 1,070 drug seizures notifications reported by all Member States and collected from other sources;
- Other SELEC reports (Organized Crime Threat Assessment for Southeast Europe 2018 - OCTA SEE 2018) and information;
- Drug-related cases carried out by the Member States;
- SELEC Joint Investigations.

The available data was processed, collated, compared and analysed for the purpose of the report.

The following aspects are being disclosed and analysed in the report:

- Situation/evolution of the main types of drugs;
- Routes of drugs trafficking in the region;
- Means of transport and concealment methods.

Presented data on number of cases, quantities seized, border crossing points, method of trans-border transportation, location of seizures, price were evaluated based on annual questionnaires, while information on routes, reason of control, type of concealment was concluded based on available seizure notifications.

The accuracy of this report and of the overall situation in the Southeast Europe is depending on the completeness of the contributions provided by Member States for the purposes herein.

Considering that not all countries provided information related to all categories referred in the standard questionnaire and seizure notifications, the totals presented in the Report should not be considered as absolute values for the regional situation.

Regarding the type of concealment, the following terms were used:

- “in transport” - the drugs are hidden in the construction hollow spaces or in special built-in concealment of vehicle (e.g. in the dashboard, in the spare/in use wheel, etc.);
- “in freight” - the drugs are hidden among the legal cargo;
- “in/on the body” - the drugs are hidden on the body (e.g. around the waist, etc) or in the body of a person (e.g. swallowed, etc.);
• “in luggage” - the drugs are hidden inside the luggage;
• “postal package” - the drugs are hidden inside a letter/parcel sent by mail.

The type of concealment is the one recorded in the moment of seizure. In some cases, the offenders change the type of transportation for the same shipment (e.g. the same cocaine load is transported by maritime container, afterwards by lorry and passenger cars).

Adjustments to figures disseminated under the questionnaires or the seizure notifications were made in some cases following the discussions with the SELEC liaison officers.

The routes presented in this Report might be parts/segments of other bigger routes. The drug routes analysis made under this Report is presenting the departure, transit and destination countries based on the seizure notifications. The data on the route may refer to the itinerary of the transport, not the route from the producer country to the illegal drug market.

Countries have reported the seizures of synthetic drugs using different units i.e. kilograms, tablets, pills etc.; in order to better analyse/compare the data, the following UNODC conversion factors system for ATS tablets (for Europe) has been used to uniform the figures for synthetic drugs, as follows:

1 tablet Ecstasy (MDMA or analogue) = 271 mg  
1 tablet Amphetamine = 253 mg  
1 tablet Methamphetamine = 225 mg  
1 tablet Non-specified amphetamine = 250 mg

To provide an estimated value of the seized drugs, it was taken into consideration the average price “at street level” in all the reporting Member State.

The figures were formatted as following: a comma (","), between every group of thousands and a dot (",".) in front for decimals (e.g. “2,100.200 kilograms” means two thousand one hundred kilograms and 200 grams).

As graphically represented in the below map¹, for analytical purposes, inside the SELEC region, the Balkan Route is divided in three branches: the Southern, the Central and the Northern branches.

¹ The approved official SELEC map was used to the representation
The Southern branch includes Turkey, Greece and Albania. The Central branch includes Turkey, Bulgaria, Serbia, Hungary, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Croatia, Slovenia and Kosovo. Some countries like Republic of North Macedonia or Montenegro can be included both in the Central and the Southern branches of the Balkan route. The Northern branch of the Balkan route includes Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary. In the context of this assessment, the Northern Black Sea route includes Central Asian countries, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Russian Federation, and Ukraine. This route is connected with the Northern branch of the Balkan route, via the border between Ukraine and Romania and Hungary.

The report is disseminated to SELEC Member States, as well as to other countries and public organizations/institutions that commit to the fight against trans-border crime and drug trafficking. The report is not available for public dissemination.

List of Member States Abbreviations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Country Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AL</td>
<td>Republic of Albania</td>
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<tr>
<td>BA</td>
<td>Bosnia and Herzegovina</td>
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<tr>
<td>BG</td>
<td>Republic of Bulgaria</td>
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<td>RS</td>
<td>Republic of Serbia</td>
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<td>TR</td>
<td>Republic of Turkey</td>
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* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Drug trafficking is by its nature a transnational crime oriented towards profit. The production, smuggling and distribution of drugs are very lucrative criminal activities, generating significant proceeds for the criminal groups which have a high level of organization and coordination, permanently exploiting the opportunities to increase profits and circumvent detection.

Countering drug trafficking is a national and regional priority in Southeast Europe, mounting up many efforts from national and international entities.

This section of the Report presents the highlights and key findings for 2018 for each type of drug in relation to quantities, number of seizures, routes, concealments, transportation and, where relevant, comparative analyse with the situation reported in the previous years.

A. Opium-Based Drugs/Heroin

- The opium-based drugs (opium, heroin and morphine) seized in Southeast Europe - almost 21 tons
- In terms of quantities, opiates at the highest level in the past five years
- Opiates detained increased by 5.1%
- Heroin (almost 20 tons) represents 95.7% of the total quantity of opiates, being the most important opium-based drug smuggled
- Heroin - upsurge by 7.1%
- Opium-based drugs transported by land touring vehicles, mostly by lorries
- The most frequently concealment mode - “in freight”
- 76.5% on risk analysis and 14.2% of total quantity is based on intelligence
- The estimated value of the seized heroin: approx. 600 million EUR

B. Cocaine

- The cocaine seized amounts more than 2.4 tons
- The total detained quantity increased by 35.4%
- Cocaine smuggled from the producers from South America, direct or via transhipment points
- Large-scale smuggling occurs usually at the ports of the region
- Cocaine is shipped predominantly by maritime containers
- Smaller amounts are trafficked through the international airports
- The estimated value of the cocaine: around 200 million EUR
C. Cannabis

- Cannabis the most produced and trafficked illicit drug in the region
- In 2015, Cannabis products at the lowest level in the past 5 years; The amount seized in 2017 comes very close to the figures registered in 2013-2014; In 2018, the total amount of cannabis products (marijuana and hashish) - close to 125 tons; decreased by 58.4%
- 68.4% were herbal cannabis (marijuana) and 31.6% hashish
- Marijuana - over 85 tons - decline by 59.5%
- Hashish - over 39 tons - decrease by 55.6%
- Marijuana routes - a focus on the south west and central branches of the Balkan Route
- Western European countries - main destinations
- Balkan Route exploited also in its reverse direction, large quantities being delivered to Turkey
- At regional level, marijuana transported by land (lorry) and maritime (by speed boats)
- The estimated value of marijuana: around 1 billion EUR, hashish: around 600 million EUR

D. Synthetic Drugs

- Amphetamine: 3,832 cases 993.997 kilograms and 10.623 litres (24.2% drop)
- MDMA: 10,823 cases 2,769.872 kilograms (0.6% increase)
- Methamphetamine: 13,885 cases 587.406 kilograms (11.7% decline)
- 9 million EUR – Amphetamine; 100 million EUR – Ecstasy; 11 million EUR - Methamphetamine
- New Psychoactive Substances - increasing threat
- Not excluded that OCGs or individuals would try to produce NPS in the region
OPIUM-BASED DRUGS

Regional overview

The heroin production takes place at a long distance from the main destination markets in Europe, therefore the heroin is trafficked across multiple borders, which obviously spawns a diverse and multifaceted supply chain.

From a large perspective, the heroin may reach the European markets via the three main routes: Northern Route, Southern Route and Balkan Route, yet the last mentioned one appears to remain the main route. Southeast Europe is geographically situated between the source and destination countries for heroin, being a transit and also destination for the illegal drug market in various amounts (different from a country to another).

Opium production decreased\(^2\) - After an overproduction in the previous years, the global area cultivated fell by some 17% in 2018, the main cause being the drought in Afghanistan, this leading to the decline of opium cultivation and production in 2018. After an upward trend over the last two decades, global production fell by 25% from 2017 to 2018 (7,790 tons).

The estimated annual gross profit\(^3\) made from opiates trafficking in all the countries on the Balkan route is \(~28\) billion US dollars; while in the countries from Southeast Europe is 1.7 billion US dollars.

The production is credited to Afghanistan, but also to the neighbouring countries such as Pakistan or Iran\(^4\). However, it is not unlikely that OCGs try moving the production, even at a low level, closer to the consumer markets. In the last years seizures of opium and morphine in the region were identified, this leading to a possible option that heroin may be produced at small scale in other areas.

In 2018, the opium-based drugs (including opium, heroin and morphine) seized in Southeast Europe weighted almost 21 tons, namely 20,851.555 kilograms. The total detained quantity increased by 5.1%.

According to the information provided by SELEC Member States, in 2018, taking in consideration the seizures and the reported prices, the total estimated value of the seized quantities of heroin (street price\(^5\)) is approx. 600 million EUR.

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\(^{2}\) UNODC World Drug Report 2019

\(^{3}\) According to UNODC - 2015 Drug Money: the illicit proceeds of opiates trafficked on the Balkan route

\(^{4}\) SELEC OCTA SEE 2018, EMCDDA European Drug Report 2019

\(^{5}\) Average price: ~30 Eur/gram
The reported opiate-related seizures for 2018 are referring to **21,904 cases** the vast majority being linked to heroin seizures, namely **21,546**.

Heroin represents **95.7%** of the total quantity of opiates seized in 2018, being indubitably the most important opium-based drug smuggled in the region. Opium (3.4%) and Morphine (0.9%) continue to represent opiates of lower use in the region. At regional level, the quantity of morphine seized dropped by 21% (from 230.292 kg to 182.002 kg), while Opium decreased by 27% (from 987.485 kg to 724.968 kg).

In order to produce heroin, the organized criminal groups need precursors; Acetic Anhydride (AA), as an essential precursor chemical for heroin is sourced predominantly in China, as well as in Europe. In response to strict control for precursors, the criminals may focus on pre-precursors that may be transported much easily. Significant seizures of Acetic Anhydride (precursor for heroin) were made in 2017. In the analysed year, it is of notice the significant decrease of seizures of Acetic Anhydride.

HEROIN

Comparing the regional situation with the previous year, the amount of seized heroin in 2018 increased by **7.1%** (+1,322.710 kg), namely from **18,621.875** kilograms to **19,944.585** kilograms. However, bearing in mind the decrease of opium production, it is expected to see a decrease of the seizures and an increase of the price.

The number of cases recorded in 2018 increased from 15,464 to 21,538 seizures. The average quantity per heroin seizure in 2018 is 0.926 kilograms, which represent a drop if we see the average reported in 2017, namely 1.204 kilograms per seizure.

Seven Member States (Albania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Turkey) reported increases of quantity seized and four countries decrease (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Greece, Montenegro and Republic of North Macedonia), as presented in the below chart:

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6 Not all the Member States provided data regarding the total number of cases
In terms of quantity, grounded on information available for 2018, “risk analysis” is in 76.5% of the reported cases the main reason of control leading to a seizure (the average – 99.4 kg per seizure), “intelligence” in 14.2% of the cases (the average – 101.4 kg per seizure), followed by routine with 9.3% (the average – 39.8 kg/ per seizure).

Comparing to the previous year (81.1% based on risk analysis and 18% on intelligence), the total quantity activated by risk analysis dropped as well as the quantity seized based on intelligence decreased.

In terms of number of cases, “risk analysis” is also the main reason of control leading to a seizure.

**SELEC Joint Investigation MD-BG-RO - 80 kg of heroin**

Following several controlled deliveries initiated by Moldova with the support of Ukraine, Georgia, Bulgaria and Romania, the authorities from Moldova seized 78,938 of high purity heroin concealed in a special-built concealment in the trailer of the lorry, the used route being Turkey - Bulgaria - Romania - Moldova. Operation results: 5 members of the OCG were arrested, 2 lorries and 4 semi-trailers were seized.
SELEC Joint Investigation Discussion - 11 kg of heroin

Joint investigation DISCUSSION related to trafficking of heroin was successfully finalized in 2018 by the Bulgarian and Turkish authorities.

Following four months exchange of information through SELEC, the Turkish Police Istanbul Narcotic Department with the support of the Bulgarian Police seized 11 kg of heroin and apprehended 3 persons involved. The heroin was planned to be transported by car from Republic of Turkey via Republic of Bulgaria, with destination Western Europe, but the transport was stopped in Istanbul and the heroin confiscated.

Routes

The heroin production takes place at a long distance from the main destination markets in Europe, therefore the heroin loads are trafficked across multiple borders, which obviously spawns a diverse and multifaceted supply chain. From a large perspective, the heroin may reach the European markets via four main routes: Northern Route, Southern Route, Caucasus route and Balkan Route, yet the last mentioned one appears to remain the main route.

The countries in the Southeast Europe play a major role in the area of drugs trafficking, because of their key geographical position that makes them essential transit countries on the so-called Balkan Route. Inside the region, the heroin may be redirected via any of the three branches of the Balkan routes: The Southern, Central and Northern branches.

The region is the shortest corridor between the source and destination countries for heroin, being a trans-shipment area for Western and Central European markets, but also a destination area for the illegal drug market in various amounts, different from a country to another.

The route is characterized by diversity, flexibility, opportunity, the best risk/profit ratio, and it can vary from one transport to another nevertheless is organized by the same perpetrators.

More than that, along the route, the heroin may be mixed by adding other substances to increase the quantity, repacked many times and divided into many conveniences, and also temporally stockpiled. Equipped laboratories to store, adulterate and reprocessing heroin are located in the region.

The seizures made in the last five years suggest an irregular exploitation of all the branches of the Balkan Route. The different branches of the Balkan route should not be seen as clearly divided, because they are permanently interlocked and pivot on the interests and links among the traffickers. The routes may change permanently and new routes and sub-routes may occur.

Due to its geographical location at the crossroads of the heroin production sites and consumption markets, Turkey continues to play a key role in the transit of heroin towards Western and Central Europe, as well as with regard to the seizures. The land border between Turkey and Iran is under the highest pressure.
In 2015 the available data indicated intensified usage of the **Northern Black Sea route**, the heroin coming in the region from Ukraine. The cautionary notice underlined in the previous SELEC reports has proved to be solid. In 2015, a substantial amount of **610,230** kilograms of heroin (4 cases) was reported as arriving in the region coming from **Ukraine**, as a starting point for the transport or transit. **Georgia** was a transit country for **375,412** kilograms of heroin, out of which 42,412 kilograms were transported directly to Bulgaria. The situation in Middle East and the immigration circumstances, followed by increased security at borders, appears that seriously influenced the heroin route.

No significant case using the Northern Black sea route in connection with the North Branch was reported in 2018; however, this channel cannot be considered closed. This route was under surveillance on a SELEC joint investigation as an OCG dismantled in 2018 was alleged to use this route.

The heroin coming from Afghanistan is mainly trafficked via Iran, afterwards enters in Turkey which is a common transit point for all the subdivisions of the Balkan route. Turkey acts as the first filter for heroin entering in the region; this is confirmed by the significant quantities of heroin seized.

After transiting Turkey, the heroin is continuing the route to Western and central Europe by land mainly through Bulgaria. After that, the heroin follows the Northern branch, entering in Romania, or the Central branch, entering in Serbia or North Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Hungary, Montenegro.

As a less used route in 2018, the heroin may follow the Southern branch by entering in Greece, this representing a decrease in comparison with the previous year. On the Southern branch, Albania is also used for transferring heroin to west, having Italy as the primary destination.

In the below map there are represented the location of seized heroin at the borders, also the main broad-spectrum routes.

![Heroin seizures map](image)

The increased seizures in Bulgaria and the decreases in Greece show a focus on the Northern and Central branch of the Balkan route, and, due to the larger quantities transiting Romania, we can conclude that, in 2018, the Northern Branch of the Balkan used was under the highest pressure.

The sea pathways along the route may gain in importance, as the quantity transported may be larger in relation to risks. Additionally, there are many citizens in the region with navigation skills that may be used to transport heroin to Western Europe ports.

The role of the region as a transit area is not limited to heroin, but also to acetic anhydride (AA), as the precursor may be shipped along the “reverse” Balkan route, coming from Europe. It appears that this route is reactivated, as large loads of AA were seized in the last years, especially in 2017. It is of notice the significant seizures of **Acetic**
Anhydride (precursor for heroin) made by Bulgaria and Turkey in 2017. In the analysed year, the reported Acetic Anhydride significantly decreased.

From Western Europe, the Acetic Anhydride concealed in lorry’s cargo may be transported using also sea routes, by ferryboats.

Concealment and transportation

In terms of encountered cases and quantity seized, based on the seizure notifications and annual questionnaires, the land vehicles e.g. passenger cars, lorries, buses, are predominantly used for heroin trafficking transiting the region to main illicit consumer markets in Central and Western Europe.

The available information shows that recently the organized crime groups are willing to take additional risks for increased profits by transporting a larger quantity at once.

As in the previous year, in 2018, in terms of quantities seized, most of the quantity was transported by lorry, respectively 91% of the total amount, followed by cars with 7%.

Loaded in lorries, shipments of several hundred of kilograms make their way by land through the region, while passenger cars are used for smuggling of relatively smaller quantities (less than 50 kilograms) and more frequent loads, thus minimizing the losses in case of a seizure. The heroin may also be delivered by boat.

Busses continue to represent a way to transport the opiates, in most of the cases in the luggage of the passengers. Smaller quantities are seized by the authorities while attempt to be smuggled by air couriers or through postal parcels (e.g. from Uganda, Tanzania, Kenya, Burundi, Zambia, Congo, Mozambique, etc.).

Any legal cargo may represent an opportunity for the OCGs to hide the heroin. Exploiting the international legal trade, the heroin is hidden among or inside (e.g. inside tomato cans) the legal commodities. In general, the lorries are used for this type of concealment.

According to the seizure notifications, the most frequently used mode was “in freight” (79%), meaning that drugs were hidden among the cargo. The heroin is concealed also “in transport” (20%), namely in specially built compartments or in construction hollows of the vehicle, as bumpers of the car, spare wheels, inside the chassis, false floor of the trailer, petrol/diesel/LPG tanks of the cars, etc. The specially-built concealment places are more and more innovative and complex, requiring more efforts from LEAs to reveal the drugs. Approximate 1% of opiates were concealed “in luggage”, by “postal parcel” and “on body”.

COCAINE

Regional overview

From a global perspective, the region does not play a strategic role in relation to cocaine smuggling, yet, it may offer many opportunities to criminals.

According to the UNODC World Drug Report 2019\(^7\), global cocaine manufacture had fallen by 35% over the period 2006–2013, and doubled over the period 2013–2017, reach 1,976 tons in 2017 (expressed at a purity of 100 per cent). According to the same report, the record level was predominantly the result of the increases mainly in Colombia (where the production quadrupled over 2013–2017.), but also in Peru and in the Plurinational State of Bolivia.

The Southeast European region is a less important market for cocaine comparing to heroin and cannabis. The role regarding cocaine trafficking is more related to transit.

The cocaine can reach the SELEC region in two ways: (i) directly, by air or sea, from the source countries from South America to the region and afterwards to Western European Countries (mainly by land), or (ii) the cocaine is reaching the Western European countries using several routes, afterwards is going to the region by air or by land. Commonly this involves transiting of small quantities from source countries or redistribution locations, usually done by air couriers, and feeding the destination markets, mostly from Western European countries. EU citizens from Southeast Europe are used as couriers for cocaine all over the world.

In the last years, many attempts to introduce significant quantities of cocaine using the maritime ports in the region were detected, in transit from the source countries in South America to destination markets in Europe.

Taking in consideration the reported seizures and prices, the total estimated value of the seized quantities of cocaine (\textit{street price})\(^8\) in 2018 is up to \textbf{200 million EUR}.

Laboratories to process (not to produce) cocaine may be located in the region. OCGs involving persons with special knowledge in chemistry set up in the region laboratories to return cocaine mixed with other products back in pure powder cocaine.

Organized criminal groups involved in cocaine trafficking are flexible, dynamic and innovative, putting effort to adjust the trafficking process to the law enforcement capabilities. The concealment of cocaine by inventive techniques has never been a missing segment in the criminals’ activity, as confirmed in the many cases \textit{e.g. the cocaine altered and injected into the furniture to avoid detection, cocaine dissolved in chemical substances, well-prepared concealment in containers.}

The cocaine seized in 2018 amounts \textbf{2,438.102} kilograms, this representing a \textbf{35.4%} increase. Although in 2016 there was a significant increase in the quantity seized, 2017 brought a \textbf{48.15%} decrease, followed by an expected increase by \textbf{35.4%}. The quantity seized in 2018 is higher than the one seized over the period 2013-2015.

In view of the fluctuation of the quantities of seized cocaine in the past 5 (five) years, it is difficult to accurately assess its further evolution based on the previous years’ pattern. However, due to the increased global production it is expected to see the cocaine at the same level, or even at higher.

\(^7\) UNODC World Drug Report 2019
\(^8\) Average price: \textdollar{}82 Eur/gram
Pursuant to the Member States contributions, 132 cases with **815,609** kilograms were directly linked to trans-border trafficking, meaning **33.3%** of the total quantity of cocaine.

Cocaine seizures at the border crossing points represent **19.4%** of the total quantity related to trans-border trafficking, while the cocaine seized inland represents **80.6%**.

As in the previous year, in terms of quantities and cases, “intelligence” is the main reason of control leading to a seizure. In 2018, **84.1%** of total quantity seized was based on intelligence.

**Routes**

Due to geographical constrains, sea and air transport are used to traffic cocaine to Europe.

The Southeast Europe represents typically a transit area to Western European countries and to a less extent destination for small quantities of cocaine. The large-scale smuggling occurs usually at the ports of the region via container shipments from South America e.g. Columbia, Brazil, Peru, Bolivia, Panama, Ecuador, Uruguay, Venezuela. Routes may not be direct, cases existing when ports along the routes in Africa or Europe are transited, before unloading in Southeast Europe.

The cocaine smuggled via the Balkan route to Central and Western Europe is inconsequential in comparison to outsized shipments trafficked directly to seaports in Western Europe.

The annual amount seized in the region is unpredictable and subject to infrequent weighty seizures; for example, in 2016 an exceptional seizure of **2.3 tons** of cocaine was made by Romania (the shipment coming from Colombia in order to reach The Netherlands), this being the peak in the last five years.

In 2018, a few infrequent seizures were made in the region. Albania made a record seizure of **613,350** kilograms transported by a container coming through the route Colombia-Italy-Malta-Albania, while another attempt to smuggle cocaine was countered by the Montenegrin authorities in Port of Bar, the route being Ecuador-Malta-Montenegro (32,168 kg). Related to land routes from west to east, inside the region, 20 kilograms were seized by Romania, the cocaine entering from Hungary.

The air routes are used by the traffickers to smuggle cocaine, the quantity being different depending on the mean of transportation and concealment (e.g. a few kilograms hidden in the luggage of passengers, hundreds of kilograms in private planes).
Concealment and transportation

In terms of seized quantities, pursuant to the seizure notifications and annual questionnaires, 80.3% of cocaine quantities were related to maritime transport and 6.9% to air courier, while the rest is linked to land vehicles and post office.

The large-scale smuggling occurs usually at the ports of the region via container shipments from South America e.g. Columbia, Brazil, Peru, Bolivia, Panama, Ecuador, Uruguay, Venezuela. Also, the private yachts / sailing boats or airplanes can be used for transport of large quantities.

Lesser amounts are trafficked through the airports in the region by air passengers or postal/express mail parcels. Couriers, mules or swallowers, using commercial flights or jet planes, may travel directly from South America or, in order to elude risk analysis, they may use irregular routes via transit point(s) such as The United Arab Emirates (UAE) and African countries. More, the couriers may combine the air and terrestrial routes.

Within the region, the cocaine is transported by other means of transport (e.g. passenger cars, bus, lorries, etc.) to various final destinations. When cocaine is delivered from Western European countries, the means of transportation used are primarily land vehicles.

When the information related to the mean of transport from the source countries to Europe (which probably was by air or maritime) was not available, the reporting countries provided information on the mean of transportation directly connected with the seizure.

Regarding the concealment methods, the cocaine is concealed “in freight” (in many cases in the container loaded with bananas), or “in transport” (wall/floor of the container, battery of the car, etc.)

The most imaginative methods of concealment are used by criminal networks, including those for which the chemical extraction of cocaine is required.
CANNABIS

Regional overview

Beyond any doubt, cannabis and its derivatives are the most widely produced and used illicit drug in the world. Globally, the herbal cannabis (marijuana) is produced and used in almost all countries, whilst the cannabis resin (hashish) production is limited to countries in North Africa, the Near and Middle East and South-West Asia.9

According to the information provided by SELEC Member States, taking in consideration the reported seizures and prices for cannabis products, the total value of the seized quantities in 2018 (street price10) is around 1 billion for marijuana and 600 million EUR for hashish.

Technology development applied in cannabis indoor cultivation leads to an increasing capacity of the cannabis producers to speed up the process and to increase the quality.

In 2018 cannabis remains the first ranked drug in terms of cases and quantities seized, compared to other type of drugs. The total amount of cannabis products, including herbal cannabis (marijuana) and cannabis resin (hashish), reported as seized was almost 125 tons (124,314.051 kg) in 80,752 cases.

If in 2015 it was registered the lowest amount of cannabis products registered in the past 5 years, in 2016 the seized quantity of cannabis products increased, the year 2017 confirming the trend. The amount seized in 2017 comes very close to the figures registered in 2013-2014, while in 2018 the quantity seriously decreased by 58.4%.

The overall decrease of the seized cannabis products is directly linked to the decreases of both herbal cannabis (marijuana) and hashish.

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9SELEC Reports, UNODC World Drug Report
10 Average price for herbal cannabis: ~11.8 Eur/gram; average price for cannabis resin: ~15 Eur/gram
As regard to the type of cannabis products, 68.4% were herbal cannabis (marijuana) and 31.6% hashish. In the last five years, the share marijuana-hashish oscillated from 70% to 95% marijuana, being difficult to accurately assess its future evolution.

It should be underlined that, without exception, the SELEC Member States seized in higher percentage marijuana.

The most significant quantity of cannabis products was detained in Turkey, Albania and in Greece.

**HERBAL CANNABIS (MARIJUANA)**

In 2018 an amount of over 85 tons (85,017.133 kilograms) within 66,142 cases of marijuana was seized in the analysed year, a decrease by 59.5% (less with 125 tons) comparing to the previous year.

Comparing to the previous year, there is an overall decrease of the quantity of marijuana seized by 59.5%. Turkey, the country with the highest quantity seized, registered a decrease by 59.0%, while Albania a drop by 74.0%. The increases/decreases are represented in the below chart.

Out of total, an amount of 22,897.343 kg was indicated as directly related to trans-border trafficking; not all the countries provided data on this aspect. The average quantity in a trans-border seizure is 47,901 kg.

Regarding the marijuana seizures directly related to trans-border trafficking, as per the contributions of the Member States, 478 seizures of marijuana were made at the border crossing points and 752 seizures inland. In terms of quantity, 9,994.76 kilograms of marijuana were seized at the border crossing points, while 12,902.58 kilograms of marijuana were seized inland.
HASHISH

Hashish registered an ascending trend in 2011-2013, in 2014 focused into a descending trend, while in 2015 being recorded the lowest quantity in the last years. In 2016, hashish went up again at high level, four times more than 2015. In 2017 we see again an increase in the quantities seized, the amount rising almost to the pick level of 2013. In 2018, the seized quantity significantly dropped being close to the level recorded in 2016. However, it is the second largest quantity registered in the last 5 years.

Hashish (39,296,919 in 2018) represents 31.6% of the amount of cannabis products seizures made in the region, the total reported quantity decreasing by 55.6% (from 88,548,718 kg in 2017 to 39,296,919 kg in 2018).

Out of the total amount of seized hashish, 27 seizures with 7,423,010 kg were indicated as directly related to trans-border trafficking.

The regional situation is statistically influenced by the Turkey’s noteworthy drop. The increases/decreases in the SELEC Member States are represented in the below chart.

In terms of quantities, “risk analysis” is the main reason of control leading to a seizure (the average - 89.2 kg per seizure) followed by “intelligence” (the average - 202.1 kg per seizure).

Out of total, 47% of the quantity is related to risk analysis, 46% to intelligence and 7% to routine.

“Intelligence” is linked to larger seizures while “risk analysis” to lower quantities, but the results are associated more with smaller amounts.
Example of SELEC Joint Investigation:

Joint investigation SUNSHINE concluded following 14 months of intensive exchange of information through SELEC channel among competent law enforcement authorities of Republic of Albania, Republic of North Macedonia, Hellenic Republic, Italian Republic and Republic of Turkey, with a total of 8.4 tons marijuana seized and 66 persons arrested.

The following results were recorded:

- In Republic of Albania: 4 operations were carried out, 1.4 tons marijuana seized and 25 persons arrested
- In Republic of Turkey: 3 operations were carried out, 3.2 tons marijuana seized and 22 persons arrested
- In Hellenic Republic: 2 operations were carried out, 1.6 tons marijuana seized and 17 persons arrested
- In Republic of North Macedonia: 1 operation was carried out, 80 kg marijuana seized and 2 persons arrested
- In Italian Republic: 1 operation was carried out, 2.2 tons marijuana seized.

Photos made available by the Member States involved in the operation

Routes

MARIJUANA (HERBAL CANNABIS)

Southeast Europe remains both source and consumer region for marijuana. The marijuana produced in the region is reaching the destination countries (Western Europe also neighbouring countries) mainly via land or sea using various branches of the Balkan Route.

The seizures made in the last years suggest a focus on the south west and central branches of the Balkan Route, in both directions, from east to west and from west to east.

The sea routes through the Adriatic Sea and Ionian Sea using speed/fishing boats or ferries appear to be intensive used by the criminals to transport marijuana into Italy.

From Albania, marijuana may be smuggled directly to Italy via ports, or may be transported in the neighbouring countries for further distribution. It is worth outlining that the route Albania-Italy seriously dropped down. Large loads may be transported by lorry or by speed boat to Greece to be further delivered. When it comes to land transportation, the marijuana transits all the countries in the region. The routes are decided depending on the connections of the OCGs.

The reported quantity for which Turkey was mentioned as destination country seriously increased in the last few years, large quantities transiting Bulgaria and Greece in order to reach Turkey, which became a more common destination for marijuana coming from other SELEC Member States. Large quantities were transported also via less common routes (e.g. from Ireland).

Hashish

Cannabis resin continues to be smuggled from Morocco to Europe and to other countries in North Africa, but also from Afghanistan to neighbouring countries, as Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran.
Hashish is coming in the region in transit or as destination. However, the region may be used as an alternative route for large-scale conveyances to Western European countries for cannabis resin sourced in Morocco, as occurred sporadic in the past (OCTA SEE 2018).

Greece seized two large quantities of hashish coming from Syria. It appears that Libya is becoming an important transhipment point for cannabis resin coming from Morocco. More, a possible increasing role of Syria should not be neglected.

**Concealment and transportation**

Having in mind the features of marijuana in relation to size/volume and demand, marijuana is transported in bigger conveyance than other drugs. The routes are influenced by the links and connections at international level.

Large scale shipments of several hundred of kilograms of marijuana or even tons are transported in lorries or by fast sea boats, while passenger cars are used for smuggling of relatively smaller quantities, but more often. Much lower quantities may be transported by passengers of trains and buses.

In 2018, the largest quantities of marijuana were transported by lorry (64% of the whole amount), while 23% was transported by passenger cars. The rest was transported by speed/sailing boats, bus, van, or even by pedestrians that cross difficult and inaccessible borders.

The average quantity transported by lorry is 234 kilograms while the average amount transported by car is 11 kilograms.

According to the available information, the most frequently used mode was “in transport”, meaning that drugs were hidden in the vehicle or special prepared concealment (e.g. spare wheel, in the fuel tank, in the engine compartment, double walls of the lorry, etc.); 81% of the seized quantity was concealed in this way. “In freight” was also used to conceal marijuana in the mean of transportation, this applying for 14% of the seized quantity.
SYNTHETIC DRUGS

Amphetamine-type Stimulants (ATS)

Regional overview

Definitely, the plant-based drugs dominate the illegal drug market; yet, the synthetic drug market is the most dynamic one and may try to catch up with, especially taking benefit of the low price. The drug evolution is difficult to assess due to many factors difficult to anticipate, as evolution of traditional drugs, technology development and new synthetic drugs.

The manufacture of synthetic drugs is not depending on the cultivation of a certain plants; therefore, it may be produced anywhere if the ingredients precursors/pre-precursors are available. The region may act also as a transhipment point for precursors and pre-precursors.

The amphetamine-type stimulants pose a considerable challenge for the authorities at the borders since their volume is small and are easy to conceal and transport. The OCGs employ various methods and techniques in the concealment of synthetic drugs, such as private vehicles, couriers, commercial flights, parcel services, and commercial buses.

Some OCGs use so-called cocktail shipments, conveying different type of drugs in the same vehicle, as heroin with methamphetamine from east to west, or MDMA and cocaine from west to east.

According to the annual questionnaires on drugs, the following quantities of synthetic drugs were seized in 2015:

- **Amphetamine:** 3,832 cases, 993,940 kilograms and 10,623 litres
- **MDMA:** 10,823 cases, 2,769,872 kilograms
- **Methamphetamine:** 13,885 cases, 587,406 kilograms

According to the information provided by SELEC Member States, taking in consideration the reported seizures and prices for synthetic drugs, the total value of the seized quantities in 2018 (street price) is around **9 million EUR**\(^\text{11}\) for Amphetamine, **100 million EUR**\(^\text{12}\) for Ecstasy and **11 million EUR**\(^\text{13}\) for methamphetamine.

Amphetamine

In 2010-2013 amphetamine registered a continuously drop from **574,843** kilograms in 2010 to **186,461** kilograms in 2013, while in 2014 the total quantity seized swiftly increased by 61% compared to the previous year, being almost at the same level from 2011.

In 2015, the seized amphetamine dropped down by 61.4% to **115,730** kilograms, being the lowest quantity seized in the last five years. In 2016, the figures went up, increasing 40 times more than previous year, from **115,730** to **4,612,947** kilograms. The increase was not sustained the next year, 2017, when the total dropped again by **71.44%**, to **1,311,424** kilograms.

In the analysed year, even though the amphetamine seizures remained at high level (**993,940** kg and 10,623 litres seized), it was recorded a **24.2%** drop down.

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\(^{11}\) Average price: ~9 Eur/gram  
\(^{12}\) Average price: ~36 Eur/gram  
\(^{13}\) Average price: ~18.7 Eur/gram
The regional situation remained close to 1 ton due to impressive seizure made by Greece, namely 3,127,360 Captagon tablets\textsuperscript{14}, which were transported from Syria to Libya.

The region represents also a transit area for pre-precursors and precursors, most of the quantity having the destination The Netherlands. In 2017, large quantities of amphetamine/methamphetamine pre-precursor (APAAN, pre-precursor for BMK) were seized in the region (e.g. 1,000 litres departed to Vietnam with the destination The Netherlands). In 2018, the quantities seized of APAAN substantially increased, as well as of the pre-precursor APAA. Large quantities (tons) of BMK coming from China were also seized in the region while transiting.

Laboratories to produce amphetamine were dismantled in the region, yet the total number decreased in 2018.

**MDMA**

In 2011-2015, Ecstasy (also known as MDMA or XTC) continued to follow the upward trend in regards to the quantities seized in Southeast Europe, whilst in 2016, for the first time in the last years, it went down to 1,590.795, being at the same level as in 2014. At this point we can talk about an increasing trend because in 2017 we have again a rise of the amount seized by 73.36% (from 1,590.795 kilograms in 2016 to 2,757.836 kilograms in 2017). In the analysed year, the situation remained at the same level, at regional level being registered a light increase by almost 0.6%, to total reported quantity is 2,769.872 kilograms.

Most of the countries reported increases of Ecstasy seized, however the quantities are not having a regional impact.

\textsuperscript{14} Amphetamine tablets with a ‘captagon’ logo
In the reverse direction of the Balkan route of opiates, MDMA (also known as Ecstasy or XTC) is crossing through the region mainly by land, from West to East, coming from The Netherlands and Belgium where it is also produced.

Important transports were intercepted by law enforcement agencies from the SELEC Member states, as per example: under the umbrella of SELEC, within the Joint Investigation codenamed "Philip Plein" between Bulgaria and Turkey, a quantity of 63,698 kilograms of drugs (tablets with logo Philip Plein and Coca Cola) were seized by the Bulgarian authorities at BG-RS border while being transported by lorry; the drugs were concealed “in freight”, in cardboard boxes with lighting equipment; the route was The Netherlands-Serbia-Bulgaria-Turkey.

![Pictures made available by Bulgarian authorities](image)

**Methamphetamine**

During the last several years small quantities of methamphetamine are produced in kitchen-type clandestine laboratories, the drugs being used predominantly for private use or even distribution.

The chemical equipment and the required precursors are relatively easy to find which means that such laboratories may be set up in any state in the region.

The year 2013 represented a major drop in the amount of the reported seizures of methamphetamine from 509,508 kilograms (in 2012) to 135,463 kilograms (in 2013). The next five (5) years the amount seized had an increasing trend which peaked in 2017 when the total seizures surpass the value of 2012, reaching 665,294 kilograms, an increase by 155.87% from the previous year.

In 2018, the methamphetamine seizures dropped by 11.7%, being the second quantity seized in the last 5 years (587,406 kg).

![Fig. Methamphetamine](chart)

**Source: Annual Questionnaires**

19% of the reported seizures of amphetamine-type stimulants were made at the BCP, whilst the rest inland. In terms of quantity, the highest amount of synthetic drugs was carried out at the border crossing points.
New Psychoactive Substances

The term “new psychoactive substances (NPS)” is defined as “substances of abuse, either in a pure form or a preparation, that are not controlled by the UN 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs or the UN 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances, but which may pose a public health threat”.

The Directive (EU) 2017/… of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 November 2017 amended the Council Framework Decision 2004/757/JHA in order to include new psychoactive substances in the definition of ‘drug’. The following points are added: “new psychoactive substance” means a substance in pure form or in a preparation that is not covered by the 1961 United Nations Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, as amended by the 1972 Protocol, or by the 1971 United Nations Convention on Psychotropic Substances but may pose health or social risks similar to those posed by the substances covered by those Conventions. In this context, “preparation” means a mixture containing one or more new psychoactive substances.

By the end of 2018, the EMCDDA was monitoring more than 730 new psychoactive substances, 55 of which were detected for the first time in Europe in 2018; these substances make up a broad range of drugs, such as synthetic cannabinoids, stimulants, opioids and benzodiazepines. In Europe, there are many cases of synthetic opioids, synthetic cannabinoids and synthetic cathinones linked to deaths and acute intoxications15.

The OCGs and individuals exploit the gaps in national legislations. NPS are sold as cheaper and easy-to-buy alternatives to traditional drugs because of similar effects. Not all the countries in the region are affected so far.

The New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) arriving in the region are externally sourced in China and, to a smaller extent, in India. The NPS may be delivered directly to Europe, or they may be produced in big quantities in China, afterwards the NPS are delivered to Europe where they are repacked and put on the illegal market (e.g. Surfaceweb/Darknet).

It appears that NPS have a younger audience, that’s why the Internet is the most appropriate platform to trade them. The order of such drugs is made online followed by mail/postal package delivery using transport companies, and it is distributed as other items, such as herb, tea or bath salts.

However, it is not excluded that OCGs or individuals would try to produce such drugs in the region. The already recorded attempt to produce methaqualone (designer drug) in Serbia is endorsing this risk16.

From all the synthetic drugs, the New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) are expected to have the most long-lasting progress, with new drugs on the market as well as other declining.

The availability of NPS on the Darknet markets represents an emerging trend. It appears that the quantities operated are lower, yet, many repeated orders may lead to large orders17.

Not all the SELEC Member States reported seizures of NPS. As the seizures are reported in different units (kilograms, tablets, packages) and there is no conversion procedure, a total quantity cannot be provided. Most of the seizures are related to synthetic cannabinoids and synthetic cannabinoids raw material.

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15 EMCDDA European Drug Report 2019
16 SELEC OCTA SEE 2018
17 IDEM
ORGANIZED CRIMINAL GROUPS\textsuperscript{18}

Globalization created the opportunity for OCGs around the world to become familiar with the vulnerabilities of each criminal justice system, further allowing them to take advantage of legislation gaps and increase their profits by expanding to a diversity of crimes.

Over the past years, OCGs have learned that the risk of detection can be decreased with every border crossed, consequently leading them to emphasize on the international dimension of the criminal phenomena. In most of the cases reported in the region, the group members are operating in all countries along the smuggling route, as well as in source and destination countries.

The majority of the poly-criminal groups have included drug trafficking in their area of business due to its high profitability, and they cooperate with OCGs involved in smuggling of other commodities.

Acknowledging that profit is the main driver for those involved in organized crime, many of the OCGs prefer to steer away from the use of violence, in order to avoid attracting unnecessary attention from law enforcement authorities. Some groups active in the region are using violence as part of their strategy to keep the discipline within the group or to avoid cooperation with law enforcement. Nevertheless, violent crimes targeting rival group members sometimes occur in connection with disagreements over territory, influence or payments.

OCGs involved in drug trafficking cooperate with criminal groups from neighbouring countries and their support relates mainly to the implementation of narcotics smuggling activities in the region. The international dimension of the OCGs and their multi-crime approach is also reflected in the structure of the criminal groups.

One of the OCGs’ priorities is to ensure that it is difficult for LEA to collect evidence and to bring them in front of the justice. OCGs use old-style countermeasures (coded language, face-to-face meetings), but also technical countermeasures (encryption, unregistered phones and subscription, etc.). There are serious legal and practical difficulties for LEA in the fields of encryption and data retention.

The OCGs are ready to hire expertise for some of the tasks, such as money laundering specialists and hackers, etc.

\textsuperscript{18} SELEC OCTA SEE 2018
FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Drug trafficking is by its nature a transnational crime oriented towards profit. The production and smuggling of drugs are one of the most lucrative criminal activities, generating significant proceeds for the criminal groups which have a high level of organization and coordination, permanently exploiting the opportunities to increase profits and circumvent detection.

Countering drug trafficking is a national and regional priority in Southeast Europe, mounting up many efforts from national and international entities.

In common with many countries, drug trafficking in the region has a wide range of impact, from the public health and increased corruption to affected image of the country. However, the impact over the environment should not be neglected. Drug use may lead to violent actions of the users and may lead to other crimes.

Factors and vulnerabilities - Drug trafficking in the region is facilitated by various factors and vulnerabilities exploited by criminals. There are natural and permanent factors, such as the geographical position, the long seacoasts, and established infrastructure, but there are temporary and dynamic factors i.e. legislation, economic and political situation, social tolerance, production of raw material, technology and the Internet.

Globalization has led to a flare-up of trafficking of a large variety of drugs as it is much easier to transport and conceal the drugs in the huge traffic flow of goods. The seizures made in Southeast Europe are placing the drugs and precursors at the top of the illegal commodities transported using containers.

OCGs have expanded beyond their country of origin to increase the profit and the diaspora communities may represent a substantial support abroad.

The complexity of drugs smuggling doubled up by the distance between the countries of origin and the main markets influence the price of drugs.

Key considerations:

**Heroin**

- The region is the shortest corridor between the source and destination countries for heroin. The sea pathways along the route may gain in importance.
- Increasing quantities of opium and morphine are shipped to west; OCGs may try moving the production, even at a low level, closer to the consumer markets.
- Increasing quantities of acetic anhydride (AA) are shipped along the “reverse” Balkan route. In response to strict control for precursors, the criminals may focus on the pre-precursors that can be transported much more easily.

**Cocaine**

- From a global perspective, the region does not play a strategic role in relation to cocaine smuggling, yet, it may offer many opportunities to criminals.
- The large-scale smuggling occurs usually at the ports of the region via container shipments from South America. The geographical position of the countries with sea ports makes them more likely to be placed on the trafficking itinerary. Routes may not be direct, other ports acting as trans-shipment point. The region is expected to be targeted by irregular large transports.
- There is a risk to have laboratories to process cocaine in the region. Criminals need such facilities to retrieve cocaine from items in which cocaine had been dissolved or impregnated.
OCGs in the region may continue joining the international large-scale trafficking of cocaine, establishing direct contacts in South America in order to acquire cocaine and transport it in the destination markets. Criminals from the region may be involved not only in the global smuggling, but also in the local markets in the destination countries.

Cannabis

- In the region, cannabis, essentially marijuana, remains the first-ranked drug in terms of production, trafficking and consumption. The region offers suitable climatic conditions for outdoor cultivation of cannabis.
- In the region, the large-scale cannabis production is commonly linked to outdoor cultivation, however there is an emerging trend related to indoor cultivation. The OCGs may focus their efforts on many small-to-medium indoor greenhouses located in different places.
- The Balkan route is exploited also in its reverse direction (from west to east).

Synthetic drugs

- The manufacture of synthetic drugs is not depending on the cultivation of a certain plants; therefore, it may be produced anywhere if the ingredients precursors and pre-precursors are available.
- Laboratories manufacturing various types of synthetic drugs were dismantled in the region.

The New Psychoactive Substances

- NPS are sold as cheaper and easy-to-buy alternatives to traditional drugs. The New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) arriving in the region are externally sourced. It is not excluded that OCGs or individuals would try to produce such drugs in the region.

During the period 2013 - 2017, large quantities of Khat were seized in the region (e.g. Bulgaria, Greece, Hungary, Romania), destined for the markets in Canada, Denmark, Germany, Sweden and UK. Khat is delivered from Africa (e.g. Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania and Egypt) as other products, such as henna tattoos or green tea. All the cases were connected with smuggling by air cargo or express mail consignments. The available data do not suggest if any noteworthy quantity is placed in the local drug markets, yet the countries with African communities may be ensnared by this type of drug. All these were considered as irregular seizures and not a general threat. However, it is not excluded that the region to register again such seizures and, more than that, it is not excluded some countries to become trans-shipment point to other destinations.

Although all the law enforcement authorities fight every day to keep the streets free of drugs, there is a noteworthy drug trafficking problem in the region which requires a regional and international approach. Success in the fight against cross-border drug trafficking can be achieved only through international cooperation, partnership, exchanging operational and strategic information on seizures, routes, modi operandi, perpetrators, patterns and criminal profiles.

Planning operations in a coordinated manner will adapt the actions and increase the efficiency of the Member States’ efforts, through a tailored approach to the particularities of the region and changes of drug trafficking in a resource-oriented approach.

Internet is considered a facilitator of drug trafficking which is gaining a respected position in the list of drug trafficking facilitators. Internet has enabled new ways to buy drugs and to open channels to find each other virtually. Illegal substances can be bought on Internet (websites, social media, dark net), and it appears to be much safer for the users than dealing personally with traffickers. The rapidity of Internet becoming a component of drug trafficking process is a challenge to law enforcement community, this requiring action.

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19 Khat/Catha Edulis (also known as q’at, kat, tschat, miraa) - a plant-based drug cultivated in Africa and Arabian Peninsula
Internet is not able to skip the physical process of drug trafficking as delivery, but can shorten/replace other components as order, direct meeting user-dealer or trafficker-trafficker and payment. Moreover, considering that OCGs have become more aware of the law enforcement methods, they rely more on Internet communications that are more difficult to be intercepted.

Law enforcement authorities should focus on all segments offered by Internet, including on not-enough-considered DarkNet which shows no sign of slowing down. The anonymity provided by the dark web, as well as identity and location hiding techniques, creates for law enforcement a difficult to investigate environment. Dark net offers to users a wide range of drug-related items from prescriptions for drugs to equipment.

Subsequent to the terrorist attacks which have hit Europe in the past years as well as the high risk for others to come, more than ever, this major threat to society must be struggled from all the perspectives, including funding. In order to fund their activities or to recruit new members, terrorist organizations get connected also with OCGs dealing with illicit drug trafficking.

A total number of 41 joint investigations were conducted by SELEC Member States and supported by SELEC under the umbrella of the Anti-Drug Trafficking Task Force.

In order to support its Member States, in 2018, SELEC together with partners developed / updated the controlled delivery manuals:

**OSCE – SELEC Controlled Delivery Manual**

The Manual, designed to assist law enforcement officers in South-East Europe in launching and implementing controlled delivery operations to combat the trafficking of illicit drugs and their precursors, has been updated by SELEC in cooperation with the Strategic Police Matters Unit of the OSCE Transnational Threats Department.

The updated Controlled Delivery Manual for South-East European Countries provides practitioners from 17 SELEC countries and observers with the contact details of authorized officers in these countries who are responsible for controlled deliveries.

The Controlled Delivery Manual aims at improving knowledge of these specificities and promotes cooperation among countries and agencies by facilitating controlled deliveries as part of the joint efforts in fighting trans-border crime. It describes brieﬂy the legislation and the rules governing the requests related to the controlled deliveries in each of the countries that contributed to the Manual, also containing the contact details of the relevant competent authorities. This Manual is designed for the use of law enforcement agencies and judiciaries.

**Global online controlled delivery manual**

SELEC participated within Council of Europe's drug policy network – the Pompidou Group – joining the efforts for creating a global online handbook in cooperation with Eurojust, Europol, Interpol, OSCE and the Council of Europe's Committee PC-OC.

Nowadays, in order to fuel the black markets, criminals transport worldwide illicit goods across borders of many states, therefore, to respond to these challenges in a proactive manner, the law enforcement authorities around the globe must apply special investigative techniques to elucidate the multifaceted investigations.

The new online guidebook is designed for law enforcement and the judiciary to make worldwide cross-border controlled deliveries of illicit goods more efficient.

The new online handbook is structured to provide information to law enforcement and judiciary in an easily accessible and constantly updated manner. The handbook is expected to enhance cooperation across borders, and improve the international coordination that is required to effectively carry out controlled delivery operations. The handbook has a global coverage and it is permanently under extension.
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