

# ADDICTION DEBATES

HOT TOPICS FROM POLICY TO PRACTICE



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SAGE SWIFTS



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RESEARCH GROUP

# Drug Trends in Europe and the new EU Drugs Agenda

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## Presentation Overview

- **Brief description from my perspective of the international organisations setting and planning drug policy and hence services and practice**
  - The United Nations and the International Narcotics Control Board
- **Brief review of the current drug trends globally and across the EU.**
  - The EU Presidency, Strategy and the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction
- **Overview of the national policy trends and possible priorities**

# International Instruments

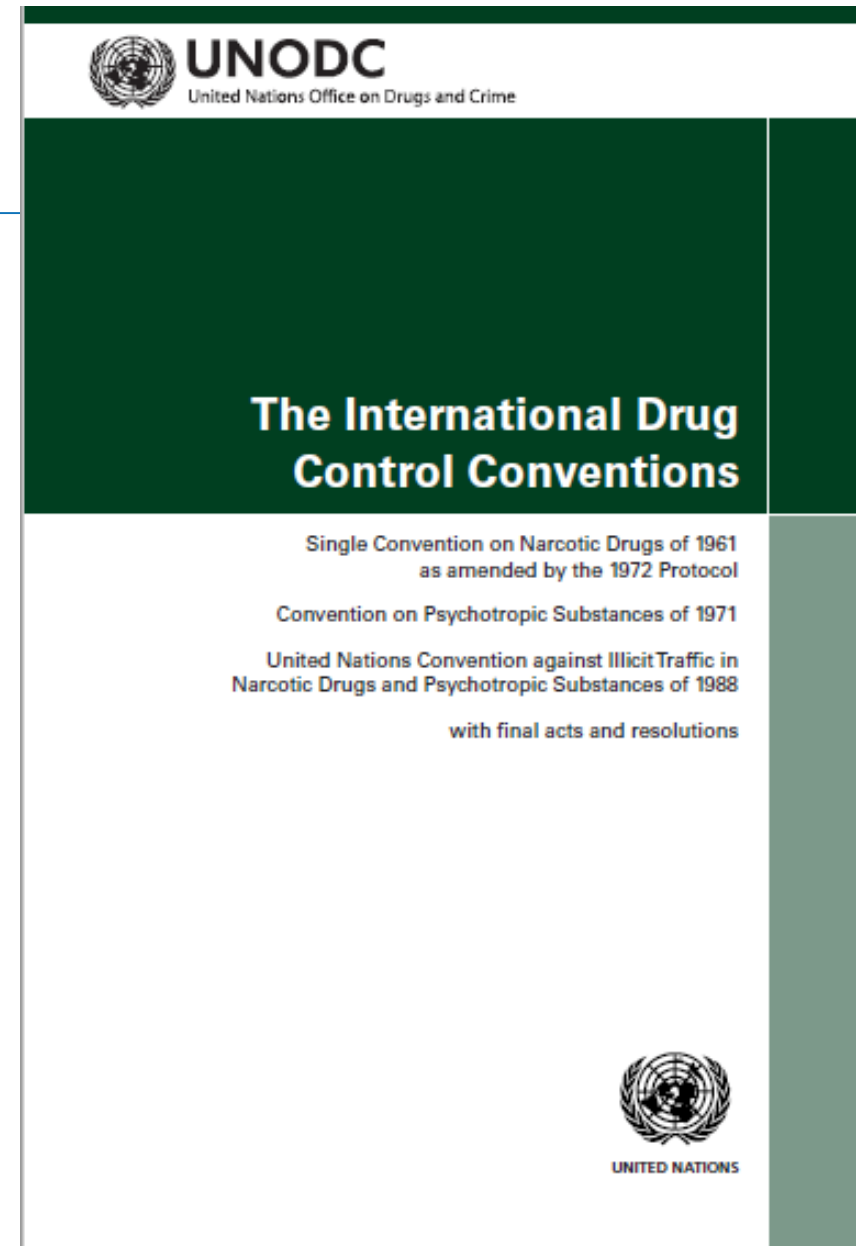
United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) 2013. *The International Drug Control Conventions*. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Vienna. [Viewed April 17 2020]. Available from:

[https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CND/Int\\_Drug\\_Control\\_Conventions/Ebook/The International Drug Control Conventions E.pdf](https://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CND/Int_Drug_Control_Conventions/Ebook/The_International_Drug_Control_Conventions_E.pdf)

UNGASS (2016) *Outcome Document of the 2016 United Nations General Assembly special session on the world drug problem*. United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Vienna. [Viewed April 17 2020].

Available from:

<https://www.unodc.org/documents/postungass2016//outcome/V1603301-E.pdf>



# Global Drug Trends: Scale and nature of the challenges for prevention and treatment

- **Approximately 275 million people worldwide or 5.6% of the global population aged 15–64 years, used drugs at least once during 2016.**
- **In 2015, 450,000 people died as a result of drug use. Of those deaths, 167,750 were a direct result of drug use disorders, in most cases involving opioids.**
- **Total global opium production jumped by 65% from 2016 to 2017. More than 75% of the production area is in Afghanistan.**
- **Global cocaine manufacture in 2016 reached its highest level ever. Most of the world's cocaine comes from Colombia. The biggest growth in cocaine seizures in 2016 took place in Asia and Africa.**

# Global Drug Trends: Scale and nature of the challenges for prevention and treatment

- **The non-medical use of pharmaceutical opioids is of ongoing concern. In North America, illicitly sourced fentanyl may be mixed with heroin or other drugs. In Europe the non-medical use of methadone, buprenorphine and fentanyl has also been reported.**
- **In countries in West and North Africa and the Near and Middle East, the non-medical use of tramadol which is not under international control, is emerging as a substance of concern.**
- **Many countries are now reporting the non-medical use of benzodiazepines**
- **Kratom, a plant-based substance used as traditional medicine in some parts of Asia, is emerging as a popular plant-based new psychoactive substance**

# The EU Drugs Agenda

- **The new EU Drug Strategy and Action plan on Drugs**  
[https://ec.europa.eu/taxation\\_customs/sites/taxation/files/docs/body/drug\\_strategy\\_2013\\_2020\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/taxation_customs/sites/taxation/files/docs/body/drug_strategy_2013_2020_en.pdf)
- **The health and security overarching priorities**
- **The EU Presidency and finalising the strategy**
- **The evidence on drug trends across the EU**

EMCDDA Document library

## EU Drugs Strategy (2013-20)

### Summary:

On the basis of the [external evaluation](#) of the previous [EU Drugs strategy 2005-2012](#) and its action plans, on 7 December 2012, the Justice and Home Affairs Council of the European Union endorsed a new EU drugs strategy (2013–20) (the subject of this page). In line with the Strategy stipulation that its detailed implementation should be set out in two consecutive Action Plans, the first [EU Action Plan on drugs 2013-2016](#) and the second [EU Action Plan on drugs 2017-2020](#). In 2016, an [external mid-term assessment](#) of the EU Drugs Strategy and the implementation of the EU Drugs Action Plan 2013-2016 was completed.

## Cannabis



Adults (15-64)

Last year use



Lifetime use

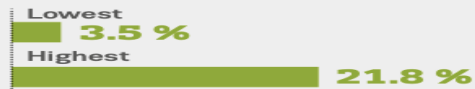


Young adults (15-34)

Last year use



National estimates of use in last year



## Cocaine



Adults (15-64)

Last year use



Lifetime use



Young adults (15-34)

Last year use



National estimates of use in last year



## MDMA



Adults (15-64)

Last year use



Lifetime use



Young adults (15-34)

Last year use



National estimates of use in last year



## Amphetamines



Adults (15-64)

Last year use



Lifetime use



Young adults (15-34)

Last year use



National estimates of use in last year



## Heroin and other opioids



High-risk opioid users

**1.3 million**

**660 000**

opioid users received substitution treatment in 2018

Drug treatment requests

Principal drug in about 34 % of all drug treatment requests in the European Union

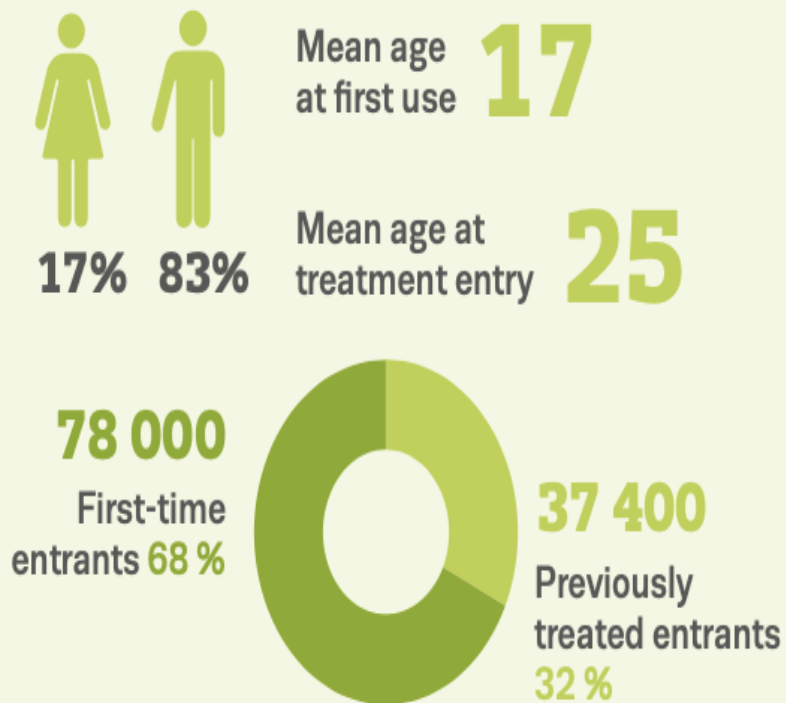


Fatal overdoses

Opioids are found in 82 % of fatal overdoses

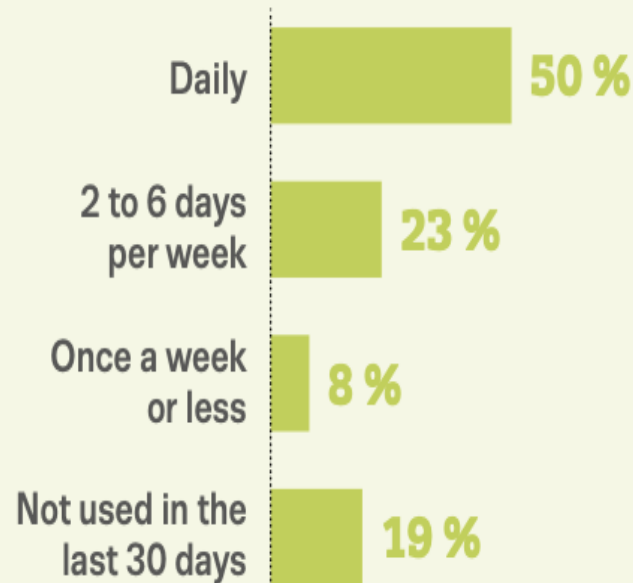


## Characteristics

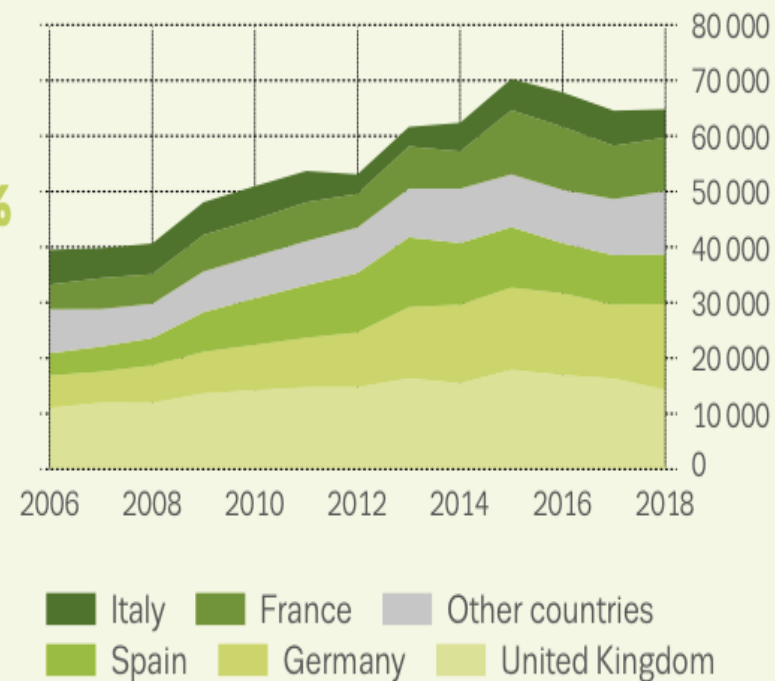


## Frequency of use in the last month

Mean use 5.3 days per week



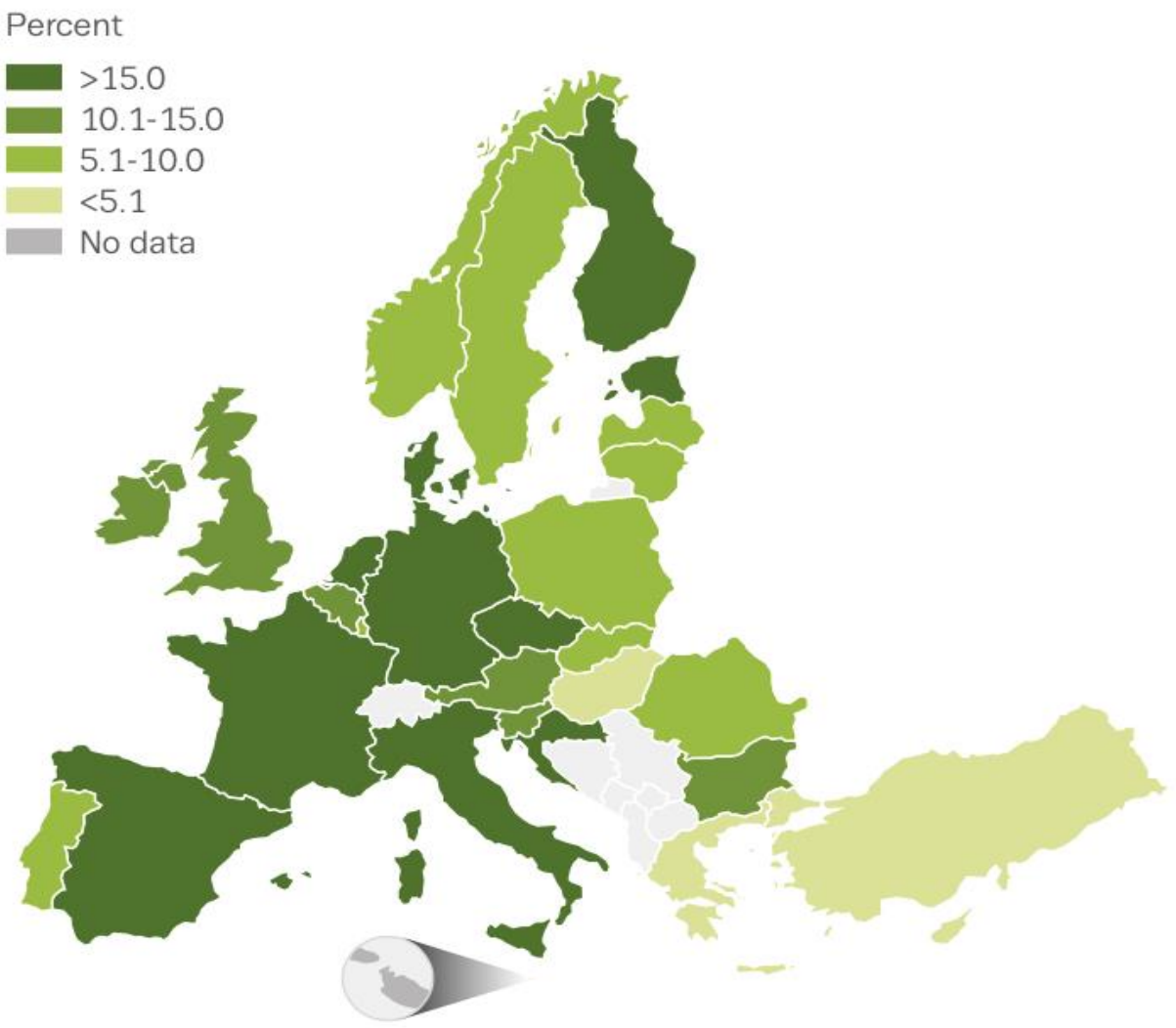
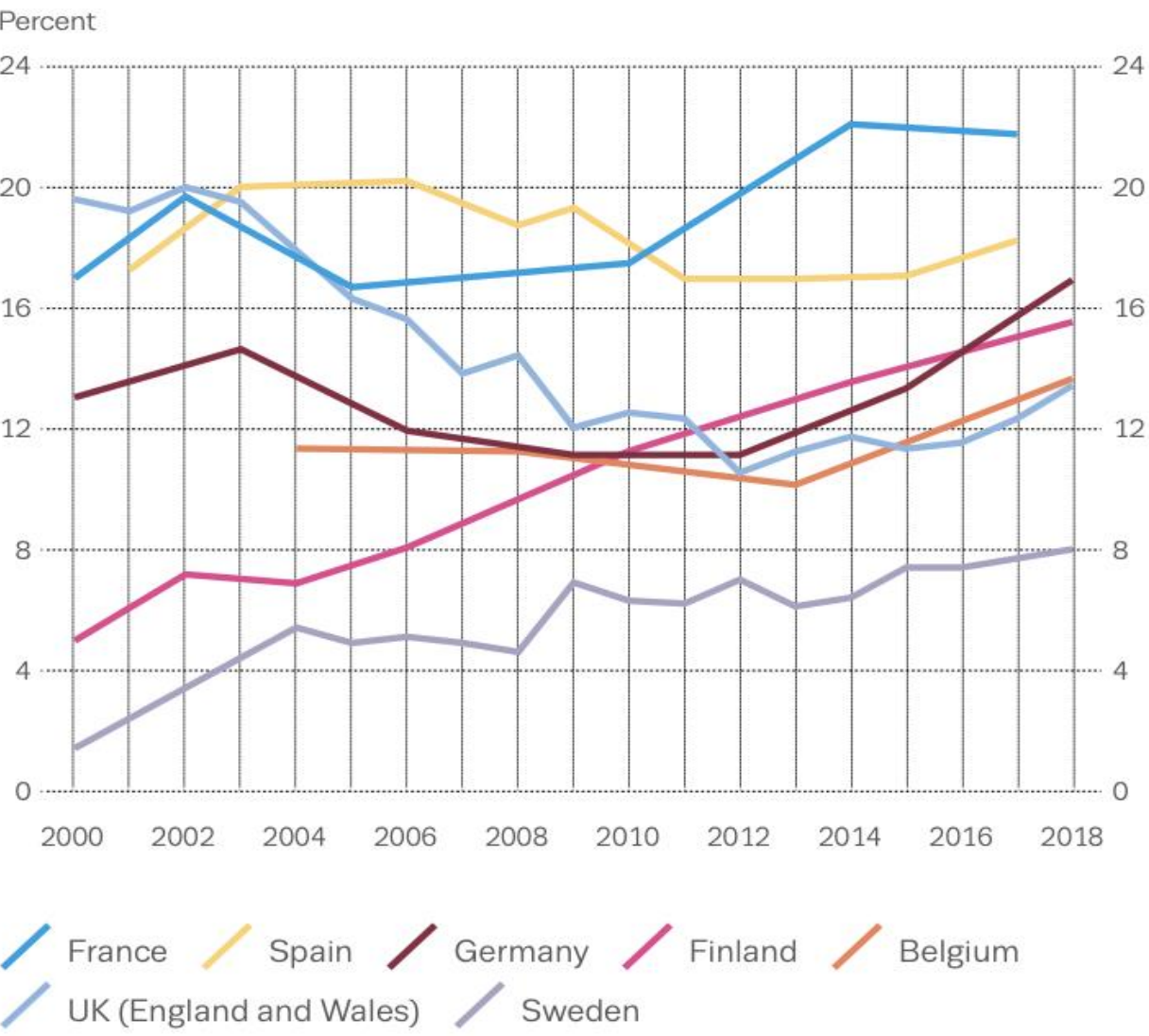
## Trends in first-time entrants



Apart from trends, data are for all treatment entrants with cannabis as primary drug. Trends in first-time entrants are based on 24 countries. Only countries with data for at least 11 of the 13 years are included in the trends graph. Missing values are interpolated from adjacent years. Due to changes in the flow of data at national level, data since 2014 for Italy are not comparable with earlier years. United Kingdom data for 2018 do not include Northern Ireland.



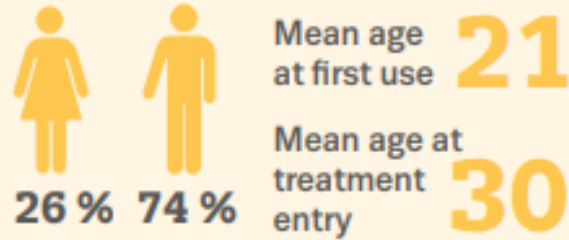
# LAST YEAR PREVALENCE OF CANNABIS USE AMONG YOUNG ADULTS (15-34): SELECTED TRENDS AND MOST RECENT DATA



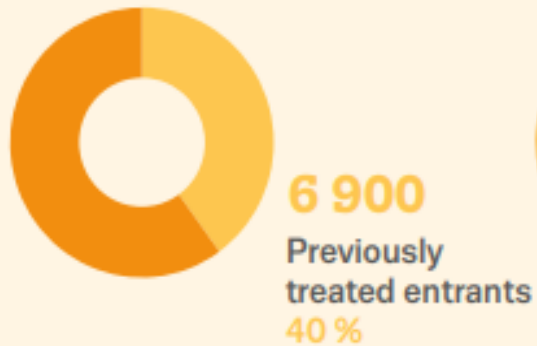
Age ranges other than 15-34 are reported by Denmark, Estonia, Sweden, United Kingdom and Norway (16-34), Germany, France, Greece, Hungary and Malta (18-34).

# AMPHETAMINES USERS ENTERING TREATMENT

## Characteristics

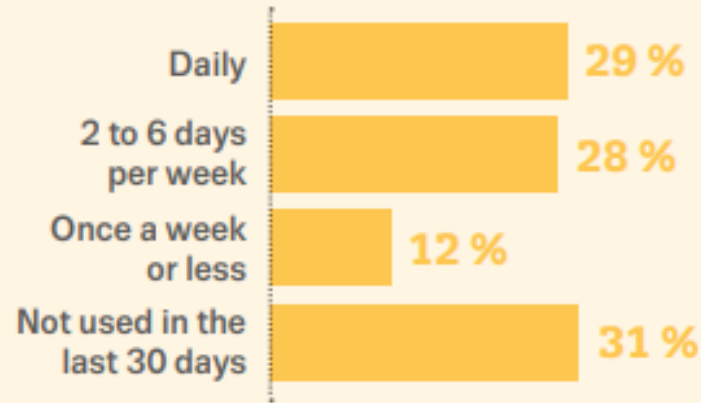


**10 200**  
First-time entrants  
60 %

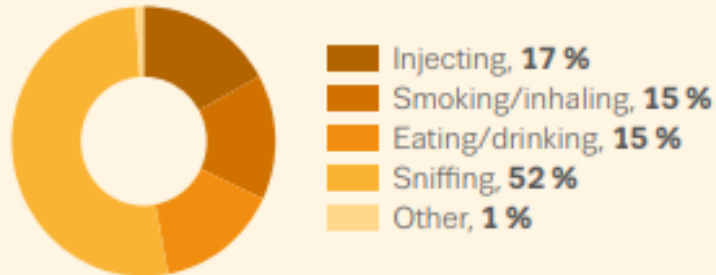


## Frequency of use in the last month

Mean use 4.4 days per week

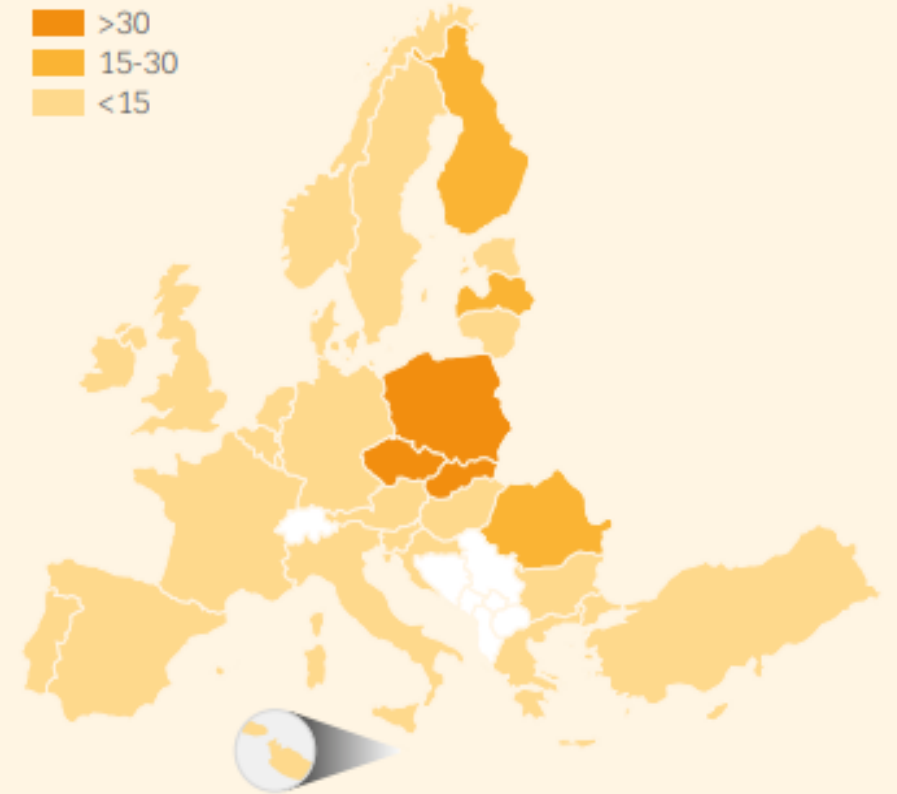


## Route of administration



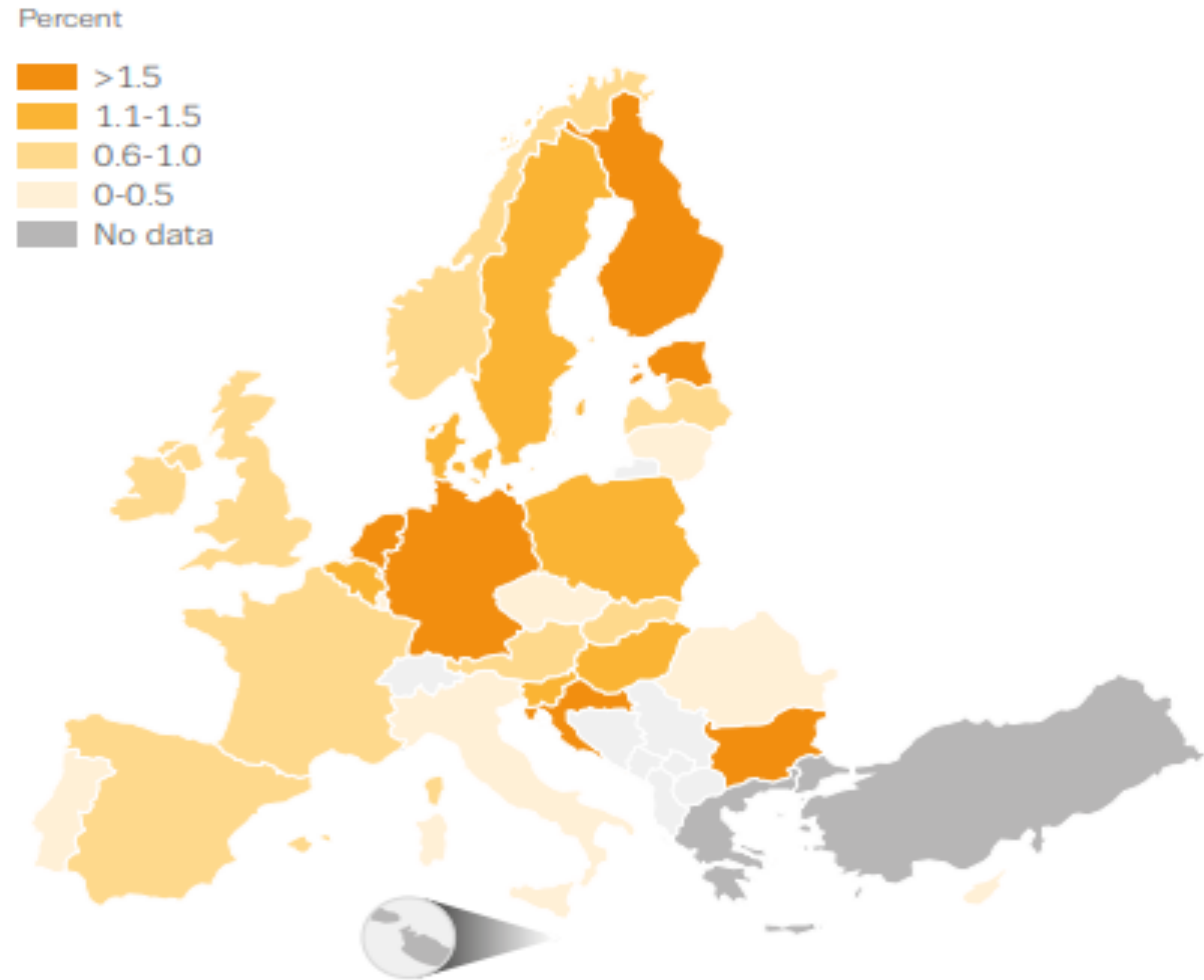
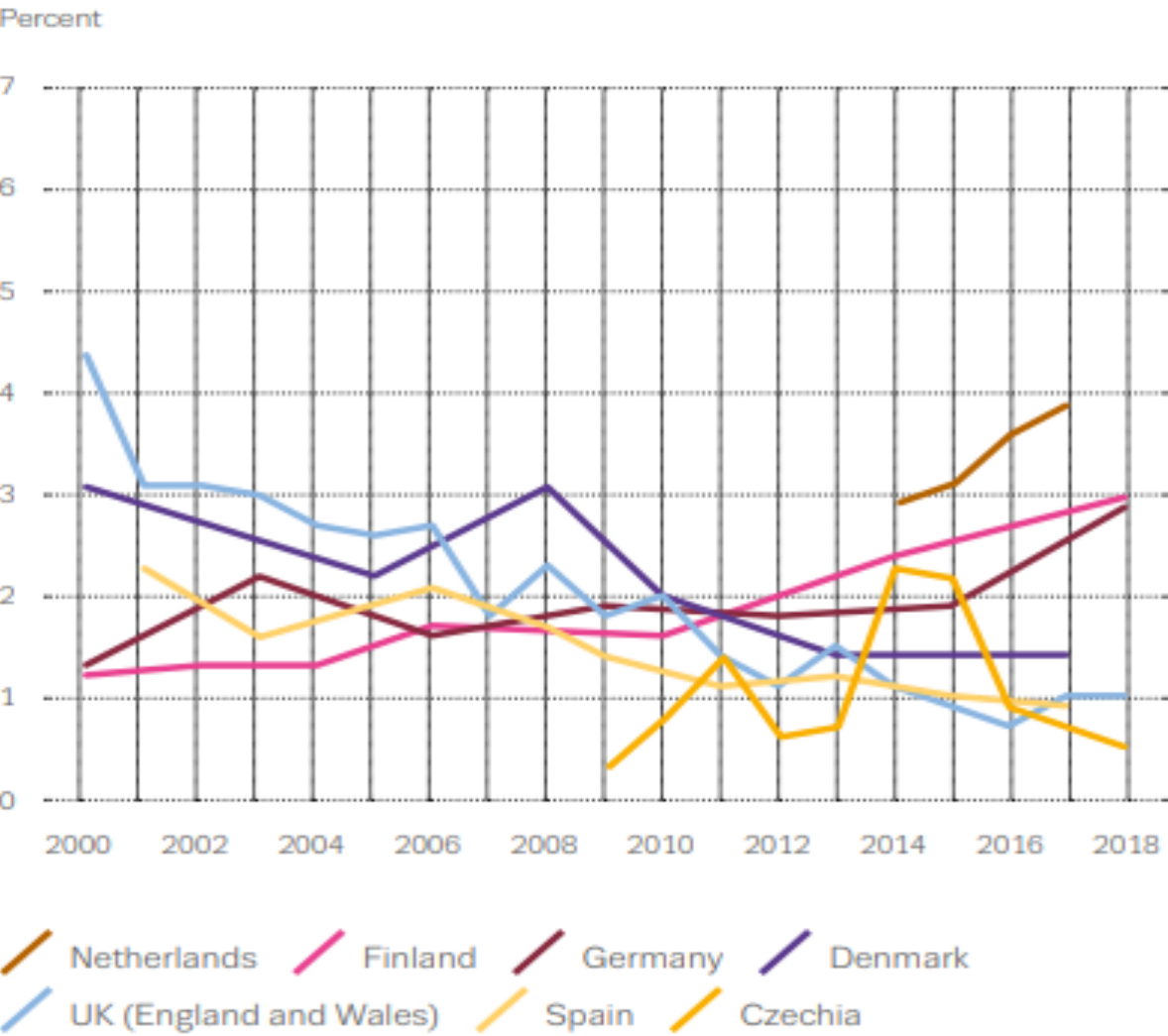
## Share of first-time entrants for all drugs (percent)

>30  
15-30  
<15



Apart from the map, data are for all treatment entrants with amphetamines as primary drug. Data from Germany, Sweden and Norway relate to clients citing a stimulant other than cocaine as primary drug. United Kingdom data for 2018 do not include Northern Ireland.

# LAST YEAR PREVALENCE OF AMPHETAMINES USE AMONG YOUNG ADULTS (15-34): SELECTED TRENDS AND MOST RECENT DATA

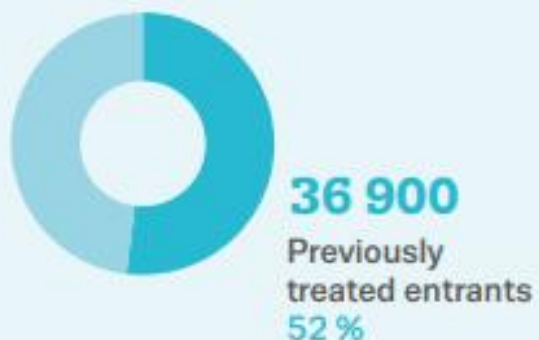


Age ranges other than 15-34 are reported by Denmark, Estonia, United Kingdom and Norway (16-34), Sweden (17-34), Germany, France and Hungary (18-34).

## Characteristics

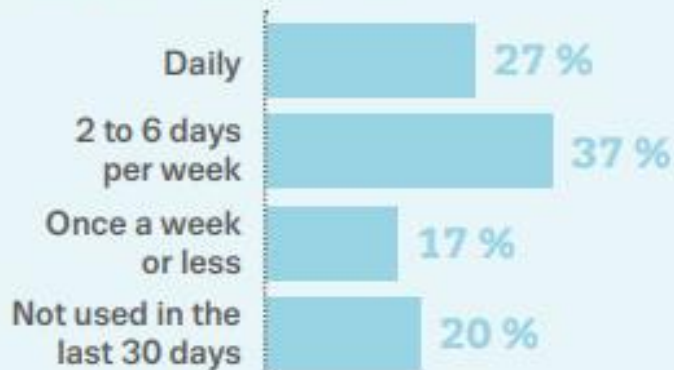


**34 200**  
 First-time entrants **48%**

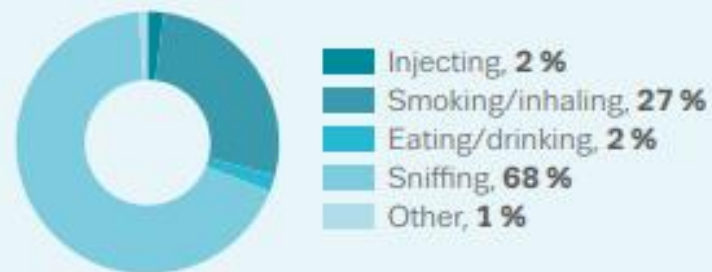


## Frequency of use in the last month

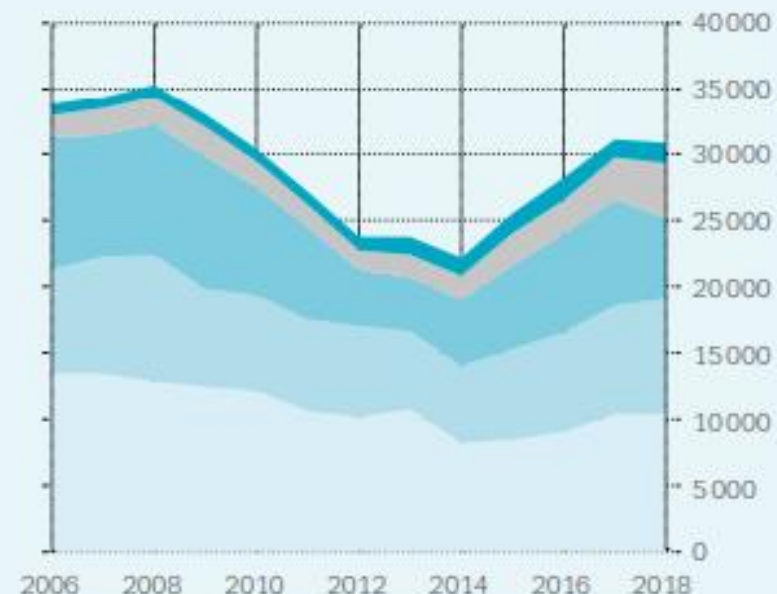
Mean use 4.1 days per week



## Route of administration

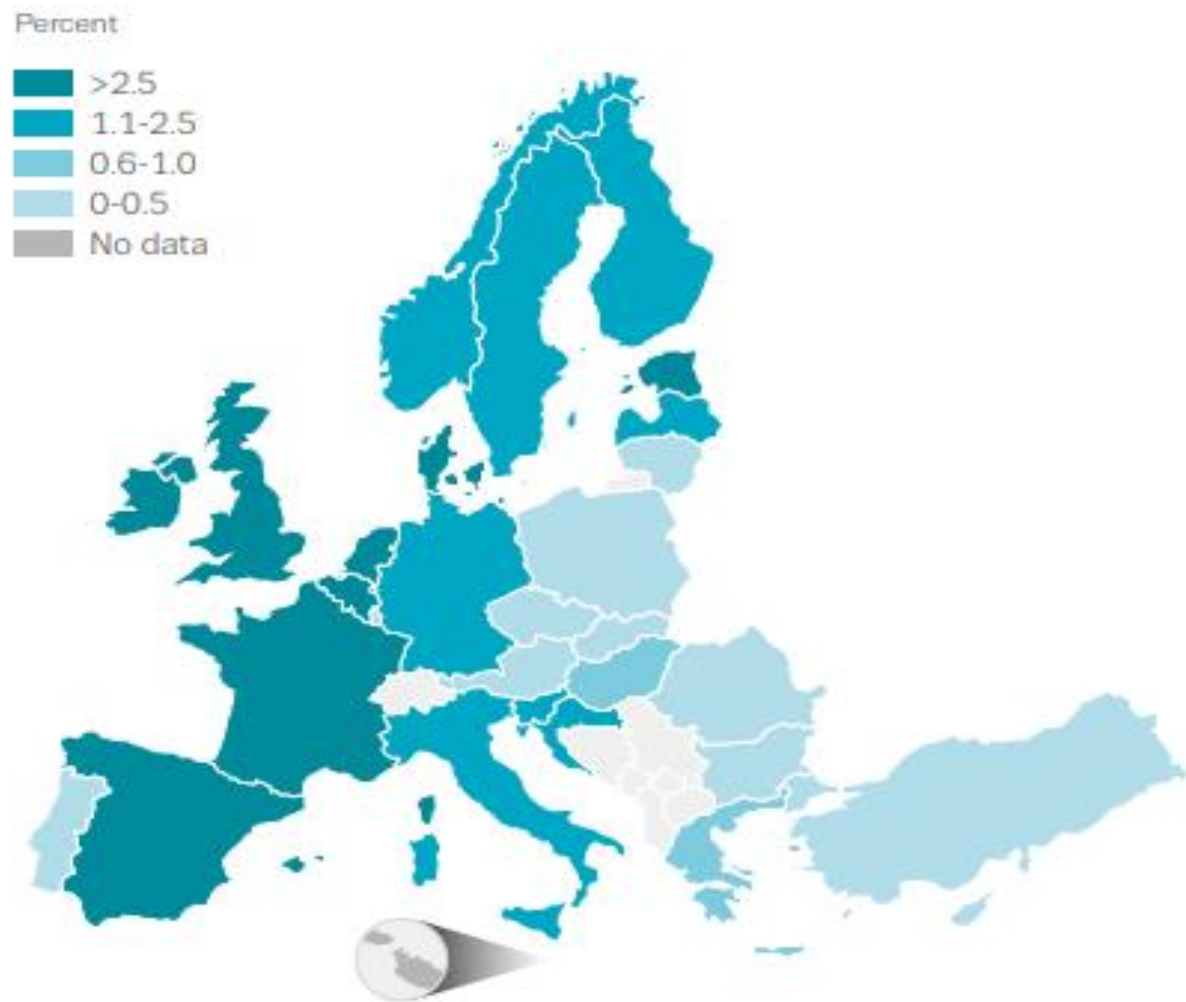


## Trends in first-time entrants



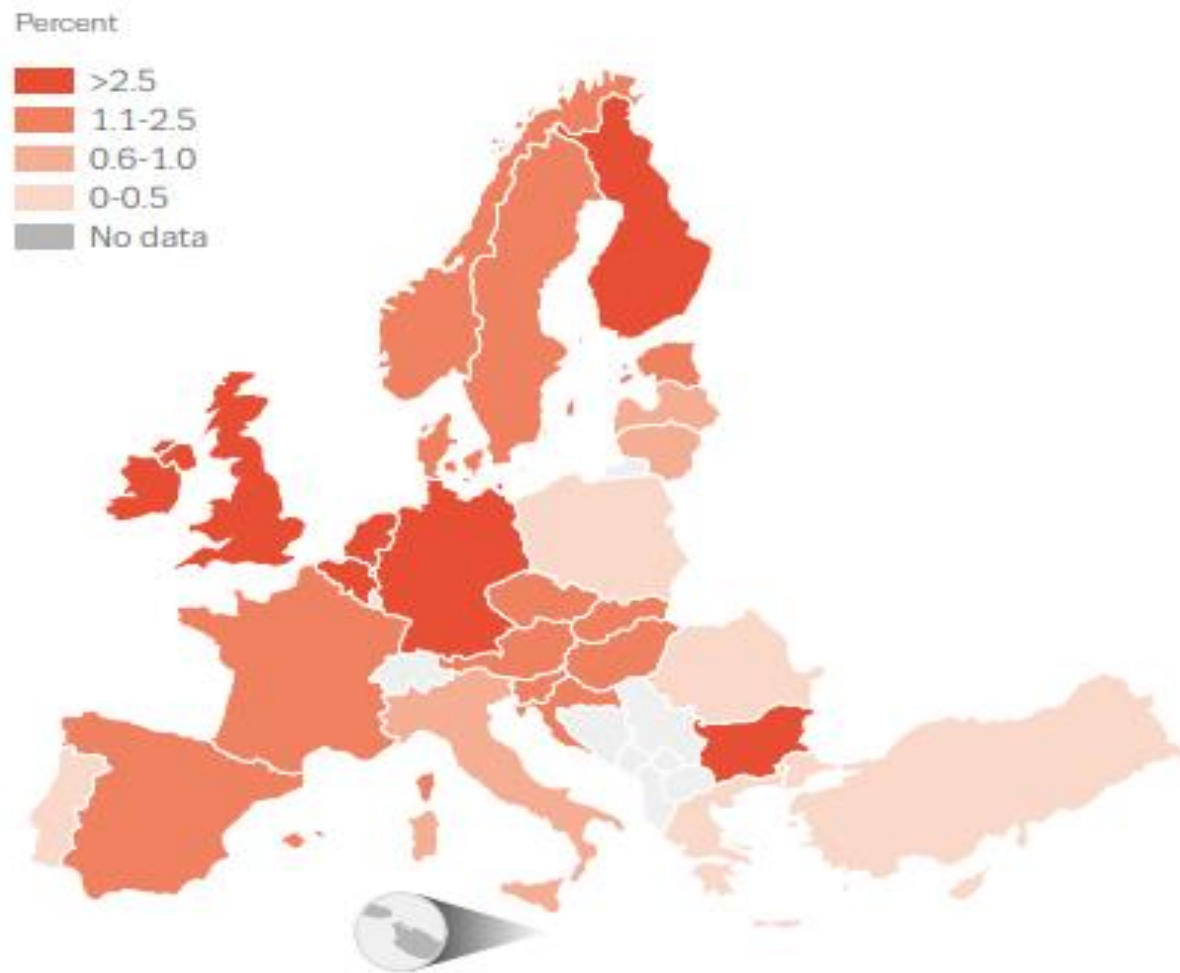
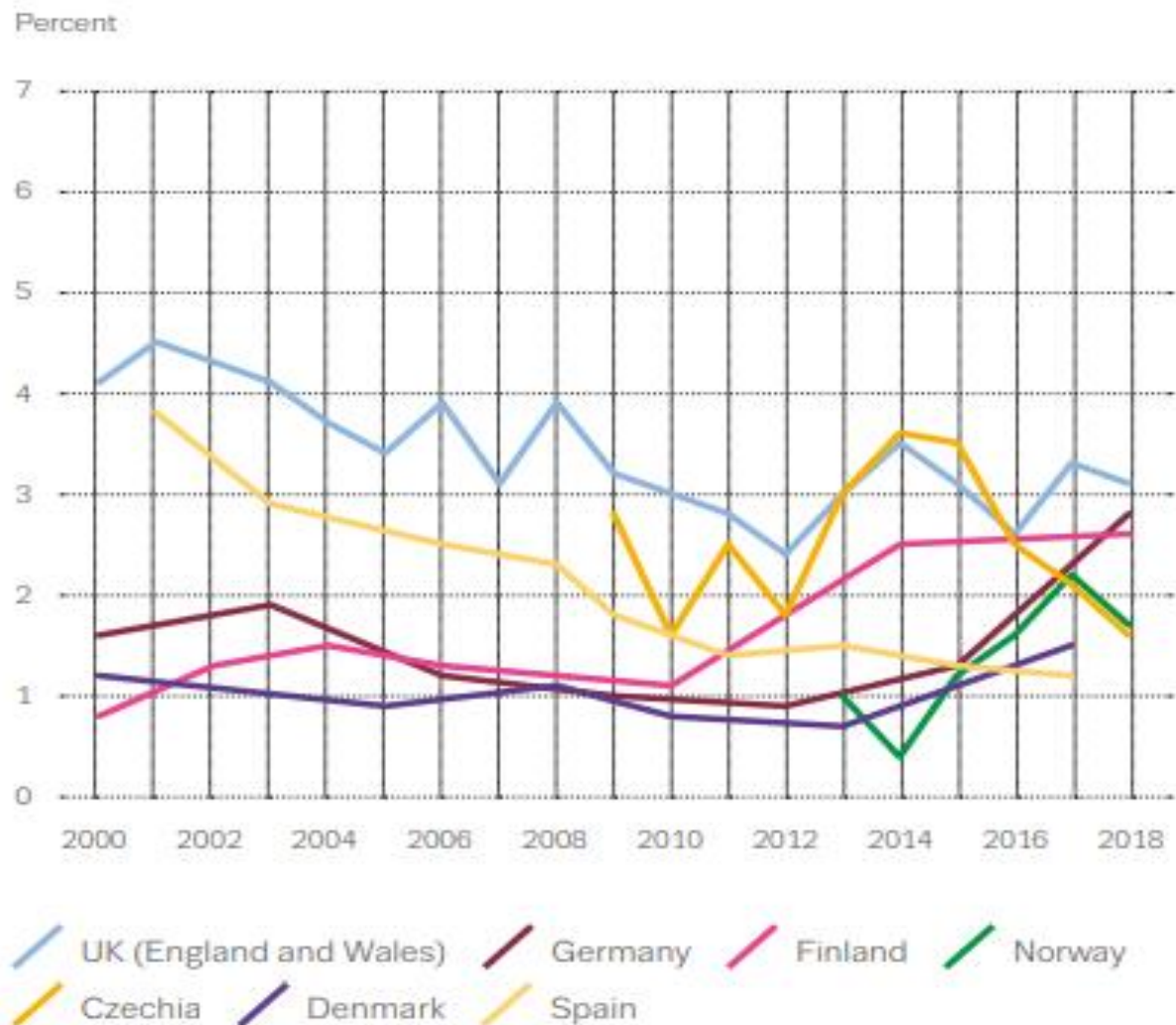
Apart from trends, data are for all treatment entrants with cocaine as primary drug. Trends in first-time entrants are based on 24 countries. Only countries with data for at least 11 of the 13 years are included in the trends graph. Missing values are interpolated from adjacent years. Due to changes in the flow of data at national level, data since 2014 for Italy are not comparable with earlier years. United Kingdom data for 2018 do not include Northern Ireland.

# LAST YEAR PREVALENCE OF COCAINE USE AMONG YOUNG ADULTS (15-34): SELECTED TRENDS AND MOST RECENT DATA



Age ranges other than 15-34 are reported by Denmark, Estonia, United Kingdom and Norway (16-34), Sweden (17-34), Germany, France, Greece and Hungary (18-34).

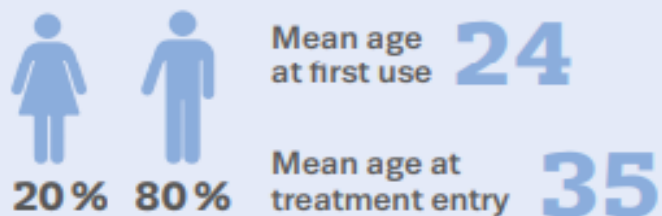
# LAST YEAR PREVALENCE OF MDMA USE AMONG YOUNG ADULTS (15-34): SELECTED TRENDS AND MOST RECENT DATA



Age ranges other than 15-34 are reported by Denmark, Estonia, United Kingdom and Norway (16-34), Sweden (17-34), Germany, France, Greece and Hungary (18-34).

## Heroin users entering treatment

### Characteristics



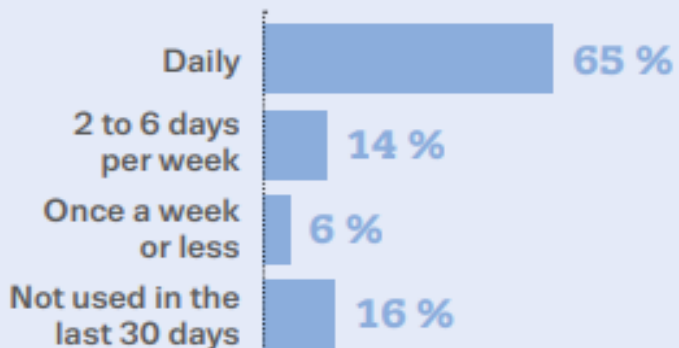
**20 400**  
 First-time entrants  
 19%



**86 400**  
 Previously treated entrants  
 81%

### Frequency of use in the last month

Mean use 6 days per week

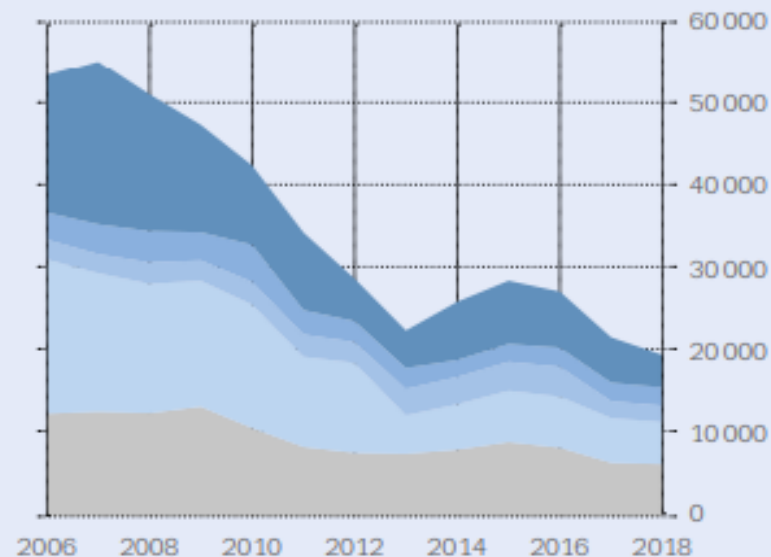


### Route of administration



Injecting, **34 %**  
 Smoking/inhaling, **47 %**  
 Eating/drinking, **3 %**  
 Sniffing, **15 %**  
 Other, **1 %**

### Trends in first-time entrants



Apart from trends, data are for all treatment entrants with heroin as primary drug. Data for Germany are for entrants with 'opioids' as primary drug. Trends in first-time entrants are based on 24 countries. Only countries with data for at least 11 of the 13 years are included in the trends graph. Missing values are interpolated from adjacent years. Due to changes in the flow of data at national level, data since 2014 for Italy are not comparable with earlier years. United Kingdom data for 2018 do not include Northern Ireland.

# THE DRUG PROBLEM IN IRELAND AT A GLANCE

## Drug use

in young adults (15-34 years) in the last year

### Cannabis

**13.8 %**

### Other drugs

MDMA	4.4 %
Amphetamines	0.6 %
Cocaine	2.9 %

## High-risk opioid users

**18 988**  
(18 720 - 21 454)

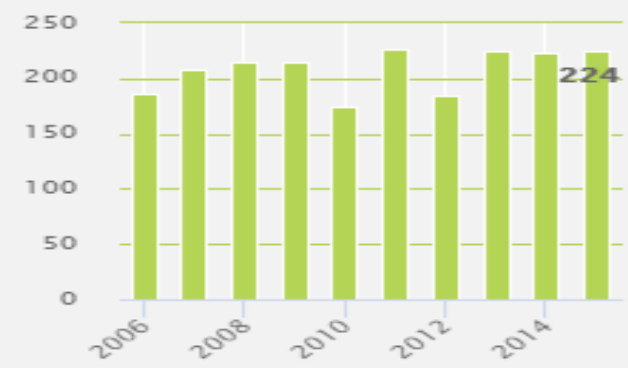
## All treatment entrants

by primary drug



- Cannabis, 25 %
- Amphetamines, 0 %
- Cocaine, 17 %
- Heroin, 38 %
- Other, 20 %

## Overdose deaths



## Drug law offences

**16 880**

## Population

(15-64 years)

**3 129 411**

Source: Eurostat Extracted on: 18/03/2019

## Opioid substitution treatment clients

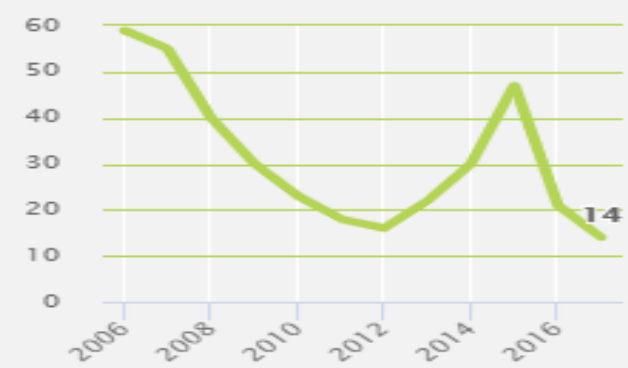
**10 316**

## Syringes distributed

through specialised programmes

**519 578**

## New HIV diagnoses attributed to injecting



Source: ECDC





# Background to policy development: 1990s HIV/AIDS epidemic

<https://catherinecomiskeytheladyprofessor.wordpress.com/> and <http://acet.ie/projects/quilt-group/>

**Patricia's story: At the age of seven** in the 1970s when most little girls in the Ireland were preparing for their first holy communion and were excited about their new dress and the big day out, Patricia was sexually abused.

**At the age of 15** in 1980, when most young girls were thinking about school, school friends and the pending 'inter cert', Patricia injected drugs.

**At the age of 20** in 1985, when same sex partnership was a criminal offence and would remain so until 1993, Patricia had her first relationship with another woman.

**At the age of 24** in 1989, when homosexuality was still illegal, when AIDS raged across the globe and after many relationships with men and injecting drug use, Patricia was diagnosed as HIV positive.

**At the age of 45** in 2010, when harm reduction was the prevailing treatment philosophy, Patricia was required to undergo regular urine screening and pee in a cup while in treatment.



# Current Policy Debates

## Decriminalisation; Hidden Harms; Safe Injecting; Ageing; Stigma and Beyond

### THE IRISH TIMES

Tue, Feb 18, 2017

- NEWS
  - SPORT
  - BUSINESS
  - OPINION
  - LIFE & STYLE
  - CULTURE
- Crime & Law | Election2020 | Six Nations | Ireland | World | Politics | Health | Education

### Decriminalising drugs: could it work in Ireland?

Campaigners hope we might be about to turn a corner. The real

© Sat, Sep 23, 2017, 03:00

### Independent.ie News Opinion Business Sport Life Style En Drug abuse: Reality of addicts shooting up injecting centre plan is rejected

- WARNING graphic images
- Reality of drug abuse on city streets
- Cycle of drug use continues after council blocked move



### Irish Examiner



## **This House Concludes:**

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- **The aim of this lecture was to provide an overview of the international and national organisations setting the policy and hence practice agenda.**
- **We highlighted UN global documents which set the policy agenda to the EMCDDA who monitor drug trends for Europe.**
- **The new EU Action Plan on Drugs will highlight Security and Health.**
- **In my opinion we also need now more than ever to ensure that health remains a priority given the security agenda.**



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