



Annual reports sent to the EMCDDA (European monitoring center for drugs and drug addiction), giving an overview of the latest developments on the drug problem in France.

National report to the EMCDDA - 2009

While no new information is available to describe trends in the adult population, specific surveys shows that among the young people aged 16 years old, there are large reductions in the spread of tobacco and cannabis use and a stabilisation or even a fall in alcohol drunkenness, while among the young people aged 17 and 18 years old, there is a fall in regular alcohol use and a modest increase in the number of cases in which 5 glasses of alcohol were drunk on a single occasion. Average ages for experimenting with tobacco and cannabis have risen for the first time in eight years.

The final results of a new study carried in 2005-2006 gives a central estimation of 230,000 (estimate range between 210,000 and 250,000) problem drug users in France in 2006, of which half involved in opiate substitution treatment. A study conducted by the OFDT in 2009 gives an estimation of 120,000 people who have used opiate substitution drugs in the first half of 2007.

In terms of offences, crime and sentencing, we note that the figure of arrests by the police, gendarmerie and customs for drug related offences continues to rise, as do the figures of sentencing, and of France's prison population. In terms of trends, the availability of heroin and cocaine continues to rise, while the loss of interest in ecstasy, amphetamines and other synthetic drugs is confirmed. Seizures have increased, the rise being mainly due to seizures of crack cocaine, and secondarily to cannabis resin.

In terms of public policies, the recent public authorities' policy has gone in line with the plan adopted in 2006, the addiction treatment and prevention plan for 2007-2011 (which only concerns treatment and prevention). In 2008, a governmental plan to fight drugs and drug addiction was drawn up for the years 2008-2011. The first measures to implement that plan have been decided.

A Justice circular dated 9 May 2008, has stated once more that all persons using relatively small amounts of illegal drugs may be sentenced to penalties. If not sentenced, adults or minors caught possessing marijuana have to complete a drug awareness course at their own expense, with costs not exceeding 450 Euros.

The MILDT and the Directorate-General of Labour have decided to develop a concerted and determined policy in collaboration with employers, trade unions and the various associations involved, aimed at significantly reducing the use of alcohol, psychotropic substances or narcotics by the various participants in the world of work.

The Ministry of Education has introduced a compulsory programme for the prevention of addictive practices, from the fifth year of primary school through to university. A national plan to combat hepatitis B and C (2009-2012) was launched in February 2009.

France has introduced new drug testing procedures on roads since the summer of 2008: oral fluid

testing devices for the on-site screening of drivers suspected of having taken drugs have been authorized since 2005, but they have only been actually used since 2008.

The reform of hospitals has been prepared during 2008 and voted in 2009, although the implementation decrees have not been published yet.

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