



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 - 2006

2005 did not bring any real changes in direction on drug policy. Apart from a possible revision of the 1970 law which is the basis for the fight against drug use and drug trafficking, the only major event was the attempt to classify Subutex® as a narcotic. This measure was aimed at fighting misuse and the black market, but it was unpopular with health professionals, and was ultimately not adopted.

The publication of the results of the SAM (Stupefiants et Accidents Mortels: Narcotics and Fatal Accidents) survey was much featured by the media. All the road accidents in urban France between October 2001 and September 2003 resulting in at least one fatality were analysed to measure the effects of cannabis and alcohol consumption on drivers. It showed that, all other things being equal, cannabis use multiplies the risk of fatal accident by 1.8. Alcohol consumption multiplies it to a much greater extent, by 8, and by almost 15 when the two substances are mixed (see Selected Issue on drugs at the wheel).

The TREND observatory showed growth in cocaine consumption, which, thanks to lower average prices, has breached its traditional boundaries (higher socio-economic classes) to break into new markets (students, young professionals, creative circles). Heroin has become more visible, especially on the party and techno scenes. Finally, methadone's role in substitution treatment has increased, although without shifting BHD® from its dominant position.

Records of treatment requests at mobile CSSTs (drug addiction treatment centres) kept by RECAP (Recueil commun sur les addictions et les prises en charge, i.e. Data Retrieving for Drug Treatment Demands) give an idea of the principal characteristics of people undergoing specialised treatment for problems linked to drug use. The majority of CSST patients in 2005 were male (80%) and young (60% under 30 years old). Cannabis use was at the origin of nearly half the requests for treatment (48%). Cannabis is behind the majority of treatments in CSSTs, especially where specialised consultants are involved (67%), and this is because specialised consultancies for cannabis users were created in the majority of CSSTs in 2004. Problems linked to heroin and cocaine are the second and third most common, being at the origin of 31% and 6% of consultations respectively.

### Summary of 'Selected Issues'.

#### *Drug use and related problems among very young people*

For legal and/ or technical reasons, it is difficult to measure drug use among young adolescents. Launching a number of surveys across the general population is one possible response to this shortcoming. Following the example of older adolescents, tobacco, alcohol and cannabis are the products most commonly mentioned by under 15s, while the use of other drugs remains minimal. Differentiation by gender occurs very early on.

#### *Cocaine and crack- situation and responses*

Although present in France since the beginning of the 20th Century, cocaine is unique in that its use is limited, and confined to specific social categories- affluent artistic circles. However, consumption has increased significantly from the 1990s, and the drug is becoming more and more easily accessible. At the same time, crack use has become more widespread, but its use is restricted to a more marginalized population in urban areas. These disparities are reflected by different methods of treatment, by staff not always adequately informed.

### *Drugs and Driving*

The results of the SAM (Drugs and fatal accidents) study, which covered all road accidents in France between 2001 and 2003 that resulted in one or more fatalities, were published in 2005. Among other interesting results, it emerged that cannabis use multiplies the risk of a fatal accident by 1.8 all other things equal; alcohol consumption multiplies it by nearly 8, and mixing the two substances by almost 15.

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