



# Psychoactive substances, users and markets: recent trends (2016-2017)



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Since 1999, the OFDT TREND scheme (Emerging Trends and New Drugs) has been monitoring current trends and those concerning emerging phenomena in the field of drugs. Based on the network of eight local TREND coordination schemes, it aims to identify, but also to understand the changes at work affecting user profiles, patterns and contexts of use and sale, together with the characteristics of substances and harms associated with their use.

This overview presents the key findings of the seventeenth observation period, which focuses on 2016 and early 2017. Three aspects are highlighted as these correspond to new or recurrent situations which are a cause for concern on a health and social level: the purity and new-found accessibility of cocaine in France; the specific problem relating to unaccompanied minors, who are made even more vulnerable by substance use behaviours; and the growing geographical areas with renewed heroin trafficking, now with a substance more appealing to users. The second part will touch on the continuation of phenomena already described in previous years: the spread of chemsex practices; the extreme poverty facing homeless users; the newly blurred boundaries between diverse

populations liable to facilitate the diffusion of psychotropic substance use; the ever-increasing violence in trafficking; the continuing changes in cannabis supply and, lastly, an update on new psychoactive substances. Other aspects will finally be touched on more briefly; these concern cannabis, fentanyl derivatives and the continuing growth in demand for paraphernalia for smoking crack.

Despite the significant changes in drug use and drug markets since the beginning of the 2000s, the already established phenomena seem particularly worrying. In particular, contrary to expectations at the beginning of the decade, NPS have not yet revolutionised the drugs sector in mainland France. The long-term use of some of these substances has, however, become established, notably with the radical increase in high-risk behaviours related to chemsex practices.

The 2016-2017 period is notably characterised by "classical" substance use and problems driven by contextual factors, which are always difficult to control, whether concerning the profitability of trafficking or the socio-economic crisis. Hence, the growing proportion of the herbal cannabis market; intensified cocaine diffusion; the changes in the heroin market; or the renewed popularity of ecstasy tablets among younger populations, as well as the precarious living conditions facing the homeless display a certain degree of continuity compared to previous years.

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