

# In a glimpse

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## Annual 2023 results of the composition of psychoactive products circulating in France (SINTES update No. 10)

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Established in 1999 by the OFDT, the SINTES system is a tool for monitoring the composition of illicit psychoactive products based on seventeen local coordination's. For the past ten years, the annual results of the analysis of the system's collections have been presented in a dedicated briefing note aimed at identifying changes in the composition of drugs circulating in France and the appearance of rare, unusual products or those causing adverse effects.

SINTES thus makes it possible to document emerging drug phenomenon and the emergence of new products (NPS) and therefore contributes to the reporting of information to the Early Warning System (EWS) managed by the European Union Drugs Agency (EUDA). The OFDT as focal point, is designed to report early information and to alert, if necessary, the national level.

This note presents a summary of the collections carried out in 2023.

A total of 731 collections of psychoactive substances were carried out as part of the OFDT's National Identification System for Toxicants and Substances (SINTES) system in 2023, an increase of 17% compared to 2022.

### Contents and products

- The trend towards an increase in the concentration of active ingredient in cocaine observed since 2018 is confirmed in 2023 and is accompanied by a decrease or even an absence of adulteration (cutting agents).
  - For heroin, the active ingredient levels remained stable in 2023. Samples containing synthetic cannabinoids, sold as heroin, have been the subject of a health alert in the Île-de-France region.
  - MDMA/ecstasy analyses confirmed high active ingredient levels for the crystal form and significant variability for the tablets.
  - 3-MMC was very rarely identified in 2023, being the subject of numerous deceptions.
  - Pink cocaine (most often a combination of ketamine and MDMA) was rarely collected in 2023.
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### **Cannabis and cannabinoids**

In 2023, various products containing cannabis emerged, some of which were highly concentrated or edible and could cause acute poisoning. The spread of hexahydrocannabinol (HHC), a cannabis derivative that appeared in France in 2022 and was classified as a narcotic in June 2023, as well as other semi-synthetic cannabinoids, kept spreading in 2023. In addition, analysis of e-liquids revealed a wide variety of synthetic cannabinoids, consumed by very young users.

### **New risks**

Nitazenes, a new class of synthetic opioids with high pharmacological potency and classified as a narcotic in July 2024, were identified by the SINTES system in 2023, particularly in the context of two health alerts in Montpellier and La Réunion.

The year 2023 was also marked by the identification of synthetic cathinones, placed under surveillance by the European Warning System of the EUDA due to the high risk of neuropsychiatric complications. However, very little data is currently available to better understand these risks.