

## European Update

### EMCDDA

The European Union and Ukraine will share information on drugs more systematically in future, thanks to a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in Kiev today between the EU drugs agency (EMCDDA) and the Ukrainian Ministry of Health.

<http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/about/press/factsheets/2010>

### Germany

German police suspect the Lebanese militant group, Hezbollah, of using drug trafficking in Europe to fund part of its activities, German police arrested two Lebanese citizens living in Germany after they transferred large sums of money to a family in Lebanon with connections to Hezbollah's leadership, including the Shiite group's Secretary General, Hassan Nasrallah.

<http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/1141351.html>

### Ireland

GARDAÍ seized a total of 300,000 BZP tablets in 2009, at a time when the overall illegal drug market contracted sharply. BZP tablets, once sold as a legal high in so-called headshops, were made illegal last April.

<http://www.examiner.ie/ireland/gardai-seize-300000-bzp-tablets-in-2009-111866.html>

### Ireland

Considerable improvements in the National Drug Treatment Reporting System's (NDTRS) data collection processes and procedures mean that the Alcohol and Drug Research Unit (ADRU) of the Health Research Board (HRB) is now able to report on the information collected from treatment centres on a more regular basis.

<http://www.irishmedicalnews.ie/index.php/current-issue/news/2986-progress-in-drug-data-collection>

### Isle of Man

Four men have been charged after heroin with an estimated value of £20,000 was seized on the Isle of Man. Officers from the Drug Trafficking Unit recovered what was described as a "significant amount" of heroin.

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/isle\\_of\\_man/8513882.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/isle_of_man/8513882.stm)

### Lithuania

Lithuanian police seized a record 500 kilograms of cocaine that was stashed in a shipment of fish which arrived at the Klaipeda seaport from Ecuador. The seizure was the result of a lengthy operation involving officers from Ecuador and Lithuania's Baltic neighbour Latvia.

[http://www.alfa.lt/straipsnis/10311578/?Lithuanian.cops.seize.500.kg.of.cocaine.in.Klaipeda..updated.=2010-01-26\\_14-41](http://www.alfa.lt/straipsnis/10311578/?Lithuanian.cops.seize.500.kg.of.cocaine.in.Klaipeda..updated.=2010-01-26_14-41)

### The Netherlands

A rose by any other name would smell as sweet, but apparently not sweet enough to conceal the scent of cocaine. Dutch customs officials say they have intercepted a shipment of the drug hidden among 20,000 long-stem roses flown to the Netherlands from Colombia in time for the St. Valentine's Day holiday.

<http://www.foxnews.com/story/0,2933,585335,00.html>

### The Netherlands

Public split on cannabis legalisation. Some 50% of the population think cannabis should be fully legalised while 25% want a complete ban.

[http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2010/02/public\\_split\\_on\\_cannabis\\_legal.php](http://www.dutchnews.nl/news/archives/2010/02/public_split_on_cannabis_legal.php)

### Russia

The National Narcotics Control Commission (CNNCC) reported over 1.34 million registered drug users in 2009, an 18.6% increase against the previous year.

<http://en.rian.ru/world/20100202/157747447.html>

### Russia

Russia - USA Bilateral Presidential Commission's Drug Trafficking Working Group. The Russian Federation and the United States share the belief that solving this problem requires the efforts of the Governments of both countries.

<http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/news/press10/020410.html>

### Sweden

Beckley Briefing paper - Sweden's drug policies have recently attained symbolic status in international policy debates. This paper examines the country's policies, their effectiveness and the historical and cultural context that underpins them. It considers whether these policies should or could be applied in other countries.

<http://www.idpc.net/sites/default/files/library/Sweden%20Briefing%20Paper%20final.pdf>

### United Kingdom

Teachers, parents and pupils have received warning about the dangers of the drug Mephedrone - sold legally online as plant food - in a bid to avert what police and drugs workers fear could become a teenage drugs epidemic.

<http://www.tes.co.uk/article.aspx?storycode=6035683>

### United Kingdom

Cannabis supply and young people. How do young people obtain cannabis? A snapshot view from a large city and rural villages. [Joseph Rowntree Foundation, UK] <http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/cannabis-supply-and-young-people>

## World Update

### UNODC

**Afghanistan Opium Survey 2010 - Winter Rapid Assessment.** UNODC projects stable cultivation of opium poppy in Afghanistan this year (measured in hectares), with a possible decrease in production (number of tons) [http://www.unodc.org/documents/frontpage/Afghanistan\\_Opium\\_Survey\\_2010\\_Final.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/frontpage/Afghanistan_Opium_Survey_2010_Final.pdf)

### UNODC

Cocaine shipped to West Africa by Latin American drug cartels is now being traded for arms — an exchange of contraband that is especially dangerous in a region now home to cells of an al-Qaida-linked terror group. <http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5glLy9bDRMbTrutV5vilu7LhFcRaAD9DSTG480>

### WADA

Thirty barred from Winter Olympics after doping tests. Over 30 athletes have been prevented from competing at the Winter Olympics for breaking drugs rules, the World Anti-Doping Agency has confirmed. [http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport1/hi/olympic\\_games/vancouver\\_2010/8508381.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport1/hi/olympic_games/vancouver_2010/8508381.stm)

### Armenia

Armenian law-enforcement officials have seized heroin and opium smuggled over the border with Turkey and arrested 3 Iranians. [http://www.rferl.org/content/Armenia\\_Arrests\\_Iranians\\_Seizes\\_Drugs\\_Smuggled\\_Via\\_Turkey/1957622.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Armenia_Arrests_Iranians_Seizes_Drugs_Smuggled_Via_Turkey/1957622.html)

### Burma/Myanmar

A report exposing the spreading opium fields in the north-eastern corner of the military-ruled Burma has brought to light an equally revealing story. It was produced by a team of ethnic women who risked their lives to document the heroin-filled world they inhabit. <http://www.ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=50170>

### Cambodia

Abuses of Cambodian addicts in detention is widespread. In a report, Human Rights Watch described in detail abuses in 11 government-run centers that included electric shocks, beatings, rape, forced labor and forced donations of blood. <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/02/16/world/asia/16iht-cambo.html>

### Maldives

Maldives joins UNODC to strengthen drug response. The Government of Maldives recently signed with UNODC its first ever country-specific technical cooperation project to combat drug abuse in the country. <http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2010/January/maldives-joins-unodc-to-strengthen-drug-response.html>

### Mauritania

A Mauritanian court handed jail sentences for cocaine trafficking to a French national and 13 Mauritians, including the local Interpol representative. The court sentenced 7 defendants to 15 years in jail and fined them the

equivalent of 26,000 euros (36,000 dollars) in what is considered Mauritania's biggest drugs case to date. <http://www.google.com/hostednews/afp/article/ALeqM5iv66ald7aAY7KqArPKMqwkZgofrA>

### Mexico

Mexican drug cartels are getting cocaine from Colombia's biggest guerrilla group in a deal that increases the threat to both nations, according to a document captured by Colombian military intelligence. <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601109&sid=aQfKk3ykBBes>

### New Zealand

Police seized \$270,000 worth of high grade cannabis from across Auckland. Plants and dried leaves, already packaged for sale, were seized from buildings and private addresses. <http://tvnz.co.nz/national-news/major-cannabis-bust-across-auckland-3343532>

### Peru

Tapping into a niche market for organic cocoa, some Peruvian farmers have turned away from cocaine in favor of growing beans for high-end chocolate retailers in Europe and the US. <http://www.csmonitor.com/World/Americas/2010/0201/Peru-farmers-drop-cocaine-in-favor-of-cocoa>

### Singapore

Heroin abuse in Singapore continues to rise for the 4th year running, even as the drug situation has improved. Central Narcotics Bureau officers arrested 1,079 heroin abusers in 2009 - a 22 per cent jump from 2008. [http://www.straitstimes.com/BreakingNews/Singapore/Story/STIStory\\_485895.html](http://www.straitstimes.com/BreakingNews/Singapore/Story/STIStory_485895.html)

### South Africa

The wife of South Africa's intelligence minister has been arrested on drug-dealing charges. Mrs Cwele was charged with procuring a woman to collect drugs in Turkey and of getting another woman to smuggle cocaine from Brazil. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/8488355.stm>

### Venezuela

Authorities discovered 28 airplanes in central Venezuela that were presumably being used by drug traffickers. The planes were found inside a hangar on the outskirts of El Sombrero. <http://www.examiner.ie/breakingnews/world/dozens-of-drug-trafficking-planes-seized-446191.html>

### Zambia

Chief Hanjalika of the Tonga people in Mazabuka district has expressed worry at the high number of people engaged in commercial cannabis cultivation. The Drug Enforcement Commission has arrested a number of people in connection with the commercial cultivation of cannabis. <http://www.lusakatimes.com/?p=23684>

## Drug Update

### New Synthetic Drug

**Mephedrone** MCAT (2-methylamino-1-*p*-tolylpropan-1-one),[2] also known as 4-methylmethcathinone (4-MMC), 4-methylephedrone, meow meow[3] or MMCAT[4], is a stimulant and entactogen drug of the phenethylamine, amphetamine, and cathinone chemical classes. Mephedrone, is illegal in Sweden, Denmark and Israel, imported from laboratories in China, is believed to have first entered Britain last year. By the summer, it was sweeping through clubs and parties throughout the country. Its intended effects include increased alertness, euphoria, excitement, feeling of stimulation, urge to talk, and openness. Side-effects of consumption include convulsions, breathing problems, nose bleeds, depression, psychosis - and, in some cases, even death. No doubt the EMCDDA's Early Warning System will find this substance of interest.

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/hi/health/newsid\\_10000000/newsid\\_10004300/10004383.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/hi/health/newsid_10000000/newsid_10004300/10004383.stm)

### Research paper

A new study conducted in two species of monkeys revises upward the risks of taking ecstasy. Only two or three doses of Ecstasy succeeding on a few hours could raise the risk of developing Parkinson's disease or other neurological disorders. Indeed, in monkeys, two or three successive doses of Ecstasy, or MDMA, equivalent to what are the youth during a rave party, not only produce serotonin neurotoxicity moderate we already knew, but also, and again, neurotoxicity dopaminergic impairment.

"The most disturbing implication of this result is that, in consequence dopaminergic lesions induced by MDMA, young adults may increase their risk of developing more than one parkinsonian syndrome, whose symptoms are similar to those of the disease Parkinson. <http://drugalcoholnews.com/dangers-of-ecstasy-more-than-previously-known/051>

### Conference

RCGP 15th National Conference:

Working with Drug & Alcohol Users in Primary Care - Integrating Practice and Policy: Everyone's Business

Date: Thursday 22 - Friday 23 April 2010

Venue: SECC, Glasgow

This conference is the largest event in the UK for GPs, shared care workers, drug users, nurses and other primary care staff, specialists, commissioners and researchers interested in and involved with the management of drug and alcohol users in primary care. <http://www.smmgp.org.uk/html/rcgpconference.php>

### Future Issues

I would like to express thanks to those persons around the world who have contributed to this issue in particular to **Jim Young and Roger van de Sompel**

Items for inclusion in future issues should be forwarded to [paul@paul-cook.net](mailto:paul@paul-cook.net)

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**Paul Cook**

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