



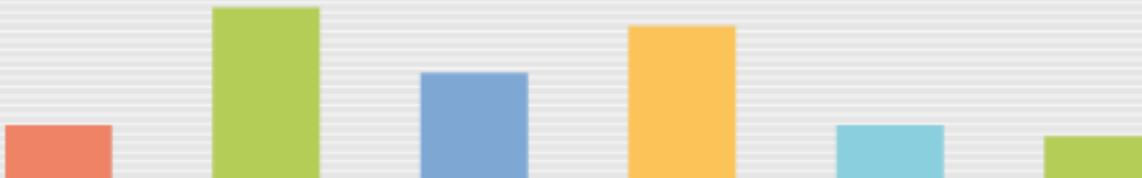
European Monitoring Centre  
for Drugs and Drug Addiction

# Impact of economic recessions on drug use

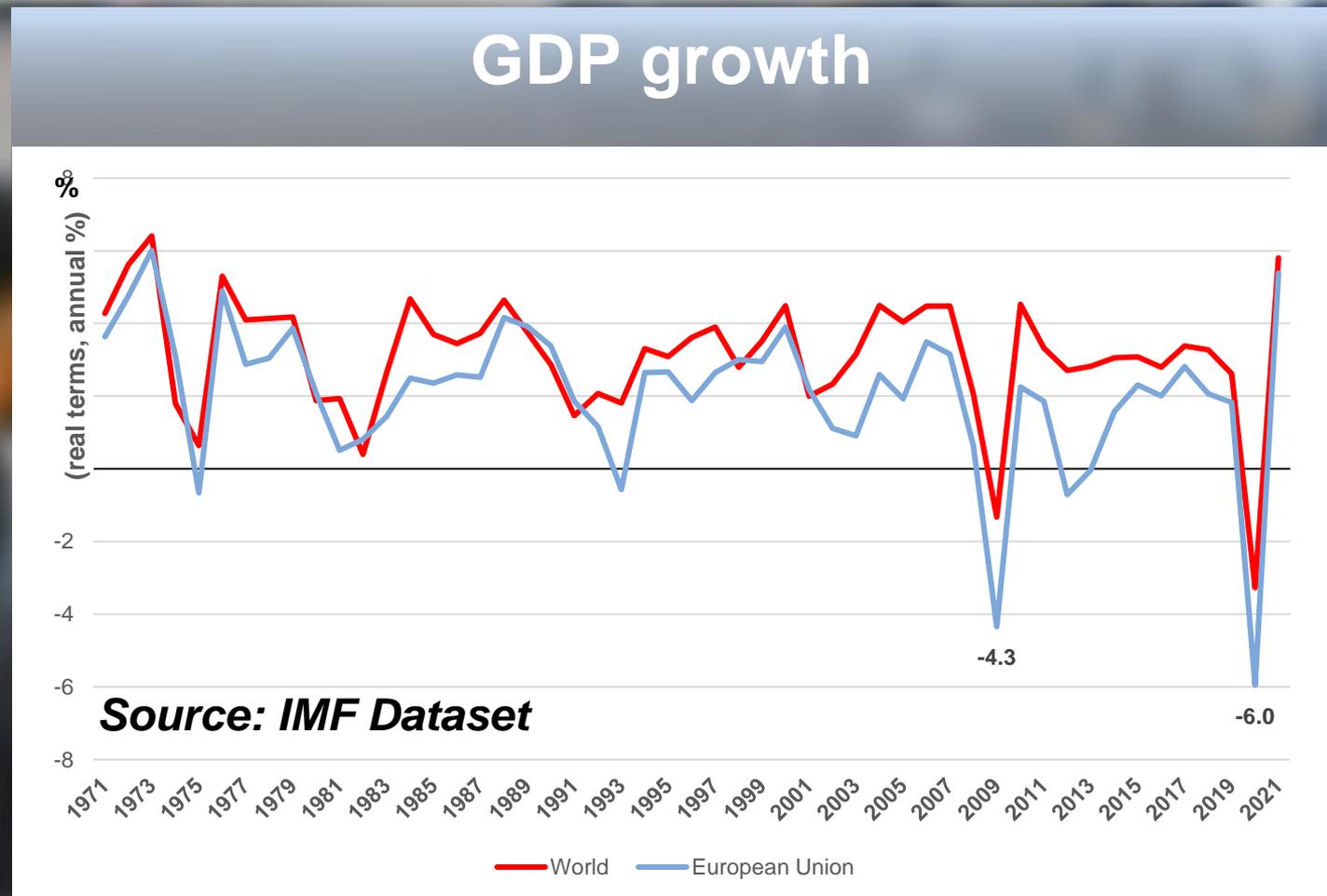
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**2022 LISBON ADDICTIONS, Lisboa**

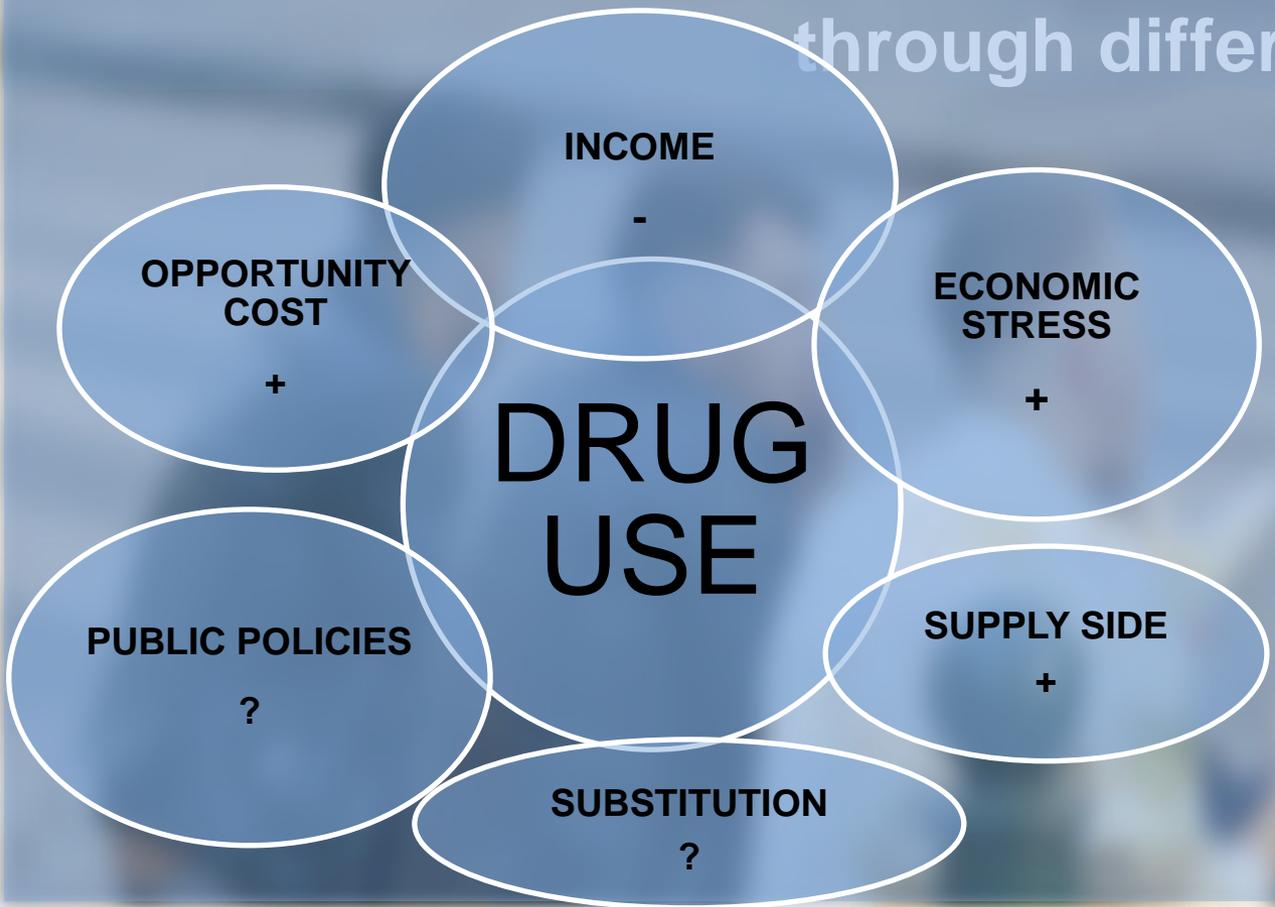


# The impact of economic recessions on drug use



# What have we learnt from the past?

Recessions impact on drug use through different mechanisms



# What have we learnt from the past?

## Impact economic recessions on drug use

**In 2021, EMCDDA  
launched a study:**

1. Systematic review of literature
2. Meta-analysis



# What have we learnt from the past?

## Systematic review – operational details

### Search strategy

- Search and data collection according to the 'Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analysis' (PRISMA) guidelines, adjusting for macro-economic studies;

### Search engines

- Scopus, *Medline*, *PubMed*, *Scielo*, *PsycINFO*, *Econlit*, *Google Scholar* and using the list of reference from screened articles;

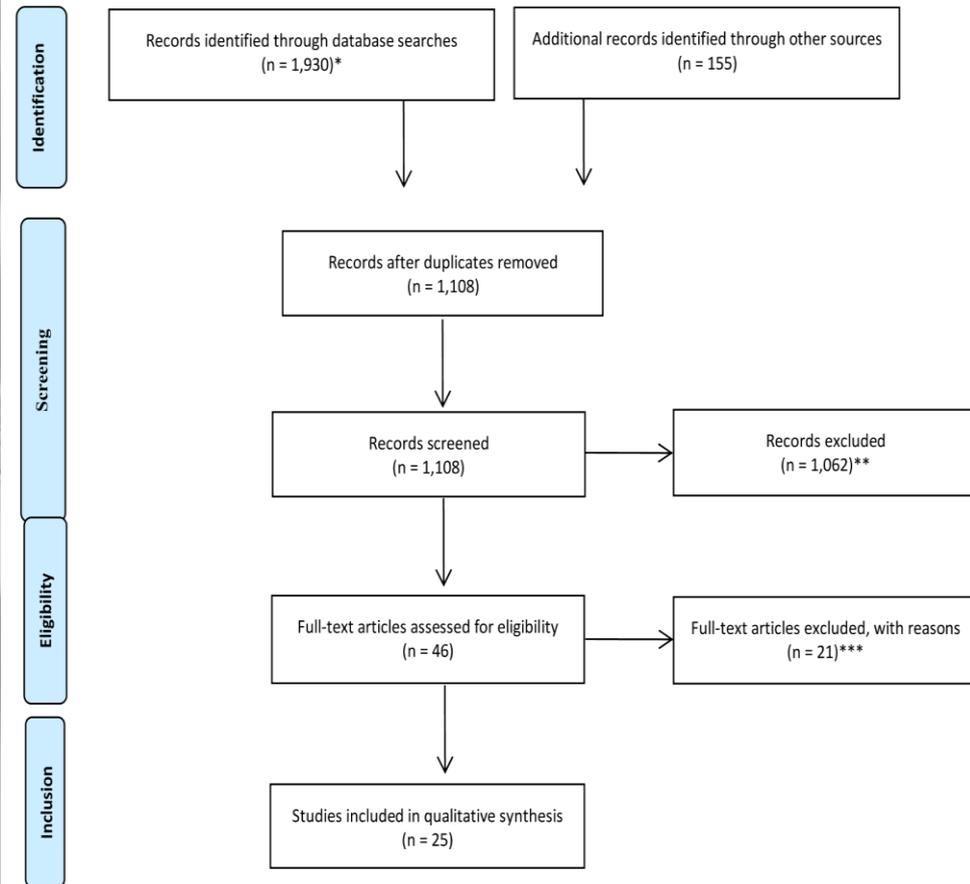
### Criteria

- Original scientific studies, published in English, between 2008 - 2020, OECD countries;
- Keywords: economic recession + with illegal drugs related words;
- Published in peer-reviewed scientific journals (excluded congress proceedings, editorials, critical reviews and other sources) and by international organizations.

# What have we learnt from the past?

## Results of the search

### PRISMA flowchart



# Characteristics of the 25 studies included

Drug use		Drug		Region	
Prevalence	16	Cannabis	14	Multinational	4
Drug-related diseases	4	Cocaine	8	Europe	4
Drug-related mortality	3	Opiates	8	United States	11
Waste water analysis	1	Other	8	Australia	1
		Not specified (illegal drugs)	8	Italy	1
				Spain	4

# What have we learnt from the past?

## CONCLUSION

1.  
**The impact of economic recessions on drug use is multifaceted;**

**The systematic review** requires a detailed analysis by age of population, type of drug and of user because results are mixed and difficult to summarize, otherwise.

### Impact of the economic cycle on drug use

<b>Procyclical</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Countercyclical</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Inconclusive or mixed results</b>	<b>13</b>

# What have we learnt from the past?

## Meta – analysis

**Objective:** assess the correlation between *recession* and *drug use*

**Criteria** (inclusion/exclusion of studies):

- Comparability of the outcome variables and predictors;
- Comparability of model specification.

**Meta-analysis run with 11 studies and 123 regressions;**

**Moderators**

- Age of drug users (under and over 35 years)
- Period of reference (ever used; past month and; last 12 months)
- Type of use (groups: type of use not specified, sporadic, frequent and heavy use)
- Drug used (cannabis, cocaine, opioids, and 'other')
- **Method:**
  - Complied with the guidelines of the Meta-Analysis of the Economics Research Network (MAER-Net);
  - Hierarchical meta-regression (HMR)

# What have we learnt from the past?

## Meta – analysis

The hierarchical meta-regression analysis selected three models:

**Model I**

Drug use of  
population of all  
ages  
&  
all moderators

**Model II**

Drug use of  
population  
under 35  
&  
all moderators

**Model III**

Drug use of  
population  
under 35  
&  
heavy drug use

# What have we learnt from the past?

## Meta – analysis results

M E T A - A N A L Y S I S

Model II	$\beta$	ci.l $\beta$	ci.u $\beta$	z-val	p-val	Signif
Intercept	0.030	0.015	0.045	3.835	0.000	***
Ref. period: during the year	-0.023	-0.063	0.018	-1.077	0.282	***
Ref.period: last month	-0.018	-0.030	-0.006	-2.896	0.004	ns
Ref. period: last 12 mounths	-0.019	-0.031	-0.007	-3.104	0.002	**
Cocaine	-0.008	-0.015	-0.002	-2.450	0.014	**
Opioids	-0.013	-0.026	-0.001	-2.131	0.033	*
Others	-0.004	-0.008	-0.001	-2.242	0.025	*
Sporadic use	-0.017	-0.036	0.002	-1.755	0.079	*
Heavy use	-0.003	-0.009	0.003	-1.101	0.271	ns

# Unemployment & the use of cannabis among young people



# Discussion - limitations

- a) Possible presence of reporting bias (self-reported use of drugs is frequently used to collect data).
- b) Cross-sectional data in some studies (causality?);
- c) no data is available for part-time/full-time jobs or 'black labour markets';
- d) some studies do not control for heterogeneity among drug users;



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**Comments or questions?**  
**Thanks for your attention!**

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