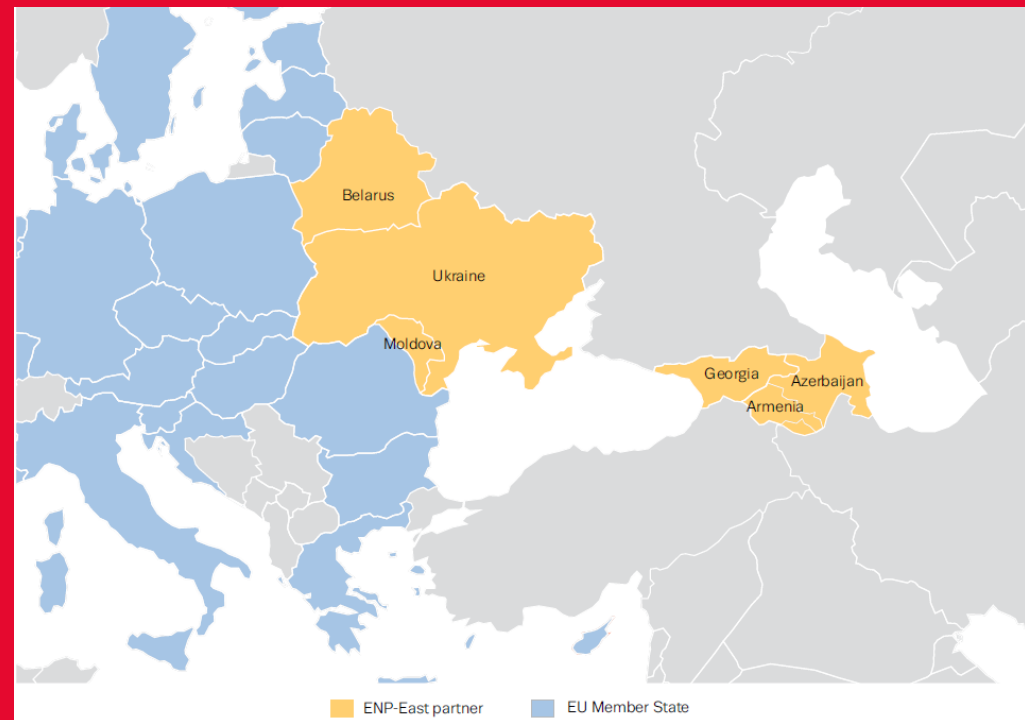


Key developments in Drug markets of Eastern European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) countries

EMCDDA Contract code: CT.21.EU4MD.0050.1.0

Daan van der Gouwe
Lisbon Addictions, 23.11.2022



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European Monitoring Centre
for Drugs and Drug Addiction

EU4MD



Funded by the
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(ENP) countries

REITOX member

The Trimbos Institute is the Dutch focal point for the EMCDDA

The Trimbos Institute is a member of the European Information Network on Drugs and Drug Addiction (REITOX)



Key developments in Drug markets of
Eastern European Neighbourhood Policy
(ENP) countries



European Monitoring Centre
for Drugs and Drug Addiction

EN

Overview of drug markets in the European Neighbourhood Policy-East countries

Regional report

2022

Key developments in Drug markets of
Eastern European Neighbourhood Policy
(ENP) countries

Methodology

Information reflects period 2018-2021

Data collection finished end of 2021

Primary source: **qualitative data** from interviews

Secondary source: **desk review** existing documents:
EMCDDA (e.g. European Web Survey on Drugs (EWSD), European Syringe Collection and Analysis Enterprise (ESCAPE), European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD), Reports of the National Drug Observatories, Scientific, grey and open source literature.

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Summer 2022: some additional data collection

Key finding 1

The emergence of the internet as a main platform for buying and selling illicit drugs

Online markets: Telegram and the Darknet

Substances: synthetic cathinones 4-MMC (mephedrone, meow meow) and α -PVP

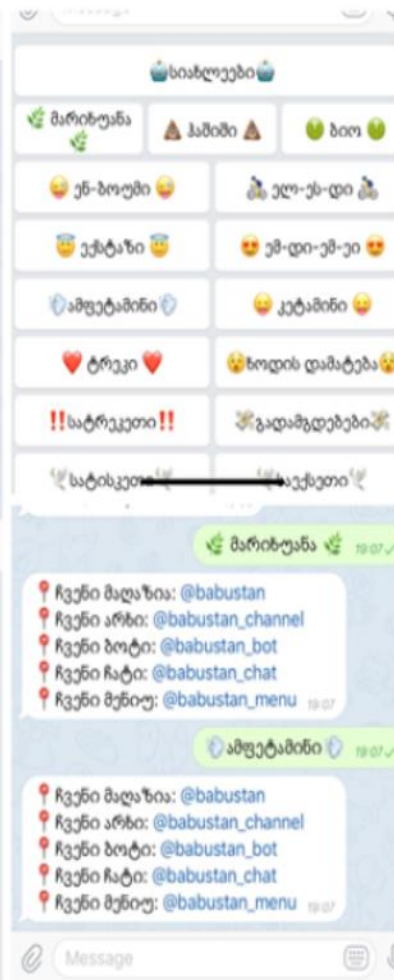
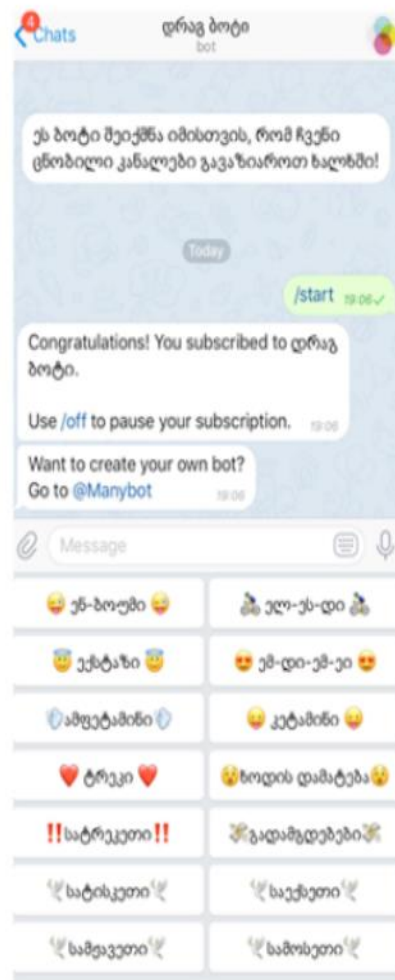
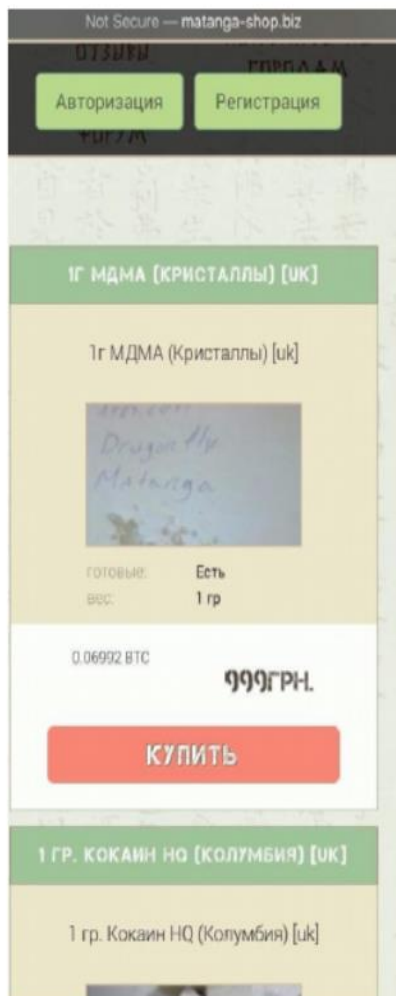
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The emergence of the internet as a main platform for buying and selling illicit drugs

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Substances: synthetic cathinones 4-MMC (mephedrone, meow meow) and α -PVP
→ not based on laboratory verifications

Screenshots from online drug shops in Ukrainian (left, 'Matanga-Shop') and Georgian (right, Telegram channel)



Source: Alternative Georgia, Tbilisi, Georgia

Key finding 2

Shift in **drug use:**
from traditional home-made substances to (imported) synthetic substances, including a shift away from heroin and towards 'street methadone', methamphetamine and NPS, esp 4-MMC and α -PVP.

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from traditional home-made substances to (imported) synthetic substances, including a shift away from heroin and towards '**street methadone**', methamphetamine and NPS, esp 4-MMC and α -PVP.

Reasons increased use of synthetic opioids: low purity of heroin, low cost of street methadone and of diverted OST medications.

Key finding 3



Key developments in Drug markets of Eastern European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) countries

Catalysers of key findings 1+2

- COVID pandemic: closed borders, COVID restrictions, curfews etc
- Invasion of Russia in Ukraine

Potential impact of the war in Ukraine

follow up questionnaire summer 2022 among PWUD

23 questionnaires of PWUD | 5 questionnaire from service providers | Additional informal talks with regional stakeholders | other sources: EMCDDA, UNODC, Public Health Alliance

- **Drug markets** are likely **shifting**:
 - √ Trafficking routes disrupted, esp cocaine and heroin trafficking routes
 - √ Domestic production (esp UA) street methadone, and NPS, disrupted: lack of precursors.

However: drug markets seem resilient and appear to be restored

- While the drug markets are likely shifting, there does not appear to be a dramatic change in **drug use** that is currently of concern.
- Rather, both PWUD and service providers highlight the **disruptions in drug-related service provision incl. OST** in some areas.

Some recommendations

- To initiate **structural and systematic monitoring of dynamic online drugs markets,**
- To initiate or expand **internet-based outreach work among online communities of PWUD,** and to
- Introduce and improve **essential services such as consumer drug checking services and other harm reduction and treatment services** that meet the needs of people who use methamphetamines and NPS.

First and foremost

- Stakeholders at regional, subregional and local level should first and foremost aim to restore and expand the provision of the full spectrum of drug-related services including harm reduction services and to restore the accessibility and availability of necessary medication such as methadone and buprenorphine in all areas.

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