



European Monitoring Centre  
for Drugs and Drug Addiction

**EMCDDA-IPA**



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# Key developments in drug markets of Western Balkans

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**Lisbon Addictions 2022**

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**No conflict of interest to declare.**

# About this presentation



## Outline of the talk

- Methods
- Drug use harms and drug services
- Drug production, trafficking and impact on the EU
- Conclusions



# Methods

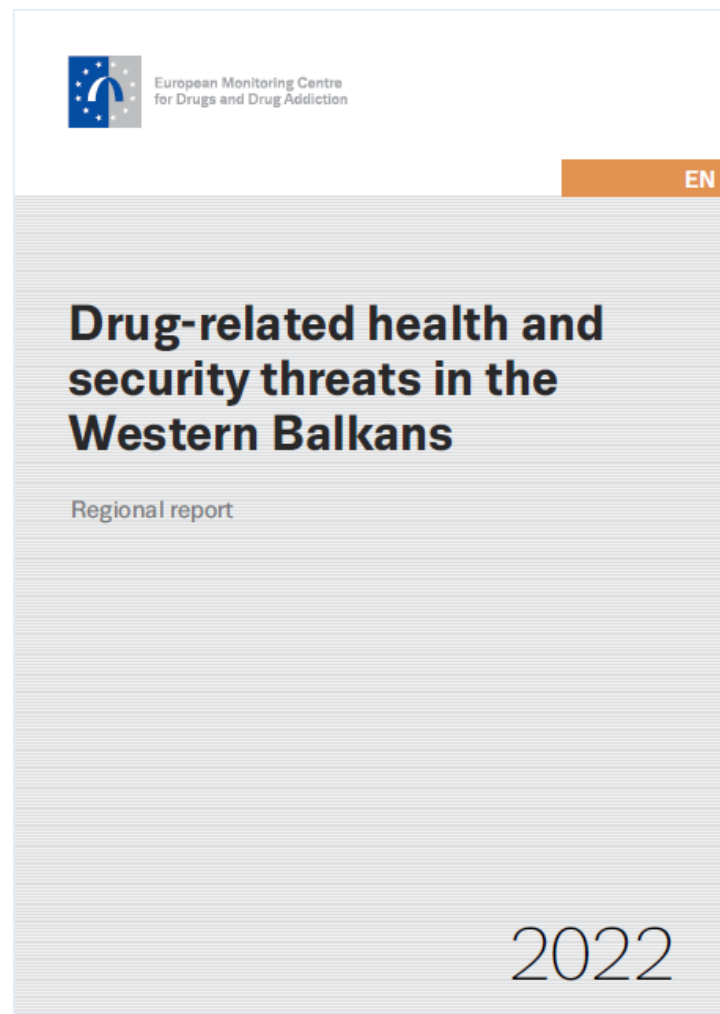
## Data routinely reported to EMCDDA

- Health and security
- Standard Tables
- Workbooks

## Studies *(examples)*

- 2021 European Web Survey on Drugs
- Trendspotter on impact of COVID-19
- Cannabis study on production and trafficking

## Literature/Desk review



# Drug use

## Evolving (▲) drug situation?

### Cannabis

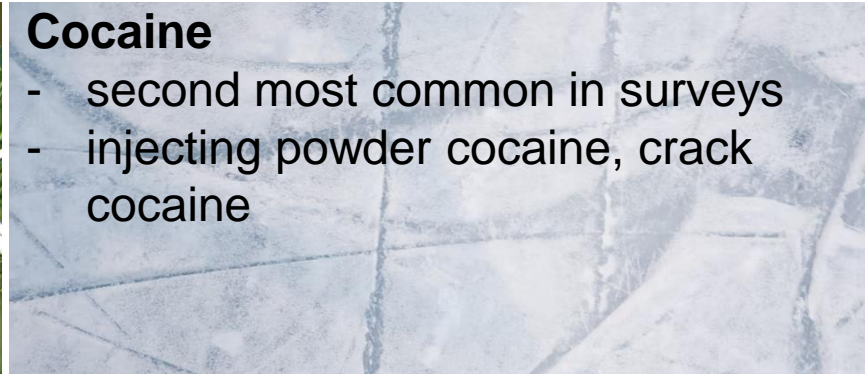
- most used drug in the region
- signals of increase among young people



## High stigma & changing attitudes.

### Cocaine

- second most common in surveys
- injecting powder cocaine, crack cocaine



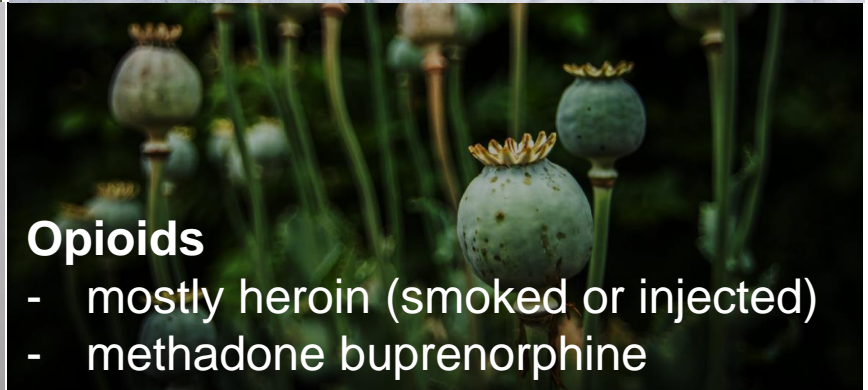
### Synthetic drugs

- Ecstasy/MDMA
- Amphetamines comparable to EU



### Opioids

- mostly heroin (smoked or injected)
- methadone buprenorphine



**COVID-19: recreational vs. marginalized PWUD**

# Drug-related harms

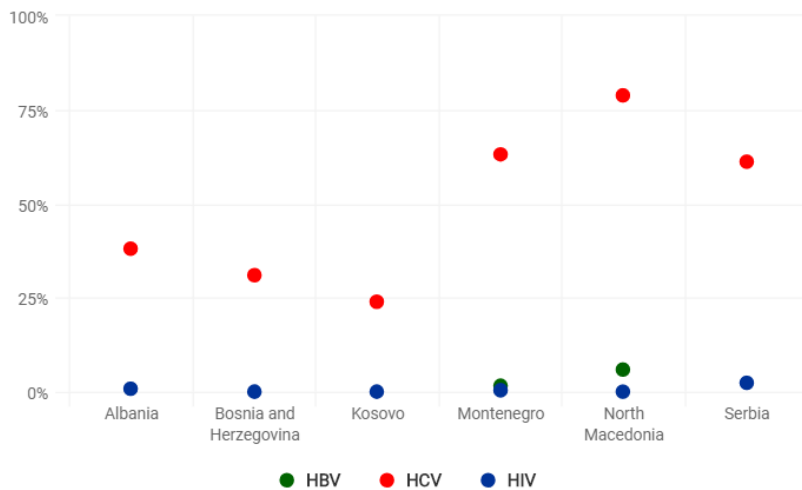
## Drug-related infectious diseases

- Advanced HIV monitoring & low prevalence
- Hepatitis: some gaps and higher prevalence

## Drug-related deaths

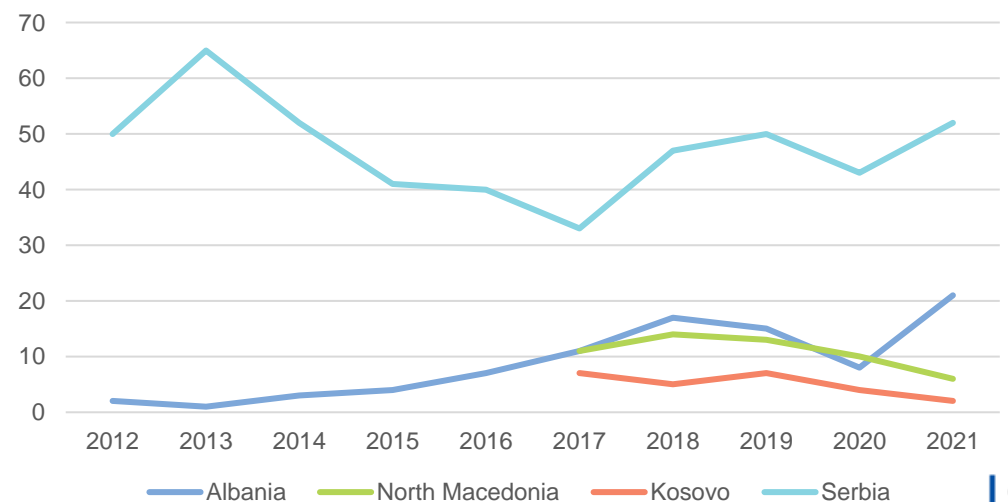
- Mostly opioids (heroin/methadone) alone or in combination
- Cocaine-related deaths (AL, MK)

**FIGURE 1: Prevalence of drug-related infectious diseases among PWID**



Source: EMCDDA

**FIGURE 2: Evolution of drug-related deaths**



# Drug services

## Treatment

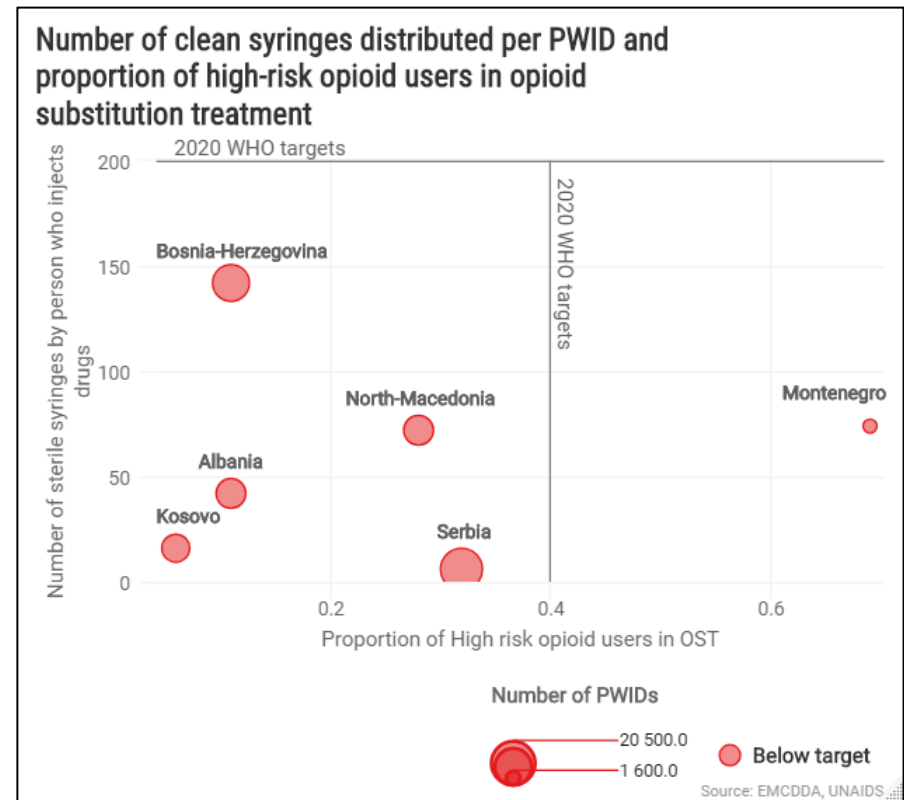
- mainly opioid agonist treatment (OAT) and services for users of opioids

## Harm reduction

- historically fragile component of care

## COVID-19

- Acute: reduced access to some services
- Lasting: some improvements of the system; some funding restrictions



# Drug production

## Cannabis:

- diversification in cultivation practices
- legal cannabis diverted into illicit market



## Heroin:

- the manufacturing from morphine may occur in the region



## Synthetic drugs:

- appear to be uncommon

## COVID-19:

- marginal impact observable





# Drug trafficking routes

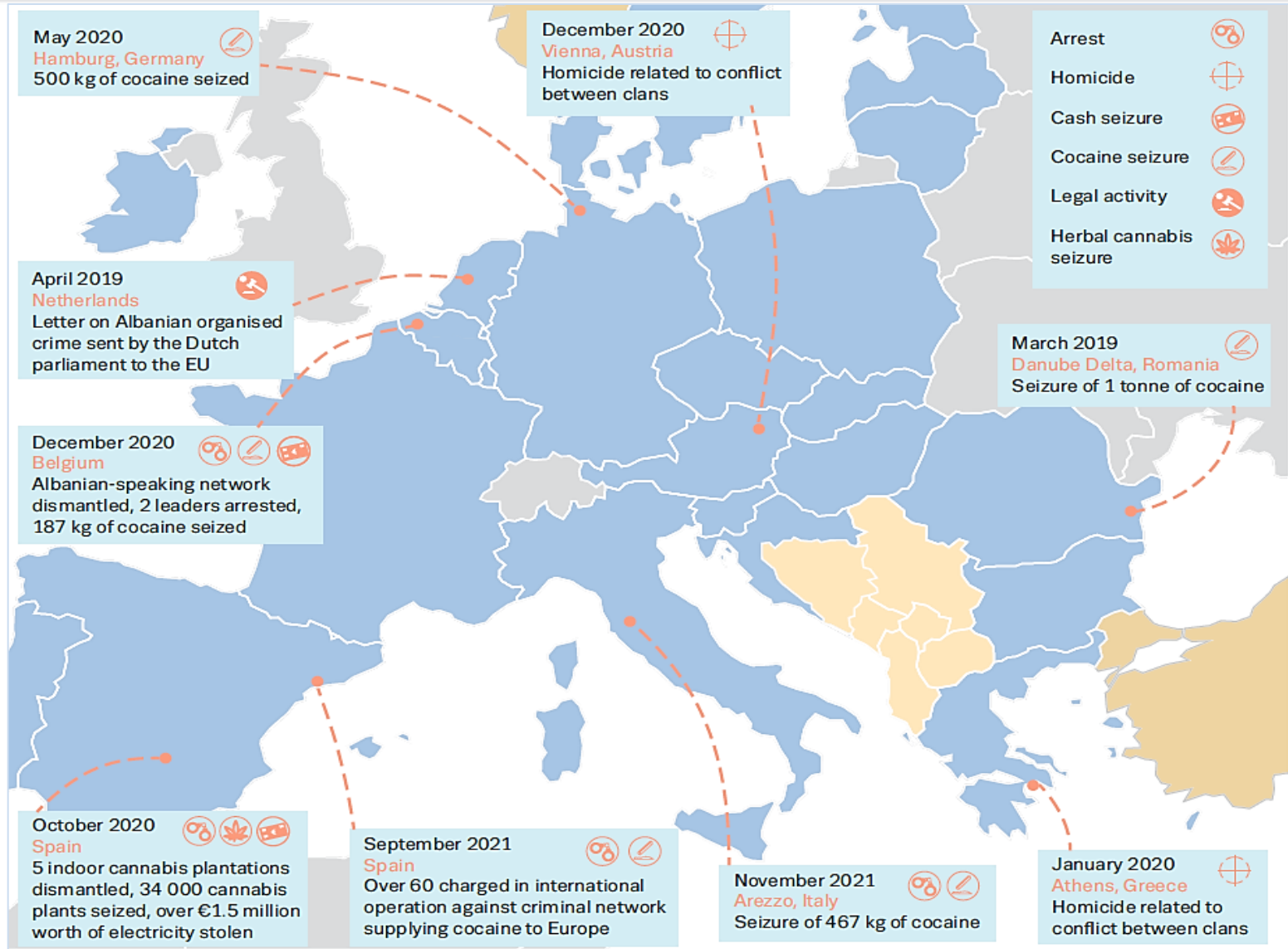


- **Herbal cannabis:** in all directions
- **Cocaine:** increasing role of ports
- **Heroin:** by land and sea
- **Amphetamine:** most seized synthetic drug
- **COVID-19 impact:**
  - changes in transportation methods
  - distribution networks - new models



Inbound, outbound and internal trafficking routes identified in the Western Balkans for herbal cannabis, cocaine, heroin and synthetic drugs.  
Sources: EMCDDA and GI-TOC.

# Impact of Western Balkan criminal networks on drug markets in the EU



Selected drug trafficking events in EU countries related to Western Balkans organised criminal networks / Sources: EMCDDA and GI-TOC.



# Take home messages

- Some communalities, but distinct national markets
- Better monitoring (for better response)
- And: Enjoy our reports!



EN

## Drug-related health and security threats in the Western Balkans

Regional report



EMCDDA trendspotter briefing

June 2021

**Illicit drug markets and supply in the Western Balkans: Impact of COVID-19**

The situation regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and responses to it continues to evolve rapidly. Regular updates are provided by the [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control](#) and the [World Health Organization](#), and in most countries national public health guidelines are available. The EMCDDA has created a [COVID-19 resource hub](#) that provides access to up-to-date materials on drugs and COVID-19-related issues.



EMCDDA trendspotter briefing

March 2021

**Impact of COVID-19 on drug use and drug services in Western Balkans**

The situation regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and responses to it continues to evolve rapidly. Regular updates are provided by the [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control](#) and the [World Health Organization](#), and in most countries national public health guidelines are available. The EMCDDA has created a [COVID-19 resource hub](#) that provides access to up-to-date materials on drugs and COVID-19-related issues.



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