

EVALUATION AND RISKS OF DRUGS' TRAFFICKING

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Abstract

The phenomenon related to drugs includes firstly the trafficking activity for drugs which comprises activities such cultivating, distributing, producing and selling drugs anywhere in the world. Drugs' trafficking is a world phenomenon that affects each society turning currently into a business for large criminal organisations, a business affecting human lives first of all, and the fighting off this phenomenon encounters always difficulties in "exterminating" totally such organisations.

Key-words: traffic, drugs, organised crime, consumption, combating

1. Conceptual presentation

Drug trafficking is a trade "activity" performed illegally that is outspread worldwide, involving activities such as cultivating, manufacturing, distributing and selling substances that belong to the category of substances included in the drugs' prohibiting laws. Each state through its bodies, and the international bodies of combating the traffic and consumption of drugs are permanently monitoring and researching the world market of illicit drug trafficking in order to identify all its substrata and to fight off and de-structure the criminal organisations that are involved in such activities that are seriously affecting the society as a whole and the life of the individual, in general.

Drugs' trafficking is closely related to drugs' production because as long as the production of such substances exists, also consumers will exist anywhere in the world, and the road of drugs to the final consumer is actually the drug trafficking that can be achieved under various forms.

The size of the drugs' market generated in time both acceptance and acknowledgement of the importance that drugs generate by means of their effects at all levels of life. Drug trafficking represents for the majority of criminal groups an important incomes' resource which makes that the attention given to such a global phenomenon during the last decade has

become very focused, specialised authorities in this respect being careful to the evolutions in this respect. For instance, at international level, but also at European Union level to the cannabis production were associated also several criminal groups that find their “headquarters” in the South-Eastern part of Asia, thus existing several concerns at global level regarding the diversification of the activities of these groups which can comprise also the production and sale of methamphetamine at the level of the European Union.

In accordance with the yearly report of the European Union – EMCDDA-Europol, several of the criminal groups which in the past dealt mostly with the heroin trafficking, currently expanded their activity and involved themselves in drug trafficking with cocaine and methamphetamine in the entire European Union, and the traffic routes are the same with the ones used for heroin trafficking.

The globalisation phenomenon turned gradually into a factor favouring drug trafficking and consumption entirely, many of the countries turning gradually into points of transit, of warehousing or production. At the level of the European Union several efforts were made in the acerbic fight against drugs, so that all EU Member-States have adopted a European pact that provides that Member-States and institutions of the EU should work together for being able to put a halt to the illicit production and trafficking of drugs.

Considered on categories of drugs, the market is rather “diversified”, the consumers being able to consume whatever drug they wish. From the viewpoint of drug production at world level, in 2013, according to international estimates, the opium production was of approximately 6883 tons, the production from Afghanistan being of approximately 80% from the total opium production at world level.

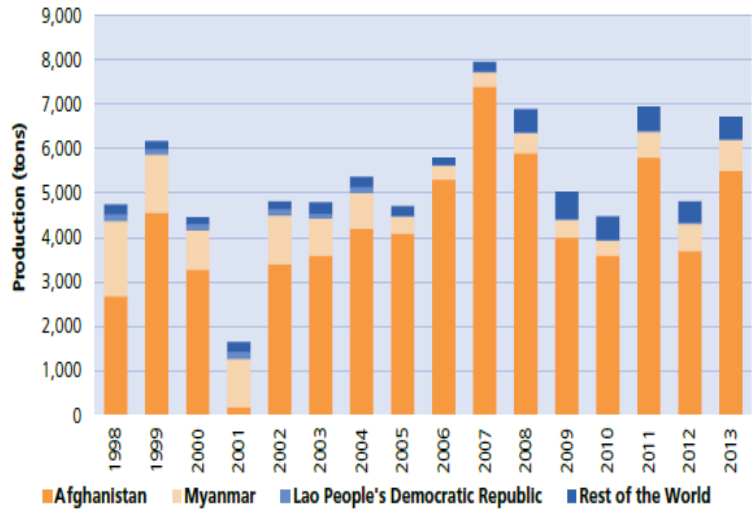
With respect to the production of heroin, as compared with past years, the production increased to up to 600 tons. The illicit cultivation and production of opiates is limited only for some countries or regions, thus, illicit opiates are trafficked on very big distances and by several transition countries, the final purpose being to satisfy the demand at world level.

The supply and demand of opioids at world level is far from being on a descending trend or from remaining at the same level, especially as there are several evidences that highlight the flows of heroin trafficking from Afghanistan to the European continent, the destination markets or countries being extremely diversified in the last period, in particular as in the last period was noticed a trend of increased interaction between illicit markets and legal markets for opioids.

The route on which heroin is trafficked is known as “the Balkan Route”, that is from Afghanistan to Central and Western Europe, then to Turkey, but this route was discovered and gradually several hindrances

appeared in the way of drug traffickers, among which also the fight of the authorities from the targeted countries by applying the law in the field, and also due to the decrease of drug demand in the country of destination.

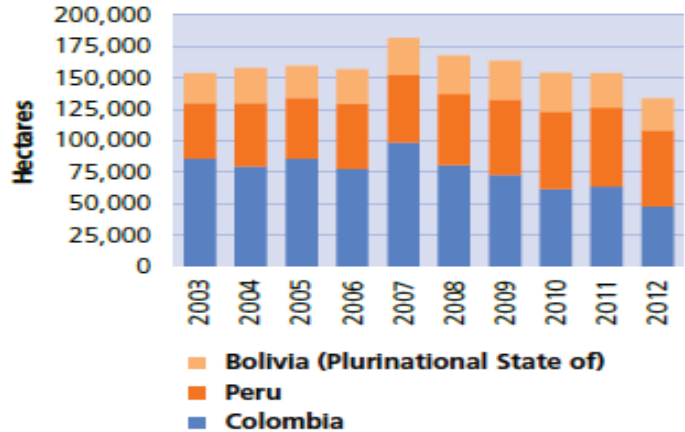
Global Opium Production 1998-2013



[Source: World Drug Report, 2014]

With respect to the cultivation of cocaine at global level, it is estimated that it registered a decrease, so that a deficit of demand was also generated at global level for cocaine, while among the years 2003-2006 the surfaces cultivated with cocaine totalled 153.000-157.000 hectares, a total that was identical in the period 2010-2011. In fact, the decline registered with respect to the cultivation surfaces for cocaine are not relevant, in particular if we take into account the fact that the traffickers and producers of drugs improved a lot the manufacturing process of cocaine.

Cocaine cultivation 2003-2012



[Source: World Drug Report, 2014]

It can be easily noticed from the presented graph with respect to cocaine cultivation that the main countries where cocaine is mostly cultivated and where are found the most spread out surfaces of cocaine and its cultivation is a “full-job” are Peru, Columbia and Bolivia, and the traffic route for reaching the European continent is the following: South-America, West- and Central Africa, Central and Western Europe, and from here towards the East and Asia the Balkan route is the one used.

Perhaps the widest spread with respect to the cultivation of drugs is the one of cannabis, as it is most easy to be procured and cultivated from all the drugs. The majority of regions from the entire world is faced with the cultivation of cannabis, this being realised either individually at a private farm, where also warehousing is provided for cannabis, or is realised in regions hidden from the eyes of the authorities. The activities for cultivating and producing cannabis are rather difficult to estimate. According to the World Drug Report, the cannabis plant is cultivated in almost all countries of the world, while the production of cannabis raisin is made only in a few countries from North Africa, Middle-East and South-West Asia.

From the viewpoint of the cannabis market, both as plant and as raisin, this is continuously increasing, so that two-thirds of the world countries report that cannabis is the primary substance with respect to drug abuse. At the level of the European Union, cannabis is cultivated mostly on the territory of Spain, Italy, the Czech Republic and Albania, and after that the route followed to reach Romania is: transiting Serbia and Bulgaria, and thereafter to Romania from Hungary or Bulgaria.

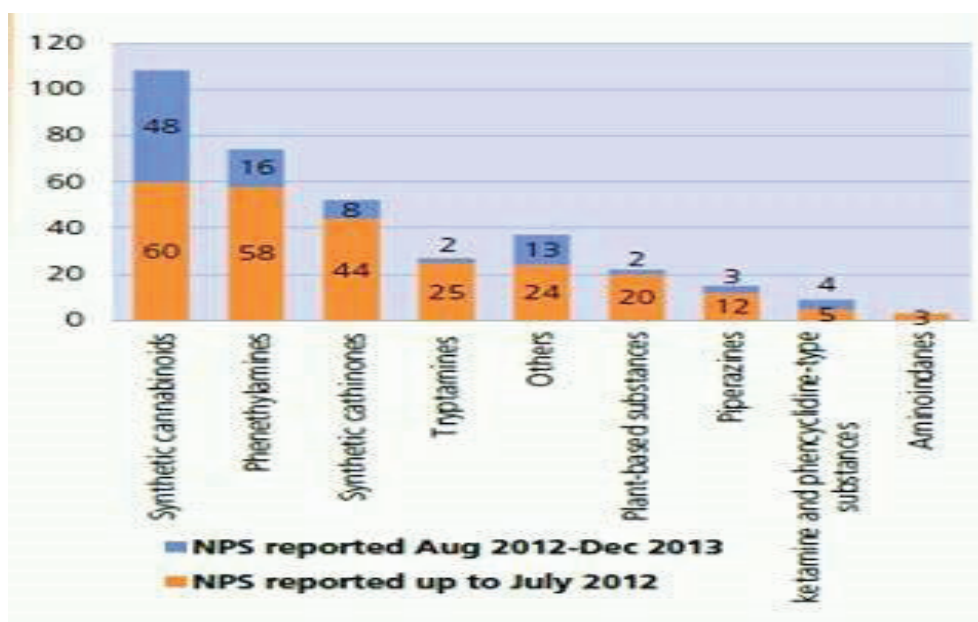
A much bigger issue which is felt by the entire mankind is the diversified substances which leads to the emergence of new drugs. The cultivation of plants and their production underwent gradually also other processes by which were obtained thereafter new drugs, drugs that become increasingly more powerful and underwent galloping spread out at global level. For instance, at world level it is rather difficult to quantify which is actually the total production of stimuli of the amphetamine type, as in the world there is an estimated total number of 12.471 laboratories, where in majority methamphetamine is produced. The fight of the authorities in combating organised crime had some success, which is many of these laboratories were discovered and eliminated. For instance, in the United States of America, in the year 2012, from 12.857 laboratories, the number decreased to 11.116 and in Mexico from 259 to 159.

At European level, synthetic drugs (amphetamines, derivates thereof, methamphetamines and ecstasy) continue to come from Western Europe, as they reach Romania either by post, by air or land. In the year 2013, there were attempts to introduce also some chemical substances not subjected to control and that can be easily changed into drug precursors, called

generically pre-precursors, especially by citizens of the countries with tradition in producing synthetic drugs (the Netherlands, Belgium).

Currently, there is an even higher concern according to the data obtained up to date as it seems that at world level there are discussions about the emergence on the drugs' market of new psychoactive substances, 94 countries reporting this situation. The regions reporting this concerning situation are: Europe, North America, Oceania, South-East Asia, South America and some countries from Africa. The use of these new psychoactive substances turned in very short-time a true global phenomenon, which continues to spread and evolve very quickly which makes even more difficult the fight of international and national bodies against drugs. According to the World Drug Report, in 2013 mention was made of a much higher number of psycho-active substances than in the year 2009, that is in 2009 where counted a total number of 34 new psycho-active substances, and in 2013 their number is of 251 such substances.

New psycho-active substances at global level (year 2013)



[Source: World Drug Report, 2014]

At national level we can mention that drug trafficking takes place mostly under the form of drug selling, as Romania is regarded more as a transit country for many of the biggest drug traffickers. In the case of heroin trafficking, in Romania is found a certain relative maintenance of the drug trafficking activities, aspects that pertain a lot also to the geographic position enjoyed by Romania, the territory of our country being used by criminal groups for heroin transportation from the production areas from

Afghanistan towards Western Europe and, in particular, to the Netherlands and Great Britain.

On the territory of our country, the most spread and, at the same time, the most captured drug is cannabis, the demand for this drug by the consumers' from Romania increasing each year. This cannabis demand increase is due mostly to the decreasing availability of new psycho-active substances on the drugs' market, but also due to the false belief of many consumers that this drug does not create dependency and is not dangerous (both very false assertions). In 2013, on the Romanian territory, according to the official data of specialised bodies, a high number of cannabis crops was registered both indoor and outdoor, many of the consumers cultivating the drug in their flats, houses or hidden among the agricultural cultures: thus were identified 69 illegal cannabis cultures. For instance, in the county Arad, in 2013, was discovered the first industrial cannabis culture, which had as purpose to feed the markets from Germany, the Czech Republic and Hungary.

With respect to the traffic of cocaine on Romania's territory, it could be regarded as a distinct situation as compared with the other situations of drug trafficking that is, this drug is implemented in Europe from South America being at the same time of relatively high concern for the criminal groups at transnational level, that use diversified routes all the time to avoid getting caught. Romania, in such a context remains an alternative by-pass route for introducing cocaine on the territory of Europe, and a frequently used entry point by these groups is Constanta Shipyard which is regarded also as the "main entry gate" for the quantities of cocaine with final destination in various European countries. For instance, the transport of cocaine can be dissimulated as follows: cocaine enters by the naval routes to Romania among other legal loads, and thereafter exits Romania by land routes together with the transport of cars or busses.

The sale of illegal substances is another specific activity to drug trafficking, and at the level of our country the practiced prices maintain limits close to the values, so that according to the data of the National Anti-Drug Agency the prices practiced in the sale of drugs, in 2013, are the following:

- Cannabis/cannabis raisin – retail price of 13.58-18.1 Euro/gram;
- Marijuana – retail price of 9.05-18.1 Euro/gram;
- Heroin – retail price of 33.94-45.26 Euro/gram;
- Cocaine – retail price of 80-120 Euro/gram;
- Ecstasy – the price of a tablet varies between 9.05 and 18.1 Euro;
- LSD – retail price between 18.1 and 33.94 Euro/doses.

Researches in the field of preventing drug consumption focused on explaining the relationship between drug consumption and the interaction of

various risk factors of individual, family and social nature highlight the fact that the development of some consumption methods is not directly related to the force of these factors. The risk factors are circumstances previous to initiating consumption, abuse or problematic drug consumption.

Risk factors are “those characteristics, variables or circumstances that acting in the life of a person contribute to increasing the probability that the respective person develops a behavioural issue, as compared with any other individual in the general population, selected randomly”, such as: economic and social deprivation, disorganisation in the social environment, the lack of emotional family binds, permissive attitudes and behaviours with respect to drug consumption, educational dysfunctions of the family, entourage, school failure, etc.

Conclusions

As result of studying these data about the situation of drug trafficking on the territory of our country, it can be said that Romania is not a country of drug consumption but rather an important transit point with respect to heroin trafficking, belonging to the Balkan route used by drug traffickers, but at the same time Romania started to get more attention from the criminal organisations especially with respect to the activities of cultivating and trafficking cannabis.

With respect to cocaine trafficking, Romania is very often targeted by drug traffickers from Latin America, due to the gate which is the Constanta Shipyard which makes easier the entry to the European territory, so that they are easier able to distribute cocaine on large scale.

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