

Resources on COVID-19 and drug markets

The EMCDDA is producing a series of special reports and briefings on the impact of the [COVID-19](#) pandemic on drug markets. COVID-19 and the related government responses are likely to precipitate impacts that have never been observed before and have therefore not been studied. Currently, there is a lack of data and research to inform the understanding at European and international level on the measures taken by drug producers, traffickers and suppliers, when significant global events cause disruption to the supply chain. Such disruptions can have important implications for patterns of drug use within the EU, the associated health, social and security problems, and for policy and operational responses.

Last updated: 28 May 2020

Overview – assessing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on drug markets

In the context of the recent global events linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, the EMCDDA recognised an urgent need to understand the impact of these developments on drug markets in order to anticipate emerging threats and meet immediate and longer-term data needs for policy-making and operational responses.

As well as improving responses to the current crisis this will also help strengthen our capacity to understand, foresee and forewarn how drug markets react to rapid global changes. Overall, the EMCDDA's objective is to strengthen EU-level preparedness and response to drug market changes. This must be done rapidly and at a time when many of our conventional data collection sources are facing operational difficulties.

[Top of page](#)

EMCDDA publications

The effect of COVID-19 on drug markets in the EU

The effect COVID-19 is having on the EU's largest criminal market is explored in [EU Drug Markets: Impact of COVID-19](#), produced jointly with Europol. The analysis reports higher prices, local shortages and reduced purity for some drugs, while noting continued violence among suppliers and distributors. It also shows how organised crime groups remain active and resilient, by 'adapting transportation models, trafficking routes and concealment methods', even during the pandemic.

The EMCDDA and Europol are working together to improve our understanding of drug market developments under COVID-19 and their impact on internal security and public health in the EU. The findings are based on opinions collected through a targeted EMCDDA online survey of drug experts in the EU Member

States, Europol's operational intelligence gathering on organised crime and structured monitoring of open source information. [Read the accompanying news release](#).

Drug supply via darknet markets

The COVID-19 pandemic has profoundly impacted on our daily lives, including our behaviour as consumers. Just as we have seen online shopping for other goods increase during lockdowns, will we see a similar shift when it comes to illicit drugs? In a special report, [Drug supply via darknet markets](#), we explore whether established methods of drug supply and distribution to consumers have changed during recent restrictions on movement ([read the accompanying news release](#)).

The report analyses activity on three darknet markets (Agartha, Cannazon and Versus) in the first three months of 2020. As the situation is evolving rapidly, the review does not provide a comprehensive overview of the topic but rather preliminary evidence and a snapshot of developments to date.

The EMCDDA and [its partner Europol](#) are working together to produce a broader and more rigorous assessment of the darknet ecosystem. An update of this analysis will offer further insights into how darknet drug sales are impacted by the current pandemic.

[Top of page](#)

Related resources

You may find below some useful resources related to COVID-19 and drug markets.

[Top of page](#)