

## Analysis of the statistical data of illegal trade with narcotic substances in Macedonia in the Period 2005-2012

### (Results of statistical research)

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### Abstract

As a negative phenomenon, drug addiction appears already a big problem in modern world. Narcotic substances have affected the Republic of Macedonia and just like in other countries, every day users have increased.

Today in the world of narcotics abuse has taken a big trend that has initiated a whole chain of criminality, which on one side has increased the number of drug addicts in the search for new amounts of narcotics, and in turn the desire of suppliers to realize the greater profits. Drugs are not the invention of modern man, it is certain that prehistoric people knew them too. The Republic of Macedonia is not a country distinct in the production of drugs, but it is a regional focal point for illegal trade of drugs known as the Balkan route.

In this sense, main purpose of this paper is the analysis of statistical data of illegal trade with narcotic substances in Macedonia during 2005-2012.

**Keywords:** narcotic substances, trade, statistical data, prevention.

### Introduction

The illegal production and smuggling of narcotics represents one of the most organized shapes of organized crime, whose carriers belong to the highest circles of international crime, and in some countries, organizations are closely related to official state bodies. Macedonia is a transit point from East to West. Also the region is not only an important link in the drug supply chain, but it increasingly turns into a consumer market. Despite the lack of accurate data on drug users, where the number is very large indeed, that can help to substantiate this claim, as well as to estimate and quantify these concerns, the Republic of Macedonia (RM), should undertake surveys of potential public drug users, which will be realized in the future with the help of students from the Faculty of Law. Despite numerous criticisms, RM has developed a successful fight against illegal trade of drugs. Certainly this war cannot succeed without international cooperation. In this context it should be mentioned that the cooperation between Macedonia with the German and Austrian police, who conducted to the successful action against organized crime group known as the *Frankfurt Group*, is crucial for war against drugs.

## The Report and analysis on the illegal trade of drugs within period 2005-2012 in Macedonia

In the last decade the government has made a big progress in the fight against drug trafficking, however according to statistical data, illicit drugs transiting through Macedonia had increased, as well as their use. The amount of drugs seized in 2005 dropped to average for some categories of drugs such as heroin and marijuana, but arose in several other categories such as cocaine and psychotropic substances. Macedonia lays in the drug trafficking route from Southeast Asia (through Turkey) to Western Europe. This road also served to provide hashish and marijuana mainly produced in Albania and Turkey, where it is exchanged with heroin, which is then transported to Western European markets. In this year there was an increase in small amounts of marijuana for personal use. Even the trafficking of synthetic drugs in 2005 increased.

According to statistics of the Ministry of Interior Affairs (MIA), in 2005 criminal charges were filed against 283 persons involved in 228 cases of drug trafficking. Regarding the criminal offenses committed in 2005, official statistics MIA, had shown little growth compared to previous years. According to Art. 215 of the Criminal Code, which includes unauthorized production and release of drugs, substances and psychotropic precursors, 292 offenses were reported and 335 offenders were accused. As for the criminal offenses committed under Article 216 which provides the facilitating of the use of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and psychotropic precursors, by statistical data of MIA, 98 criminal offenses were reported.<sup>1</sup>

According to the report of MIA in 2005 the following drugs were seized: 70 kg of heroin, 196 kg of marijuana, 3 kg of hashish, 11 kg of cocaine, (over 100 times higher than in 2004), 3.206 ecstasy tablets (about 300 times higher than in 2004), 107,000 tablets of diazepam, 2 kg of paracetamol mixed with cocaine, 93 hydrochloride morphine ampoules, 2.865 kg of cannabis sativa (6 times higher than in 2004), 2,220 plants and 2.5 kilograms of dry poppy seed.

In 2006 Macedonia suffered some changes in the area of organized crime, namely the prevention of trafficking and abuse of narcotic drugs. The cooperation between MIA and the Organized Crime Unit included a section on combating illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs, that worked to advance and strengthen the intelligence unit and also cooperation with other police officials. Police confiscation, mainly heroin and marijuana, in 2006, were on average higher than in the previous year. A seizure of other drugs, such as cocaine, hashish and other psychotropic substances, was significantly lower. According to the 2006 report of MIA, regarding offenses, offenders, and the amount of narcotic substances seized in 2006, the following substances were seized: 261 offenses regarding unauthorized production and release into circulation of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors; 54 criminal offenses committed under Article 216 of the Criminal Code, which includes facilitating and the use of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors. In total 315 offenses were registered. According to INCR's<sup>2</sup>, Macedonian official statistics regarding drug

<sup>1</sup> Statistical Report of illegal trade with drugs, for 2005. Report of Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2006 [www.mvr.gov.mk](http://www.mvr.gov.mk).

<sup>2</sup> International Narcotics Control Strategy Report", Vol. I, March, 2007, p.434-435.

abuse and drug addiction, had estimated about 7000-8000 users in the country. The most used drugs were marijuana, followed by heroin and then ecstasy. In 2006 there were about 1,000 users of cocaine, that underwent medical treatment in specialized health clinics.

In January 2007, the Macedonian authorities, in cooperation with UNMIK and the DEA seized 450 kg of cocaine which had allegedly originated from Venezuela and was destined to be transported in Greece. In late November, a court in Macedonia sentenced two accused involved in the biggest cocaine seizure and drug trafficking in the country, and both perpetrators were sentenced to 14.5 years in prison each. The most used drug was marijuana, followed by heroin and ecstasy. During the first 10 months of 2007, the Republic of Macedonia has had an increase in illegal trafficking and drug seizures in comparison to the previous year, with 450 kg of cocaine confiscated at the border crossing with the Republic of Kosovo. In this context the Macedonian authorities worked very closely with regional counterparts, including the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), in counter-narcotics operations. Such operations of cooperation in some cases have been hampered because of ineffectiveness and good inter-institutional planning, although there have been some modest improvements in inter-institutional coordination in comparison to last year.

Based on the statistical report of MIA, the quantity of hashish and cocaine caught by the police was significantly higher than that of 2006. Regarding to the period of 2007, MIA statistics included 368 offenses. Drug seizures included 486 kg Cocaine (300 grams less when compared to 2006); Heroin 60 kg (twice less than in 2006); 208 kg marijuana (30% less than in 2006); 4413 cannabis plants seized (an increase of some 142 plants seized and destroyed in comparison to 2006). In 2007, seizures of hashish and cocaine by the police were significantly higher than in 2006.

According to official statistics of MIA, in 2008<sup>3</sup>, 348 criminal offenses were detected under Article 215 of the Criminal Code and 67 offenses were registered under Article 216 of the Criminal Code. In 2008, 415 total offenses were detected. Of the seized drugs marijuana is mostly present with (133 kg), heroin (60 kg), cocaine (93 kg), morphine (12 kg), opium (9 kg), etc. The cooperation with other countries, succeeded with the discovery of four international channels in the drug transport and 56 citizens of the Republic of Macedonia were arrested. In these joint police actions, which are carried out in other countries (Germany, Austria, Croatia, Turkey), a total of 318 kg of heroin and 26 kg cocaine was seized.

In 2009 Macedonia was involved in illicit trafficking of narcotic drugs, which included cases of cultivation of plants which can be obtained in various narcotic drugs. This year marks the fight against drug with high efficiency. The seizure in 2009 included a quantity of 1 ton of drugs, which in comparison with last year (250 kg) marks an increase of four times. The most seized drugs were marijuana (702 kg), heroin (213 kg), opium (15 kg), ecstasy etc. The most used drugs were marijuana, then heroin, etc. From the total of 1,500 prisoners in the main prison in the country, about a quarter of prisoners are drug addicts.

In 2010, the fight against drugs continues to deliver solid results, particularly in the

<sup>3</sup> Statistical Report for 2008, Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2009, [www.mvr.gov.mk](http://www.mvr.gov.mk).

fight against transnational crime. More than 10 international channels passing through the territory of Macedonia were destroyed. During this year a total of 578 criminal offenses were detected, from which 494 offenses under Article 215 of Criminal Code and 84 offenses under Article 216. Against 713 persons, criminal charges have been filed and 27% of them were suspect for the offense of theft.

In 2011, the illegal trade in narcotics continued with approximately the same size as 2010. 481 offenses were committed under Article 215 and 115 offenses committed by Section 216. A total of 596 were recorded offenses. Among these cases, 719 persons were detected. A total of 430 kg of drugs was seized. From this amount, marijuana (286 kg), heroin (23 kg), hashish (112 kg) and others. During 2011, MIA destroyed 8 transnational organizations of organized crime in cooperation with other states and other countries outside of Macedonia, 158 Macedonian citizens were arrested. From these 73% were operating in the territory of Germany and Austria.<sup>4</sup>

In 2012, 604 offenses for illicit trade in drugs were detected. From these, 468 criminal charges were filed under Article 215 and 136 under Article 216. 736 persons were arrested and 846 kg, drug substances were seized. The fight against transnational crime has continued during this year, which resulted with the destruction of 14 channels transporting drugs.<sup>5</sup>

## Conclusions

The Republic of Macedonia is a transit country for the drug trafficking. Therefore often called as the Balkan drug route. Illegal trade in drugs as one of the most profitable ways still represents one of the most "privileged" to get rich, but on the other hand, high unemployment, decline in the standard of living and insufficient involvement of prosecution bodies are causes and factors for illicit drug trafficking.

This affects the geostrategic position of the Republic of Macedonia, which represents many factors in the increase of drug trafficking in the illegal market.

A change in the overall system leads to socio-economic development of the current collapse of the existing system of values and creates conditions for the development and related crime caused by drug abuse.

Macedonia's failure war against drug trafficking are closely connected with inefficiencies of the courts. Practice has proved that the drug trade in the Republic of Macedonia, is present in high quantity and its continued growth is very worrying, because of the failure of customs control and obsolete methods and tools still applied. All this makes the fight against this phenomenon unsuccessful, because the numbers are very worrying. Most of the Macedonian staff working against the drug trafficking are not trained and prepared to face the challenges of combating this negative phenomenon. In addition the staff of the MIA is facing many difficulties regarding the allocation of money for the commitment of associates, drug purchasing, technical means and cars etc. It is therefore necessary the allocation for more funds from the RM budget for the purchase of equipment and technique of forensic tools that will

<sup>4</sup> Statistical Report for 2011, Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2012, [www.mvr.gov.mk](http://www.mvr.gov.mk).

<sup>5</sup> Statistical Report for 2012, Ministry of Internal Affairs, 2013, [www.mvr.gov.mk](http://www.mvr.gov.mk).

help combat drug trafficking.

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