

Drug trafficking is one of the **EMPACT** priorities, Europol's priority crime areas, under the 2018–2021 EU Policy Cycle.

Each year about 22 million users of cannabis spend an estimate EUR 9 billion on the drug, thus making the illicit market for it the largest of its kind in the EU.

The trade in cannabis accounts for around 38 % of the retail market for illicit drugs in the EU, and the drug is thus an important source of revenue for **organised crime groups (OCGs)**. About 1 % of European adults smoke it almost every day, thus increasing the risk of social problems, such as violence and other crimes that impact communities. Less widely recognised are the health problems it causes for some users. There are also health concerns about various innovations that have led to edible products, oils and cannabis preparations for use in vaporisers.

## THE ROLE OF OCGS

OCGs are making use of technological innovations to produce ever-larger quantities of more-potent products in the EU. While the market is dominated by herbal cannabis, and domestically produced herb is displacing imported resin in many countries, still ever-more-potent cannabis resin is also being trafficked from Morocco into the EU alongside other illicit goods as well as people.

OCGs also provide know-how and equipment to other criminal groups that want to start cannabis production. Intensive domestic production sites have not only been linked to violent inter-group crime and to electricity theft but are also associated with human trafficking.

## MEETING CHALLENGES ON MULTIPLE FRONTS

Efforts to interdict both production and trafficking must be strengthened in such areas as the Iberian Peninsula, the Netherlands and Belgium. Best practices must be shared across all areas, including both interdiction and awareness-raising among communities. In particular, strategies are needed to prevent vulnerable young people from becoming involved in the cannabis market, and to make them aware of health repercussions associated with its use.

Improved monitoring of products, production methods and distribution techniques is needed, including those brought about by technical and logistical innovations, while findings on harms such as impacts on public health must be clearly communicated. This is particularly important in the light of licit cannabis product developments in the Americas.

The social, environmental and economic problems underlying cannabis production in the Rif, a mountainous region in northern Morocco, need to be addressed, since they pose risks associated with OCGs, illegal immigration and, possibly, terrorism. There is also a need to engage more broadly with non-EU partners in North Africa and the Middle East to develop a greater understanding of product flows, routes and financing, and to identify potential threats from production and trafficking in other areas, such as Afghanistan and Albania.

NUMBER OF ITEMS FOUND: 41

SEARCH



TYPE

Article/Story, Event, How-To Guide, Landing Page, Multimedia, News/Press Release, Operation, Page, Publication/Document



TARGET GROUP



SEARCH

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17  
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## ALBANIAN-BELGIAN DRUG TRAFFICKERS BUSTED IN BELGIUM AND SWITZERLAND

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21  
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06  
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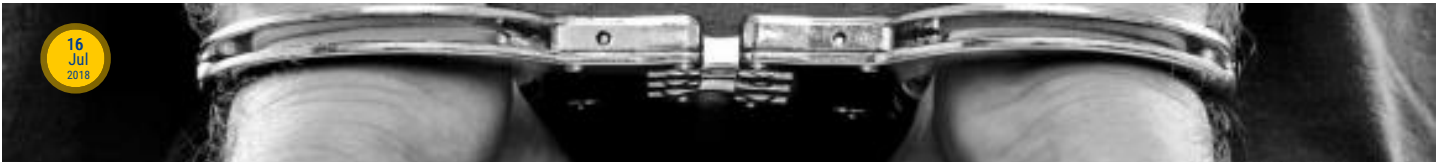
## DRUGS IN EUROPE: A BOLD LAW ENFORCEMENT RESPONSE

EVENT



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