DRUGS AND THE DARKNET: PERSPECTIVES FOR ENFORCEMENT, RESEARCH AND POLICY

Report
Joint Reports

Illicit trade on darknet markets is one manifestation of the increasingly complex nature of transnational organised crime in the European Union (EU). Darknet markets, also known as cryptomarkets, provide a largely anonymous platform for trading in illicit goods and services. Drugs are estimated to account for around two thirds of darknet market activity. Almost any type of drug is accessible to buyers with basic technical understanding within a few clicks, including new psychoactive substances. This development poses a significant threat to the health and security of citizens and communities across the EU.

This report summarises our current understanding of the functioning of darknet markets and outlines potential countermeasures for policymakers and law enforcement professionals engaged in the fight against this phenomenon. Our point of departure is a review of the threat we face in this area, bringing together the latest findings from international research, fresh empirical data, operational information and intelligence. This analysis provides us with the opportunity to identify priority areas for targeted actions, and leads us to the conclusion that Europe needs greater investment and continuous innovation, if we are to keep pace with the challenges we face in this area.

For this report, the EMCDDA and Europol have

combined the latest available data and outlined law enforcement strategies to reduce criminal opportunities in the darknet ecosystem. We present a multidisciplinary analysis of how darknet markets function and how they relate to criminal behaviour. We explore the implications of this for drug control policies, research and monitoring approaches, and law enforcement activities. We would like to particularly acknowledge the input from experts in academia and law enforcement officials, without which this report would not have been possible.

EN Drugs and the darknet: Perspectives for enforcement, research and policy [2.88 MB]

CRIME AREAS   Drug Trafficking • Synthetic Drugs • Cannabis • Cocaine and heroin • Other Drugs • Cybercrime
TARGET GROUPS   General Public • Law Enforcement • Academia • Professor • Students • Researcher •
Press/Journalists • Other
ORGANISATIONS   European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA)

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