
European Monitoring Centre for Drugs: Cannabis Report. General trend is to reduce prison penalties

“The speed, and possible scope of, cannabis policy change and the potential impact of these changes on public health and safety” are among the factors which prompted the EMCDDA to publish the report “Cannabis laws in Europe: questions and answers for policymaking”. Updating a 2017 review, the report describes the state of play of cannabis policies and laws in Europe and current approaches to regulation and control. “The primary focus of the report - a statement reads - is on recreational cannabis use and ongoing developments in this area”. The report outlines some of the recent changes in cannabis policy in Europe. “Over the last 20 years, the general trend in national laws in Europe has been to reduce, or even remove, prison penalties for minor cannabis possession offences. Today, five EU Member States (Czechia, Germany, Luxembourg, Malta and the Netherlands) and Switzerland are introducing, or planning to introduce, new approaches to regulate the supply of cannabis for recreational use”. Complicating an already challenging policy landscape is the fact that cannabis products are becoming increasingly diverse. The report describes how developments are not only taking place in the area of cannabis as a recreational drug, but are also extending to the regulation of cannabis and cannabinoids for industrial, therapeutic, food or cosmetic uses”.

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