

Committee: Council of the European Union (EU)

Issue: Addressing the Phenomenon of Cocaine Capitals within the EU

Student Officer: Loukas Kargiotis

Position: Deputy President

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear delegates,

My name is Loukas Kargiotis, and I am deeply honored and excited to have been given the opportunity to serve as a Deputy President in the Council of the European Union of this year's DSTMUN conference.

First of all, I wish to congratulate all of you for participating in this conference. From past experiences, I am convinced that such a conference is helpful in many ways, on the one hand, you get the chance to broaden your horizons and practice your English skills, and on the other, you get to know new people and have fun.

Our topic is a critical one, as it has been coming under discussion for many years. Nowadays, however, the discussion seems to be at its peak, as the phenomenon of cocaine capitals can play a vital role in our lives in the following years. Thus I expect that we get this chance and make the debate interesting and fruitful.

This study guide should introduce you to the topic, I, thus, encourage you to read it carefully, check the bibliography down below to examine some of the sources yourself, and to furthermore conduct your personal research on the topic for a more detailed notion, that will ensure you are accumulated with the issue to the need extent.

Being a part of the MUN Club and participating in conferences, it has always brought me joy and excitement. I am looking forward to the 6th DSTMUN and meeting you all. I hope that you share the same excitement as me! We will hopefully have an amazing time!

My email address is loukaskargiotis@gmail.com. You are more than welcome to ask me about our topic, this study guide, your country's policy or the rules of procedures of the conference.

Good luck conducting your research and I am looking forward to meeting you all!

Sincerely,

Loukas Kargiotis

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

The cocaine trade in Europe has become a significant concern, with certain cities gaining notoriety as "cocaine capitals." This issue is driven by the complex drug networks connecting Europe with regions like Latin America, resulting in the proliferation of cocaine trafficking and consumption within the European Union (EU). In response to this escalating problem, the EU has formulated policies to address drug-related challenges and mitigate the negative impact of the cocaine trade on public health, safety, and societal well-being.

According to the EU's drugs policy, illicit drug use, particularly cocaine, poses serious threats to member states, including Belgium, Romania, the Netherlands, France, Portugal, and Spain. The trade has contributed to increased crime rates and placed strains on healthcare systems in these countries. To tackle this multifaceted issue, the EU adopts a balanced approach, combining law enforcement measures, demand reduction strategies, and harm reduction initiatives.

Recognizing the transnational nature of the drug trade, the EU emphasizes the need for international cooperation to effectively combat the cocaine problem. This involves close collaboration between European nations and Latin American countries, as the drug trade's roots extend beyond Europe's borders. Joint efforts are required to disrupt the drug supply chain and apprehend traffickers operating across these regions.

However, tackling the cocaine trade proves to be complex and challenging. Criminal groups involved in the drug business are deeply entrenched and employ innovative smuggling methods, making it difficult for law enforcement to fully dismantle their networks. Despite the EU's efforts to implement comprehensive drug policies, concerns persist regarding the social and public health impact of cocaine abuse in these member states. Documentaries have shed light on the devastating

consequences of drug addiction in European communities, highlighting the urgency of prevention, education, and rehabilitation programs to effectively address drug abuse.

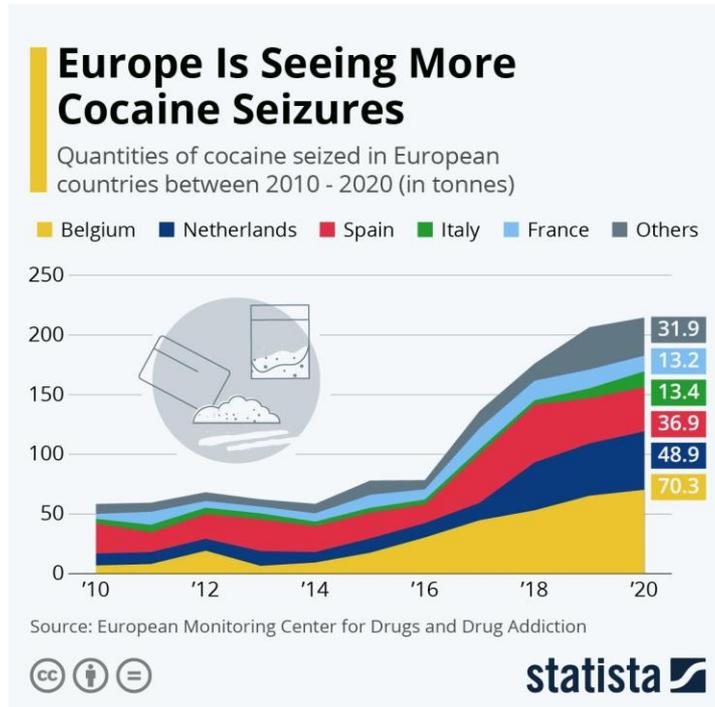


Figure 1: Cocaine Seizures in Europe¹

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Cocaine Capitals

Countries in which cocaine use and trafficking have reached high levels. The most prominent example: Antwerp.

Drug Network

“Also known as county lines, involves organized crime groups extending their drug dealing business from big cities into new areas.”²

Organized Crime

“Criminal activities that are planned and controlled by powerful groups on a large scale”³

¹ Richter, Felix. “Infographic: Climbing the Ladder in the Global Innovation Race.” *Statista Daily Data*, 4 Apr. 2023, <https://cdn.statcdn.com/Infographic/images/normal/27631.jpeg>

² Drug Dealing & Networking | Cambridgeshire Constabulary, www.cambs.police.uk/police-forces/cambridgeshire-constabulary/areas/campaigns/drug-dealing/.

³ Organized Crime | Definition, Types & Examples - Study.Com, study.com/learn/lesson/organized-crime-groups-history-examples-what-is-organized-crime.html.

Drug Addiction

“A chronic, relapsing disorder characterized by compulsive drug seeking and use despite adverse consequences.”⁴

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Cocaine Production and Trafficking

The production of cocaine primarily occurs in Latin American countries, with Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia being the major producers. These regions provide the raw coca leaves, which are then processed into cocaine hydrochloride and cocaine base. Organized crime groups, notably drug cartels, play a significant role in trafficking cocaine into Europe, utilizing various routes, either by air or sea, -such as the Caribbean, where the Dominican Republic and Jamaica are considered the main hubs, although operations elsewhere appear to have pushed some trafficking through the eastern Caribbean, and the West African mainland and neighboring islands, Cape Verde, Madeira and the Canary Islands- and methods to smuggle the illicit substance. One of these methods is the maritime transport which allows the transportation of large quantities at one time, and over two-thirds of EU seizures in the period 2011-13 involved this form. In addition, smaller private boats are able to bring in large quantities of cocaine in single shipments, entering Europe at many points; in September 2014 for example, a private yacht carrying a tonne of cocaine that had been picked up in Venezuela was intercepted off the coast of Ireland. Cocaine trafficking by air involves individual couriers, air freight abroad commercial flights and the use of private aircraft. However, compared with maritime shipments, the quantity transported by air is generally smaller, although the number of seizures of cocaine transported in this way is high, and this mode of transport does have the effect of spreading the risk for traffickers. Couriers transport cocaine on commercial flights, whether internally, in their baggage, or, less frequently, on their body. Some

⁴ “Drug Misuse and Addiction.” National Institutes of Health, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 13 July 2020, nida.nih.gov/publications/drugs-brains-behavior-science-addiction/drug-misuse-addiction.

concealment methods, such as the use of cocaine incorporated into breast implants, involve surgical procedures on cocaine couriers and pose significant risks to their lives.

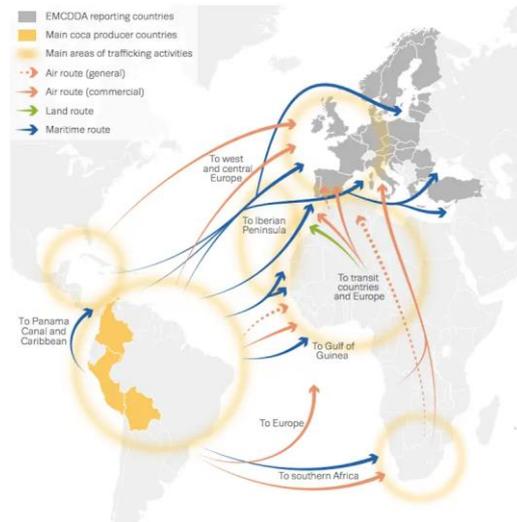


Figure 2: Cocaine trafficking routes towards Europe⁵

Cocaine Consumption and Prevalence

Cocaine is the most consumed stimulant drug in Europe, with a retail market value estimated by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) to be about 5.7 billion € a year. It is also estimated that approximately 91 tons of cocaine are consumed in Europe every year. This was proven in July of 2023 in Rotterdam, where almost 3600 kilograms of cocaine were found hidden in a shipment from Ecuador. Additionally, efforts by the Dutch military led to the seizure of another 2 tons of drugs. The Navy and the Coast Guard crews working on the Zr. Ms. Groningen, a Holland-class patrol ship, intercepted drug shipments in the Caribbean Sea, including a batch of cocaine and another of cannabis.

In 2014 about 78000 seizures of cocaine were reported in the European Union (EU), yielding an estimated 61.6 tons of the drug. The situation has been relatively stable since 2010, although both the numbers of seizures and the volume seized are at levels considerably lower than the peak values reached in the mid to late 2000s.

Reasons Behind the Creation of Cocaine Capitals

Cities such as Antwerp in Belgium, Rotterdam in the Netherlands, and Barcelona in Spain have been identified as prominent cocaine capitals due to geographical and legislative factors. Antwerp's strategic location and one of Europe's largest ports have made it a key entry point for drug shipments, leading to the establishment of a thriving drug market within the city. Similarly, Rotterdam's extensive port infrastructure and connections have made it attractive for drug traffickers. Barcelona's position along the Mediterranean coast has also made it a

⁵ 2016-05-06T20:36:00Z. "Welcome to Insider." Insider, 24 Oct. 2019, www.insider.com/about.

significant entry point for drug shipments, leading to the establishment of a robust drug market in the city and its surroundings.

Amsterdam in the Netherlands and Paris in France have also faced challenges as drug capitals due to various factors. Amsterdam's lenient drug policies have inadvertently facilitated the circulation of drugs, including cocaine, attracting drug tourists seeking easy access to substances. Paris, as a major European capital, has been affected by drug trafficking and consumption.

Social and Economic Impact

The widespread consumption of cocaine has severe social and economic consequences for European societies. Drug abuse is often associated with increased crime rates, putting pressure on law enforcement and judicial systems. This issue is illustrated in Antwerp, a major port city in Belgium. Being one of the largest and busiest ports in Europe, has become a significant gateway for drug trafficking. The flood of cocaine into Antwerp has attracted organized crime groups involved in drug trafficking. The complex and well-organized networks make it challenging for law enforcement to intercept and dismantle these operations. Once cocaine reaches Antwerp, it is distributed to various local dealers and, eventually, end-users. The presence of numerous drug dealers contributes to increased street-level crime, as rival gangs might clash over territory or engage in violent activities to protect their interests. In addition, cocaine addiction can lead individuals to commit crimes to sustain their drug habit. Addicts may resort to theft, robbery, or other illegal activities to obtain money to buy cocaine. Cocaine abuse does not only affect individuals, but also has a broader public health impact. Increased drug use can lead to health crises, including overdose deaths and the spread of infectious diseases through shared needles among drug users. The strain on social services and healthcare facilities is significant with drug-related cases placing an additional burden on public resources. Furthermore, drug trafficking is linked to money laundering that can negatively impact the economy, since criminals attempt to legitimize their gains through various means, making it challenging for authorities to trace and seize the proceeds of drug trafficking.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

Belgium

Belgium has been identified as a significant player in the cocaine trade due to its strategic location in Europe. Moreover, Antwerp, a city in Belgium, is the biggest consumer of cocaine in Europe, at an average of 2381 milligrams per 1000 people per day. Furthermore, almost 110 tons of cocaine were seized in the city's port in 2022. The port's extensive shipping connections and high cargo volume make it an attractive

transit point for drug traffickers looking to transport large quantities of cocaine and other illicit substances.

Cocaine trafficking in Belgium has significant cultural and economic implications. The drug's high consumption, the country's strategic location, and a bustling port attract drug traffickers. This illicit trade fuels organized crime networks, impacting societal well-being and challenging law enforcement efforts due to the time and personnel needed for the trials of drug dealers, while also generating substantial profits for traffickers.

Netherlands

A recent study held by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) indicated that the country remains a cocaine capital in Europe. The study focused on analyzing wastewater, revealing high levels of cocaine consumption in the nation.

Furthermore, the Netherlands is a state, in which drug consumption is high due to the "Dutch Drug Tolerance Policy". Under this policy, the possession, production, and sale of drugs, including cocaine, remain illegal. However, the Dutch authorities have adopted a more tolerant stance towards the possession of small quantities of drugs for personal use.

Last but not least, the geographical position of the Netherlands plays a vital role in the cocaine trade, as the nation is located by the Atlantic ocean, making it easy for traffickers from South and North America to smuggle the illegal substance into the country via its numerous ports.

France

The cocaine trade is rapidly expanding in Europe, with France experiencing a significant increase in its prevalence. The country has become a prominent hub for cocaine trafficking and consumption, especially in cities such as Le Havre, Dunkerque and Marseille, reflecting the broader challenge of drug-related issues in the region.

Cocaine trafficking in Marseille has been an issue for several decades. The city's geographical location along the Mediterranean coast makes it a strategic point for drug smuggling into Europe. The trafficking of cocaine, along with other illegal drugs, has been a longstanding problem, and its history can be traced back to at least the 1960s.

In addition, children are also being drawn into the heart of the conflict. Criminal organizations are exploiting vulnerable youth in the city, involving them in the drug trade and exposing them to violence and danger. The situation underscores

the severity and complexity of the drug trafficking issue in Marseille, highlighting the urgent need for comprehensive measures to tackle the problem and protect the civilians from its devastating consequences.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

The UNODC plays a crucial role in addressing drug-related issues globally, including cocaine trafficking. In the context of the EU, the UNODC collaborates with European law enforcement agencies and member states to provide expertise, technical assistance, and capacity-building initiatives to combat drug trafficking and its associated challenges. The UNODC also assists in strengthening the legal and criminal justice systems in affected countries to better prosecute drug traffickers and dismantle criminal networks.

Additionally, the UNODC works towards promoting international cooperation, data exchange, and information sharing among law enforcement agencies, such as Europol and Eurojust, to disrupt and prevent the flow of cocaine and other drug within and through the EU, by measures such as monitoring and providing data on drug trends, consumption patterns, and trafficking routes, and working with EU governments and civil society to raise awareness about the dangers of drug abuse.

European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA)

The EMCDDA collects and assesses data on drug use, production, and trafficking, including cocaine. Through its research and analysis, the EMCDDA identifies trends and emerging issues related to cocaine trafficking and its impact on different regions within the EU.

The agency also works closely with EU member states, law enforcement agencies, and other stakeholders to provide evidence-based policy recommendations and strategic responses to address drug-related challenges. This includes identifying the so-called cocaine capitals, and proposing measures to combat the drug trade and protect vulnerable communities.

Furthermore, the EMCDDA facilitates information exchange and cooperation between EU member states to enhance the understanding of drug markets and develop joint approaches to tackle drug trafficking, including cocaine, at the regional and international levels. By fulfilling its role as the EU's drug information hub, the EMCDDA contributes to a coordinated response to the issue of cocaine trafficking in the EU.

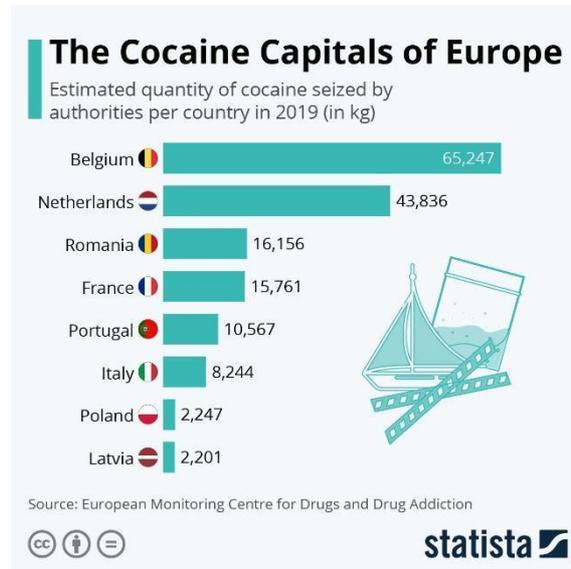


Figure 3: Estimated quantity of cocaine seized by authorities.⁶

BLOCS EXPECTED

Bloc A

Nations in which cocaine trafficking and consumption rates are higher than average and are directly influenced by cocaine capitals, such as the Netherlands, France and Belgium.

Bloc B

Nations that are less influenced by the issue, yet are still seeking for a way to address it, such as but not limited to Hungary, Austria and Finland.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

⁶ Zandt, Florian, and Felix Richter. "Infographic: The Cocaine Capitals of Europe." Statista Daily Data, 30 Mar. 2023, www.statista.com/chart/26213/estimated-quantity-of-cocaine-seized-by-authorities-per-country/.

Date	Description of event
1961	Creation of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs
1971	Creation of the Convention on Psychotropic Substances
1981	Establishment of the Schengen Agreement
1995	Creation of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA)
1997	Establishment of the United Nation Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
1997	Dutch Drug Tolerance Policy
2022	Seizure of a summary of 110 tons of cocaine in Antwerp, Belgium
2023	Seizure of Cocaine In Rotterdam, Netherlands

RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

EU Drug Strategy

The presence of cocaine capitals in Europe calls for a coordinated and multi-dimensional response from all member states. The European Union's drugs policy seeks to strike a balance between law enforcement, demand reduction, and harm reduction strategies to address the challenges posed by the cocaine trade in these countries. Through international cooperation and concerted efforts, the EU attempts to combat the cocaine problem and safeguard the well-being of its citizens from the perils of drug abuse.

Schengen Agreement

Established in 1985, the Schengen Agreement is an agreement within the European Union. Its aim is to create a zone, where internal borders are eliminated, allowing the free movement of people across the Member States. The so-called Schengen Area enhances law enforcement cooperation and information sharing to

combat cross-border crime. While the Schengen Agreement has undoubtedly contributed to combating drug-related issues, such as cocaine trafficking, its impact on directly decreasing cocaine capitals is challenging to specify.

The Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs

The Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961) is a crucial international treaty aimed at combating drug abuse, including cocaine, and limiting its production, distribution, and consumption. It has displayed a significant role in facilitating international cooperation and coordination among countries to address drug-related challenges. The Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs has provided a basis for countries to implement effective drug control measures and adopt legal frameworks to address drug-related issues.

The Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971)

The Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971) has been instrumental in controlling the production, trade and use of psychotropic drugs, including cocaine. By establishing international controls on these substances, the treaty has helped curb their abuse and prevent the emergence of widespread addiction and related health issues. The treaty's provisions have facilitated cooperation among countries, leading to improved monitoring of drug movements and better law enforcement efforts against illicit trafficking.

Policy and Legal Framework

European countries have developed various drug policies and legal frameworks to address the cocaine trade. The EU emphasizes a balanced approach that includes law enforcement measures, demand reduction strategies, and harm reduction initiatives. However, the effectiveness of these policies remains a subject of evaluation, and there is a constant need to adapt and improve strategies to effectively tackle the challenges posed by cocaine capitals in the European Union.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

Cocaine Seizures within the European Union

In June of 2021, the Dutch police seized 28 tons of cocaine at a makeshift warehouse in the city of Almere. The operation resulted in one of the biggest cocaine busts in the countries' history.

The police raid occurred following a long-running investigation into a criminal network involved in cocaine trafficking. The authorities' successful operation dealt with a significant blow to the drug trade, disrupting the supply chain and dealing a heavy blow to the criminal organization behind it. The seizure highlights the ongoing

efforts of law enforcement agencies to combat drug trafficking in the region and underscores the Netherlands' role as a transit point for illegal drug shipments destined for various parts of Europe.

Moreover, in June of 2023, Spanish authorities made a significant cocaine seizure, finding 6.5 tons of the drug hidden inside banana shipments. The operation occurred at the Port of Algeciras in Spain and was carried out by the Spanish Customs Surveillance Service.

The authorities discovered the massive cocaine haul during a routine inspection of containers carrying bananas. The illegal drugs were concealed within the fruit shipment, indicating the use of sophisticated smuggling techniques by criminal organizations involved in drug trafficking.

The seizure is one of the largest ever in Spain and highlights the continued efforts of law enforcement agencies to combat drug smuggling activities in their country and across Europe. The successful interception disrupted a major drug trafficking operation, preventing the illicit narcotics from reaching their intended destination.

Last but not least, in July of the same year, Italian police made a record-breaking cocaine seizure, confiscating 5 tons of the illegal drug near Sicily. The operation took place in international waters in the Mediterranean Sea, and the Italian financial police, along with customs and the Navy, were involved in the successful interception.

The cocaine was found on board a vessel intercepted during a maritime operation. This significant seizure represents one of the largest amounts of cocaine ever made in Italy.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Focus on Prevention and Treatment

Investing in prevention and treatment programs is a critical aspect of any comprehensive strategy to combat cocaine consumption and drug abuse. Prevention efforts focus on raising awareness about the risks and dangers of drug use, particularly among vulnerable populations such as adolescents. Targeted awareness campaigns can educate individuals about the adverse health effects of cocaine and its potential consequences on personal, social, and professional life. Moreover, prevention programs can equip individuals with effective coping skills and resilience-building strategies to resist peer pressure and make informed choices.

International Cooperation and Partnership

Strengthening international cooperation with countries in Latin America and other regions known for drug production is crucial to disrupt the cocaine supply chain at its source. Sharing intelligence and conducting joint operations enhance counter-narcotic efforts, while collaboration with key stakeholders and international organizations fosters a unified approach. By addressing challenges posed by the global drug trade, this cooperation reduces the flow of illicit drugs, making significant strides in combating cocaine trafficking and related criminal networks.

Strategic Use of Technology

Utilizing advanced technology, such as data analytics and artificial intelligence, can enhance law enforcement's capabilities to detect and prevent drug trafficking. Technology can help track illicit financial transactions and identify patterns of criminal behavior. This advanced approach empowers the fight against drug trade and organized crime, enabling quicker responses and targeted interventions. Leveraging sophisticated tools allows for better resource allocation and real-time insights, enhancing the effectiveness of counter-narcotic efforts. Moreover, technology aids in dismantling drug networks and apprehending key players involved in the illegal drug trade, contributing to safer communities and a more comprehensive approach to drug control.

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