

# Summary

## Illicit Drug Offences Specified

The Research and Documentation Centre of the Ministry of Security and Justice provides a contribution to the Annual Report of the National Drug Monitor (NDM). In the Section Drug-related Crime numbers and figures are reported about illicit drug cases registered by the police, the Public Prosecution Service and the judiciary on the basis of national registrations. The information presented gives a rough overview of illicit drug cases. The RDC has ordered an update and a more detailed research of the illicit drug cases registered in the reference year 2004 conducted by Jacobs (2007). This time 2012 is the reference year. This present report is the result of this study.

The research question is threefold and focuses on the following questions:

1. Which types of illicit drugs and what types of offence are registered by the police as drug offences in the Netherlands in the year 2012?
2. What are the characteristics of these offences in the various drug cases?
3. What are the characteristics of suspects in relation to the type of offence?

Files relating to registered drug offences of the National Police and the Royal Military Police were studied. The data relate to the year 2012 and contain information on the drug offence and the suspects. The file of the Royal Military Police (RMP) also contains information about the drugs seized (type and quantity). This information could only be partially achieved from police files. Additionally, Crime Register data are requested to understand the criminal career of the suspects.

Drug offences registered by the police are divided in six subcategories: possessing, trading and manufacturing of hard and soft drugs. The drug cases registered by the RMP are mainly related to smuggling of drugs and there is a distinction made in cases of swallowers, soft drugs cases, (post) shipments without consignee and other drug cases.

In addition to the analysis of the police and RMP files a sample of drugs reports has been studied. In total 1,019 drug offences have studied in detail: 909 registered by the police and 110 registered by the RMP. The files are selected based on a stratified sample. The six subcategories listed above have been used as strata.

### Type of drug and type of offence

There are a total of over 9,500 cases registered on hard drugs offences and over 12,000 cases relating to soft drugs offences involving one or more suspects. A case is not equal to the seizure of one type of illicit drugs; there is not always a seizure and sometimes several types of drugs are seized. Possession of hard drugs counts for 62 percent of the registered hard drug cases. It is clear that the police and definitely the RMP encounter most often cocaine. About half of all

hard drugs seizures are related to cocaine. Synthetic drugs like ecstasy and amphetamines sign for a quarter to a third of the hard drug cases. Opiates (heroin), GHB and other hard drugs are responsible for a quarter to a sixth of the hard drugs seizures by the police and the RMP. The general distribution is different for the separate drug offences: possession, trading, smuggling and production. Detected smuggling is almost exclusively about cocaine; intercepted by Customs Service officers of the airport Schiphol (near Amsterdam) and RMP officers elsewhere in the country. Production of hard drugs is about synthetic drugs. For possession and small-scale trade the distribution is more diverse.

The soft drug cases the sized drugs are almost exclusively cannabis products. Dutch cannabis and hemp plants predominate with three quarters of the seizures. Twenty percent is accounted for foreign hashish and marijuana. Almost half of the soft drug issues relate to the cultivation of hemp. Also a large number of cases (38 percent) refer to the possession of cannabis.

### **Detection, geographical and temporal distribution**

Detection of possession of drugs ( both hard and soft drugs ) is more often the result of non-targeted detection than targeted control, while all other drugs issues mainly come to light through targeted search. Controls of Customs play a crucial role in trafficking while with the discovery of drug production and hemp growth tips from citizens are the most important factor.

Police register proportionally (per 100,000 population), most drug offences in the South of the Netherlands: the provinces of Limburg and North Brabant. Nearly three out of four drug cases recorded by RMP come from Schiphol. The border crossing in the port of IJmuiden (ferry to Newcastle) scores after Schiphol highest in RMP cases.

In addition to geographic distribution, there is also temporal distribution. Police are recording fewer drug cases in the month of December. In the summer months, more drug trafficking cases are recorded, but fewer hemp cases.

### **Quantities of drugs seized**

The study provides no basis for an exact calculation of the quantity of drugs taken by the police in the Netherlands. The quantity of seized hard drugs is in police records often expressed in terms of wrappers, pills or pellets. For our study, we recalculated these units in so called ‘small amounts for personal use’, analogous to the Opium Act Directive of the PPS. Also, the definition of the term ‘small amount for personal use’ is derived of this Directive. Nearly one in five seizures of hard drugs is characterized as ‘small amount for personal use’. For soft drugs this is the case in more than half of the seizures.

With smuggling by swallowers on average 0.75 kilo of cocaine is seized by the RMP. The average amount of other methods to smuggle cocaine in the Netherlands – such as through the body packers or in (hand) luggage – provides an average catch of 2.5 kilos of cocaine. In total, approximately 1,500 kilos of cocaine has been seized by the RMP in 2012. The amount of soft drugs seized in smuggling cases, detected by RMP, remains at 69 percent of cases within the

low investigation priority limit of five grams. In 95 percent of all cases no more than thirty grams of soft drugs seized.

The production of hard drugs is mostly related to synthetic drugs and often equipment and/or chemicals (precursors) are found and no seizures of drugs are registered. In the cultivation of hemp (cannabis) in average 320 plants per plantation is seized.

### **Drug trading**

With regard to drug trading, both the trade of hard drugs and the trade of soft drugs, are almost exclusively related to retail. With the term 'retail' we refer to a situation in which drugs are sold to users directly. This might be caused to the fact that there will be more retailers than large scale traders and retail sales are sometimes more visible than large scale sales.

A distinction can be made between three main types of retail outlets: in the streets, through a mobile phone (on order) and in a pusher house. Based on the studied police files, we can conclude that most of the trade is to qualify as street trading; in particular in case of soft drugs. This could also be due to the fact that the most street deals are most visible and leads thereby possibly to earlier detection. The analysis of the files further suggests that pusher houses are involved more often in hard drug deals than in soft drugs deals.

### **Drug trafficking**

The study of RMP files was limited to drug swallows and so called 'other drug cases'. Most of the files are related to smuggling of cocaine through Schiphol. Not surprisingly, the countries of origin are South American countries, especially those who traditionally have a relationship with the Netherlands: the Dutch Antilles and Suriname. The registered country of destination is, despite a few exceptions, the Netherlands. The soft drug cases of the RMP are not involved in the file study. However, we can draw the conclusion based on register data that the vast majority of these cases concern export of soft drugs. There is a significant group that is caught with a 'small amount for personal use' of cannabis at Schiphol. These passengers are flying from Schiphol. Furthermore, almost a quarter of the cases is recorded in the port of IJmuiden, where especially British citizens take the boat to Newcastle.

### **Drug production / hemp cultivation**

The Opium Act Directive of the PPS defines when cultivation of hemp is considered as a commercial business. The study of files revealed that in 94 percent of the cases of cannabis cultivation may be seen as commercial cultivation. As regards hard drugs we read in the files that the production of GHB is sometimes rather amateurish (pan on the stove). Production takes place particularly in private homes. This applies even more to the cultivation of hemp. More than a quarter of the production of synthetic drugs takes place in a special laboratory. At eleven percent of hard drug locations and nearly a quarter of the hemp locations there is danger for fire according to the police files.

### **Profile of the suspects**

Suspects of drug offences are usually men, although also women are registered as suspects of cocaine smuggling. There are relatively many suspects of possession of soft drugs from the neighbouring countries Germany, Belgium and France . Dutch with a Moroccan background (double nationality) are strongly represented among the registered drug dealers (both hard and soft drugs), while cocaine trafficking is mainly a matter of Antilleans and Surinamese. In the smuggling of limited amounts of cannabis for personal use are relatively many British suspects are involved.

Mainly young adults are involved in possession and smuggling of small amounts of cannabis for personal use. The retail traders of cannabis products, however, are in their late twenties, while the mode in the age distribution among growers is late thirties. Also mainly young adults are involved in possession and dealing of hard drugs, while smuggling cocaine is accounted for by persons aged mid-twenties to mid-thirties. In the production of hard drugs there are relatively many suspects who are in their early thirties.

The Crime Register records show that more than forty percent of all suspects qualify as a first offender. Suspects recorded by the RMP (smugglers) are more often first offender; in eighty percent of the cases. About one in six police suspects can be characterized as a high volume offender; defined as persons with more than ten offences recorded in their name whereas none of the RMP suspects appears to have the label of high volume offender.

