

SUMMARY

Mennes, R., J. Snippe, M. Sijstra, B. Bieleman (2016)

Monitor ontwikkelingen coffeeshopbeleid. Meting 2015. WODC / St. INTRAVAL, Den Haag/ Groningen-Rotterdam.

Research and advice bureau INTRAVAL has performed the second measurement over 2015 of the monitor following the developments in coffee shop policy. This measurement is commissioned by the Research and Documentation Centre (WODC) of the Netherlands Ministry of Security and Justice. The monitor consists of three measurements in total, which the Ministry of Security and Justice will use to map the developments of the coffee shop policy in 2014, 2015 and 2016.

National and regional data from the Police and the Public Prosecution Service (OM) were obtained and analysed. In addition, 83 local experts were consulted in a sample of 31 municipalities from 11 judicial regions throughout the Netherlands: 37 local officials and 46 police officials. The experts answered questions about the coffee shop policy, coffee shop tourism, soft drugs tourism, the nuisance around coffee shops and illegal soft drugs and hard drugs sales. In total, they have completed 67 questionnaires. The results of the second measurement over 2015 have been compared with the results of the first measurement over 2014.

Coffee shop tourism

Coffee shop tourism occurs in more than half (18 of 31) of the municipalities involved. According to the experts consulted, it concerns a few to (quite) a lot of non-residents visiting the coffee shops in the municipality. These tourists mainly visit municipalities in the east and south of the country, along the border. In addition, municipalities with high cultural-historic values and major events that attract foreign tourists, are known to have more coffee shop tourism.

Compared to 2014, the extent of coffee shop tourism has increased slightly. In eight of the 31 municipalities, the experts report an increase, while in one municipality there are signs of a decrease. In 18 municipalities there has been no change. In four municipalities this development cannot be determined. The increase especially occurs where the Residents Criterion was never actively enforced. It seems as if the introduction of the Residents Criterion initially led to a 'shock effect' which is now slowly fading.

Soft drugs tourism

The phenomenon of soft drugs tourism occurs in less municipalities than coffee shop tourism, according to the experts. Experts of more than half of the municipalities (17 of 31) indicate that there is hardly any or no soft drugs tourism. In the 14 municipalities where soft drugs tourism does occur, it mainly concerns Belgians and Germans who buy soft drugs outside the coffee shop. Migrant workers from Poland and other Eastern European countries also buy soft drugs outside the coffee shop every now and then.

In comparison with 2014, most municipalities saw little change in the extent of the soft drugs tourism in 2015. Expert from most of the municipalities (20 of 31) reported no change. Soft drugs tourism has declined somewhat in a few municipalities along the borders. This might be because foreign coffee shop visitors avoid these municipalities thinking that the Residents Criterion is actively enforced. In order to buy soft drugs they look for alternative municipalities where they think they are allowed into the coffee shop.

Soft drugs related nuisance

In 21 (of 31) municipalities there is little to no soft drugs related nuisance in 2015. The nuisance level seems to have diminished slightly compared to 2014. The experts attribute the decline mainly to targeted actions by municipality and police. On the other hand citizens did not make less reports of alcohol and drugs related nuisance incidents in 2015 compared to 2014. The number of registered soft drugs incidents with the police however is lower in 2015 than in 2014, while almost nothing has changed in the number of registered hard drugs incidents. Several experts noted that soft drugs incidents had a low(er) priority in their municipalities in 2015. The data show that there is a positive correlation between the monthly number of nuisance and hard drugs incidents in both 2014 and 2015. This correlation is not found between soft drugs and nuisance incidents, or between soft drugs and hard drugs incidents.

Illegal sales

Illegal sales of soft drugs take place in almost all municipalities, and various forms are reported. In large municipalities in the regions of Amsterdam and Rotterdam and three municipalities in the border area in the east of the Netherlands, illegal sales occur (very) frequently and in various forms. Experts indicate that the municipalities in the southern regions have experienced fewer illegal sales in 2015. They also report fewer sales forms. In 2014 these regions scored above average. The fact that dealers from the Randstad, previously active in Limburg, are now active in the three municipalities in the east of the Netherlands, may indicate a relocation effect.

Prevention of street trade by drugs runners and dealers in a municipality in combination with upholding the Residents Criterion or not, leads to various developments in municipalities. Experts from some municipalities indicate that the street trade has declined since the enforcement of the Residents Criterion, whereas experts in municipalities where the criterion is not (actively) enforced, also indicate that the street trade has declined. The presence of street trade appears not to be solely dependent on (changes in) the coffee shop policy. The local situation and historical components possibly also play a role.

In-depth study

The significance of local solutions and the relocation effect will be further investigated in the in-depth study which we will perform in the municipalities where the developments are most evident. By performing various on-site research activities, the findings above can be further characterized and interpreted.