



SUMMARY

Mennes, R., I. Schoonbeek, R. Pieper, B. Bieleman (2020)

Monitor ontwikkelingen coffeeshopbeleid. Meting 2018. WODC / Breuer&Intraval, Den Haag / Groningen-Rotterdam

Research and advice bureau Breuer&Intraval has performed the fifth measurement over 2018 of the monitor following the developments in coffee shop policy. This measurement is commissioned by the Research and Documentation Centre (WODC) of the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security. The Ministry will use this measurement to identify, map and follow the developments of the coffee shop and soft drug policy in the period 2014 up to and including 2018.

National and regional figures from the Police and the Public Prosecution Service (OM) were obtained and analysed. In addition, 62 local experts were consulted in a sample of 31 municipalities from 11 judicial regions throughout the Netherlands: 31 local officials and 31 police officials. These experts answered questions about coffee shop policy in their municipality, coffee shop tourism, soft drug tourism, illegal sales and the situation around coffee shops. Where possible, the results of this measurement were compared with the results of the four measurements from 2014 up to and including 2017. In addition, this measurement included a similar questionnaire that was presented to coffee shop owners and employees in the sample municipalities. In total, 75 coffee shop owners or employees from 21 sample municipalities have completed the questionnaire.

Soft drug incidents

The slight decline in the number of registered soft drug incidents, which has been recorded since 2014, appears to continue in 2018. In the Zeeland-West-Brabant region, the number of registered soft drug incidents is highest throughout the year. In 2018, this region, together with the eastern Netherlands (along the border) and central Netherlands, shows a slight increase of incidents. For all five research years the number of soft drug incidents is lower than the number of registered hard drug incidents.

Coffee shop and soft drug tourism

Coffee shop tourism (non-residents buying hash/weed in coffee shops) occurs in four-fifths (24 out of 29¹) of the sample municipalities. In only a few of these municipalities this form of tourism causes significant nuisance. In addition, more than a third (11 out of 29) of the sample municipalities have a lot of coffee shop tourism. Some of these municipalities already attract many tourists, who also visit the coffee shops. The other municipalities are located in border regions and do not actively uphold the Residents Criterion (I-criterion), giving tourists access to the coffee shops.

¹ Where coffee shop tourism is concerned, there are two of the 31 municipalities in which there is no insight into the situation regarding this phenomenon. For soft drug tourism and illegal sales this is the case in respectively two and 11 of the 31 municipalities.



Local experts have limited knowledge of whether and to what extent soft drug tourism (the purchase of soft drugs - not hard drugs - by non-residents outside the coffee shop) occurs in their municipality. In two-thirds (14 out of 20) of the municipalities where the experts do have insight into soft drug tourism, they believe it does occur. According to the coffee shop owners and employees who have insight into soft drug tourism, soft drug tourism occurs in about a third of the municipalities.

Situation around coffee shops

Problems in the area around coffee shops seem to occur to a limited extent. In over two-thirds (21 out of 31) of the sample municipalities, there are no nuisance incidents concerning coffee shops according to local experts. In other municipalities these incidents occur to a limited extent. Problems around coffee shops are mainly caused by traffic congestion, parking problems, and people loitering around. The majority of the coffee shops (60 out of 75) take their own measures to prevent nuisance in the vicinity of the shop. They often cooperate with other parties such as the police, the municipality and neighbours.

Illegal sales

The number of municipalities where illegal drug sales occur, seems to have stabilised in the past year, according to local experts. In almost all (25 out of 29) of the municipalities, illegal drug sales take place to a greater or lesser extent. In about a quarter (5 out of 20) of the sample municipalities, coffee shop owners and employees indicate that illegal sales take place in the vicinity of their coffee shop, while in the other sample municipalities respondents indicate that this does not take place or barely occurs in the direct vicinity of the coffee shop.

Conclusions

All in all, we note that the situation around coffee shops in the 31 municipalities appears to be manageable in the calendar year we examined, 2018. Even when looking at the developments regarding the various measurements (2014 up to and including 2018), in general no significant developments have occurred. Coffee shop tourism is the most constant of all the phenomena studied, both in terms of national and regional developments. This "limited local phenomenon" has often occurred in the same municipalities for years. Other municipalities have not or have hardly had to deal with this phenomenon for years.

The situation with regard to illegal sales can be considered worrying. There is little insight into this phenomenon and local experts - especially police officers - who are intensively involved in the subject, indicate that illegal sellers seem to be getting more inventive. There are signs that more and more these illegal sellers are working via the internet. This possible transition to less visible forms of drug trafficking could lead to a diminished grip on the illegal sales of soft drugs and a stronger confluence with the illegal market for hard drugs.