



COCAINE AND HEROIN TRAFFICKING TO EUROPE: CAUSES AND CONSEQUENCES

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ABSTRACT

Drug trafficking is an issue that needs to be addressed in both human, social and security contexts and depends on many different variables. The study analyzed the issue of drug trafficking in the European context, focusing only on heroin and cocaine, rather than all substances in general. By describing the morphology of drug trafficking in general, the study analyses the volume of cocaine and heroin trafficking into Europe by examining the functions and situations of these elements in the European context. In the course of the research, rather than the normative perspective of Europe to prevent drug trafficking, the European position and its impact on the cocaine and heroin trade, the reasons for the differences in the prices of these drugs and both the social and individual consequences of drug use were emphasized.

Key Words: Drug Trafficking, Europe's Situation in Cocaine/Heroin Trade, Public Expenditure, Drug Prices

AVRUPA'YA KOKAİN VE EROİN KAÇAKÇILIĞI: SEBEPLER VE SONUÇLAR

ÖZET

Uyuşturucu ticareti, hem insani hem toplumsal hem de güvenlik bağlamlarında ele alınması gereken ve birçok farklı değişkene bağlı olan bir konudur. Çalışma, uyuşturucu ticareti konusunu, tüm maddeler genelinden çıkararak sadece eroin ve kokain özelinde ve Avrupa bağlamında incelemiştir. Çalışma, genel olarak uyuşturucu ticaretinin morfolojisini anlatarak, bu unsurların Avrupa bağlamındaki işlevleri ve durumları inceleyerek, Avrupa'ya olan kokain ve eroin ticaretinin hacmini incelemiştir. Araştırma sürecinde Avrupa'nın uyuşturucu ticaretini engellemeye yönelik normatif perspektifinden ziyade, Avrupa'nın konumu ve bu konumun kokain ve eroin ticaretine etkisi, bahsi geçen uyuşturucu maddelerin fiyatlarındaki farklılıkların nedenleri ve uyuşturucu kullanımının hem toplumsal hem de bireysel sonuçları üzerinde durulmuştur.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Uyuşturucu Ticareti, Kokain/Erain Ticaretinin Avrupa'daki Durumu, Kamu Harcamaları, Uyuşturucu Fiyatları

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INTRODUCTION

The global drug trade is worth an estimated \$435 billion to \$652 billion annually (DEA, 2021). The drug trade, which has such a large economy, has different impacts in different parts of the world. Europe, one of these regions, has become an important target country for drug trafficking especially in the last decade (EU Drug Agency, 2024). At this point, Europe's geographical proximity to countries such as Afghanistan and Pakistan, which are heroin production centres, and its contact with global heroin transfer routes have made the whole of Europe risky in terms of heroin. In addition, due to both the preventive policies implemented by the US and the increasing demand in Europe, the trade in South American cocaine has increased towards Europe.

When the rising demand in Europe and the drug trade towards Europe come together, the resulting economy exceeds 31 billion dollars in the European Union countries alone. In this context, the study will analyse the presence of these substances not only in the EU but also in continental Europe, focusing on heroin and cocaine, which account for more than half of this volume in Europe.

The study will firstly focus on the concept of drug trafficking and reveal the morphology of this trade. As a next step, the issue of drug trafficking to Europe within the global drug trade will be analysed. At this point, the study will underline all drugs present in Europe and address the issue in the context of supply and demand. Following these general approaches, the study will first examine the main routes used in drug trafficking in relation to the two main drugs that are the focus of the study, and then examine the different trends they have shown over time.

In order to increase the reliability and validity of the research, the data and statistics used were taken from institutions with high level studies on the subject. In the European Union, data compiled by EUDA (European Union Drug Agency) and European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) were used. In particular, data compiled by the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (EUROJUST) were used to show the relationship between the substances addressed in the study and crime within the European Union. Data compiled by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) were also used in order to show the global situation of the aforementioned drugs and at the same time to enable a second look at the institutions that are the main data source of the study.

The last section, which is the step that makes the study important, will evaluate the consequences of drug use. At this point, the evaluation will focus on the deaths of individuals due to drug use and the infectious diseases they contract due to drug injection. In addition, convictions for drug use, sale and distribution will also be emphasised as a negative impact of drug use on individuals. The study will be concluded by highlighting the huge scale of drug use and the associated victimisation, as well as the cost to governments as an expenditure item. In summary, the study will analyse all the trends in cocaine and heroin use in Europe, particularly in terms of the impact on individuals, and will examine the humanitarian dimension, the cost dimension and the trafficking dimension of the issue by bringing together the approaches put forward in different sources under one roof.

1.DEFINITION OF DRUG TRAFFICKING

Drug trafficking is a trade carried out by organized crime groups in order to meet the demand for drugs arising from the increasing permeability of international borders in the globalizing world. Apart from this general perspective, United Nations Office Drug and Crime (UNODC) defines it as a process which covers cultivation, manufacture, distribution and sale of illegal substances (UNODC, 2010). In the light of this definition, there are similar descriptions of drug trafficking in literature as well. Kan (2016, s. 3) defines drug trafficking as the distribution of psychoactive substances banned by states and regulatory authorities globally due to the adverse effects of the substances on individuals' health, public

safety and border security. In other perspective, since the issue concerns the damage to human health, it is associated with public health and considered as a violation of human rights (Astorga & David, 2010).

The definitions of drug trafficking are important in understanding the perspective of the person or organization making the definition. In other words, the definitions reflect the level of analysis of each perspective. For instance, when drug trafficking is analysed from a criminological perspective, the fact that it is an illegal activity and its impact on society and law enforcement comes to the fore (Araújo & Silva, 2024; Moeller, 2018). When drug trafficking is analysed from a public policy perspective, the discussions and definitions on the issue focus on controlling the distribution and consumption of drugs (Kan, 2016, ss. 8-10). On the other hand, comparative policy perspectives on drug trafficking focus on how it operates on a regional and country-specific basis, and for what reasons countries and regions are targeted (Aronowitz, 2009; Danziger, Martens, & Guajardo, 2009). From an economic perspective, drug trafficking is defined and evaluated in terms of several issues such as, unemployment, productivity, economic welfare of the society, the budgets allocated by countries to drugs, and the size of the drug market (Kan, 2016; Moeller, 2018; Singer, 2008).

The levels of analysis in these evaluations from different fields were manifested in three levels. The first level of analysis is the person. Here, analyses are made by emphasizing the effects of drug use on human health and thus on public health. The second level of analysis is the state. At this point, the analyses focus on the effects of drug use and trafficking on the state sovereignty, border security, internal security, economy and policy-making processes of states. The last level of analysis deals with the international system. Here, the analyses focus on the security issues raised by regional and global drug trafficking by transnational organized crime organizations, as well as on the need for supranational organizations to establish a global prevention and combating agenda. Common to all three levels of analysis is that drug trafficking has cost lives, fuelled violence, subverted governments, entrenched public corruption, undermined legitimate trade and infiltrated online commerce (Kan, 2016, s. 5).

Apart from the literature, it is important to see how international structures that fight drug trafficking at the international and regional level view the issue in order to understand how the above-mentioned levels of analysis and different perspectives are encountered in active processes. In this context, the definitions of drug trafficking made by the United Nations and its sub-organizations, Interpol and the European Union show the dimensions and levels at which the issue is examined.²

Table 1: Definitions of Drug Trafficking

Organization	Definition
The United Nations and its Sub-organizations	<i>Drug trafficking is a global illicit trade involving the cultivation, manufacture, distribution and sale of substances which are subject to drug prohibition laws.</i>
Interpol	<i>This international trade involves growers, producers, transporters, suppliers and dealers. It affects all of our member countries, undermining political and economic stability, ruining the lives of individuals and damaging communities. The end-users and addicts are often the victims of a powerful and manipulative business.</i>
European Union/Europol	<i>Threat posed by drugs and drug trafficking, and show how they: are related to other criminal activities, such as the rank exploitation of</i>

² The basic principle for selecting these organizations is that their sphere of influence and authority is comprehensive. For example, the European Union and Europol use the same legislation, the normative structure laid down by the United Nations is adopted by OSCE, and Interpol is the world's largest police organization with 196 members.

	<i>labourers; create a strain on government institutions; are linked to terrorist activities; have a serious impact on legitimate business; drag down the wider economy; have untold consequences for individuals, families and communities.</i>
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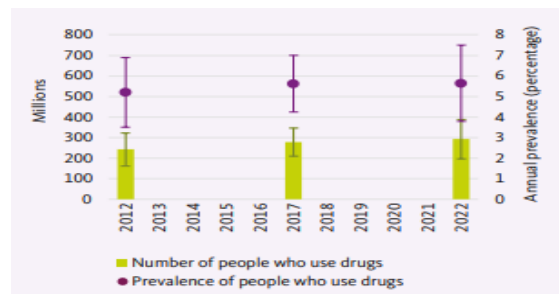
Sources:(Europol, 2022; INTERPOL, 2011; UNODC, 2010)

As can be seen in the three definitions given above, production, distribution and sale are emphasized and it is underlined that drug trafficking is a global threat, that it is carried out in violation of the law and that it is a threat to both the internal political structures and the security of states. In addition, the European Union and Interpol in particular have focused on the economic effects of the drug trade and the impact on drug users. When the definitions of drug trafficking in the literature and in the international system are taken into account, as mentioned earlier, it becomes clear that drug trafficking is a trade that targets people who are the end users, causes erosion in the political and economic structures of states and involves many actors in the global system due to its international nature.

2. DRUG USE in EUROPE

According to 2022 data, 292 million people in the world use drugs and their derivatives. This number has increased by a large 20% in the last 10 years (UN, 2024). This increase reveals the dire state of drug use globally. The drugs at the centre of this huge economy are cannabis and opioids. According to the data for the 2024 reporting period, opioids (31%) and cannabis (24%) are the most commonly used drugs globally when the arithmetic average of the drugs used in Europe, the Americas, Africa, Asia and Oceania is taken (UN, 2024).

Table 2: Global Prevalence and number of people who use drugs in the global population aged 15 to 64, in 2012, 2017 and 2022



Source: (UN, 2024)

The issue of drug trafficking, which has such a large economic volume globally, also manifests itself seriously in Europe. In order to assess drug use in Europe and the European context, Table 3 examines both the general contours of the issue, its general trends and its impact on people.

Table 3: Information on drug use/trafficking in Europe and its impact on public health

	Demand	Supply	Key Issues
EUROPE	<p>Western and Central Europe remains the second largest cocaine market worldwide</p> <p>Amphetamine is the second most used stimulant in Europe after cocaine</p> <p>ATS (amphetamine-type stimulants) use has been increasing in the region over the past decade</p> <p>Europe remains a major consumer market for “ecstasy”</p> <p>Opioids remain the main drug type for which people are in drug treatment in Europe, but cannabis follows closely and its use is more common among those being treated for the first time</p> <p>Following years of increase, wastewater data point to a potential stabilization in methamphetamine consumption in Western, Central and South-Eastern Europe in 2023</p> <p>Use of NPS (new psychoactive substances) seems to be increasing in Eastern Europe, where it has become a major concern</p> <p>Eastern Europe has the highest prevalence of people who inject drugs (1.3 per cent in 2022), as well as of people who inject drugs living with HIV (25.6 per cent), while the prevalence of hepatitis C among people who inject drugs in Europe is higher than in any other region</p>	<p>Trafficking in cannabis herb remains mostly an intraregional issue in Western and Central Europe; there continue to be, however, substantial imports of cannabis resin into the subregion from North Africa</p> <p>Western and Central Europe remains a hub for the manufacture of synthetic drugs, in particular “ecstasy” and amphetamine. There are also signs of a possible expansion in the manufacture of methamphetamine</p> <p>Darknet drug markets around the world were expanding until 2021. In recent years, this was largely due to Hydra Market, the world’s largest Russian - language darknet market, which was dismantled in April 2022, giving place to new, smaller darknet markets</p>	<p>The long-term trend of increasing cocaine use paused in 2020 during the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, but has since rebounded in Western and Central Europe</p> <p>There has been a long-term increase in the number of people in treatment for cannabis use disorders in Western and Central Europe; almost half of people accessing drug treatment services for the first time in 2021 were being treated for cannabis use</p> <p>In Eastern Europe, the NPS market expanded in 2021, likely owing to the expansion of online supply, in particular of cathinones. There are indications that these trends continued in 2022 and 2023</p> <p>The prevalence of people who inject drugs and of people who inject drugs living with HIV in Eastern Europe, and the prevalence of people who inject drugs living with hepatitis C in Europe overall, are of key concern</p>

Sources:(EU Drug Agency, 2024; UN, 2024)

It would be useful to analyse this table at three different levels: the types of drugs used, the effects of drug use on public health and other variables. Europe is the world's most important market for cocaine, amphetamines, ATS, opioids, methamphetamine and ecstasy. Western and Central Europe is a production centre for synthetic drugs such as amphetamines and “ecstasy”. As for the supply of a wide range of drugs, the lockdown period during the global pandemic, which manifested itself in 2020, led to the creation of new ways for drug traffickers to meet demand. One of these new methods is to meet demand through sales on the darknet. Even though this process started in 2020, large darknet platforms continue to meet demand today by splitting or changing platforms, even if they are detected. The pandemic has not only changed the way people access drugs, it has also changed their drug preferences. While cocaine was the long-term most demanded substance in Europe, after 2020, more accessible synthetic substances and NPSs reduced the demand for cocaine.

After 2020, although changing demands and new supply methods reflect the changing face of drug use and sale, the only issue that has not changed over the years is the destruction of individual and public health caused by drugs. 1.3 out of every 100 people in Eastern Europe inject drugs and 25.6 of these people are HIV positive (EUROJUST, 2024). Also, Europe has by far the highest rate of hepatitis C carriage among drug users of any other region in the world.

3. COCAINE AND HEROINE TRAFFICKING in EUROPE

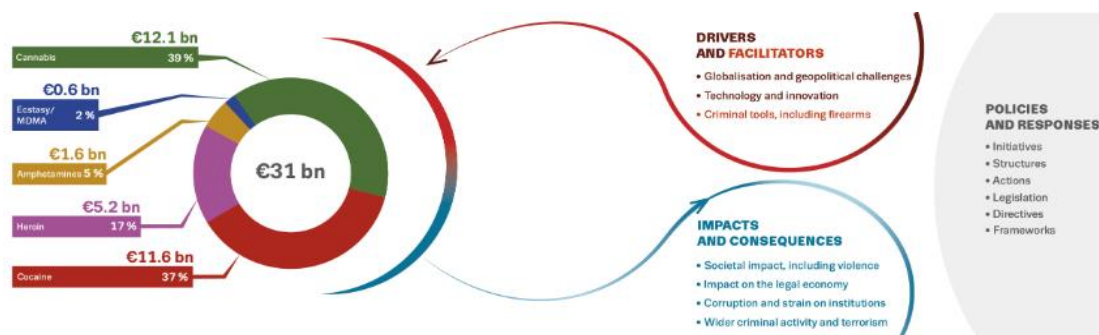
In addition to the fact that many different drugs present themselves and are subject to drug trafficking, it is also important to recognize that the trafficking of these drugs varies across European sub-regions. In this part of the study, the reasons for these different trends in drug trafficking will be analysed and an assessment will be made in relation to both the economic situation of the states in the region and the income levels of the people living in these sub-regions.

According to United Nations sources, Europe consists of four sub-regions: Eastern Europe, Western Europe, Northern Europe and Southern Europe (UN Department for General Assembly and Conference Management, 2024). When we look at the drugs used to monitor drug trafficking in these regions, Table 3 shows that the drugs of choice also differ across sub-regions. This implies that the drug trafficking towards these sub-regions is also differentiated. Before looking at the sub-regions in Europe, it is useful to draw a general picture of Europe's place in the world drug trade. According to the Council of Europe (2005), Europe is probably the most profitable drug market globally. This discourse in 2005 can easily be said to be the same today. One of the most recent reports, EUROPOL's EU Drug Market Analysis Report (2024), emphasizes the same discourse and reveals the size of this market. According to 2021 data, EUROPOL has defined the European drug market as follows;

“the minimum retail value of the EU drugs market is estimated to be at least €31 billion. An significant feature of EU drug market is that different illicit drugs are interconnected through criminal networks and key intermediaries and facilitators, who are often involved in multi-drug crime. The large EU drug market also intersects with and has a significant impact on other areas of crime, such as firearms trafficking and money laundering.”

As can be seen, the European drug market has grown even more in the intervening period of almost two decades, despite the measures taken and policies produced. There are some reasons for this growth. The first of these is the increase in the variety of drugs. The use of synthetic drugs has become increasingly widespread, even though more traditional drugs are still used today. Another reason is that both political and legislative steps have led criminal organisations, which are already able to adapt very quickly to variables, to find new methods and to operate these methods away from the system. This makes it difficult to trace the drug trade. The last, and perhaps the most important reason, is the failure to take sufficient global measures. Europe, geographically one of the focal points of the drug trade, will continue to be affected by drug markets outside the region as it is a major market (Chandra & Joba, 2015; Dolliver, 2015). It is important to recognise that markets and criminal actors are globally interconnected and to develop effective global responses to address current and future threats.

Table 4: Structure of the EU drug market



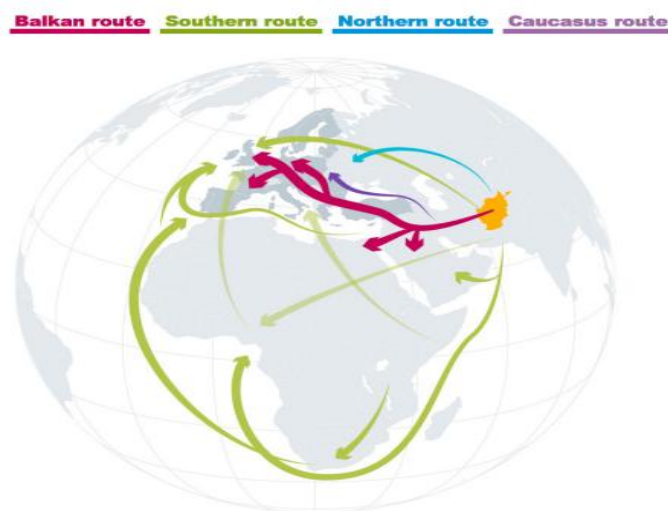
Source:(European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction & European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation, 2024)

This visualisation in Table 4 is a visualisation of the whole of Europe in the EU in particular. Since the region is a transit route and especially Western Europe has a higher level of development and economic development, Europe is of serious importance in terms of drug trafficking. In other words, the supply of drugs increases in proportion to the demand and can change its nature.

3.1. MAIN ROUTES AND TRENDS

The United Nations makes assessments on three main sub-regions within the scope of the concept of Europe (UN, 2024).³ In this context, it is possible to make evaluations over a wider geography. This part of the study will examine the diversity of drugs and the routes that support and perpetuate this diversity. When international reports on Europe are analysed, there are several types of illicit substances such as heroin and cocaine. In line with these substances, the effects of drug trafficking in Europe will be analysed in this section as well. It is also worth mentioning why the study focussed only on these two drugs when multiple drugs threaten Europe. As can be seen from Table 4, cocaine and heroin account for almost \$17 billion of the total drug market value in Europe. This volume is more than half of the entire market. The large number of variables related to the drugs that account for the rest of the market, such as synthetic drugs, new types of psychoactive substances and cannabis, has also been applied as a criterion to limit the discussion to only two drugs. These variables include, in particular, the fact that synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances, as already mentioned, change very rapidly and are difficult to monitor, and in the case of cannabis, the legalisation of cannabis for personal use by Malta, Luxembourg and Germany. Neither in the reports nor in the literature is there any information on whether legalisation for personal use is or should be included in the total market value or in the volume mentioned in the reports and literature. For these reasons, only heroin and cocaine will be considered, the trade of these two drugs will be evaluated, their global routes will be analysed and the economics of these two types of drugs will be examined.

Map 1: Heroin trafficking routes towards Europe



Source: (EMCDDA, 2015)

³ **Eastern Europe:** Belarus, Republic of Moldova, Russian Federation and Ukraine; **South-Eastern Europe:** Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Türkiye and Kosovo; **Western and Central Europe:** Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Monaco, Netherlands (Kingdom of the), Norway, Poland, Portugal, San Marino, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Faroe Islands, Gibraltar and Holy See

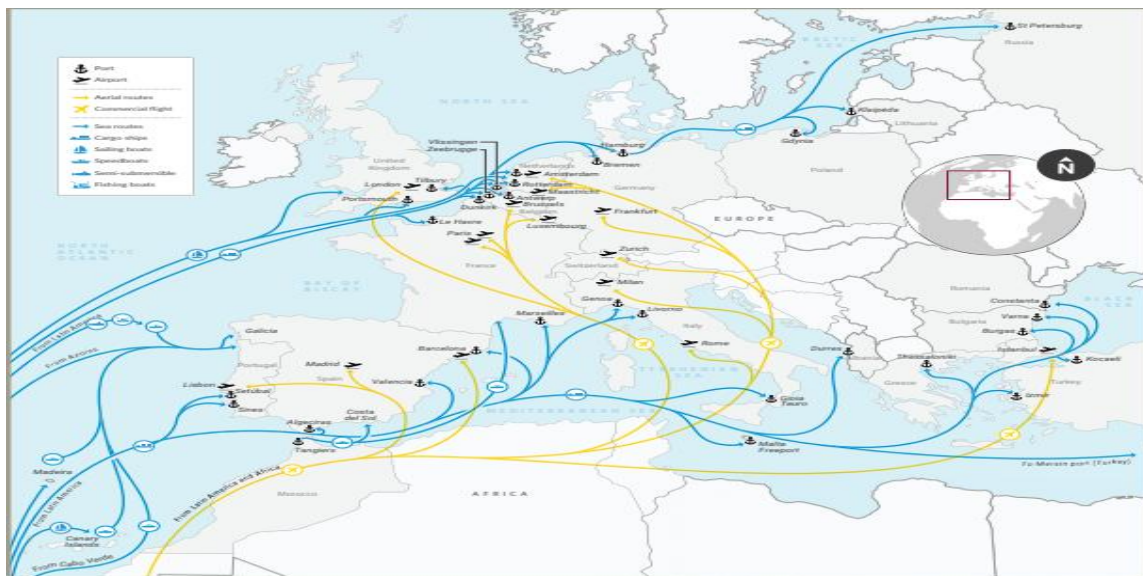
Heroin has historically been introduced into Europe in two different forms. The first and most common is brown heroin in the form of a chemical base. It comes mainly from Afghanistan and south-west Asia. The second type is white heroin in salt form. This type is also imported from the region called the Golden Crescent (Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan) (EMCDDA, 2015; McCoy, 1993; Strang, Griffiths, & Gossop, 1997; Watson, 2018). Although the routes used from the past to the present are almost the same, these routes are named more concretely in current studies and reports on heroin trafficking. According to the EU, heroin reaches Europe mainly through three routes. However, both in the EU and UN reports and in the literature, the so-called Balkan route comes to the fore in heroin trafficking. As can be seen from Map 1, heroin trade to Europe is carried out through 4 routes, but the Caucasus route is not listed among the main heroin routes as it is generally small in volume and connected to Türkiye.

The Balkan Route: It is the oldest heroin trafficking route to Europe. It runs from Afghanistan to Iran and from there via Türkiye to south-eastern Europe and Western Europe. This route is the shortest route that can be used for heroin trafficking. Moreover, due to Türkiye's geographical location, its extensive and multifaceted trade capacity with Asia, Europe and Africa provides an infrastructure for organised crime organisations in heroin trafficking (Berlusconi, Aziani, & Giommoni, 2017; Bucur & Radulescu, 2015; Chandra & Joba, 2015; Giommoni, Aziani, & Berlusconi, 2017).

The Southern Route: This route has attracted attention due to heroin shipments through the Gulf of Oman and the Persian Gulf. Especially the Makran Coast in Baluchistan in the south-east of Iran and south-west of Pakistan is the origin point of heroin from this region. The main reason why this route attracts attention is that heroin can be delivered to Europe by including different modes of shipment and transport modes in the process (Berlusconi et.al., 2017; EMCDDA, 2015; U.S. Department of Justice, 1994; Zafar & ul Hasan, 2002).

The Northern Route: Most of the heroin trafficked through this route is transported from northern Afghanistan to Tajikistan, and from there to Kazakhstan via Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. The next route is via Russia, Ukraine and Belarus to markets in Central and Western Europe (EMCDDA, 2015; Paoli, 2001; The Organized Crime Index, 2023).

Map 2: Cocaine Routes to Europe



Source:(McDermott, Bargent, Held, & Ramirez, 2021)

Cocaine, which is produced from the coca plant grown in South America, enters Europe through various routes, especially through ports. As it can be seen on Map 2, loaded smuggling with intermodal commercial containers through European ports has a great impact on the availability and accessibility of cocaine. Cocaine is the most widely used illicit stimulant drug in Europe, with an estimated 3.6 million users (aged 15-64) according to 2016 data (EMCDDA, 2016). This widespread use has made cocaine the second most seized drug in Europe after cannabis. In fact, reports for 2024 estimate that around 2.5 million people aged 15-34 in the EU alone have used cocaine in the last year (EUDA, 2024e; McDermott et.al., 2021).

Cocaine use in Europe has increased significantly, especially in the last decade (Hernandez-Roy & Bledsoe, 2023). The reason for this increase is that the global cocaine trade has moved beyond the USA and entered the more lucrative European market. There are important routes fuelling cocaine trafficking to meet this growing demand. As mentioned before, cocaine is a drug that is trafficked by sea in order to reach Europe since it is obtained from the coca plant originating from South America. At this point, cocaine enters Europe mainly through the ports of Spain and Portugal in the south and through the ports of the Netherlands and Belgium in the north (Chandra & Joba, 2015; EMCDDA, 2016; McDermott et.al., 2021). In other words, 70 per cent of the cocaine entering Europe is traded through Belgium, the Netherlands or Spain (Hernandez-Roy & Bledsoe, 2023). It is also useful to look at the origin points of the routes from South America, which are used to meet this great demand in Europe. At this point, Colombia, Bolivia and Peru stand out. Two characteristics of these countries are noteworthy. Firstly, these countries are the origin points of cocaine for Europe. Secondly, these countries alone harvest 99.5 per cent of the coca plant globally.

3.2. FACTORS AFFECTING PRICES

Heroin and cocaine are the two drugs that dominate the European drug market. Although the regions of supply vary, the European market is targeted by following very different routes towards Europe. In fact, the maps of the routes are provided both to visualise the trafficking and to show the distance of the drug production centres to the target region of Europe. Looking at the routes and source countries shown on the maps, two questions arise. Firstly, why is cocaine, a drug originating from South America, brought to Europe? The second question is what is the proportion between the risk taken and the gain? This part of the study aims to answer these two fundamental questions by analysing the drugs in question.

Cervero (1981) mentioned that a long trip increases operators' costs more than a short trip. In the light of the results obtained in more recent studies in this direction (Jara-Díaz, Gschwender, Castro, & Lepe, 2024; Jørgensen & Preston, 2007; Nikolaevich Lada, Viktorovich Sazonov, & Olegovich Skobelev, 2016), the fact that distance increases the cost and therefore the final price. In this illicit trade, when all other risks (such as drug spoilage, seizure, inter-organisational confrontation) are ignored, it leads to an increase in cocaine prices. As mentioned in the previous section, the main reason why the direction of cocaine trafficking shifts from the USA to Europe is the higher prices. To explain this situation, while the price of a kilogram of cocaine in the USA is around \$28,000, this price rises to around \$40,000 in France and Spain. In fact, according to the information obtained during the seizures in 2023, the price of a kilogram of cocaine in Estonia even reaches \$220,000 at some locations (Hernandez-Roy & Bledsoe, 2023; McDermott et.al., 2021; UNODC, 2023).

As with all drugs, the prices of these substances vary for a variety of reasons. Foremost among these reasons is, of course, the illicit nature of these substances. At this point, the relationship between the amount, continuity and purity of the trafficking and the penalty to be imposed and the possible profit to be obtained is effective (Miron, 2003). In other words, the profit and loss analysis to be made by the smuggler in line with the rational choice theory will be one of the factors determining the price of the

drug (Yıldız, 2020). As in every trade, the risks that exist and are taken in the smuggling process in drug smuggling and the multiple transactions between the producer and the consumer cause an increase in the price (Chandra & Joba, 2015). In simpler terms, if the point of production is close to the point of consumption, the price will be lower; if the point of production and the point of consumption are far away, the price will be higher.

Table 5: Cocaine and Heroin Prices

Substance	Unit	Measure	Price Range (Avarage)
Cocaine	EUR/g	Retail	Min.31,69-Max. 120
Cocaine	EUR/kg	Wholesale	Min.27214-Max. 55000
Heroin (base)	EUR/g	Retail	Min.20.09-Max. 79
Heroin (base)	EUR/kg	Wholesale	Min.20059-Max.31232

Source:(EUDA, 2024a, 2024d)

There are many variables related to drug prices. In the sections of the study so far, when we look at the issues affecting prices by presenting the issues mentioned in a more organised manner, the issues we encounter are generally associated with the prices of drugs with issues such as the route of trade, the risk of capture at the target entry points, the size of demand and the frequency of operations of the countries in the process of trade. In these respect, the ‘distance’ issue increases the price of drugs due to the inherent risks of trade and the multiple transactions they are often subjected to as they move from producer to consumer (Miron, 2003). Although there are different views on prices, the main point to be considered here is the relationship between supply and demand. While there was a decline in the prices of heroin and cocaine during periods of drug seizures, this did not destabilise demand. At this point, the prices of drugs are determined not by the increase or decrease in demand, but by the adequacy of supply (Chandra & Joba, 2015; Clements, 2006; Farrell, Mansur, & Tullis, 1996). However, there are also sources in the literature that show a sharp relationship between price and demand. For example, it is mentioned that a 10 per cent increase in the price of illicit drugs results in a decrease in demand of about 9% (Payne, Manning, Fleming, & Pham, 2020). This shows that the demand for illicit drugs has weak price elasticity on average.

4. CONSEQUENCES OF COCAINE AND HEROIN TRAFFICKING IN EUROPE

Drug trafficking has multiple and very different consequences, first on individuals and then at the social level. From a global perspective, drug-related deaths, security violations in source and destination countries, social unrest and damage to the environment of trust, and a serious economic market capacity are the general summaries of the consequences of drug trafficking. From this point of view, it is seen that similar problems have consequences for the drug trade towards Europe. In this part of the study, the human-centred consequences of drug trafficking and the economic consequences for Europe as a whole will be discussed.

It is very difficult to find holistic information on Europe as a whole. However, up-to-date statistics are also difficult to obtain. According to 2022 data, an estimated 6392 people died from drug overdose in the EU. This number was announced as 6959 when the EU, Norway and Turkey were added. Of this number, 23% are women and 77% are men (EUDA, 2024b). The main cause of these deaths is drug injection. According to UN data for 2022, almost 3 million people between the ages of 16 and 64 inject drugs in Europe as a whole (UNODC, 2022). At this point, not only the problem of drug injection, but also the use of non-sterile injection methods and the use of syringes more than once can lead to various diseases. Almost 500 thousand of these 3 million people are HIV positive and almost 2 million are carriers of hepatitis-b and hepatitis-c (UNODC, 2022). Even when analysed globally, HIV and viral

hepatitis are more prevalent among people who inject drugs than deaths due to overdose (Arum et.al., 2021). The scale of the phenomenon is so large that there are locations such as France (1993), Italy (1994), Spain (1994), Portugal (1995), and Ireland, the Netherlands, and Finland (all before 2001) and Eastern Europe (Estonia, Russia, and Ukraine 2000-10) where there have been recorded epidemics caused by people who inject drugs (Jarlais et.al., 2020; Wiessing et.al., 2008, 2011).

Apart from deaths due to drug use, another problem that people experience due to drug trafficking is the link between drugs and crime. According to United Nations data, Europe has the highest rate of drug trafficking, drug-related investigations and arrests in the world (UN, 2024). This poses a significant challenge. While the rate of persons arrested for drug use or possession offences in the Americas is one of the highest after Europe with 144 arrests per 100,000 population, the region has the lowest conviction rate for such offences (EUROJUST, 2024). The main reasons for this difference are many different reasons such as the size of the drug using population and the level of capture.

Drug-related deaths, other disease transmission, drug trafficking and judicial processes related to drug use are the most visible parts of the drug trade. At this point, another loss caused by the drug trade, which has a very large budget as emphasised at the beginning of the study, is the expenditures made by states and individuals to get rid of drug-based problems. In addition to the negative health impacts of drug use, the money spent on drug treatment is a significant cost to individuals and governments. According to the According to 2017 data, the number of people in treatment for drug use in the European Union (28), Turkey and Norway is around 1.5 million (Costa Storti, 2019; EMCDDA, 2017). In 24 European Countries⁴, expenditure to treat drug disorders was close to 0.3% of overall health expenditure (Casal, Storti, & Morgan, 2020). Although this number may seem proportionally small, the total expenditure on drug-related treatment in 2015 was close to 300 million euros (Casal et.al., 2020; Eurostat, 2024; Lievens, Vander Laenen, & Christiaens, 2014; Macro Trends, 2024). It is not possible to find a specific source for the total budget allocated to the fight against drugs in these 24 countries, but it is estimated that it represents between 23% and 83% of drug-related public expenditure (EUDA, 2024c). The differences that arise here are due to policy options and the organisation of public services. Public expenditure in the fight against drugs is only part of the costs borne by society. In addition to public expenditure, costs borne by individuals, such as private contributions to medical care, and costs external to society, such as lost productivity and financial costs resulting from premature deaths and illnesses related to drug use, can be added (Hofmarcher, Leppänen, Månsdotter, Strandberg, & Håkansson, 2024; Vella, Ibáñez, Segura, Colom, & García-Altés, 2022). Taking these costs into account, the social cost of illicit drugs is estimated to be between 0.1 per cent and 2 per cent of GDP in the European countries for which we have information (EUDA, 2024c).

CONCLUSION

Although there are many different drugs in the European drug market, heroin and cocaine dominate the European market. Globally, Europe is a destination for drug trafficking and the European drug market has an increasing volume due to both the existing demand and the diversity of entry points. At this point, it is also possible to explain the growth trend in this market mainly by the relationship between supply and demand in drugs. Europe, which has a relatively easier and higher supply of heroin due to its geographical proximity to heroin production and the fact that it is sometimes the destination and sometimes the transit route of global heroin transport routes, has become a target for South

⁴ Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

American cocaine supply due to its many different global ports and the ease and frequency of transit between different modes of transport.

Based on the evaluations of the study, it is possible to say the following about heroin and cocaine trafficking in Europe;

- International organisations or states that define drug trafficking make definitions from their own perspectives. In this context, for the European Union, although not for Europe in general, the issue of drug trafficking has been formulated in a way to cover the process from production to sale, as well as the economic side of this issue. As a matter of fact, drug trafficking is an increasing illegal economic factor in Europe.
- While Europe is a major market for heroin and cocaine supply due to its location, it is also a major market for other synthetic drugs, especially NPSs. In particular, during and after Covid-19, the supply of drugs via the internet has increased significantly and this has been emphasised in both EU and UN reports.
- Cocaine and heroin account for about \$17 billion of the total drug market value in Europe. Accordingly, particular attention needs to be paid to the supply of these substances. Although there are four main heroin supply routes to Europe, the Caucasian route is not significant in terms of flow volume and the volume of the Balkan route. Between 2015 and 2019, more than 70 % of the heroin entering Europe came from the Balkan route, 18 % from the Southern route and 7 % from the Northern route (Turkish National Police, 2022). According to UN data from 2015, the volume of the Balkan route is around 170 tonnes (UNODC, 2015). It is not possible to find up-to-date data on this subject. However, the amount of heroin seized by Turkey, which is the gateway of this route to Europe, in the operations carried out in 2022 alone is over 22 tonnes (Turkish National Police, 2022).
- Western and Central Europe remains the second largest cocaine market worldwide. In 2022, 270 tonnes of cocaine shipped from South America to Europe were seized in European ports (Öner, Çavuş, Güler, & Esen, 2022). In 2024, this number increased to 300 tonnes (European Commission, 2024). There is no information and estimates on how much cocaine has entered Europe. However, the UK's National Crime Agency (NCA) estimates that around 117 tonnes of cocaine is consumed annually across England, Scotland and Wales (Kelly et.al., 2024).
- Another issue raised in the study is the reasons for the retail price differences between cocaine and heroin. In this context, the study shows that both wholesale and retail prices of heroin are lower than cocaine. The reason for this is associated with the geographical distance of both substances from the source country to Europe. As the distance increases, issues such as the risk of capture, transport costs and the possibility of drug deterioration come to the fore, the price of heroin based in Afghanistan is lower than cocaine based in South America. At this point, the difference between prices can be interpreted by revealing the basic relationship between supply and demand. The price of heroin, whose supply is more abundant and frequent, remains lower than that of cocaine, whose supply is relatively more risky. However, it is noteworthy that even in periods when the prices of drugs increase; there is no significant decrease in the demand of users, which is valid for both drugs.
- The study also shows that heroin and cocaine use in Europe is not only a drug problem. In addition, increasing public health problems and deaths due to infectious diseases such as HIV, hepatitis b and C, which spread rapidly due to drug injection, are among the leading problems based on drug use. In addition, judicial penalties are imposed for involvement in drug trafficking. This has made Europe the world's leading country in the number of arrests for drug use or possession offences. In the case of heroin and cocaine, drugs also have a negative impact on expenditure. In particular, the money spent by individuals on drug treatment and the costs

incurred by states in this context have a significant place in total health expenditures. Moreover, the expenditures made by the states in the process of combating drugs have a social cost as they impose a burden on each individual living in the European society.

Heroin and cocaine are the substances with the highest demand on the European market for drug trafficking and use. The trafficking of these substances has made the European market a target due to the unpredictable demand, the proximity to major drug routes and the large number of entry points into Europe. This situation has seriously affected and continues to affect Europe with both individual and social negativities.

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