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Drug Checking - Trends, results and experience

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Abstract Mireia Ventura Vilamala, PhD

The term “Drug Checking” refers to an integrated service that basically enables individual drug users to have their synthetic drugs (e.g., cocaine, ecstasy, GHB, or LSD) chemically analyzed as well as receiving advice and, if necessary, counselling. An international collaborative effort called the Trans European Drug Information (TEDI) project was launched to combine data of drug testing systems. TEDI is a network of European fieldwork drug checking services that share their expertise and data within a European monitoring and information system. Drug checking services from Spain, Switzerland, Belgium, Austria, Portugal, and the Netherlands participated in this project.

In this presentation results of some of the main illicit drugs encountered will be presented: cocaine, ecstasy and amphetamine and also comments on new psychoactive substances (NPS) detected between 2008 and 2016. The drug markets of the distinct European areas showed many similarities, but also some interesting differences. For instance, purity of cocaine and amphetamine powders was generally low in Austria but high in Spain and the Netherlands. Also, some NPS appearing in ecstasy seemed more specific for one country than another. This data demonstrates that Drug Checking Services can be used to generate a global picture of drugs in recreational settings.