



SUMMARY — EMCDDA MONOGRAPH No 8

A CANNABIS READER: GLOBAL ISSUES AND LOCAL EXPERIENCES

Perspectives on cannabis controversies, treatment and regulation in Europe

<http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/monographs>

Volume 1	Volume 2
Cannabis in the past	Epidemiology
Policies, legislation and control strategies	Health effects of cannabis use
Supply and production issues	Prevention and treatment

Smoked, eaten, imbibed — or just talked about — it seems the world has a strong taste for cannabis. An estimated one in five European adults have tried it at some time in their lives. Over 13 million Europeans have consumed it in the past month. Globally, nearly 50 000 tonnes of cannabis herb or resin are produced for consumption every year. Little wonder, then, that cannabis has become a controversial cultural phenomenon.

This monograph underlines the point that cannabis is not just a static, unchanging plant, but a dynamic product that is subject to gradual evolution in potency, prevalence and cultivation. In the publication, leading experts provide short, sharp insights on a range of cannabis topics while offering advice on further reading for each of them. Brief editorial notes provide concise introductions to each issue, occasionally drawing attention to political sensitivities and the need for a ‘critical eye’. So the cannabis reader has a value, both as a shortcut for those entering the area for the first time, as well as a synthesis for the more seasoned expert.

Two volumes, multiple audiences

The monograph is divided into two volumes, each comprising three sections. There are a number of reasons for this two-volume approach. While complementary, each has a slightly different audience. Volume I centres on political, legislative, economic and social developments relating to cannabis. Its core audience thus comprises policymakers, sociologists, historians, journalists and those involved in enforcement. Volume II is very much centred on drug professionals working in the fields of treatment, prevention and healthcare.

In Volume 1, the reader traverses: the history of cannabis; events in the United Kingdom in the 1960s and 1970s; recent cannabis developments in the EU’s newer Member States; policy shifts in governmental approaches to cannabis; the cannabis resin trade linking Morocco to northern Europe; and information on how coffee shops developed in the Netherlands. While some of these articles focus only on smaller pieces of the cannabis puzzle, they provide insights into the many different ways Europe has dealt with cannabis to date.

In Volume 2, general overviews are provided on: the impact of cannabis use on health, from an individual perspective and public health perspective; descriptions of contemporary European patterns of cannabis use, from a general population perspective and in terms of adolescent use; and descriptions of treatment demand for cannabis use disorders in Europe. Case-study articles look at the way in which cannabis users perceive their use in Finland; the rise in cannabis treatment demand in Germany and the specific effects of cannabis use on driving.

From global issues to local experiences

Common to both volumes is the effort to fuse general ‘scene-setting’ chapters with specific case studies offering a ‘close-up’ view of the subject. Each section begins with chapters providing a general introduction to a single cannabis issue, often of an encyclopaedic nature, together with a summary of the current state of scientific research. The monograph then zooms in with a case study about a specific aspect of the topic. The result is a general overview of key aspects of cannabis use, extensive links to a wide range of technical sources and a springboard for further exploration.