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A photograph of several white pills and a pile of white powder on a blue surface, with a faint world map in the background.

**GLOBAL SMART
UPDATE
2011**

About the SMART Update

The threat of synthetic drugs is one of the most significant drug problems worldwide. Global estimates of past-year amphetamine-type stimulants users (ATS) exceed those for heroin and cocaine, combined. Since 1990, ATS illicit manufacture has been reported from more than 65 countries and the figure keeps rising. Trends on the synthetic drug market evolve quickly each year.

The UNODC Global Synthetics Monitoring: Analyses, Reporting and Trends (SMART) Programme enhances the capacity of Member States in priority regions to generate, manage, analyse, report and use synthetic drug information to design effective policy and programme interventions. Global SMART was launched in September 2008 and provides capacity-building to 11 countries in East and South-East Asia. In January 2011, operations expanded into the Americas. A review of the global ATS situation was issued in September 2011.

The Global SMART Update is designed to provide regular brief reporting on emerging patterns and trends of the fast changing global synthetic drug situation. Given the speed at which changes in the ATS markets occur, it is especially important to have a simple sustainable mechanism for frequent information sharing from different parts of the world. The bi-annual report is published twice a year and is available in English and Spanish.

The Update reports synthetic drug information in several categories, such as significant or unusual drug or precursor chemical seizures, new locations or methods for clandestine manufacture, new trafficking groups or routes, changes in legislation to address the problem of synthetic drugs, environmental impact from their illicit manufacture and destruction, emerging drugs or user groups, and health implications related to their use.*

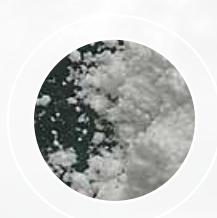
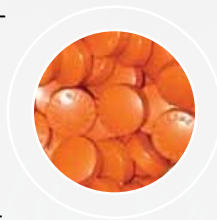
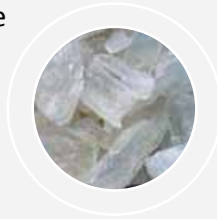
In this issue

Each issue of the Update contains special coverage and thematic segments and as of the fourth issue (October 2010), the special segment has been enlarged to provide a more in-depth review of an issue that deserves particular attention. In the fourth issue, the Update highlighted the increasing dimension of ATS trafficking from Africa. In the fifth issue, the situation on ATS in South Asia was reviewed.

In October 2010, short regional overviews were added to provide snapshots of the situation in the regions of the world. Since 2010, the Update has been available in English and Spanish.

The special segment of the current issue reviews the latest developments on synthetic substances that are not under international control. Over the past months, these substances have become more widespread in established ATS markets. They represent a particular challenge in the United States. The American Association of Poison Control Centres counted 5,226 calls related to bath salts from January 2011 to the end of September, up from 303 calls during 2010. On 7 September, the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) used its emergency scheduling authority to temporarily control mephedrone, 3,4 methylenedioxypropylvalerone (MDPV) and methylone for 12 months and on 21 October the DEA published the final order on 'bath salts' in the Federal Register designating these chemicals as Schedule I substances, the most restrictive category.

While information on law enforcement activities is often abundant, information about the demand for ATS is often scarce and anecdotal in nature. Nevertheless, the Update continues to make a determined effort to highlight the human toll of ATS use. Various demand-related subjects are covered in this issue, including facts that have come to light about the use of synthetic drugs in the Pacific, Australia, Philippines, Germany, the United Kingdom, Peru and the United States.



The information and data contained within this report are from official Government reports, press releases, scientific journals or incidents confirmed by UNODC Field Offices. Additional or updated information from previously reported incidents may also be included where appropriate. Information denoted with an asterisk () are from 'open sources' where UNODC is waiting for official confirmation and therefore should be considered only preliminary. This report has not been formally edited. The contents of this publication do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of UNODC or contributory organizations and neither do they imply any endorsement. Suggested citation: UNODC Global SMART Update Volume 6, October 2011.

UNODC warns of new synthetic drugs markets and rising use



The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime launched the 2011 Global Assessment on amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) in September 2011. The report highlights the most important subregional developments and trends, since the last global assessment was published in 2008.

ATS remain the second most widely used drug, after cannabis, being well established on the illicit drug markets with an increasing global spread. While the global use of ATS has stabilized during the past year, some regions have experienced a major increase in use.

Manufacture is shifting to new markets and trafficking routes are diversifying into areas previously unaffected by ATS. Due to weak law enforcement and the lack of understanding of the ATS problem, controls can easily be avoided. The main characteristic of ATS differentiating it from other drug types is that manufacture is not restrained to geographical borders. ATS laboratories only need little initial investment and drugs can be manufactured using a wide range of methods and precursor chemicals.

ATS manufacture on the rise and spreading to new regions.

East and South-East Asia experienced an increase in manufacture which can be seen from the number of ATS laboratories dismantled. This rose from 288 in 2008 to 458 in 2009. Indonesia and Malaysia have evolved into manufacturing locations, with 37 and 30 ATS illicit manufacturing operations respectively discovered in 2009. Manufacture has also spread to West Africa: in June 2011, the Nigerian Drug Law Enforcement Agency dismantled a methamphetamine laboratory in Lagos, the first of its kind in West Africa. ATS manufacture in Central America and South America appears to be on the rise, with an increasing number of illicit laboratories reported from Argentina, Brazil, Guatemala and Nicaragua.

New ATS trafficking routes. The ATS market has become more sophisticated with a higher level of integration and the involvement of organized crime groups throughout the production and supply chain. In recent years, ATS trafficking routes have been diversifying especially in South-East Asia and growth in inter-regional trafficking was experienced. In 2010, more than 133 million methamphetamine pills manufactured in Myanmar, were seized in East and South-East Asia. New routes include the Mekong River as well as routes to the Western part of Myanmar and onward trafficking to South Asia. During the past two years, there has been an increase in methamphetamine seizures in East Asia originating from West Africa (see Global SMART Update, Volume 4, 2010). Methamphetamine from the Islamic Republic of Iran is also being smuggled to East and South-East Asia.

Reports of injecting ATS use. A new development is the increasing number of injecting ATS use in East and South-East Asia. Lao People's Democratic Republic and Malaysia reported the injecting use of crystalline methamphetamine for the first time in 2008

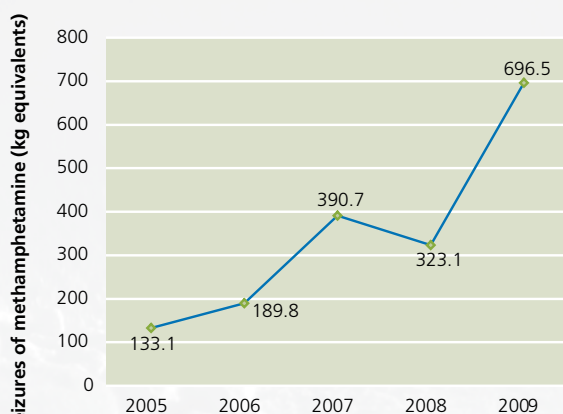
and 2009, respectively. In Europe, high rates of amphetamines injection are reported by Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden and Ukraine. Injecting ATS increases the risk of infection with blood-borne diseases such as HIV/AIDS.

Emergence of methamphetamine in Europe. Since the last UNODC global ATS assessment in 2008, several European countries (Austria, Belarus, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland and Portugal)

have reported seizing illicit methamphetamine laboratories for the first time. Seizures of methamphetamine more than doubled between 2008 and 2009, from 323 kg to 697 kg.

'Designer drugs' increasingly available on established ATS markets. There are new synthetic substances such as mephedrone or methylenedioxypyrovalerone (MDPV) sold as 'bath salts' or 'plant food' on the market in Europe, North America and Oceania. These substances are not controlled by the United Nations drug control Conventions.

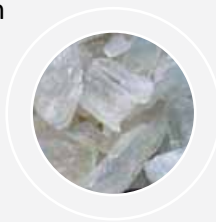
Europe: seizures of methamphetamine 2005-2009



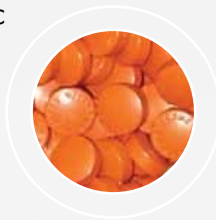
Source: UNODC ARQ/DELTA

Regional overviews

Oceania. Australia and New Zealand continue to be significant markets for ATS. Seizures of ATS laboratories (mostly methamphetamine) are at a high in Australia. Due to a shortage of precursor chemicals the purity of ecstasy has dropped which led to an increase in illicit trafficking into the region mainly sourced from Canada. In New Zealand, synthetic cannabis-like products e.g. spice were banned on 16 August 2011 for a period of 12 months. ATS use among young people aged 12-25 years in Pacific Island States and territories is increasing. In the region the usage of ATS is higher among men except in Australia, Solomon Islands and Tokelau where mostly women abuse the drug.



East and South-East Asia. China, Myanmar and the Philippines remain the major manufacturing countries within the region. Indonesia, Malaysia and, to a lesser extent, Cambodia are now reporting ATS manufacture. Since 2008, there has been an increase in methamphetamine trafficking from the Islamic Republic of Iran and West African countries. A new trafficking route for methamphetamine has emerged in the Greater Mekong subregion. An increasing dimension of injecting ATS use can be observed in the region.



South Asia. In South Asia, illicit ATS manufacturing facilities are dismantled regularly. India has a large chemical industry which makes the region vulnerable for exploitation by drug trafficking organizations. In Sri Lanka a Precursor Control Authority was established. Since no comprehensive assessment on the ATS situation has been undertaken by the various countries the true extent of ATS use and manufacture within the region is unknown.

West Asia and the Middle East. A third of the world's amphetamine is seized within the region. Amphetamine is often sold as *Captagon* but the origin of these pills is unknown. There have been no Government reports about the manufacture of methamphetamine except from the Islamic Republic of Iran. Lately methamphetamine has been smuggled out of the Islamic Republic of Iran to South-East Asia and the Pacific. Several countries have high requirements of ATS precursors which makes them vulnerable to possible diversion of the chemicals to illicit markets. The first ephedrine seizure (245 kg) in Pakistan in April 2011 may point to a growing problem within the region.

Europe. Methamphetamine is increasingly present on European markets. First time seizures of illicit methamphetamine laboratories have been reported from Austria, Belarus, Lithuania, Netherlands, Poland and Portugal. The appearance of synthetic stimulant substances such as mephedrone and benzylpiperazine (BZP) constitutes a worrying new trend in Europe. Manufacturing of amphetamine expanded from North West Europe to Poland and the Baltic states. There was a reduction in ecstasy manufacture due to the shortage of the precursor chemical piperonylmethylketone sourced from China due to stricter controls.

Africa. The highest number of ATS laboratories dismantled are in South Africa, where mostly methamphetamine and methcathinone are manufactured. Evidence of methamphetamine manufacture in West Africa emerged in June 2011 when a methamphetamine laboratory was seized in Lagos, Nigeria. Since 2008, methamphetamine believed to have originated from West Africa has been seized in several East Asian countries such as Japan and the Republic of Korea. A sizeable proportion of methamphetamine seized in Japan was suspected to have originated in Africa.

North America. Canada and the USA remain important ATS markets with an increasing number of laboratories being dismantled. Increased ecstasy seizures have been reported along the US-Canada border. Seizures of ecstasy made in Asian countries and Oceania are allegedly reported to originate from Canada. Substances marketed as 'bath salts' (Mephedrone and methylenedioxypropylvalerone (MDPV)) are a cause for concern in the USA. On September 7, 2011 an emergency ban for a period of 12 months was issued by the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration on three chemicals contained in 'bath salts'. Mexico reported increases in seizures of methamphetamine laboratories including the largest seizure of precursor chemicals used for its manufacture.

Central and South America. An increase in seizures of ecstasy pills and methamphetamine pills was reported from Brazil. In addition a growing number of laboratories were dismantled in Argentina, Guatemala and Nicaragua. In Peru, lifetime use of ecstasy has increased and seems to have exceeded that of cocaine. Since the traditional focus within the region is on cocaine and cannabis and due to a lack of data on ATS, it is likely that the true situation is underreported.

'Bath salts'- the new synthetic drugs challenge

Substances sold as 'bath salts' are the latest addition to a growing list of a new synthetic stimulants, which are often sold and marketed as legal substances under names such as "Aura" or "Ivory Wave". In late 2010, these substances emerged in the United States and their use has proliferated in recent months. 'Bath salts' are offered online or by retail outlets. Products are often labeled 'not fit for human consumption' in an attempt to circumvent existing legislation.



Composition of bath salts.

Synthetic cathinones are central nervous system stimulants similar to cathinone, the substance found in the leaves of the khat plant (*catha edulis*). A number of synthetic cathinones have gained popularity as 'legal highs' due to their availability over the internet and through so called head-shops. These include methylmethcathinone (mephedrone), butylone, 4-methyl-N-ethylcathinone (4-MEC), 4-fluorocathinone and 3,4-methylenedioxypyrovalerone (MDPV). Some of these synthetic cathinones, particularly MDPV and mephedrone, have been marketed as bath-salts.



Origin and distribution. The origin of 'bath salts' is unknown but there are indications that the supply originates from China, India or Pakistan. Packaging for wholesale distribution seems to occur in Europe, mainly through the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, highlighting Europe's role as a transit point. The Internet plays an important role as a marketplace for the substances as well as a forum for exchanging information about the substances' effects.

Legal issues. None of the substances usually found in 'bath salts' are controlled by the United Nations drug control Conventions, however several Governments have taken action to prevent the distribution and use of 'bath salts'. In

Canada, mephedrone is regulated under the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. In EU countries and Switzerland as well as Australia and New Zealand, mephedrone has been a controlled substance since 2011. In the United States, many States have intro-

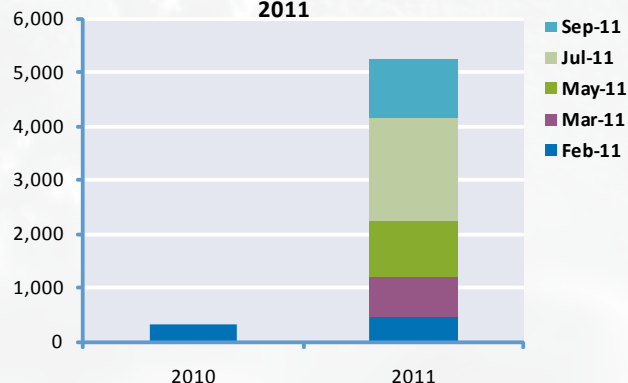
duced legislation banning mephedrone or/and MDPV including Alabama, Florida, Hawaii, Kentucky, Louisiana, New York and North Dakota. Early in 2011, two bills were filed in the US Congress targeting a nationwide ban on 'bath salts'. Due to the imminent hazard posed by mephedrone, MDPV and methylone the US Drug Enforcement Agency used its emergency scheduling authority on 7 September 2011. On 21 October 2011 a Final Order was published in the Federal Register which designated these chemicals for at least one year as Schedule I substances (not accepted for medical use in the United States).

Use. 'Bath salts' are sold in powder and crystalline form and are taken orally, by inhalation, or by injection. Since these substances are relatively new, the knowledge beyond the psychoactive ingredients of 'bath salts' is very limited, which also means that short- and long-term effects are unknown. The American Association

of Poison Control Centers counted 5,226 calls related to bath salts from January to the end of September 2011, up from 303 calls during 2010. In 2010, a UK survey on drug use of persons frequenting night clubs conducted by the National Addiction Center found that the use of mephedrone ranked behind ecstasy and cocaine and had been tried by a third of the respondents. A group of British criminologists has suggested that the popularity of mephedrone is related to

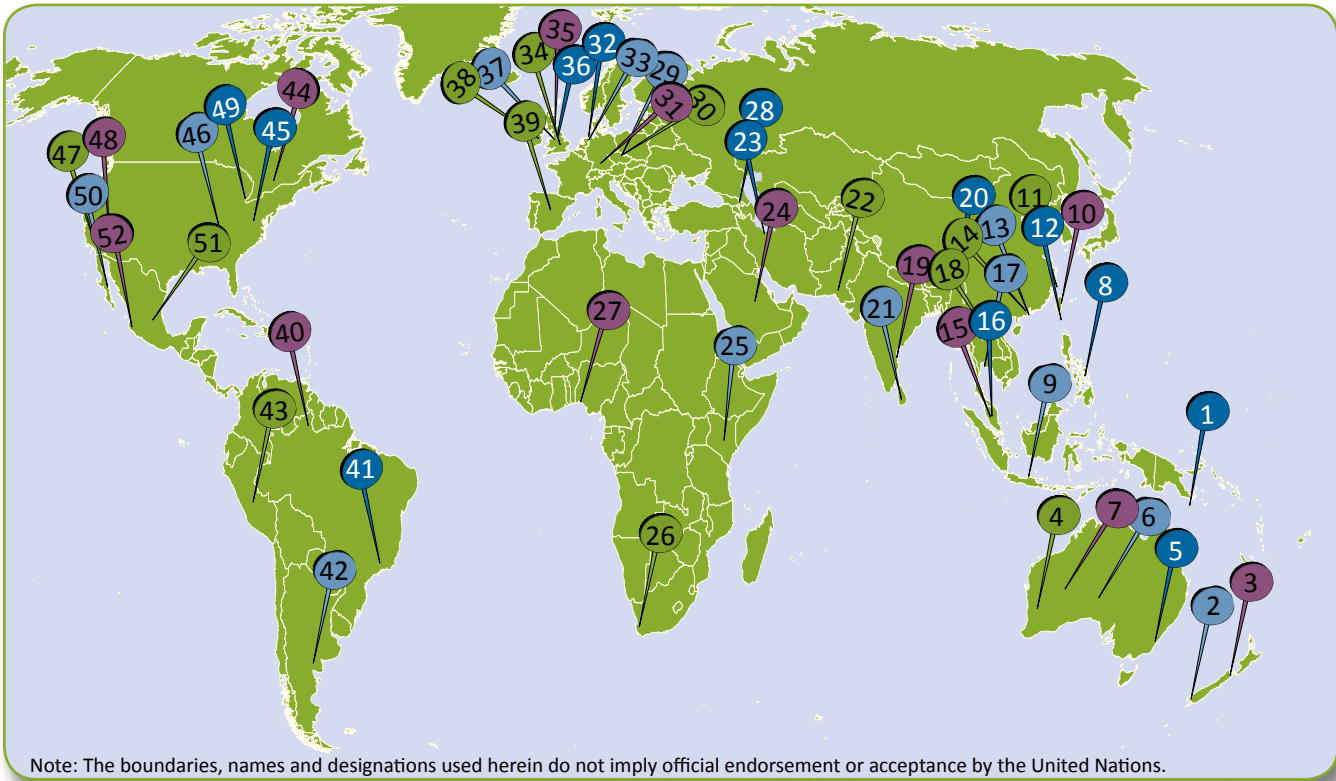
the reduced availability and purity of cocaine and ecstasy (Drugs and Alcohol Today, March 2010). This is supported by the results of the British Crime Survey 2011 which shows that mephedrone is as popular as cocaine among teenagers and young adults (see segment no 37 of this issue). Both mephedrone and MDPV have been associated with fatalities.

USA: Number of exposure to 'bath salts', 2010-September 2011



Source: American Association of Poison Control Centers, the term "exposure" means someone has had contact with the substance in some way; for example, ingested, inhaled, absorbed by the skin or eyes, etc. Not all exposures are poisonings or overdoses.

Regions covered in this issue



Global SMART segments are arranged based on regional threat. Oceania has among the highest prevalence rates for ATS use in the world, while the number of ATS users are greatest in East Asia. Therefore, the map and corresponding index of segments begins with recent events from Oceania and East Asia and then moves geographically westward. The numbered pins on the map above correspond with the index of segments below.

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High ATS use among young Pacific islanders

PACIFIC – February 2011. The Marshall Islands (15.4% men and 10.5% women) and Vanuatu (12.3% men and 3.4% women) have some of the highest use of ATS, according to a study conducted by the Australian National Drug and Alcohol Research Center of the University of New South Wales. The study examined ATS use of young people aged 12 to 25 within the Pacific region. Use of ATS on some islands is higher than in Australia (1.4% men and 2.9% women) and in New Zealand (0.5% to 1.1% in total). In Australia, Solomon Islands and Tokelau, ATS use is higher among women than among men.



Source: DEA

Synthetic cannabis-like products banned in New Zealand

NEW ZEALAND – 16 August 2011. Legislation banning 43 synthetic cannabis products came into effect on 16 August 2011, for a period of 12 months. Import, export, manufacture, supply or selling any of the listed substances or products containing these substances is illegal and can be punished with imprisonment, in addition to a USD 850 fine. Use and possession of less than 56 grams of any products is allowed. The ban is an interim measure while the Government is working on a complete overhaul of the Misuse of Drugs Act.

New Zealand: pseudoephedrine preparations seizure prevents manufacture of methamphetamine worth USD 10 million

AUCKLAND, New Zealand – 5 May 2011. In a joint operation of the Auckland Police and New Zealand Customs, three Chinese nationals have been arrested with 68 kg of pharmaceutical preparations containing pseudoephedrine (Contac NT) after a month-long operation. The seizure is the largest precursor seizure made by New Zealand Police in 2011. New Zealand Police estimate that between 13 kg and 20 kg of methamphetamine could have been manufactured with this quantity, with a market value of at least USD 10 million.

Australia: record safrole seizure (288 lt)

SYDNEY, Australia – 22 September 2011. The Australian Federal Police and the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service have dismantled a criminal organization in Sydney and have potentially stopped more than 2.3 million ecstasy pills from hitting the illicit markets. Three men were arrested following a seizure of about 288 lt of safrole, a precursor chemical frequently used in the illicit manufacture of ecstasy. The precursor was concealed in more than 2800 lt of safrole oil, labeled as liquid hair and cleaning products imported from China. The quantity of safrole was enough of the banned chemical to manufacture almost 235 kg of ecstasy with an estimated street-value of more than USD 73 million.

Malaysian methamphetamine trafficking organization dismantled in Australia

SYDNEY, Australia – 9 August 2011. Five members of a drug trafficking organization were arrested with 2 kg of crystalline methamphetamine and charged with illicit trafficking following a joint investigation of the New South Wales State Crime Command's Asian Crime Squad, the Australian Federal Police and the New South Wales Crime Commission. In February 2011, an operation was launched to investigate potential trafficking of crystalline methamphetamine from Malaysia to Australia. The Malaysian nationals were travelling to Australia to supervise the establishment of the distribution network for the drug in Sydney, Melbourne and Queensland.

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Source: DEA

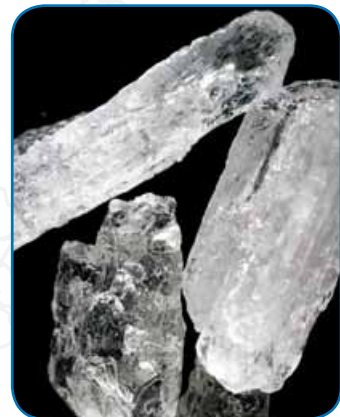
Ecstasy use declines in Australia

AUSTRALIA – 27 July 2011. According to the National Drug Strategy Household Survey Report 2010, there has been a significant decline in ecstasy use between 2007 and 2010 among males from 4.4% to 3.6% and among young Australians aged 14-19 years from 5% to 2.8%. Ecstasy is the second most used illicit drug after cannabis with 3% of people aged 14 years and older having used the drug in 2010. It is estimated that the composition or the quality of the pill is one of the factors which influenced the decreased use among this group. Use of methamphetamine and ketamine is reported as being stable.

6

Methamphetamine market in Australia remains stable

AUSTRALIA – 14 April 2011. The methamphetamine market remains stable and faces a decreasing demand, according to the Australian Crime Commission Report 2011. Most of the methamphetamine is manufactured locally and levels of manufacture are reported as being stable. Some forms of methamphetamine and precursor chemicals are smuggled by criminal groups from the Middle East, Eastern Europe, West Africa and South-East Asia. Precursor chemicals needed for the manufacture of methamphetamine continue to be detected at the border mostly sourced from China, Thailand, Cambodia and India.



Source: DEA

7



Source: DEA

Philippines: 5 out of 50 bus drivers use methamphetamine

TACLOBAN CITY, Philippines – 25 April 2011. Five out of 50 Philippine bus drivers in Eastern Visayas were tested positive for methamphetamine hydrochloride. The Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency, in cooperation with the regional Land Transportation Office, took random urine samples in order to test the bus drivers on prohibited drug use. It was found that mostly the bus drivers, who drive the route between the provinces and Metro Manila, use methamphetamine to stay awake during the long journeys which can last up to 22 hours.*

8

9 kg methamphetamine seized - Increasing number of smuggling attempts at Jakarta's Airport

JAKARTA, Indonesia – 25 May 2011. Custom officers have foiled three attempts to smuggle drugs from Malaysia into Indonesia at Soekarno-Hatta International Airport, seizing a total of 9 kg crystalline methamphetamine. In one attempt, the three suspects flew in from Kuala Lumpur and officers found 3 kg of crystalline methamphetamine wrapped in food containers. All three suspects reportedly were offered USD 230 to 330 as well as a holiday in Jakarta. Drug seizures have reportedly been on the rise in 2011. Since January 2011, Customs have seized a total of 36 kg crystalline methamphetamine, 28 kg ketamine and 10,140 ecstasy pills, and arrested 27 people.*

Taipei City: nimetazepam (Erimin 5) seizure covering the demand of 100.000 users

TAIPEI, China – 23 September 2011. More than 2 million tablets of nimetazepam (410 kg) were seized in a joint operation of the Criminal Investigation Bureau (CIB) and the Taoyuan County Police Department. Nimetazepam is a benzodiazepine derivate controlled in Schedule IV of the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances. Three suspects were arrested for engaging in manufacturing illicit drugs in the Xinzhuang District of Taipei City. It was one of the largest seizures of illicit drugs in recent year. The drugs are estimated to have a street value of around USD 10 million and could have met the demand of 100,000 users, according to CIB officials.



Source: DEA

China: international drug smuggling ring uncovered

TAIWAN, China – 7 September 2011. The Criminal Investigation Bureau, with assistance of counterparts in New Zealand and Japan, detained 17 key suspects in a Taiwan-based illicit drug smuggling ring, which was operating in seven countries and regions in the past decade. The group dispatched people to Thailand and the Netherlands to smuggle amphetamine and ecstasy pills into destinations in East Asia and Oceania (Australia, New Zealand). The pills were usually hidden in original food product containers which were sealed with specialized equipment. The organization managed to smuggle hundreds of kilogram of drugs with an estimated street value in excess of USD 70 million.

Health risks of ketamine highlighted in scientific study

TAIWAN, China – March 2011. Urinary tract dysfunction, which could result in renal failure and dialysis, is one of the long-term effects highlighted in an article published in the scientific journal "Substance Abuse and Rehabilitation". The most noted ketamine-related effects in South-East Asia are lower urinary tract dysfunction and sexual impulse or violence. The study reviews the pharmacological and toxicological effects of ketamine and concludes that the negative effects of ketamine have been underestimated. It calls for more clinical research on the risks and benefits of ketamine.



Source: DEA

13



Source: Lithuania national focal point

Synthetic substances banned in Hong Kong

HONG KONG, China – 1 April 2011. The Dangerous Drugs Ordinance Order 2011 and the Control of Chemicals Ordinance Order 2011 came into effect on 1 April 2011. The Orders ban three types of synthetic substances: derivatives of piperazine, synthetic cannabinoids and derivatives of cathinone. Illicit trafficking and manufacture are liable to a maximum penalty of USD 5 million and life imprisonment. Use or possession of any of the above mentioned substances entails a maximum penalty of USD 1 million and imprisonment of seven years.

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Ketamine trafficking organization dismantled

HONG KONG, China – 17 March 2011. Hong Kong Customs seized 49 kg of ketamine, small quantities of cocaine and nimetazepam, a benzodiazepine controlled in Schedule IV of the 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances, as well as three cars used for drug trafficking. The ketamine was concealed among foodstuffs, beverages, inside packets of tea leaves and body concealments. Eleven people, aged between 17 and 39, were arrested for drug trafficking.

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Malaysia: more than 679 kg of methamphetamine seized in 2011

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia – 20 October 2011. More than 679 kg of methamphetamine ('syabu'), valued at about USD 54 million have been seized in the first 10 months of 2011, according to the Bukit Aman Narcotics Crime Investigation Department. Methamphetamine accounts for the bulk of the drugs seized, followed by heroin (470kg). In addition, almost 2 million of nimetazepam pills (known as 'Erimin 5') were seized in Malaysia in 2011.*

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Malaysia: Iranian concealed 81 kg of methamphetamine in carpets

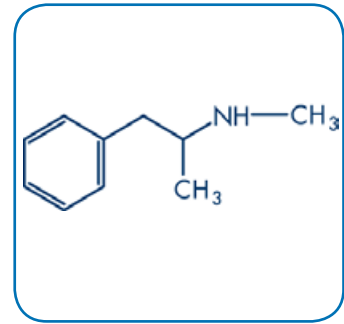
SHAH ALAM, Malaysia – 24 March 2011. The police seized 58 packets of crystalline methamphetamine (81 kg) in West Port, Port Klang from a container, which was carrying furniture and carpets. A 32-year-old Iranian man was arrested. To avoid detection during scanning, packets were wrapped in carbon paper that were hidden in 11 rolled carpets. This was the first trafficking attempt from Iran (Islamic Republic of) and might be connected to the stricter checks at Kuala Lumpur International Airport.*



Source: Malaysian National News Agency

Thailand transit point for drug trafficking to Asian countries

BANGKOK, Thailand – 11 April 2011. A joint operation between Thailand's Narcotics Suppression Bureau, the Immigration Police and the Special Branch Police, led to the arrest of an Iranian national at Suvarnabhumi Airport. The man, travelling from Abu Dhabi, attempted to smuggle 7 kg of crystalline methamphetamine (USD 660,000) via Thailand to Malaysia. The drug was divided in 13 bags concealed in a laptop, an aerosol spray can and electrical appliances. Thailand might be used as a transit point before delivering drugs to other Asian countries.



Source: EMCDDA

17

Spillover of Myanmar methamphetamine into Thailand

PHITSANULOK, Thailand – 9 March 2011. Some 2.6 million pills of methamphetamine and 102 kg of crystalline methamphetamine were seized at Phu Soi-dao National Park (north Thailand), the result of a joint operation of the Border Patrol Police and the Provincial Police in Phitsanulok. The suspects, believed to be members of major drug trafficking organization, escaped. Since 2007, seizures of methamphetamine pills and crystalline methamphetamine have grown due to increased manufacture from Myanmar.

18

Chennai: transit point for ephedrine smuggling

CHENNAI, India – 27 June 2011. Chennai reportedly has become a transit point for ephedrine. While in 2000, nine out of ten drug-related trafficking cases were associated with heroin, in 2011, six out of eight cases were related to ephedrine, according to the Narcotics Control Bureau, with total seizures of nearly 100 kg. Ephedrine, which is widely available in India, is being smuggled out to markets in South-East Asia through Chennai. Ephedrine is a precursor for methamphetamine but is also used for its stimulant effect.*



Source: AODS

19

Ephedrine-smuggling in India, linked to militant activities?

KHOIJUMAN (Manipur), India – 4 April 2011. A 32-year old male resident of Manipur was arrested on charges of attempting to smuggle 200 kg of ephedrine to Myanmar and China. The ephedrine was found in 20 cardboard boxes, packed in small packs of 500 grams each. He and his associate, who is suspected to be involved with a banned terrorist organization, have smuggled ephedrine weighing 260 kg and 160 kg respectively on two other occasions. Police claims that the militants from the region are trafficking drugs to finance their activities.

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Sri Lanka: Precursor Control Authority established

SRI LANKA – 3 January 2011. The National Dangerous Drugs Control Board established a precursor control authority which started operating on 3 January 2011. Some of the major duties carried out by the authority include issuing licenses for importers, exporters, dealers and end-users of precursor chemicals, issuing licenses for the storage premises of precursor chemicals, monitoring proper transport and distribution, analyzing samples, making inspections and holding periodical awareness programs for the relevant parties. Copies of regulations applying to precursors are available online at: <http://www.nddcb.gov.lk/Precursor.html>



Source: Karachi Port Control Unit

Pakistan: first seizure of ephedrine (245 kg)

KARACHI, Pakistan – 28 April 2011. The first reported seizure of ephedrine (245 kg) in Pakistan was made by the Karachi Port Control Unit during a routine profiling of a container destined for Australia. The consignment was thought to contain various spices such as red chilli powder, coriander powder and baryani masala. The white crystalline powder, hidden in foil sachets, were discovered in packets of chilli powder. Ephedrine is frequently used as a precursor chemical for the manufacture of methamphetamine.

Major drug trafficking organization uncovered in the Islamic Republic of Iran

TEHRAN, Iran (Islamic Republic of) – 30 May 2011. The anti-narcotics squad of Iran's Law Enforcement Police discovered a major international gang involved in smuggling crystalline methamphetamine in the capital Tehran, after four months of intelligence work. More than 270 kg of the drug was seized and several groups of smugglers were arrested. The drugs were manufactured in home laboratories and subsequently shipped to Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand. Investigation into the drug trafficking networks is ongoing, in cooperation with police in Malaysia, Indonesia and Thailand.*

Saudi Arabia: gliders used in Captagon trafficking

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia – 28 September 2011. More than 700,000 pills of Captagon were seized off a motor glider in the north of Saudi Arabia, according to a spokesman of the Ministry of Interior. The pills were kept in three bags inside the glider. One person was arrested in connection with the seizure. This is the first time motor gliders are being used for criminal drug-related activities. Saudi Arabia reports the highest quantities of amphetamine seizures in the world, most of which are made in the form of Captagon.

Amphetamines used in Kenyan public schools

NAIROBI, Kenya – 29 March 2011. The lifetime use of amphetamines and mandrax (methaqualone) in secondary schools in Nairobi is 2.6%, compared to 1.6% of students having used it within the last six months. The National Alcohol and Drug Abuse Report 2011 of the National Campaign against Drug Abuse Authority highlights substance use in public schools, with cannabis being the most frequently used illicit drug. A total of 773 students were interviewed for the study. A good school environment was found as being essential to minimize the risk of drug abuse. Schools could also assist in identifying students with drug problems for receiving treatment.

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Source: National Institute of Health (Cape Town)

Study reviews effects of methamphetamine on brain

CAPE TOWN, South Africa – March/April 2011. A study by the National Institute of Health in Cape Town on possible brain changes from methamphetamine showed that normal controls on impulsivity to act out are lacking and there is a loss of self-control or inhibition. Subjects were examined using magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) and functional MRI, which measures blood flow and metabolic changes. The research may help scientists understand how substance abuse changes the brain in a way that makes further abuse more likely and why early intervention with drug users may be crucial.

26

NDLEA dismantles first illicit methamphetamine lab in West Africa

LAGOS, Nigeria – June 2011. The National Drug Law Enforcement Agency has uncovered a clandestine laboratory for the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine. Manufacture took place at a three bedroom bungalow located on the outskirts of Lagos at Iba, Ojo. The owner and one worker have been arrested in connection with the illicit drug manufacture center. This is the first methamphetamine laboratory that has ever been dismantled in West Africa.



Source: National Drug Law Enforcement Agency

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Georgia: increase in home-made stimulants

TBILISI, Georgia – August 2011. Home-made stimulants prepared from pharmaceutical preparations containing pseudoephedrine, ephedrine or phenylpropanolamine, which are available from pharmacies without a prescription, are replacing the use of subutex (buprenorphine), according to a report published by the Georgia office of the Global Initiative on Psychiatry Foundation. The final injectable product contains methamphetamine (known as “vint”) or methcathinone (known as “jeff”). Treatment centers have reported an increase in the number of persons whose principal drugs were home-made stimulants. Drug use data is very limited in Georgia as no survey on drug use has ever been conducted in the general population, neither nationwide nor limited to some city or area.

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Czech Republic: drug law amended to ban 33 substances

PRAGUE, Czech Republic – 22 April 2011. A presidential amendment to the drug law became effective on 22 April 2011, banning 33 substances most of which have no therapeutic uses. The substances include butylone, flephedrone, mephedrone, methylone and synthetic cannabinoids. Since late 2010, these 'designer drugs', which are believed to originate in China, have been smuggled into the country from Poland.

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Source: Policie ČR

Czech Republic: methamphetamine and organized crime

PRAGUE, Czech Republic – 23 February 2011. The Czech Police Force seized 9 kg of methamphetamine (pervitin) from a Vietnamese man. The drug was packed in small plastic packages in a sports bag. In addition, the police confiscated a submachine gun as well as Czech and foreign currency of approximately USD 100,000. The Police believe that they arrested an important member of a well-organized drug trafficking organization.

30

Germany: report shows significant increase in methamphetamine seizures and use

WIESBADEN, Germany – 24 March 2011. The newly released report of the German Federal Criminal Police Office shows that, in 2010, the number of users of amphetamine and crystalline methamphetamine who came to the attention of the police for the first-time increased by 11% and by 76% respectively. Sixteen illegal laboratories, mostly for the manufacture of methamphetamine, were dismantled and, for the first time, a laboratory manufacturing synthetic cannabinoids, was uncovered. Whereas seizures of amphetamines decreased for the first time after eight years, total seizures of crystalline methamphetamine rose from 7 kg to 27 kg.



Source: UNODC

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European pact against synthetic drugs

LUXEMBOURG – 27 October 2011. The Council of the European Union adopted a European pact against synthetic drugs which sets out guidelines for the future approach concerning legislation and the EU anti drugs strategy to be followed by Member States, the European Commission and relevant EU agencies. Overall, the pact aims to combat illicit manufacture and trafficking of synthetic drugs and precursors and provide law enforcement services with specialized training on detecting, investigating and dismantling clandestine laboratories. In addition, the pact highlights the need to improve information exchange and strengthen coordination of different actions in this area, such as investigations and operational activities in cooperation with Europol, Eurojust or national asset recovery offices. The pact also calls for the European Drugs Profiling System, which was launched in 2010, and its database to be fully used to integrate forensic profiling in intelligence and law enforcement operations.

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European Union: new survey on the use of psychoactive substances released

BRUSSELS, Belgium – July 2011. Young people from Ireland were the most likely to say they have used new psychoactive substances that imitate the effects of illicit drugs (16%), according to the latest Eurobarometer survey on youth attitudes on drugs. The survey was carried out in May 2011, among over 12,000 randomly selected young people aged 15-24 across the 27 States members of the European Union. In the UK, Latvia and Poland, self-reported use of these substances was close to 10%. Responses should be interpreted with caution as the category could be understood to encompass a great variety of substances. A slim majority (54%) of respondents reported having obtained the substance from a friend, 36% reported having been offered such substances at a party or in a club.

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UK: drug alert over 'rockstar' pills

FOLKESTONE (KENT), United Kingdom – 27 October 2011. Blue pills known as 'rockstars' are circulating in Kent targeting adolescents with the age group of 15 to 18. These pills carry an "R" or star logo. They are understood to be selling for up to USD 16 and came to the attention of the Kent Police after a 15-year-old boy was arrested on suspicion of possessing a drug with intent to supply. Users have been warned that the pills are known to cause excessive teeth grinding and have led to hospitalisation as a result of severe stomach pains. It is not yet known if the pills are linked to red/ pink 'rockstar' pills which have been available in some ATS markets in the United Kingdom and are believed to contain MDMA.*

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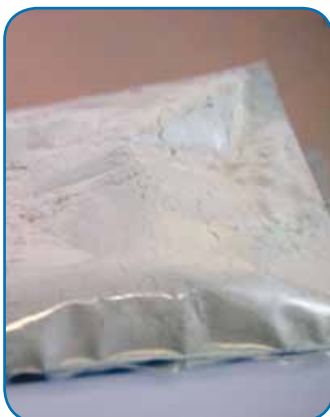
Scottish police issues warning over PMMA

SCOTLAND, United Kingdom – 28 July 2011. Police are warning drug users about the dangers of a paramethoxymethylamphetamine that is circulating in Scotland. The stimulant substance is available on illicit markets in powder form and pills that look like ecstasy, are pink with a Rolex Crown logo, or are white with a four-leaf clover logo. The warning comes at a time when MDMA, the active ingredient in ecstasy tablets, is making a comeback to the drug scene.



Source: SUST

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Source: CNB Singapore

UK: mephedrone as widely used as cocaine

UNITED KINGDOM – 28 July 2011. Mephedrone is as popular as cocaine, among younger adults aged 16 to 24, according to the newly released British Crime Survey. 4.4% report having used mephedrone in the past 12 months, putting mephedrone use at a similar level with powder cocaine. The vast majority of those who said they had taken mephedrone in the past year were existing drug users rather than new users. The research also highlights a rise in the use of ketamine. Concerns about the sale of mephedrone were first raised by the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs in 2009.

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UK review on ketamine highlights adverse effects

LONDON, United Kingdom – 21 July 2011. A review on ketamine shows that it can be addictive, with psychological and physical implications, such as the ketamine-induced ulcerative cystitis and serious impairment in the short and long-term memory. The review, which was carried out on behalf of the Independent Scientific Committee on Drugs, examined existing data and found that the number of ketamine users had increased to 113,000 in 2008/2009, up from 85,000 in 2006/2007. Similarly, a survey of people visiting dance venues in 2001 found that 25% had taken ketamine, a percentage which increased to 68% in a comparable survey carried out in 2009.

Ireland: first seizure of crystal methamphetamine in Dublin

DUBLIN, Ireland – 28 September 2011. About 2.5 kgs of crystal methamphetamine were seized at Dublin Airport, in a joint operation of Irish Tax and Customs with the Garda National Immigration Bureau. The drugs, valued at approximately USD 350,000, were concealed in the frames of two suitcases. A 39-year old man who had arrived at Dublin Airport from Lesotho in Africa was arrested. The seizure is reportedly the first seizure of crystal methamphetamine at the capital's airport and the largest methamphetamine seizure since July 2008, when law enforcement agencies seized almost 5 kg of methamphetamine powder in Birr, County Offaly.

Largest ever pill pressing facility dismantled in Spain

MADRID, Spain – 25 October 2011. National Police agents in Madrid have arrested five members of a group engaged in the processing and trafficking of various synthetic drugs. A pill press was seized at a site in central Madrid which reportedly has a capacity of pressing about 7,000 pills per hour, which would make it the largest pill pressing facility that has ever been dismantled in Spain. The police also seized 6,500 pills of 2C-I (2,5-dimethoxy-4-iodophanethylamine) which had been pressed in the machine as well as 350 grams of metylone (3,4-methylenedioxy-N-methylcathinone), a substance closely related to MDMA. In addition, several materials frequently used in the illicit manufacture of synthetic drugs such as precision scales, colouring agents as well as templates for logos used in pill pressing operations were found at the site.*



Source: Polícia Federal

Brazil Police seize 18,700 methamphetamine pills

BOA VISTA, Brazil – 27 July 2011. The Federal Police arrested two people at a checkpoint located at the Bridge of Macuxis, near Boa Vista, carrying nearly 18,700 pills of methamphetamine, which were hidden in plastic bags inside the car. Investigation had started after two seizures in February and June 2011 at the airport in Bethlehem, with the traffickers saying that they received the pills in Boa Vista. Several arrests took place including a taxi driver and a Surinamese national who are both from Bonfim, located at the border of Guyana.



Source: Polícia Federal

Brazil: first seizure of synthetic drug at Guarulhos Airport

SAO PAULO, Brazil – 14 June 2011. In coordination with Portuguese Police, the Federal Police confiscated 9 kg of methamphetamine, 3 kg of LSD, and 2 kg of cannabis resin at the Airport of Guarulhos. Several arrests were made in connection with the seizure. This marks the first seizure of synthetic drugs using the smuggling route to Brazil via Guarulhos International Airport in 2011.

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Argentina: ecstasy availability declines, according to new study

ARGENTINA – June 2011. Fewer people report having been offered ecstasy, according to research undertaken by the Argentine Drugs Observatory. Only 3.3% of the population aged 16-65 reported having been offered ecstasy, compared to 7.1% in 2006. Although the perceived risk of ecstasy has been slightly decreasing since 2006, still more than 70% of the population consider its use as harmful. However, 2.8% believe that occasional use of ecstasy has no risk, which is more than double compared with figures in 2006.

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Source: Collier County Sheriff's Office, Florida, US

Ecstasy use rises among Peru's young population

PERU – 11 March 2011. According to a study by the Center for Drug Abuse Information and Education (Cedro) of Peru, the use of ecstasy has increased over the years. Between the age of 12 to 64 were interviewed for the study. It is estimated that around 203,139 Peruvians (1.53%) have used ecstasy pills at some point, with the highest users being between 12 and 18 years old. The price of ecstasy has also decreased to between USD 8 and USD 15 per pill compared with USD 30 in previous years.

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Canada: methamphetamine abuse may increase risk of Parkinson disease

TORONTO, Canada – 26 July 2011. People who abuse various ATS such as methamphetamine are 76% more likely to develop Parkinson disease. This is the result of a new study from the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health where almost 300,000 hospital records of patients from California over a time period of 16 years were examined. These findings do not apply to patients who take amphetamines for medical purposes, where doses are much lower. The study is among the few studies available examining the long-term association between methamphetamine use and Parkinson disease.



Source: DEA

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Source: DEA

US: 'bath salts' under federal control and regulation

WASHINGTON, D.C., United States of America – 21 October 2011. On 21 October 2011, the United States Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) exercised its emergency scheduling authority and published the final order on 'bath salts' in the Federal Register designating mephedrone, 3,4 methylenedioxypropylvalerone (MDPV) and methylone as Schedule I substances, the most restrictive category. Back in September 2011 the DEA used its emergency scheduling authority to temporarily control these three chemicals. Possessing and selling these chemicals or products that contain them will be illegal for 12 months, with a possible extension of 6 months. In the meantime, the Department of Health and Human Services will consider whether these chemicals should be permanently controlled.

Methamphetamine laboratory seizures rise in Missouri despite pseudoephedrine controls

MISSOURI, United States – 20 August 2011. According to the US Drug Enforcement Administration, a total of 11,239 clandestine methamphetamine laboratory incidents including laboratories, dumpsites, chemical, glass or equipment seizures were reported in 2010. Most of the laboratories (1,917), were dismantled in Missouri, an increase of 10 % compared to the previous year. The rising number might be due to methamphetamine manufacturers successfully circumventing the legal purchase restrictions of pseudoephedrine. Missouri limits the amount of pseudoephedrine tablets people can buy and pharmacies have an electronic tracking system in place showing if people buy more than the legal limit.

USA: 'Project Delirium' results in drug seizures and 23 arrests

SAN DIEGO, United States – 25 July 2011. More than 91 kg of methamphetamine, nearly 91 kg cannabis, 0.5 kg of cocaine and 1.5 kg of heroin were seized during a 15-month operation entitled 'Project Delirium'. The Drug Enforcement Administration also announced the arrests of 23 people from major Mexican drug trafficking organizations who operate between the Mexican and US border together with *La Familia Michoacana*, a Mexican drug trafficking organization based in Michoacan, Mexico.



Source: DEA

Record methamphetamine seizure (95 kg) in Nevada

LAS VEGAS, United States – 12 July 2011. Nevada records the largest seizure of methamphetamine (95 kg) which resulted from a joint investigation of local, state and federal law enforcement within the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Task Force. Apart from the methamphetamine, 2 kg of heroin, approximately USD 280,000, nine vehicles, five handguns and one shotgun were seized and 11 people were arrested.

Significant ecstasy seizure (24 kg) at US-Canada border

DETROIT, United States – 10 May 2011. U.S. Customs and Border Protection officers working at the Detroit Ambassador Bridge seized approximately 24 kg ecstasy (75,812 pills) laced with phencyclidine. Two individuals in a Canadian-plated vehicle arrived at the bridge and declared that they were entering the U.S. to go to Atlanta for a week of shopping and vacation. Using a fiber optic scope, plastic bags containing colored pills which were identified as ecstasy were found.



Source: U.S. Customs and Border Protection

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Source: DEA

US: improved monitoring of illicit methamphetamine intake in urine

CALIFORNIA, United States of America – 30 March 2011. A method was developed in the Addiction Pharmacology Research Laboratory, in cooperation with the University of California, which can estimate changes in methamphetamine use, using non-pharmacologic doses of deuterium-labeled l-methamphetamine. The method, which was tested on 12 participants, reliably detects small, clinically relevant changes in illicit methamphetamine intake from random urine specimens and can be used to quantify patterns of methamphetamine abuse.

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Mexico: record seizure of precursors

QUERETARO, Mexico – 18 July 2011. Military personnel dismantled a large industrial warehouse with 840 mt of precursors used to make methamphetamine, making it one of the largest seizures to date in Mexico. They found 787 mt of phenylacetamide, a precursor of phenylacetic acid which is used in the illicit manufacture of methamphetamine, in the 2,500 m² big warehouse. Some 53 mt of tartaric acid, which is used in purifying d-l methamphetamine, were found as well as 340,000 lt of benzyl chloride. Further isobutyl phenylacetate and methyl phenylacetate were discovered, all of which can be broken down to phenylacetic acid.

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Mexico seizes more than 60 tons of precursors shipped from Shanghai

MANZANILLO, Mexico – 3 June 2011. In a joint action between the Tax Administration Service, the Secretary of the Navy of Mexico and the Attorney General's Office, four containers with more than 60 mt of precursor chemicals were secured on two different ships by Customs staff in the port city of Manzanillo, arriving from Shanghai, China. A total of 31,360 kg of methylamine and 34,848 kg of phenyl ethyl acetate were found. The chemicals, stored in drums, were abandoned in the terminal.



Source: Secretaría de Marina

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Global SMART accomplishments for 2011

The Global SMART (Synthetics Monitoring: Analyses, Reporting and Trends) Programme improves the capacity of targeted Member States to generate, manage, analyze, report and use information on illicit synthetic drugs. The programme launched formal operations in September 2008 in Bangkok. In 2011, the Global SMART Programme has:

- prepared and launched the 2011 Global ATS assessment;
- produced two Global SMART Updates (in English and Spanish);
- presented the latest information related to the global ATS situation at the 54th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in Vienna;
- convened the third annual Global SMART Programme Advisory Group meeting;
- provided substantive input into the 2011 World Drug Report chapter on ATS;
- conducted the third annual regional synthetic drug information workshop in East and South-East Asia;
- including the First Forum on New Drugs organized by EMCDDA;
- organized a two-day pilot technical workshop in March 2011 (Argentina, Chile and Uruguay) and continued SMART activities in the Americas, in close cooperation with the Organization of American States (OAS), Regional workshop Latin America, Sep. 2011;
- disseminated information related to the synthetic drug situation at targeted conferences.

Recent Global SMART Publications

2011 Global ATS Assessment (September 2011)

The report provides a comprehensive and current analysis of the ATS situation worldwide with a special focus on subregional patterns and trends, and highlights the challenges ahead. The report outlines several main developments since the last global assessment was published in 2008, such as the expansion of ATS trade and the increasing threat high criminal profits pose to worldwide security and health.

New Global SMART Publications – coming in November

2011 Patterns and Trends of Amphetamine-Type Stimulants and Other Drugs – Asia and the Pacific (4th quarter 2011)

The report provides detailed data and information on 15 countries in East and South-East Asia, with regional coverage of South Asia and Oceania. The report examines the threat from the illicit manufacture, trafficking and use of ATS from within the region and from neighbouring regions.

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If you have comments on this report, or would like to contribute information that should be considered for future reports, please contact the Global SMART Programme at globalsmart@unodc.org. Information on the Global SMART Programme can be found via the internet at www.unodc.org and www.apaic.org or by contacting UNODC at the Vienna International Centre, P.O. Box 500, A-1400, Vienna, Austria.