

Crime prevention policy	
EU- priority	Drugs (prevention)
Country ROMANIA	
Year 2018 (2016 data)	

1. Overview of the field

Definition of crime(s)

Drug law offences

Drug law offence data are the foundation for monitoring drug-related crime and are also a measure of law enforcement activity and drug market dynamics; they may be used to inform policies.

National drug laws

In Romania, penalties have been linked to the type of drug — ‘risk’ or ‘high risk’ — since 2004 and there are separate concepts of user and addict, according to diagnosis. The latest changes to the Criminal Code, which entered into force on 1 February 2014 reduced several penalty ranges for supply offences. *Drug consumption is forbidden, but no punishment is specified.* In the case of possession for personal use of ‘risk’ drugs, the court can impose a fine or a prison sentence of three months to two years’, while possession of high-risk’ drugs attracts a prison sentence of six months to three years.

A drug user who is convicted of any of these offences can avoid prison by agreeing to attend an integrated assistance programme; the consent of the drug user is a prerequisite for inclusion in such a programme. This has been enabled by, and is clearly defined in, the new Criminal Code (in line with an overall trend in the EU for such offences).

All actions related to the production and sale of ‘risk’ drugs are punishable by two to seven years’ imprisonment, while the range is 5-12 years for ‘high-risk’ drugs. Import or export of ‘risk’ drugs is punishable by 3-10 years’ imprisonment, which in the case of ‘high-risk’ drugs increases to 7-15 years.

Following the emergence of new psychoactive substances (NPS) in Romania in 2009-10, two initiatives were adopted in 2011. The first strengthened the enforcement of various existing laws, such as consumer safety laws and tax laws; the second was a new law penalizing unauthorized supply of any products with potential psychoactive effects, regardless of their intended use. The new law defines the characteristics as well as the procedure for how the supply of such products is to be authorised. Violations of the law are crimes punishable by prison sentences of six months to three years (the sentence is reduced if the psychoactive effects were not actually known to the seller).

Assessment of trends and developments

Reported drug law offences and offenders in Romania – data from National drug report, 2017, National Anti-Drug Agency

In 2016, a total of 7140 people were investigated for drug offences in Romania, which is more than in 2014 and 2015.

In 2016 there were 852 convicted persons, for drug and new psychoactive substance offences, which is less than previous year. This number represents 17,64% of definitive convictions and 2,73% of total convictions at national level.

In 2016, Romanian law enforcement agencies reported a significant increase in the total quantity of illicit substances seized - 3998. Cannabis products remain the primary drugs seized in Romania. In 2016, Romania reported seizure of increased quantities of heroin, cocaine and khat, synthetic stimulants (MDMA and amphetamines).

Prevalence and trends

The prevalence of use of illicit substances among the adult population in Romania increased steadily over the period 2004-16, though it remains low when compared with other European countries. Cannabis remains the most commonly used drug, and its use is concentrated among young adults aged 15-34 years. In 2016, almost twice as many 15- to 34-year-olds than in 2013 indicated that they had used cannabis within the last 12 months. In general, males report cannabis use more frequently than females.

Data from the most recent general population study indicate that about 2.5 % of Romanian adults have tried a new psychoactive substance at least once in their lives, although regular use remains rare and is concentrated among young people.

Drug use among students is reported by the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD), which was conducted in Romania for the fifth time in 2015. These surveys confirm that cannabis is the most prevalent illicit substance among students and indicate that there has been an increase in the lifetime prevalence of cannabis use among 15- to 16-year-old students since 1999. Nevertheless, the prevalence of lifetime use of cannabis among Romanian students is only half the ESPAD average (based on data from 35 countries). The lifetime use of illicit substances other than cannabis and the lifetime use of new psychoactive substances among Romanian students in 2015 were similar to the ESPAD averages. The non-prescribed use of tranquillisers or sedatives and the lifetime use of inhalants were lower than the ESPAD averages.

High-risk drug use and trends

Studies reporting estimates of high-risk drug use can help to identify the extent of the more entrenched drug use problems, while data on first-time entrants to specialised drug treatment centres, when considered alongside other indicators, can inform an understanding of the nature of and trends in high-risk drug use.

The Romanian estimate for the prevalence of high-risk opioid use ranged from 1.05 to 1.77 per 1 000 of the adult population in 2016. The number of people who inject drugs (PWID) in Bucharest was estimated to be close to 10 000 in 2016.

Data from specialised treatment facilities suggest that heroin is the main drug of choice among PWID, as nearly 9 out of 10 PWID entering treatment report it as a primary substance, while around 1 in 20 report a new psychoactive substance as a primary substance of use.

A long-term analysis suggests that the number of heroin users entering treatment in Romania has been decreasing since 2007, while the number of cannabis users has grown since 2013. The increase in cannabis treatment demands might be largely attributable to treatment offered as an alternative to imprisonment for certain categories of offenders.

Approximately 1 out of 10 treatment clients in Romania is female; however, the proportion of females in treatment varies by type of substance used and by programme.

Recent overview of statistics and research

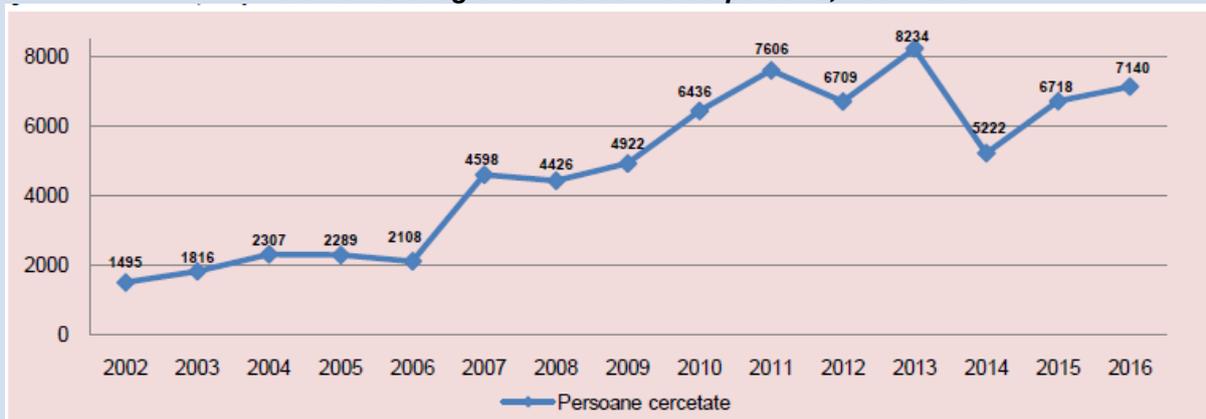
Data from National drug report, 2017, National Anti-Drug Agency

Evolution of drug offences investigated persons, 2002-2016



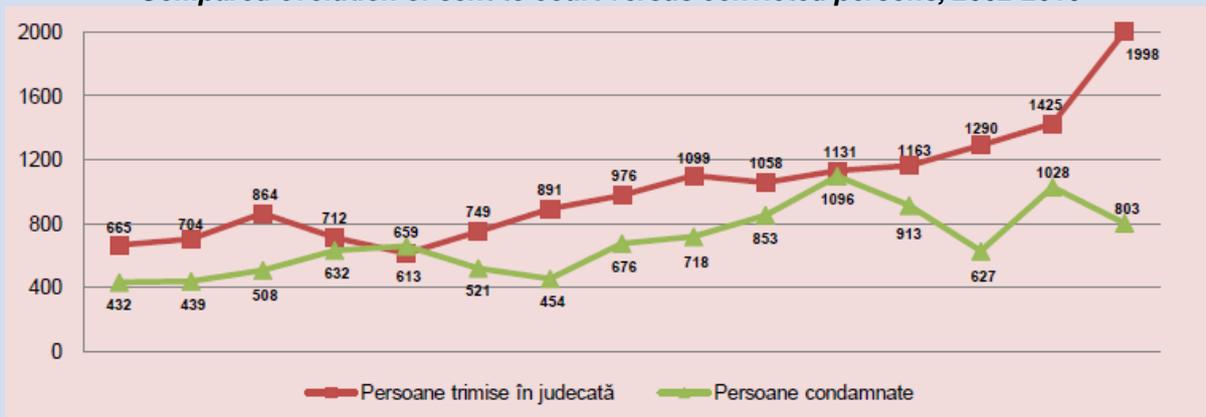
Source: Superior Council of Magistracy

Evolution of drug offences convicted persons, 2001-2016



Source: Superior Council of Magistracy

Compared evolution of sent to court versus convicted persons, 2002-2016



Source: Superior Council of Magistracy, Prosecutor's Office attached to the High Court of Cassation and Justice

The statistics of recent 5 years (2012-2016) shows an oscillating tendency, with highest peaks in 2012 and 2015. Also, compared analyses of indicators related to investigated drug

offences persons versus sent to court drug offences persons reflects a growing tendency, starting 2014, and the highest number of persons sent to court for drug offences. The number of investigated persons reaches the third position in 2016, after 2013 and 2011.

2. Crime strategy and coordination

Objectives of the crime strategy

Reflecting a balanced approach, the National Anti-Drug Strategy is structured around the *two pillars of drug demand reduction and drug supply reduction*. It also contains three cross-cutting themes:

- (i) coordination;
- (ii) international cooperation; and
- (iii) research, evaluation and information.

The National Anti-Drug Strategy has five overarching objectives and is being implemented through two action plans, which address the periods 2013-16 and 2017-20.

Role of prevention in the crime strategy on state/regional/local level

In Romania, the National Anti-Drug Strategy 2013-20 and the specific implementation plans endorse scientific evidence as a basis for the development of the integrated prevention and support system. In order to standardise the activities of drug use prevention, Romania has implemented the European Drug Prevention Quality Standards, as part of the final evaluation of the prevention programmes conducted at national level.

Prevention interventions encompass a wide range of approaches, which are complementary. Environmental and universal strategies target entire populations, selective prevention targets vulnerable groups that may be at greater risk of developing substance use problems and indicated prevention focuses on at-risk individuals.

Implementation of the policy (which level is responsible for the implementation and how the implementation coordinated is?)

The National Anti-Drug Agency, a unit under the remit of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, is the national coordinator on drugs in Romania. In Romania, prevention activities are developed based on the guiding principles outlined in the National Anti-Drug Strategy 2013-20 and the corresponding Action Plans and are coordinated by the National Anti-Drug Agency (NAA).

Activities in this field are primarily implemented by the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research and the NAA's territorial network of 47 Drug Prevention, Evaluation and Counselling Centres, in cooperation with other governmental bodies. Non-governmental organisations are key partners in the implementation of projects at the local level.

Stakeholders (working groups, specialized agencies, partners, etc.)

The National Anti-drug Agency coordinates Romania's Anti-Drug Strategy and the relevant implementing authorities. Supply reduction issues are coordinated by the Directorate for Investigation of Organised Crime and Terrorism.

The National Anti-drug Agency is also responsible for international cooperation between Romanian institutions and foreign organisations and it hosts the Romanian Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction as one of its units.

The National Anti-drug Agency is supported by a scientific committee and has 47 Drug Prevention, Evaluation and Counselling Centres at the local level, six of which are in Bucharest.

Participation in European/ international networks, working groups, etc.

The National Anti-Drug Agency also has the responsibility of ensuring compliance with the *international conventions* and agreements to which Romania is party and proposes to the Government, through the Ministry of Internal Affairs, measures regarding the fulfilment of the obligations arising from the international documents.

The National Anti-drug Agency is also responsible for international cooperation between Romanian institutions and foreign organisations and it hosts the Romanian Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction as one of its units.

3. Good practices

Overview of recent good practices, prevention programs, etc.

In Romania, schools are the primary setting for universal prevention activities. Standard information activities continue to play a significant part in drug use prevention; however, personal skills development and peer-based training modalities are increasingly being incorporated into universal prevention activities. For example, the project **Unplugged**, which focuses on the attitudes and skills of 12- to 14-year-old school children, was implemented in a district of Bucharest, and it was scaled up to the national level. In addition, numerous local school-based projects have been implemented; some provide information and are designed to raise awareness about the consequences of drug use, while others promote alternative leisure activities for pupils.

Family prevention initiatives have mainly been implemented at the local level and aim to increase parents' awareness of substance use risks and to strengthen the protective role of the family; however, although the number of projects in this field shows a constant increase, participation in these activities remains low. Community-based prevention is mainly oriented towards the provision of information about licit and illicit substances through different campaigns.

Selective prevention is mostly targeted at young people in recreational and festival settings, Roma groups, the prison population, people who have used drugs in the past, victims of family violence and young adults leaving care.

Following a successful pilot of the EU-wide project '**Fred goes net**' — an 'early intervention' project aimed at young people who have come to the attention of police, work or school because of drug use — the initiative is now being carried out nationwide in collaboration with drug prevention, evaluation and counselling centres.

