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**Panel on Effective Drug Control Strategies in Northern Cyprus:
Challenges and Opportunities in 2024**

**ANTI-DRUG STRATEGIES AND
THE EXPERIENCE OF THE COUNTER NARCOTICS
DEPARTMENT OF TÜRKİYE**

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Abstract

In recent years the emergence of synthetic drugs called NPS (New Psychoactive Substances) along with the traditional drugs, drug abuse and addiction have become a global problem. To conduct an effective and successful fight against this devastating problem, a common understanding is necessary among all relevant institutions and organizations. Türkiye has significant experience in the fight against drugs due to its geographical location and its multi-dimensional approach. The global nature of this problem necessitates the creation of international ties which are vital to not only access best practises but also to enhance information exchange and create awareness of new challenges. The rapid development of communications and transport has changed the modus operandi of the activities and methods used by criminal drug organizations. The increasing share of illegal drug trafficking in cross-border crimes has led such organizations to cooperate increasingly with similar entities in other countries and regions and even with terrorist organizations enabling drug smuggling rings to procure drugs directly from the production regions and introduce these products directly into the consumer regions. In order to cope with this reality, counter narcotics authorities' strategies are focused on three aspects; Supply, Prevention and Training. In this context, the paper covers current and emerging threats, new challenges, responses, prevention projects and training activities.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the Counter Narcotics Department of Turkish National Police

The Counter Narcotics Department of the Turkish National Police (TNP) was first organized as a bureau in the Public Security Branch in 1937. The Central Branch and 32 provincial branches were established under the Ministry of Interior in 1969. In 1980, the Central Narcotics Division was established within the Anti-Smuggling and Organized Crime Department and following global developments and heightened awareness of emerging threats, the Counter Narcotics Department was established on 5 June 2015 with the approval of the Ministry.

1.2. Organisational Structure

In order to cover all related areas in the fight against drug related crimes and criminals, 12 divisions were established comprising the Information Technology Division, Logistics Support Division, Human Resources Division, Strategy Development Division, Analysis Division, Narcotics Crimes Investigation Division, Fight Against Crime Revenues Division, Technical and Operational Support Division, Turkish Monitoring Centre For Drugs and Drug Addiction (TUBIM), International Relations Division, Narcotics Training Academy, and lastly, the Dog Training Centre.

2. Methods

The research design used for this paper was qualitative in nature as this design is considered best suited to the data needs for this paper. The data was collected through a close reading of associated materials like historical records and departmental reports related to the establishment of the various departments, the drugs supplies and processes, and the counter narcotics strategies developed to fight the drug menace. All materials were collected within the available departmental archives.

3. Supply and Types of Drugs

This section of the paper outlines the types and the supply of the drugs that the Counter Narcotics Department has dealt with.

3.1. Recent Global and National Trends Related to Drugs

3.1.1. Heroin Trafficking Trends

Heroin is a semi-synthetic opioid derived from opium found naturally in the poppy plant. Afghanistan remains the source of the largest quantity of heroin supplied to global drug markets. It is estimated that 80% of the global demand for opiates is met by Afghanistan (UNODC, 2022b).

Among the 50 countries where opium production is reported worldwide in the 2015-2019 period, Afghanistan, Myanmar, and Mexico have the highest production with an estimated 97% (UNODC, 2021, p. 87).

Recently, changes have been observed in the geographical production regions of illicit drugs on a global scale, especially synthetics. The seizure of one tonne of opium in the Canadian port of Vancouver in early 2021 and 2.5 tonnes of opium in a single seizure in the same port in late 2022, and the detection of three heroin production centres in the Netherlands in 2021 (EMCDDA, 2023, p. 10) are important examples. Heroin produced in the laboratories identified in European countries is targeted to European countries and other countries (UNODC, 2022c).

In addition to the identified production sites, a total of 5,730 litres of acetic anhydride, the key precursor chemical of heroin production, was seized in four seizures made by Belgium, Latvia, and the Netherlands. The fact that the production of acetic anhydride, which is the key precursor chemical of heroin production process, occurs in Central and Western European countries is significant in the fight against drugs. This shows that smugglers have easier access to the said chemical and can obtain it cheaply which are considered the main reasons for the start of heroin production in Europe.

The Balkan route¹, the Southern route² and the Northern route³ are still actively used in the smuggling of opiates originating from Afghanistan, mostly heroin, to the countries neighbouring Afghanistan and to the rest of the world. However, a diversification of these main routes has been observed through the side and sub-routes such as the Caucasian Route, Northern Black Sea Route, Eastern Mediterranean Route, Northern Iraq-Syria Route, etc.

The significant contributions (see Table 1) provided by the Turkish Law Enforcement Authorities in the field of international operational cooperation, increased law enforcement measures, and effective controls carried out at our borders have resulted in drug smugglers looking for alternative routes, especially the Southern Route.

Table 1. Amounts of Heroin Seized 2018-2022 in Türkiye

Years	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Heroin/Gram	18.530.894	20.164.800	13.783.315	22.201.638	7.971.825

3.1.2. Trafficking Trends in Cannabis and Derivatives

Cannabis remains the most widely used drug worldwide. Unlike other plant-based drugs, which are concentrated in a limited number of countries, cannabis is produced in almost every region of the world and is the most widely illicitly cultivated and trafficked drug.

In the 2016-2020 period, cannabis seizures continued to be concentrated in North Africa and Western Europe, which together account for around 60% of global trafficking, production, and consumption, as well as South-West Asia, where one-third of the global volume occurs. These regions were followed by the Near and Middle East (UNODC, 2022a, p. 21).

¹ The Balkan Route: For several decades, the most frequently used route for smuggling opiates, including heroin, into Europe has been the Balkan Route, which originates in Afghanistan and passes through Iran, Türkiye, and the Balkan countries before reaching Central and Western Europe.

² The Southern Route: The Southern Route spans from Afghanistan via Pakistan, the Gulf States, and, to some extent, Iran for shipping, before continuing on across South or West Africa to Europe.

³ The Northern Route: A route that connects Afghanistan's northern borders with Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan, ultimately ends in the Russian Federation and Ukraine, where the opiates originating from Afghanistan are transported to illicit drug markets.

In 2020, it is estimated that around 209 million people worldwide used cannabis (UNODC, 2022a, p. 16). In 2021, the amount of cannabis seized in the EU region was the highest in the 10 years (EMCDDA, 2023, p. 16).

Skunk is a type of cannabis obtained by hybridising different types of cannabis seeds (Cannabis Sativa and Cannabis Indica), usually coming to Türkiye from Europe, containing high Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) levels, also known as Hybrid Cannabis, Sinsemilla, and Nederwiet (Dutch Cannabis). However, the latest seizures show that the seeds of Skunk are also seen in Türkiye and attempts to be planted illegally. The amount of cannabis and Skunk seized are as follows (see Table 2 and Table 3).

Table 2. Amounts of Cannabis Seized 2018-2022 in Türkiye

Years	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Cannabis/Gram	69.845.099	64.287.775	87.947.224	58.594.058	63.362.366

Table 3. Amounts of Skunk Seized 2018-2022 in Türkiye

Years	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Skunk/Gram	10.861.618	26.290.884	5.793.997	5.530.939	8.604.844

3.1.3. Cocaine Trafficking Trends

Cocaine, which has a stimulating effect on the central nervous system, is obtained from the leaves of the plant *Erythroxylon Coca*, which grows mostly in Colombia, Peru, and Bolivia which continue to be the countries where the most cocaine is produced.

Analysis of the most recent global data on cocaine production and seizures shows that cocaine production and trafficking are still concentrated in certain regions. However, recently, Latin American drug producers and trafficking groups have increased their cooperation with similar groups outside the continent, and the frequent use of alternative chemicals during cocaine processing has led to the expansion of cocaine production regions and trafficking outside the traditional regions.

Since 2015, cocaine seizures have continued to increase worldwide, with a record 1,424 tonnes of cocaine seized in 2020 (International Narcotics Control Board [INCB], 2022, p. 56). Between 2011-2021, the highest increase in drug seizures in Europe was realized in cocaine seizures with 416% (EMCDDA, 2023). In 2022, 110 tonnes of cocaine (91 tonnes in 2021) were seized in the Belgian port of Antwerp, the largest seaport in Europe and one of the main entry points for cocaine (EMCDDA, 2023). In line with global developments, there has been an increase in the number of cocaine seizures made by our law enforcement units in recent years (see Table 4).

Table 4. Amounts of Cocaine Seized 2018-2022 in Türkiye

Years	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Cocaine/Gram	1.509.147	1.638.149	1.961.366	2.841.377	2.299.208

3.1.4. MDMA/Ecstasy Trafficking Trends

Ecstasy, an amphetamine-type stimulant, is a synthetically derived substance. Europe (mainly the Netherlands and Belgium) continues to be the largest production region and supplier of Methylenedioxyamphetamine (MDMA) on a global scale.

One of the main reasons for the concentration of MDMA production in Europe is that it hosts large-scale production centres of precursors and other chemicals required for production. This situation allows illicit drug producers to access the necessary chemicals cheaper and more easily.

A comparison of the amounts of MDMA seized in other regions, including Türkiye (see Table 5) with the amounts seized in Europe and the smuggling routes, it is clear that MDMA produced in Europe is generally targeted to markets outside Europe. Although Türkiye is generally the target for MDMA smuggling originating from Europe, it is also used as a transit region for targeted smuggling to the Middle and Near East and Gulf Countries through our country.

Between 2016-2020, the highest number of laboratory detections were made in Europe (54 per cent) (UNODC, 2022d, p. 74). Between 2011-2021, the amount of MDMA seized in Europe increased by 123% (EMCDDA, 2023).

Table 5. Amounts of MDMA/Ecstasy Seized 2018-2022 in Türkiye

Years	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Mdma/Ecstasy/Tablet	8.909.892	8.695.605	11.096.244	7.618.013	5.050.325

3.1.5. Captagon Trafficking Trends

Captagon, which is in the phenethylamine synthetic drug group including amphetamine and contains phenethylamine, was first produced for medical purposes by a pharmaceutical company in Germany in the 1960s. In 1986, phenethylamine was included in Table II of the United Nations 1971 Convention on Psychotropic Substances. Thus, the production and use of Captagon was banned (EMCDDA, 2018, p. 4).

In recent years, tablets with the Captagon logo, which contain low levels of amphetamine instead of phenethylamine as the main active ingredient, are frequently seen in the global drug market. On the global scale, Captagon trafficking and production is generally concentrated in Syria, Lebanon and, to a lesser extent, Jordan, which are located in the Near and Middle East.

In some Captagon seizures, it has been observed that Europe is used as a transit region for the smuggling of Lebanese or Syrian Captagon to the Near and Middle East (usually to Saudi Arabia) and North Africa (usually to Libya).

Although it is known that Captagon production is traditionally centred in the Near and Middle East, it is observed that production has recently shifted to other regions, especially Europe. The large number of seizures in Europe in recent years indicates that production sites with large-scale production capacity have been established in Europe, in addition to low-scale production (UNODC, 2022d, p. 71). The amount of cannabis and Captagon seized are as follows (see Table 6).

Table 6. Amounts of Captagon Seized 2018-2022 in Türkiye

Years	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Captagon/Tablet	22.738.579	11.081.667	2.875.182	13.790.648	23.945.26

3.1.6. Methamphetamine Trafficking Trends

Methamphetamine is a synthetic stimulant in the Amphetamine Type Stimulants (ATS) class, which also includes Captagon, amphetamine and ecstasy, with a high addictive potential. In illicit drug markets, methamphetamine is available in powder, crystal, liquid, and tablet form.

Between 2010-2020, the amount of methamphetamine seizures worldwide increased five-fold and 375 tonnes of methamphetamine were seized in 2020; an increase of 16% compared to the previous year. This figure comprised 71% of all ATS seized in the same year (UNODC, 2022d, p. 45).

Increased methamphetamine production in Afghanistan, which has been a key concern and has been observed since 2012, continued in 2021. Methamphetamine seizures originating from Afghanistan continued in Iran, Pakistan, Central Asia, South Caucasus, Europe, Southeast Asia, South Asia, Oceania, and Türkiye. There also appears to be a high risk that heroin trafficking routes may be used for methamphetamine trafficking, which could lead to a supply-driven market for methamphetamine in countries where demand for methamphetamine is currently limited (INCB, 2022, p.101).

These developments in methamphetamine production and trafficking are among the reasons for the increase in methamphetamine seizures both in Türkiye and globally. While methamphetamine in crystalline form is frequently seen in Europe, in Türkiye, significant amounts of liquid methamphetamine seizures are also observed in addition to crystalline form. Criminal groups have started to smuggle liquid methamphetamine as a new transport method in order to avoid detection in control measures. Places where liquid methamphetamine is converted into crystal form have been detected in some provinces, especially in Istanbul. A significant amount of crystal and liquid methamphetamine was seized in these Centres where mostly Iranian nationals were caught. Different types of chemicals used in the methamphetamine conversion process were also seized in these Centres. It is noteworthy that the purity levels of the liquid methamphetamine seized are very low compared to crystal methamphetamine. The amount of methamphetamine seized are as follows (see Table 7).

Table 7. Amounts of Methamphetamine Seized 2018-2022 in Türkiye

Years	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Methamphetamine/Gram	563.933	1.042.185	4.161.794	5.528.229	16.210.445

3.1.7. New Psychoactive Substances (NPS)

These have emerged as a wide range of drugs that are not subject to control under the United Nations Drug Control Conventions and are classified in 14 different groups, such as cannabinoids, cathinones, tryptamines, opioids, benzodiazepines, etc. Many of these substances mimic the effects of internationally controlled drugs (cocaine, cannabis, heroin, LSD, ecstasy and methamphetamine, etc.) and are often substituted in global drug markets under the name of "legal highs".

The emergence of a large number of NPSs in global illicit drug markets poses serious risks to public health and threats to national/international drug policies and calls for new approaches.

As of June 2023, a total of 1,212 NPS were reported to the UNODC NPS database globally. While 429 NPS were reported in 2022, this number was 103 in the first five months (half) of 2023 (UNODC, 2023). The most detected NPSs in the 2016-2020 period are stimulants, mostly cathinones and phenethylamines. Next are synthetic cannabinoid receptor agonists, hallucinogens (mostly tryptamines and

some phenethylamines) and opioids, mostly fentanyl (UNODC, 2022d, p. 92). The amount of Synthetic Cannabinoids seized are as follows (see Table 8).

Table 8. Amounts of Synthetic Cannabinoid (Bonzai) Seized 2018-2022 in Türkiye

Years	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Synthetic Cannabinoid (Bonzai)/Gram	871.424	709.791	1.700.001	2.141.704	1.033.107

3.1.8. Synthetic Pharmaceuticals

With globalisation, the production and consumption of substandard, counterfeit or unapproved drugs is becoming a serious public health problem. The combination of modern transport networks, the internet, low labour force and developments in the chemical and pharmaceutical industries, especially in China and India, facilitates the formation of a serious market in this field. Such a market and the potential profitability it offers also involve criminal groups (EMCDDA & EUROPOL, 2019, p. 42).

Drugs that enter the supply process illegally can reach their users in different ways. These ways include: sale for money by users who obtain them by prescription; theft of prescription drugs from pharmacies or warehouses; acquisition with fake prescriptions; purchase from online sites where prescriptions are not requested; special production for the illegal market; manufacturing by criminal groups using their own laboratories, production lines, repackaging, and distribution of counterfeit drugs from abroad by these groups; and smuggling of counterfeit drugs produced outside the country into the country (EMCDDA & EUROPOL, 2019, p. 42).

Alongside the global developments, it can be said that the abuse of synthetic pharmaceuticals has also increased in Türkiye. The increase in seizures made in recent years indicates that the abuse of these drugs has become rapidly widespread. The number of Synthetic Pharmaceuticals seized are as follows (see Table 9).

Table 9. Amounts of Synthetic Pharmaceuticals 2018-2022 in Türkiye

Years	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Synthetic Pharmaceuticals/Tablet	1.973.636	2.032.378	4.262.468	8.456.901	12.607.432

4. Prevention

The following section outlines the preventive measures undertaken by the counter narcotics department (CND).

4.1. National Projects Implemented by the CND

4.1.1. Narcoteam

In addition to the intelligence and operational work already carried out, the narcoteam was unofficially put into practice in 2014, especially to prevent the occurrence of crime and to prevent the street-level accessibility of drugs, and in October 2018, it was established and institutionalized throughout the country.

4.1.2. Narco-Field

This project aims to secure the presence of law enforcement officers on the street determined by thoroughly analysing and ensuring the contribution of different police units to the fight against narcotic crimes by maintaining the integrity between preventive measures and operational activities.

4.1.3. NARCOLOG

In order to identify the reasons and risk factors behind drug offences, the NARCOLOG project aims to combat concerns in the fields of drug supply, substance use, addiction, treatment and rehabilitation more effectively. The output of this Project is one of the sources for studies in Drug Policy in the context of supply and prevention.

The target group of the project is the suspects who are investigated for drug crimes by the relevant Provincial Police Departments in all 81 provinces. The survey (Narco-form) which consist of 77 questions is applied after the completion of judicial proceedings against the suspects involved in drug crimes and on a completely voluntary basis.

Profiling studies to be conducted with the demographic information and tendencies of those involved in drug crimes contribute significantly to the formulation of strategies and policies for the fight against illegal drugs in every field. Through the Project, Risk factors and criteria for fighting against drugs are determined with the outputs

4.1.4. UYUMA (Fight Against Drugs Application)

The effectiveness of the fight against drugs depends on increasing the sensitivity of citizens and social surveillance through technological means and creating a permanent and strong environment in accordance with the awareness of social responsibility. In this respect, the development of a domestic software was undertaken to prevent drug crimes, to reveal the crime with all the evidence, to bring the criminals to justice, and to enable citizens to report electronically in a rapid manner.

4.1.5. The Best Narcotics Police: “Mother Project”

Within the framework of focusing on awareness and awareness-raising activities for mothers, the "Best Narcotics Police: “Mother Project” was launched and implemented on 23 October 2020. The Best Narcotics Police: “Mother project” training module was prepared and sent to Provincial Anti-Narcotic Crimes Branch Directorates

4.1.6. Narcoguide

Within the scope of the activity of "Ensuring Effective Use of Local Governments in the Fight Against Drugs" within the framework of the Ministry of Interior Anti-Drug Implementation Policy Document: “NARKOGUIDE Training Module” was prepared by the CND to provide training by narcotics units, starting with groups such as the police department, cleaning staff, and private security organisations.

Contained in the framework of the NARKOGUIDE module are: substance addiction- its use and effects: classification of narcotic substances; types of narcotic substances; synthetic pharmaceuticals and volatiles, the importance of combating narcotic crimes; the street dealers; places where drugs are sold and used; legal implications in drug crimes; the *uyuma* project; and solution centres for combating substance addiction.

4.1.7. Training on Combating Methamphetamine

To effectively combat methamphetamine which has become an increasing threat both in the world and in Türkiye in recent years, an "Anti-Methamphetamine Module" was prepared for the law enforcement units affiliated to the Ministry of Interior and the personnel of the General Directorate of Customs Enforcement of the Ministry of Trade. Within the framework of the module, "Anti-Methamphetamine Training" is provided to law enforcement personnel to aid their efforts to combat this menace.

4.1.8. Narco Migrant

Within the scope of Narkoguide information activities, the Narco Immigrant project was implemented on 19 August 2021 to raise awareness of immigrants in the country against drug addiction.

4.1.9. Narco Kaan

The Narco *Kaan* project was implemented on 26 February 2022 to raise the awareness of private security officers working in Türkiye against drug addiction in coordination with the Department of Private Security.

4.1.10. Narcostand

Materials prepared to enhance the sensitivity of citizens and inform families against drugs, drug related crimes and drug addiction began to be distributed as of 01 June 2017.

4.1.11. NARCOTRUCK (Don't be a Target; Don't be Targetless)

NARCOTRUCK was designed to inform citizens using computer-based modules to increase the outreach of such information to the public all around the country.

4.1.12. NARCO 191

In the prevention of substance-related deaths, creating social awareness and raising awareness is as important as the measures taken to solve the problems encountered in the fight against drugs. Within the scope of the NARKO 191 project, preventive posters and stickers were prepared by the EGM Directorate of Combating Narcotic Crimes to raise awareness among target audiences about the harm and deaths caused by the use of the synthetic substances.

5. Training

5.1. Counter Narcotics Training Academy (NEA) – Dog Training Centre (KEM)

Counter Narcotics Training Academy (NEA) started to operate upon a ministerial approval of 3 May 2018 with the aim of bringing a new vision and approach to training activities. The NEA is the only training institution in Türkiye that organizes national and international training programmes for the struggle against narcotic crimes.

The Dog Training Centre (KEM) also operates under Counter Narcotics Dept. It was set up in 1997 in the Gölbaşı district of Ankara with contributions from the UNDCP, the European Commission and the Foundation for Strengthening the Turkish Police. The KEM is the sole unit meeting the needs of the Turkish Police for dogs to serve in this area.

The list of training activities within NEA and KEM comprise:

Risk analysis and search techniques at airports; synthetics, NPS and clandestine labs; crime investigations training; risk analysis and search techniques; drug types, current routes and trends; training of trainers; operational shooting tactics and escaping the ambush; field experience in narcotic crimes; proceeds of narcotics trafficking; training of narco-guide trainers; narkoguide training; narcotics detector dogs and handlers training; explosive detector dogs and handlers training; puppy and young dog progress training; dog trainer training; intensified patrol dogs and handlers training; intensified narcotics detector dogs and handlers training; intensified explosive detector dogs and handlers training; special operations dog training program; intensified special operations dog training program; search and rescue training program; intensified search and rescue dog training program; intensified firearm and ammunition detection dog training program; technology detection dog and handlers training; and intensified technology detection dog and handlers training.

6. Recommendations for the Northern Cyprus

6.1. Drug Decision Support System (UKDS)

Upon the publication of the Prime Ministerial Circular No. 2014/19, TUBİM of the TNP Counter Narcotics Department (CND) was assigned to focus on the gathering of national data in real time. To achieve this aim, an EU project was developed entitled Strengthening the Data Collection Capacity of TUBİM. Funded through the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA), the project consisted of twinning and supply components, which were to be managed independently of one another. The aim of implementing the said project was to gather information and data on the activities conducted by national institutions and organizations in the fight against drugs as rapidly as possible, and hence to develop policies and strategies rapidly and effectively. The twinning component of the project was launched with Romania on 8 August 2018, and completed on 14 February 2021. The supply component of the project encompassed both hardware and software elements. The procurement of the equipment required for the full establishment of the UKDS was completed and tests were successfully carried out. The flow of data from public institutions and organizations commenced with the completion of the final acceptance process for the Project on 12 April 2022.

6.2. Early Warning System

The fight against new psychoactive substances which are spreading rapidly in Türkiye as in the whole world, is conducted by the TUBİM Early Warning System (EWS) National Working Group, which was established in 2006 and was fully implemented in 2008. Representatives from the Ministries of Justice, Health, Agriculture and Forestry, Trade, EGM, Gendarmerie General Command, Coast Guard Command, Universities, and other relevant institutions are included in the Early Warning System, which continues its activities by meeting regularly twice a year in June and December.

When the institutions within the scope of EWS encounter a new substance in the country, they fill in the Report Form for New Psychoactive Substances (drugs, stimulants, hallucinogens, etc.) and TUBİM. EMCDDA, UNODC and INCB are contacted and information about the substance and its derivatives are collected and the risks that new psychoactive substances identified by both international organisations and our institutions will pose for our country are evaluated in the meetings held and the process of including those deemed appropriate within the scope of the Law No. 2313 on the Control of Narcotic Drugs is initiated.

The Generic Classification System, which was adopted in 2015, ensures that most new psychoactive substances are covered by the law even before they enter the country.

Between 2008 and 31 December 2022, a total of 1,006 New Psychoactive Substances were included in the scope of Law No. 2313 on the Control of Narcotic Substances. Among these substances that have been included in the scope of Law No. 2313, three types of substance predominate: 31.1% (313) are synthetic cannabinoids, 19.2% (193) are synthetic cathinones and 13% (131) are substances belonging to the phenylethylamine group.

6.3. National Drugs Policy and Strategy

Under the Presidential Circular No. 2019/21, it was decided that the High Council for the Fight against Addiction should convene under the chair of the Deputy President. The High Council for the Fight against Addiction was reconstituted with the participation of the Ministers of Justice; Family, Labour and Social Services; Environment and Urbanization; Youth and Sports; Treasury and Finance; Interior; National Education; Health; Agriculture and Forestry; Trade, and Transport and Infrastructure; and of the Deputy President of the Presidential Health and Food Policies Board.

Provision was made for the High Council to be chaired by the Minister of Health if the Deputy President is unable to participate. The circular also authorized the High Council to establish a Council for the Fight against Addiction chaired by the Deputy Minister of Health, and coordination councils in the provinces chaired by the provincial governor, as well as working groups if necessary.

At the meeting of the High Council held on 3 July 2019, the working principles and procedures of the Council for the Fight against Addiction were approved and entered into force. In this way, arrangements were made for the working principles and procedures of the High Council for the Fight against Addiction (BMYK), the Council for the Fight against Addiction (BMK), the Technical Council for the Fight against Addiction (BMTK) and the Provincial/District Coordination Councils for the Fight against Addiction. The

provinces and the institutions concerned were informed of the new principles and procedures on 9 August 2019.

In 2022, with respect to the fight against drugs, the BMYK met once, the BMK met twice (at the level of deputy ministers, under the chair of the deputy minister of Health) and the BMTK met three times (at the level of heads of department under the chair of the Director General of Public Health).

A National Strategy Document and Action Plan on the Fight against Drugs Monitoring Platform has been developed to enable all the stakeholders to enter data in an electronic environment, and to permit the reporting of the data, so as to ensure that the activities conducted as part of the fight against drugs are monitored. Data entries for 2022 have been completed by the central and local organizations of all the stakeholder institutions.

At the BMYK meeting on 10 February 2022, it was decided to hold provincial/district workshops with the theme of "If It Had Been Me". At these workshops, the work carried out on tobacco, alcohol and behavioural addictions was evaluated and planning was conducted to address the needs identified (Ministry of Health, General Directorate of Public Health, 2023)

6.4. Fight Against Proceeds of Crime

Laundering proceeds of crime can be defined as the conversion of all kinds of income obtained through illegal means into other assets by preserving its value as much as possible, concealing it in a way that does not attract the attention of authorized persons and ensuring that this income gains legal justification in order to comply with the law.

Any kind of income obtained from crime is defined as the offence of "laundering the proceeds of crime" in Article 282 of the Turkish Criminal Code.

A criminal economy exists in which the income obtained from the manufacture and trade of narcotic substances is high. Success in the fight against drugs can be achieved by revealing the revenues that are the lifeblood of these crimes. Analysing the financial flows between criminals can contribute to the detection of the link between organised crime and terrorist crimes and thus, to the fight against the financing of terrorism.

6.5. Financial Crimes Investigation Board (MASAK)

The 2018-2023 National Strategy Document and Action Plan on the Fight Against Drugs entrusts MASAK, under the heading of "Initiatives and Activities for Preventing the Supply of Drugs", with the duties of "Monitoring the financial dimension of drugs, obstructing the generation of income from drugs trafficking and preventing it from being a source of revenue for terrorist organizations". In 2022, MASAK provided training on this issue to 152 law enforcement personnel selected by law enforcement units. With respect to the sharing of financial data in real time during centrally planned operations, MASAK shared information in 208 instances as part of its data sharing, analysis, assessment, and examination activities. (Financial Crimes Investigation Board [MASAK], 2023).

6.6. Analysis Systems Narcotics Network (ASENA)

Cross-border narcotic criminal organizations are operating in an increasingly complex and secretive manner, and the CND is drawing on dynamic and needs based technical and tactical means of combat such as risk analysis, artificial intelligence, and digital transformation to uncover their illegal activities in their entirety.

The Analysis System Narcotics Network (ASENA) Project is a data analysis and visualization platform which became active in March 2021, makes it possible to conduct comprehensive analyses in the fight against these illegal organizations which are constantly changing and diversifying their criminal methods on account of the successful project operations undertaken. As an artificial intelligence software network that can be constantly developed according to current trends, ASENA is a completely domestic and national project.

This platform makes use of the experience and data acquired in the fight against crime to identify relationships, links, and patterns for deciphering the methods used to commit crimes and capturing criminal elements. In this way, interventions against narcotics crimes can be launched as they take place, light can be shed on past crimes or contributions can be made to ongoing investigations.

Active use is being made of the ASENA project in the fight against narcotics crimes in particular, but also against other crimes.

6.7. NARVAS Narcotic Case Analysis System (NARVAS)

NARVAS has been developed by the Counter Narcotics Department under the auspices of our Minister in order to ensure more effective analysis of narcotic notifications. It is a software program that enables the analysis of narcotics notifications made by our citizens through 112 Emergency Call Centre and UYUMA Application, the creation of density maps based on analysis, the detection of criminals, and the preparation of place and time-oriented struggle plans and strategies.

6.8. NARCONET Operations

While it is a fact that technology occupies a great place in our lives, it is inevitable that unless used with awareness, it can be harmful. Despite being a very recent innovation, social media has evolved into a communication network which enables social interaction through smart phones, tablets, and computers, can be accessed easily by the masses anywhere and at any time, and is capable of changing the daily habits of humanity. Social media has become a channel via which social media accounts sometimes openly promote, the abuse of drugs, encourage their followers to take sedatives and stimulants, and facilitate abuse by providing information on how to consume narcotic substances, whether through the spoken and written word, images, songs, or video broadcasts (Turkish Penal Code Article 190).

6.9. Preventing Demand

The fight against drugs in Türkiye is based on Article 58 of the Constitution of the Republic of Türkiye which stipulates that “The State shall take necessary measures to protect youth from addiction to alcohol and drugs, crime, gambling and similar vices, and ignorance.”

Narcotic substances are substances that have sedative, stimulating and hallucinatory effects, which in time incite a desire for further abuse, depending on the amounts taken, and which lead to physical and psychological dependence and withdrawal symptoms if not taken. Drug addiction is the continuous use of a legal or illegal substance despite all its adverse effects.

The harm caused by drug abuse is not limited to the health problems experienced by the abuser. Aside from the damage to physical health, drug abuse usually brings with it legal, social, and economic problems which affect the abuser's family, his/ her environment and society as a whole. In addition, drug abuse is a significant security problem which threatens young generations and harms the future of society. In view of all these risks, education and prevention activities constitute one of the most important pillars of the fight against drugs.

In addition to working to protect persons who have never been introduced to drugs, prevention activities aim to provide counselling and treatment support for persons who have tried drugs, to treat persons with drug addictions and to introduce persons who have been treated back into society through rehabilitation and social integration programmes.

6.10. Legal Framework

Türkiye is a party to the relevant international conventions in force in the fight against drugs, including those considered to be the basic pillars of the global drug control system, which are headed by the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971, the UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988 and the 1972 Protocol amending the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs. Besides fulfilling its responsibilities stemming from these conventions vigorously, Türkiye supports projects and activities conducted under the umbrellas of the UN and other international organizations both as a donor and as a participant. In accordance with the global drugs control system, Türkiye has made various legal arrangements for the fight against drugs. Although these arrangements are contained in the provisions of many different laws, the main pieces of legislation in this field can be categorized under three main headings:

- The Turkish Penal Code (TCK) No. 5237 of 26 September 2004
- TCK Article 188 on the production and trade of narcotic and stimulant substances,
- TCK Article 190 on facilitating the use of narcotic and stimulant substances,
- TCK Article 191 on the purchase, receipt or possession of narcotic or stimulant substances with intent to use them and the use of narcotic or stimulant substances;
- The Law on Drugs No. 3298 of 3 June 1986,
- The Law on the Control of Narcotic Substances No. 2313 of 12 June 1933

Due to rapid changes in drug related crimes, on April 2023 6 different laws were amended (Turkish Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure, Turkish Civil Code, Law on Probation Services, Law NO.2313 AND Law No. 5607).

The minimum sentence for the offence of manufacturing and trafficking synthetic drugs has been increased from 10 years to 15 years.

Surprise test applications have been enforced for those who have been granted postponement of the opening of the public case and probation.

Destruction of seized narcotics substances during the investigation phase has been approved.

Compulsory treatment and rehabilitation decisions may be made for detainees and convicts in prison and that the prisons suitable for this purpose shall be constructed.

Declaration of Conflicts Interests

The author declares that they have no conflict of interest to disclose.

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