

An overview of drug approaches in Europe

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Countries in Europe, even neighbours, have vastly different approaches to combating drug abuse.

Here is an overview.

CRIMINALISATION OF DRUG USE/CONSUMPTION:

- Drug use is a [criminal offence](#) in:

Norway, Finland, Sweden, France, Hungary, Greece, Cyprus, and Luxembourg (all drugs except for cannabis).

- Drug use is a non-criminal offence (a minor offence, misdemeanour or contravention comparable to a parking offence) in:

Portugal, Spain, Estonia, Latvia, Bulgaria, Croatia and Luxembourg for cannabis.

- Drug use is not an offence in:

Ireland, United Kingdom, Belgium, Netherlands, Denmark, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Slovenia, Austria, Italy, Malta and Turkey. In Romania, where the use of drugs is prohibited, no penalty is specified.

- Drug possession for personal use is a criminal offence punishable by a prison sentence in most [countries](#). No imprisonment is possible for

minor possession offences in:

Croatia, Italy, Slovenia, Spain, Portugal, the Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

- Only the Netherlands allows [drug](#) consumption of marijuana in sanctioned coffee shops.
- Drug use, mainly of heroin, may also be tolerated in special consumption rooms—professionally supervised areas for drug use in safer, more hygienic conditions.

HARM REDUCTION POLICIES:

- Countries that provide Heroin Assisted Treatment: (synthetic heroin injections for addicts for whom other therapies failed):

Belgium, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, United Kingdom.

- Countries with drug consumption rooms:

Denmark, Germany, Greece, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain.

- Countries that allow Naloxone treatment, to be administered by a friend or family member of a [heroin](#) addict in case of an overdose:

Denmark, Germany, Italy, Spain, United Kingdom.

All countries except Turkey have exchange programmes for drug addicts to obtain clean needles.

TOP 5 REPORTED DRUG LAW OFFENCES:

United Kingdom - 152,406 (2011)

TOP 5 REPORTED DRUG-RELATED ADULT DEATHS in cases per million and total count (2011 or last year with available information):

Source: The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA). Data is for the 28 EU member countries plus Norway and Turkey.

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