



COUNTRY FACTSHEETS, EURASIAN NARCOTICS:

LITHUANIA 2004

General Information

Population: 3,445,900
 UNDP Human development index ranking: 41 (out of 177, 2004)
 TI Corruption indicators: 4.6 (0 highly corrupt, and 10 highly clean)

The Lithuanian drug market was fairly limited before the collapse of the Soviet Union. Problems with drug abuse existed, particularly in the prisons, which were supplied by soldiers including from Central Asia serving as guards. Since the early 1990s, the trafficking, sale and abuse of drugs have increased rapidly, despite extensive measures taken by the Lithuanian government to control the narcotics problem. In 2004, Lithuanian law enforcement agencies estimated that the domestic drug trade amounted to \$200 million. Lithuania is also a producer of poppy products and synthetic drugs for domestic use and export. The most popular drugs in Lithuania today include synthetic narcotics, poppy straw extract, heroin and cannabis.

Smuggling of Drugs

Heroin is smuggled into Lithuania by the Silk Road from Central Asia via Russia and Belarus and also from the Balkans. The heroin is transported out of Lithuania via ferry or car to Scandinavia, as well as to Poland and Kaliningrad. Lithuania seizes more heroin stemming from the Silk Road trade route than any other country in the area with the exception of Estonia. Cocaine from South America is smuggled through Western Europe (Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium) to Lithuania, and amphetamines are transported into the country from Poland and the Netherlands. Marijuana and hashish are transported into Lithuania from both east and west, originating in Morocco. Locally produced poppy straw products are exported to the Kaliningrad district of Russia, and to Latvia. Today, opiates constitute 56% of all seized drugs.

Health and Economic Aspects

Corruption: Although there are few reliable statistical measurements of the level of corruption in Lithuania, national surveys indicate that it is a relatively serious problem. However, World Bank surveys indicate that "state capture" and political corruption on a higher level is not a major problem in Lithuania. Laws against corruption are being developed in accordance with international guidelines, and the existing laws are being enforced by the Lithuanian government and law enforcement agencies. Lithuania has an independent anti-corruption agency, the Special Investigation Service, which was created in 1997. In the International Narcotics Control Strategy Report of 2005, the U.S. Department of State conclude that narcotics-related corruption is not a major factor in trafficking in Lithuania.

Money Laundering: With only 10 commercial banks, 2 foreign bank branches and 58 credit unions, Lithuania is not a regional financial centre. However its geographical position makes it vulnerable to organized crime, smuggling and tax evasion. Despite this, the 2005 Narcotics Strategy Report: Money Laundering – Lithuania, concludes that the sale of narcotics does not generate a substantial part of financial crime or money laundering in Lithuania. There were no reported cases of money laundering related to narcotics trade in 2004.

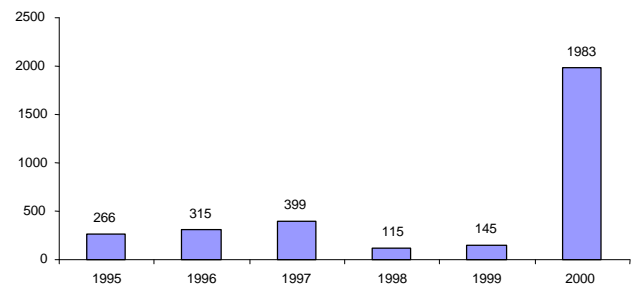
Drug abuse and HIV epidemics: No standardized data collection for treatment and demand exists in Lithuania, and thus it is difficult to estimate any increases in the number of drug addicts in the country. However, available estimates indicate that the number of people seeking treatment for drug addiction has increased at least 8 times since 1991. In 1997 the level of registered drug addicts was 74.4 per 100,000 of the population. The increase in abuse has had consequences on the Lithuanian health situation. Between 1998 and 2001, drug related mortality almost doubled, but stabilized again (at a fairly high level) in 2002. A problematic aspect of the narcotics situation in the country is that the majority of addicts are young; 71.3 % were below 35 years in 1997. The HIV situation in Lithuania, (although it is increasingly troublesome), is relatively moderate compared to the other Baltic states. According to UNAIDS, Lithuania had a relatively low HIV prevalence rate in 2002. In 2002, 81% of all newly reported HIV cases were caused by intravenous drug use.

Political and Societal Aspects

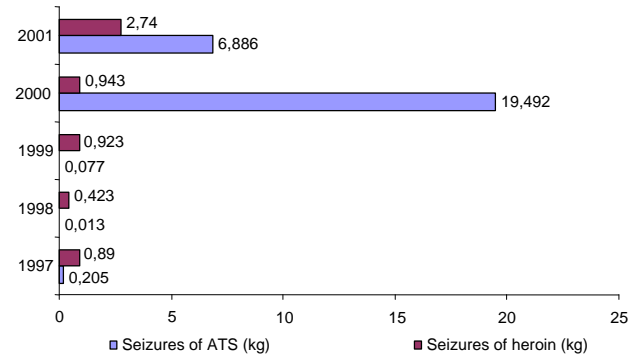
No extensive research has been conducted in Lithuania on the social and economic cost of substance abuse. However, there are obvious links between poverty, substance abuse, unemployment and crime. The number of drug-related crimes has been rapidly increasing in Lithuania. In 2004 there were 1,121 registered crimes, compared to 886 in 2003. Organized crime groups are engaged in illicit drug trafficking in Lithuania, and the criminal world is developing links with international drug trafficking. For instance, Lithuanian organized crime groups have established themselves on the German drug market. Members of Lithuanian crime groups have been connected to Polish, Belgian and Dutch citizens involved in the trafficking and production of illicit drugs. 90% of the members of the criminal groups in Vilnius are of Russian nationality, where in other regions groups consist mostly of Lithuanians. According to police estimates, there are 11 groups engaged in smuggling, car thefts, prostitution, trafficking of illegal migrants and have strong link with organized crime groups in Russia, Latvia and other states.



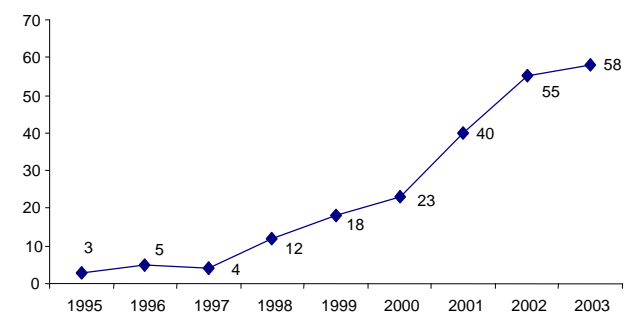
Drug related crimes



Seizures of amphetamine type stimulants and Heroin



Registered AIDS cases, newly reported



Counter-Narcotics Efforts

State

The Lithuanian Governmental Drug Commission, which includes representatives of 11 ministries, was established in 1995. In the same year, a unit for fighting illicit drug trafficking was established within the Lithuanian Police Department. Resources directed to this area have increased substantially over the last decade. The National Program on Drug Control and Prevention of Drug Addiction 2004-2008 is the current national plan for combating the drug problem. It includes directives on cooperation between national authorities and drug control organizations. The focus is on prevention and treatment of abuse. Accordingly, more funds have been allocated to these areas rather than to prevention of trafficking and sales. However, the increase in EU funds has augmented resources allocated to the latter areas, especially to strengthening Lithuanian border control. In 1996 the Lithuanian Government together with the Baltic States, the European Commission and the UNDCP signed the Riga Declaration on the Fight Against Money Laundering. Money laundering was first criminalized in 1997 with the Law on the Prevention of Money Laundering, which made the reporting of suspicious and unusual financial transactions to the Financial Crimes Investigative Service (FCIS) obligatory for financial institutions.

The government of Lithuania has initiated both methadone treatment programs and a needle exchange program, which appear to have had a substantial effect on the diminishing spread of HIV (with only 12 new detected cases in Vilnius in 2001). Compared to the other Baltic States, Lithuania has a slight increase of HIV. After the outbreak in the Alytus prison in 2002, the Lithuanian government allocated funds to prevent trafficking in prisons, educate prison staff, and prevent further spreading of the virus in corrections facilities. In addition to these measures, health education programs on the dangers of drug use have been introduced in the Lithuanian curriculum.

Civil Society

There are a number of international and local NGOs which operate in Lithuania in the fight against drugs.

Among the local ones there are several youth organizations, such as the Christian Youth Union "Zingsnis," and organizations (such as the Temperance fund), aimed at supporting recovering alcoholics and drug addicts.

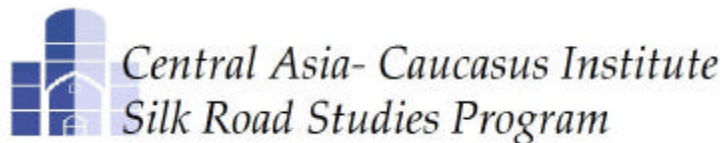
Regional Cooperation

Lithuania participates in the regional cooperation between the Baltic republics, defined in the 1997 document Fight Against Drugs. Lithuania also participates in the Task Force program, in which police forces in the Baltic sea region cooperate with each other with the aim of preventing and combating organized crime in the region. Efforts of the Task Force group have been concentrated on trafficking in drugs, illegal immigration, trafficking in human beings and stolen vehicles, illegal trade in arms and radioactive material, smuggling of highly taxed goods, forgery of money, money laundering, and violent crime. The Task Force has also established an HIV/STI network of healthcare professionals and institutions within the Baltic Sea region to fight the spread of HIV in the region. The Scandinavian countries have rendered assistance to Lithuania since the early 1990s. An example of this is the "parents help parents program" which is financed by the Norwegian government.

International

Lithuania is a party to the 1988 UN Drug Convention, the 1971 UN Convention against Psychotropic Substances, and the UN 1961 Single Convention as amended by its 1972 protocol. Furthermore, Lithuania is a party to the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. The UNODC has a regional office in Riga, and Lithuania participates in the United Nations International Drug Control Program.

Lithuania participates in the EU PHARE project "Fight against Drugs in Eastern Europe", as well as other PHARE programs, and is a member of European Cities against Drugs. In addition to this, Lithuania is a participant of the World Customs Organization, and cooperates with Interpol.



Joint Transatlantic Research and Policy Center

The Project on Narcotics, Organized Crime and Security in Eurasia

The Project on Narcotics, Organized Crime and Security in Eurasia is conducted by the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program. The Central Asia-Caucasus Institute and Silk Road Studies Program form a Joint Transatlantic Research and Policy Center affiliated with the School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Washington DC; and the Departments of East European Studies and Peace and Conflict Research, Uppsala University, Sweden.

Latest publications:

Niklas L.P. Swanström, "Multilateralism and Narcotics control in Central Asia", *CEF Quarterly*, the journal of the China-Eurasia Forum, February 2005.

Niklas L. P. Swanström and Maral Madi, "International Cooperation Against Drug Trafficking, in Central Asia," *United Nations: Multilateralism and International Security*, in C. Uday Bhaskar et. al., eds, Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses & SHIPRA Publications, 2005.

Svante E. Cornell, "Stemming the Contagion: Regional Efforts to Curb Afghan Heroin's Impact", *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 6 no. 1, Winter/Spring 2005.

Kairat Osmonaliev, *Developing Counter-Narcotics Policy in Central Asia: Legal and Political Dimensions*, Silk Road Paper, January 2005.

Svante E. Cornell, *Narcotics, Radicalism and Security in Central Asia: The Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan*, East European Studies Working Paper no. 84, December, 2004.

Maral Madi, "Drug Trade in Kyrgyzstan: Structure, Implications and Countermeasures", *Central Asian Survey*, Vol 23, No 3-4, December, 2004.

Database:

The current version of the database contains information on illegal drugs and related issues in Central Eurasia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan), Russia and the Golden Crescent (Afghanistan, Iran, Pakistan). These countries are the primary focus at Silk Road Studies. The database can be accessed at www.silkroadstudies.org/drugsdatabase.htm