

# Working group D.3

Drugs and the criminal justice system  
(response and prevention of drug-related crime)

# Overall challenges and strengths of data collected in current ARQ

- ARQ collects information on drug-related crime in Part IV, Q25-31 of the questionnaire. 3 main types of data are collected: On persons brought into formal contact for personal consumption, for drug trafficking and on the citizenship of persons brought into formal contact for drug trafficking. (In addition, a separate question asks about the number of drug offences related to personal use/consumption and to trafficking.)
- The data on persons in formal contact for both personal consumption and trafficking are further disaggregated by male and female and by the 5 most common types of drugs. (In addition there is a disaggregation of the total number of persons by adult and juveniles.) Data on the citizenship of drug traffickers is also disaggregated by the 5 most common types of drugs. The latter may be of limited use because data tend to mirror the involvement of various groups in street-level trafficking, rather than transnational drug trafficking networks.
- Data are available for around 60-70% of countries. While data on sex disaggregations are consistent with totals in over 90% of cases, there may be issues with data quality/standard recording practices for disaggregations by drug type: in less than 50 % of cases did the sum of all drug types match the reported total number of persons in formal contact (for both possession and trafficking).
- The definition of personal drug-related offences is “offences related to the use or the possession of drugs for personal consumption”, while drug trafficking is defined as “drug offences not in connection with personal use” (according to the 1988 UN Convention). Despite using the UN definition, data may be affected by different legislation and recording practices. The gradual implementation of the International Classification of Crime for Statistical Purposes (ICCS) should improve comparability of data in future.
- Over 80% of respondents from MS rated the relevance of data on drug-related crime as high, 70% rated the clarity of the section to be high. Just under 50% of respondents from MS rated the workload needed to complete this section to be high, another 40% to be medium. These data, while clearly representing only the detected part of drug-related offences, are useful for assessing trends and patterns of drug-related crimes and of law enforcement activities to contrast them.

# Possible issues to be considered by the experts for modifications and improvements

- + Examine the inclusion of appropriate data on the response to and on the prevention of drug-related crime, such as: data on the number and type of convictions of drug offenders, length of custodial sentences, alternatives to incarceration and levels of recidivism.
- + Consider the inclusion of data on the number of persons in detention for drug-related crime and in rehabilitation programs.
- + Consider the inclusion of data on the number of law enforcement officials (police/special units) specialized in counter drug trafficking.
  
- In consideration of the limited relevance of data on persons brought into formal contact by citizenship, experts may consider whether to discontinue the collection of such data in the ARQ.
- There may be only limited value added by collecting data on the number of recorded drug-related offences (in addition to the number of persons in formal contact for such offences), thus experts may consider whether to discontinue the collection of such data in the ARQ. (Data on drug-related offences (disaggregated by possession and trafficking) are also collected in the revised annual UN-Crime Trends Survey).
  
- ± Examine the inclusion of appropriate data for analyzing gender disparities (coverage of issues which can highlight gender disparities)
- ± Consider the implementation of the ICCS as common framework for producing statistical data on crimes by all criminal justice institutions to further enhance comparability and consistency of data (including on drug-related crime)
- ± In view of observed inconsistencies of data on persons brought into formal contact by drug type (the sums did not match in over 50% of cases), consider the standardization of counting rules and practices of persons by drug type.

# Guide for discussion

For the data/information that will be discussed, focus should be on:

- ± improvements (definitions, classifications, re-organisation of questions, etc.)
- + data/questions to add
- data/questions to drop

When relevant, a distinction between core and non core data could be made:

- Core: data that are key to understand trends and patterns of the drug problem, they may change at fast pace (on yearly basis) and/or are available for the majority of countries
- Non-core: data, usually not subject to rapid fluctuations, requiring more in-depth/detailed questions and/or are available in a limited number of countries