

Dear Delegates,

Today we would like to draw your attention to expanding and diversifying drug markets and drug range.

Over the last decade, there has been a **diversification of the substances** available on the **drug markets**. In addition to traditional plant-based substances, the last decade has witnessed the expansion of a dynamic market **for synthetic drugs and the non-medical use of prescription medicines**. More potent drugs are available and the increasing number of substances, and their potential combinations, poses a greater risk.

Injecting drug use is most commonly associated with opioids, although in a few countries, the injection of stimulants such as amphetamines or cocaine is also common. Cocaine is the most commonly used illicit stimulant drug. MDMA is often taken alongside other substances, including alcohol. There are now also growing indications of **Europe's importance in the global market for synthetic drugs**. These signals include significant seizures of various substances at EU borders; the fact that more MDMA is now seized in Turkey than in the European Union as whole; and the detection of facilities in Europe producing methamphetamine and other synthetic drugs intended for export. In the example of Turkey, synthetic drugs were the biggest problem in terms of users and amounts until last two years. However, in recent studies we realized that there is a decline in number of synthetic drug users, but a significant increase in methamphetamine users.

As the range of drugs expand in recent years, **hundreds of NPS have been synthesized**. The majority are stimulants, followed by cannabinoids and an increasing number of opioids, with unpredictable and sometimes severe **negative consequences, including death**. The non-medical use of pharmaceutical opioids is of increasing concern. In North America, the use of synthetic opioids such as fentanyl resulted in the continued dramatic increase in opioid overdose deaths in 2017. In other sub-regions, such as West and Central Africa and North Africa, based on seizures, the market for the non-medical use of tramadol has grown significantly.

Over the last few years there appears to have been an increase in the number, type and availability of new psychoactive substances belonging to the benzodiazepine class, **which are not controlled under international drug control laws**. Some of these are sold as fake versions of commonly prescribed anti-anxiety medicines such as alprazolam and diazepam, making use of existing distribution networks in the illicit drug market. In the context of Turkey, misuse of benzodiazepine substances is incremental in last years. Also misuse of anxiety medicines like alprazolam and diazepam is emerging, even though not at a comparable level with the problem in North America.

For people with drug use disorders, the availability of and access to treatment services remains limited at the global level, as only one in seven people with drug use disorders receive treatment each year. Information on those in treatment can provide useful insight into trends and geographical variations with respect to drug use disorders. However, that information reflects not only the level of demand for treatment but also the extent of the availability of treatment services.

Turkey reported a large increase in the number of deaths related to synthetic cannabinoids. Synthetic cannabinoids were present in 60 % of all drug-related deaths reported in the country, and most of the cases were young males in their twenties.

We Turkish Green Crescent, as a centennial NGO that works on the fields of addictions, give our best effort to keep up with the changes in this evolving and sophisticated market. We follow a comprehensive approach with our public awareness campaigns, prevention programs, counselling and rehabilitation services in order ensure the reach to all layers of the public.

We also try to increase number of consultation centers, which work in cooperation with competent medical facilities country-wide with the inclusion of reintegration services. Moreover, TGC initiates and coordinates scientific studies to determine needs assessments of addicts in order to suggest convenient public policies for all.