

# Current Drug Situation in Ukraine

Kyiv

2022

# State Drug Policy Strategy

Following the implementation of the European Commission's recommendations, stated in the 3d EC Report on 10 July 2022 and relative to the "Public Order and Security" Section, Ukraine worked out the State Policy Drug Strategy for the period up to 2030.

The Draft Strategy is under finalization for its further approval by the Government of Ukraine.

## **Strategic goals:**

- To reduce the demand for psychoactive substances.
- To ensure counteraction to illegal substance trafficking.
- To improve the situation with observing human rights and the social, medical, psychological and economic well-being of the country's population through promoting a healthy lifestyle and creating relevant opportunities.
- To improve the situation with the availability of drugs, providing quality medical and social-psychological care for people who need it, and harm reduction programs.

## **Expected outcome of drug policy strategy:**

- To come to a comprehensive transition from the punitive anti-drug measures to the therapeutic and preventive ones, as the most effective to overcome drug addiction.

## Drug-Related Legal Acts-2022

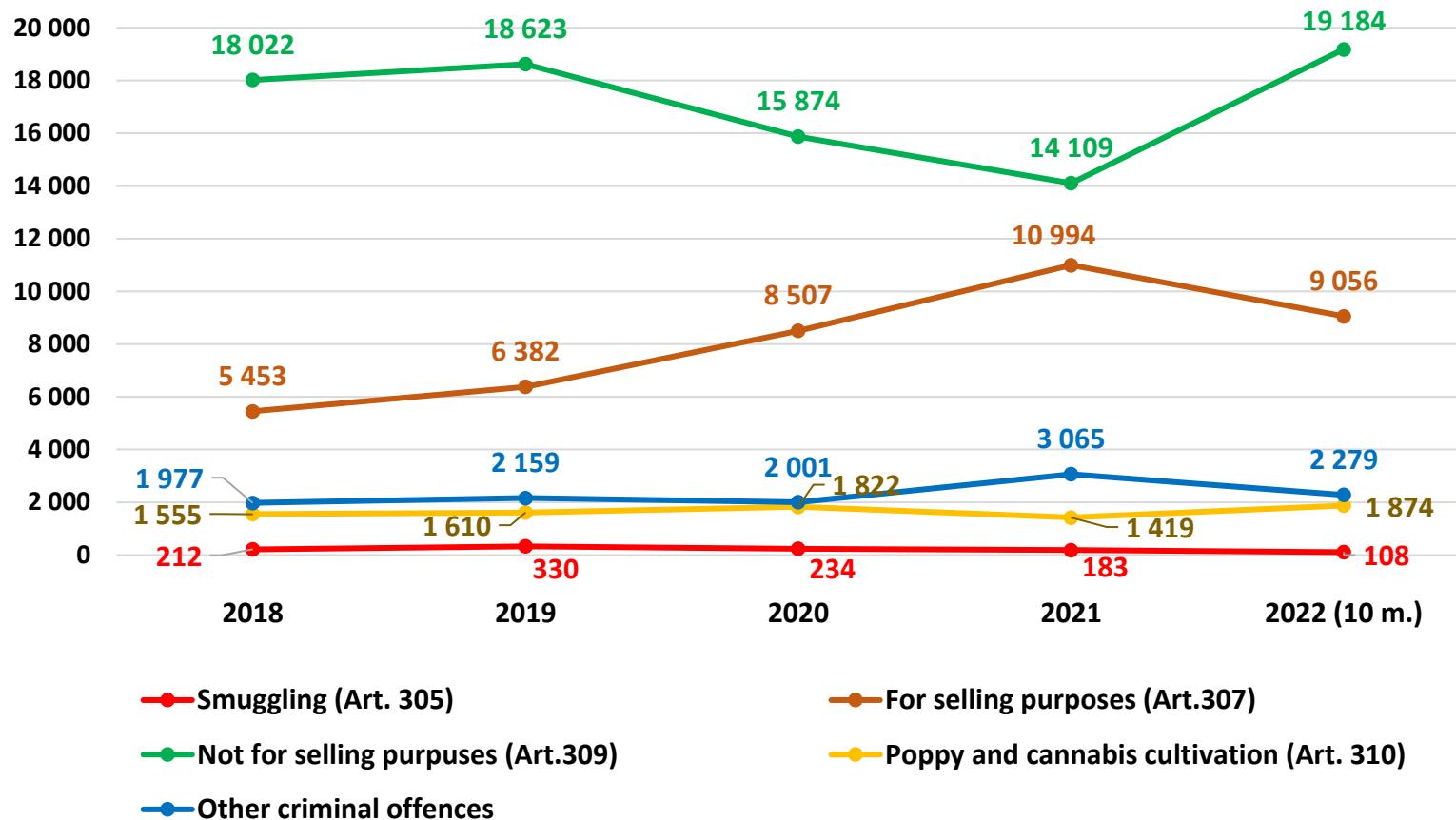
- Ukraine suspended Agreement with russia on cooperation in combating illicit trafficking in drugs, psychoactive substances and precursors ([Resolution of 20 May 2022 № 611](#)).
- Government approved the option of submitting documents in electronic form, and in this way it simplified licensing for the activities related with circulation of controlled substances ([Resolution of 15 April 2022 № 452](#)).
- Government introduced some changes in the List of controlled substances, thus moving remifentanil to the list of substances with restricted circulation ([Resolution of 11 March 2022 № 255](#)).
- Government approved the electronic form of submitting documents and obtaining permission for importing, extorting and transiting substances and precursors. At that the Security Service's approval is required. ([Resolution of 17 March 2022 № 306](#) and [Resolution of 03 May 2022 № 527](#)).
- Ministry of Health approved the procedure for humanitarian aid supplies ([Order of 12 March 2022 № 474](#)), and Ukrmedpostach (Supplier of medical products) was nominated the only authorized recipient of this aid ([Order of 03 May 2022 № 731](#)).
- As of 01 November 2022, the electronic prescriptions for drug-containing medicines came into effect (before that the prescriptions were only in paper form) ([Order of 11 October 2022 № 1841](#)).

## Ukrainian Drug Market after the Russian Invasion

- International drug trafficking channels to Ukraine were broken, namely transiting "tough" drugs like heroin & cocaine. It was due to the closure of sea and air traffic, as well as the closure of road and rail communications with Belarus and Russia.
- The government suspended its control over substances in the occupied territories.
- People migration resulted in appearing new schemes of drug smuggling and sales, which in fact leads to a redistribution of the drug market. E.g., new routes for importing substances and precursors (pseudoephedrine) are emerging. For this purpose, drug dealers use even the infrastructure of legal businesses.
- The external migration has increased the risk of importing synthetic drugs (MDMA, LSD, medicines containing precursors that are imported mainly from Europe (*Poland, the Baltic countries, Germany, the Netherlands, Italy*)).
- Drug distribution networks have been expanding due to the deterioration of the socio-economic situation and growing unemployment, which has led to the attempts of "easy enrichment" by doing simple work (hiding «caches», packaging and shipping substances, etc.).
- A trend of increase in drug transportation using the Internet (Darknet) and international mail services. At that, the drug dealers prefer using cryptocurrencies to pay for drug supplies.
- Popular distribution channels: postal delivery services, the Internet and vehicle transportation of substances disguised as humanitarian aid.
- The drug demand remains very high due to hostilities, people's loss of their loved ones, housing, earnings, regular stress.
- The prices of substances have risen due to complicated logistics, high demand and growing costs.
- A sustainable trend of refocusing from the herbal drug market (opium and cannabis family) to synthetic substances (amphetamine, methamphetamine, a-PVP).
- A continuing trend of increase in drug-related crimes.

# Drug-related Criminal Offences

## Number of registered drug-related criminal offences in 2018-2022, by offence (article of the [Criminal Code of Ukraine](#))



**Reported in 2022:**

**Increase in offences:**

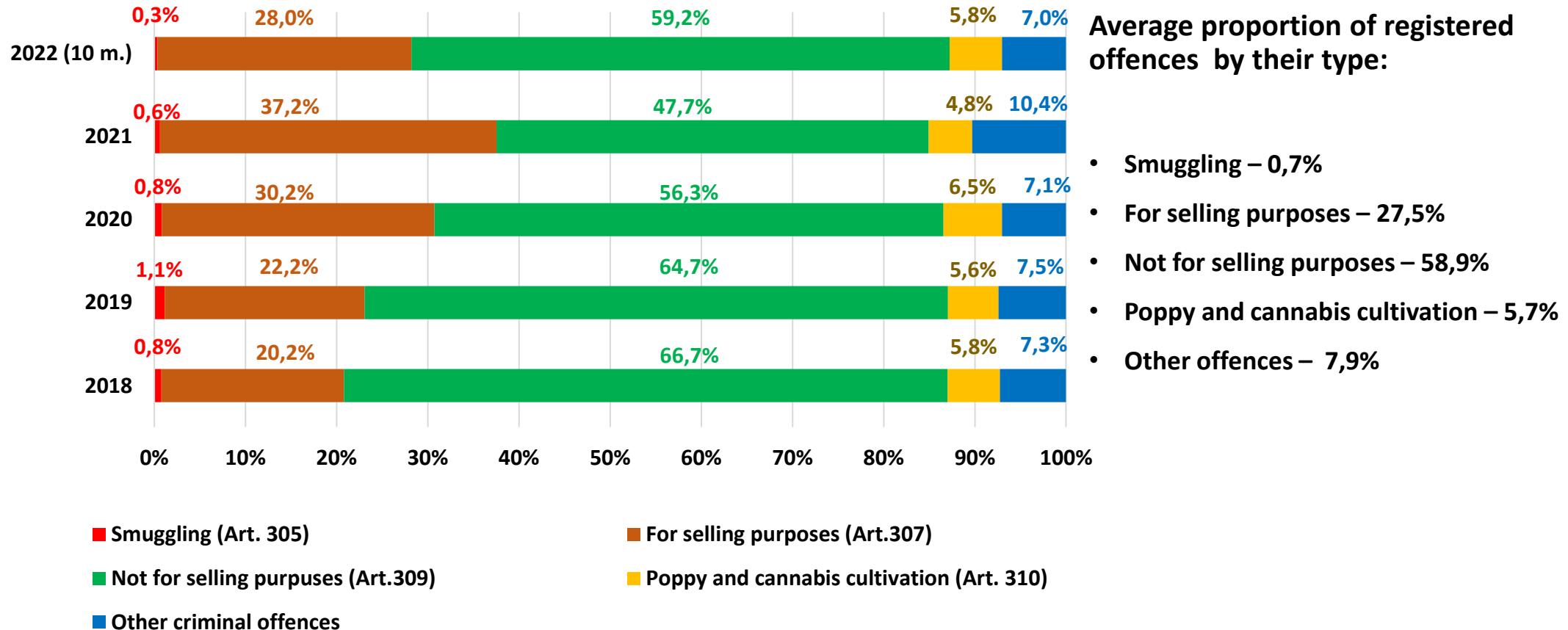
- Not for selling purposes (+26%)
- Poppy and cannabis cultivation (+24%)

**Decrease in offences:**

- Smuggling (-41%)
- For selling purposes (-18%)

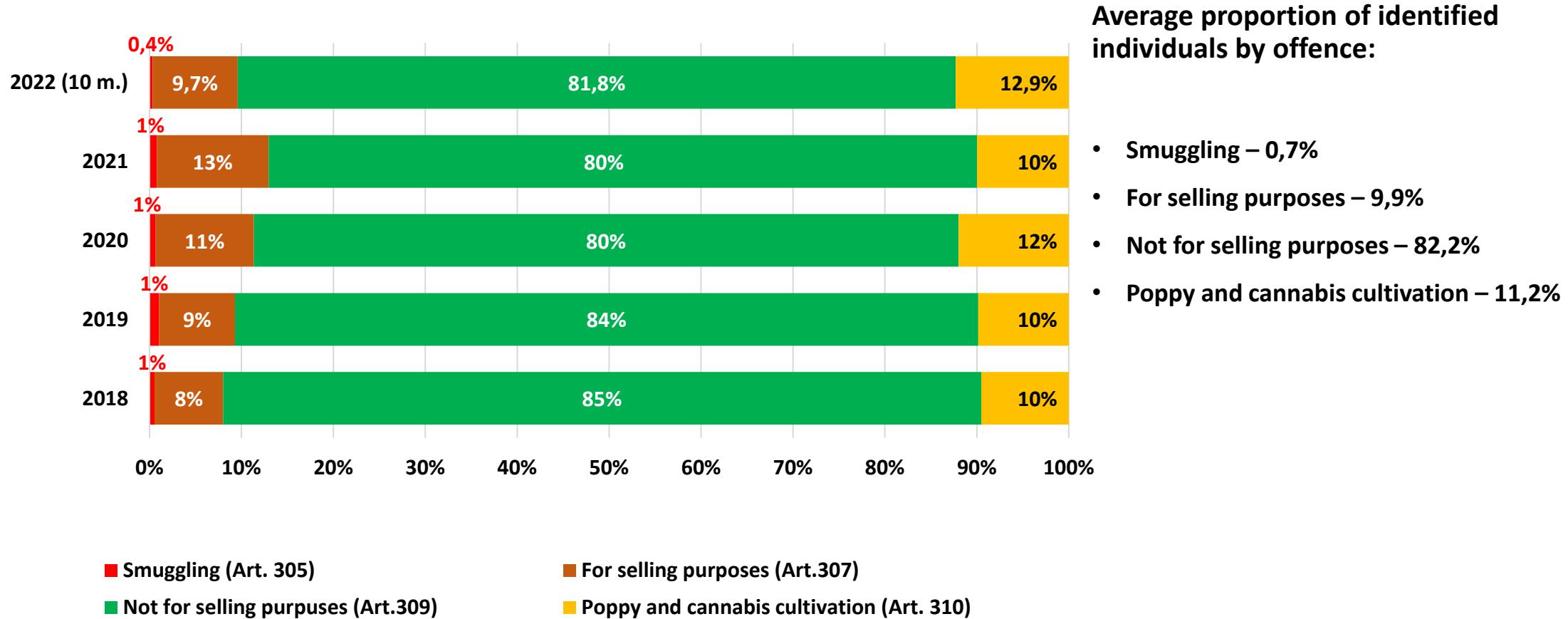
Source: [Prosecutor General's Office](#)

## Proportion of registered drug-related criminal offences in 2018-2022 by offence



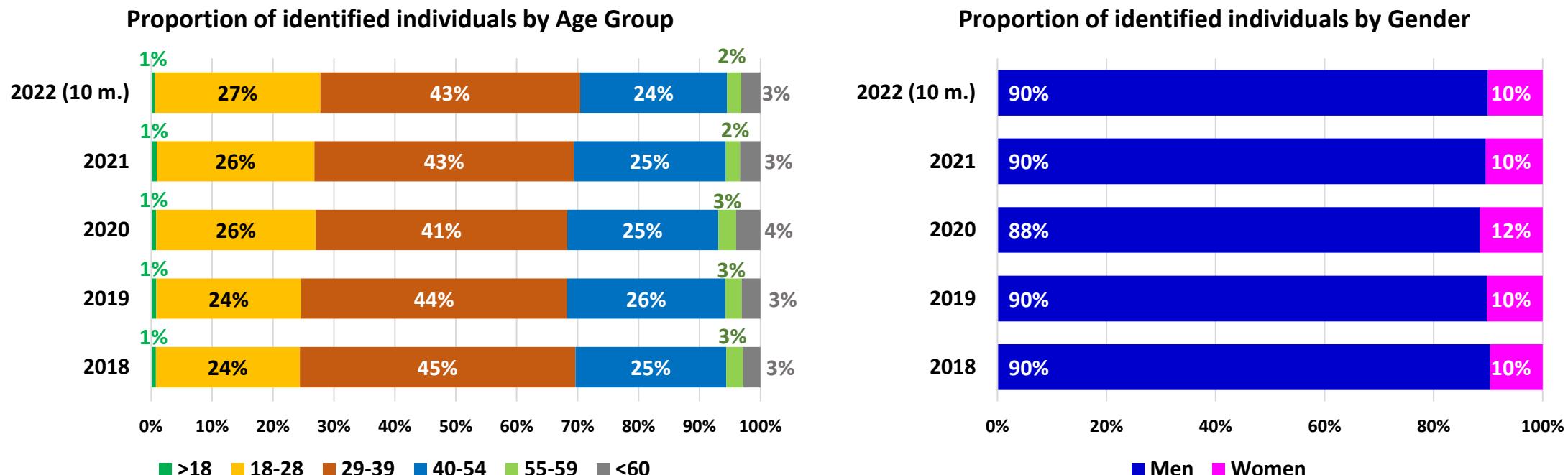
Source: [Prosecutor General's Office](#)

## Proportion of identified individuals who committed drug-related criminal offences in 2018-2022, by offence



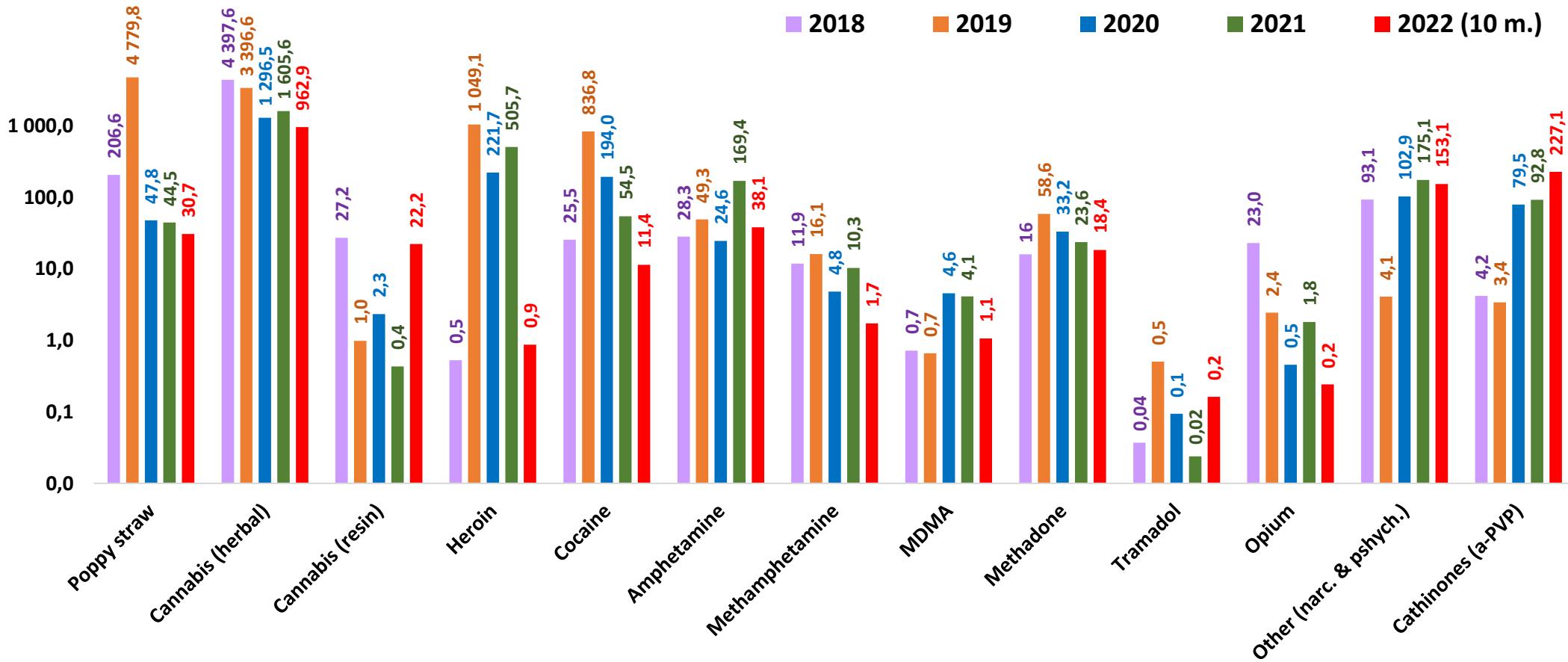
Source: [Prosecutor General's Office](#)

## Proportion of identified individuals who committed drug-related criminal offences in 2018-2022, by age group and gender



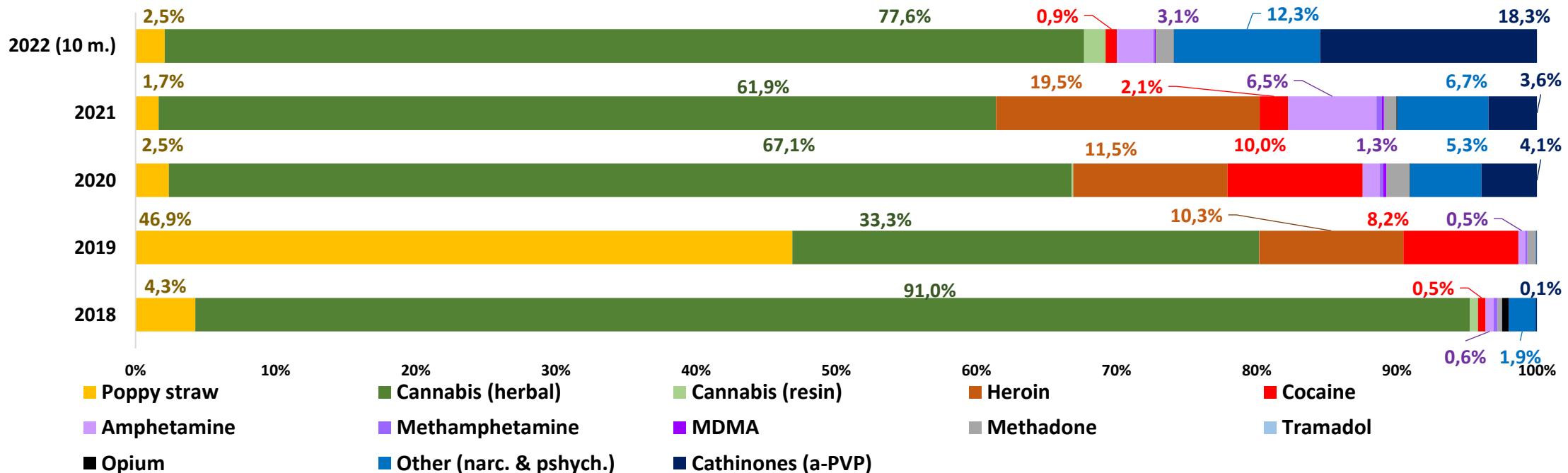
- Some 90% of identified individuals are men
- Nearly 43% of identified individuals represent the age group of 29-39 years old
- 25% of identified individuals belong to the age group 18-28, and another 25% - to the age group of 40-54

## Volume of seized substances on initiated criminal proceedings in 2018-2022 to be forwarded for investigation (kilograms)



Source: [National Police](#) & [Security Service](#)

## Proportion of seized substances on initiated criminal proceedings in 2018-2022 to be forwarded for investigation (%)



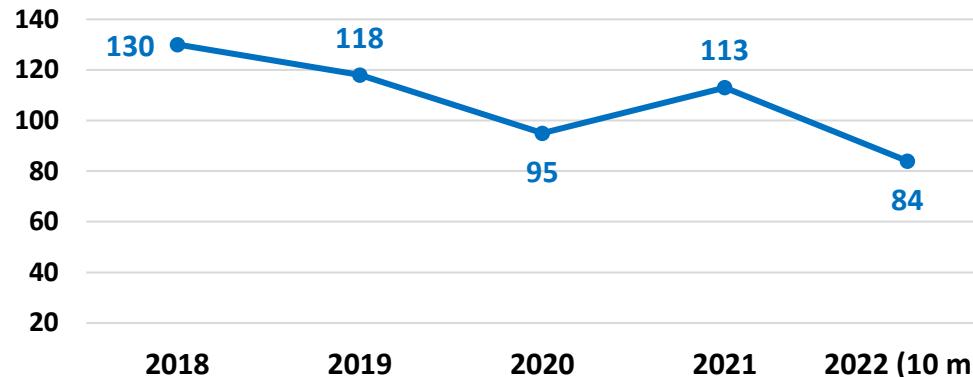
### Top-3 substances seized in 2022

- Cannabis (herbal) – 77,6%
- Synthetic cathinones (a-PVP) – 18,3%
- Amphetamine – 3,1%

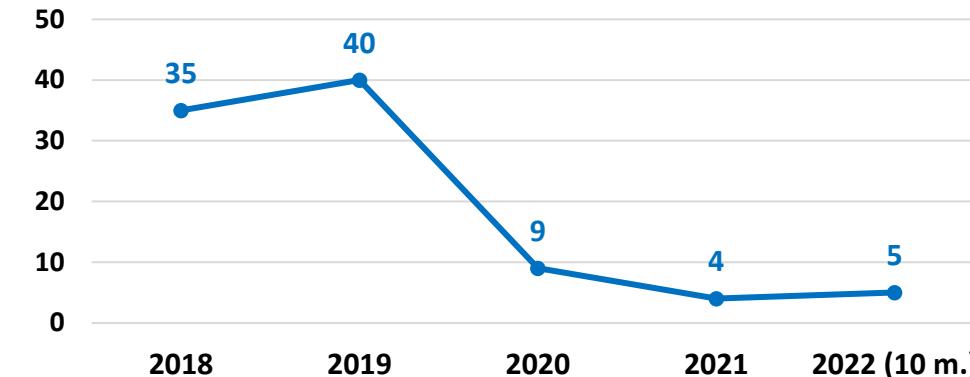
Source: [National Police & Security Service](#)

## Results of combating drug-related crime in 2018-2022

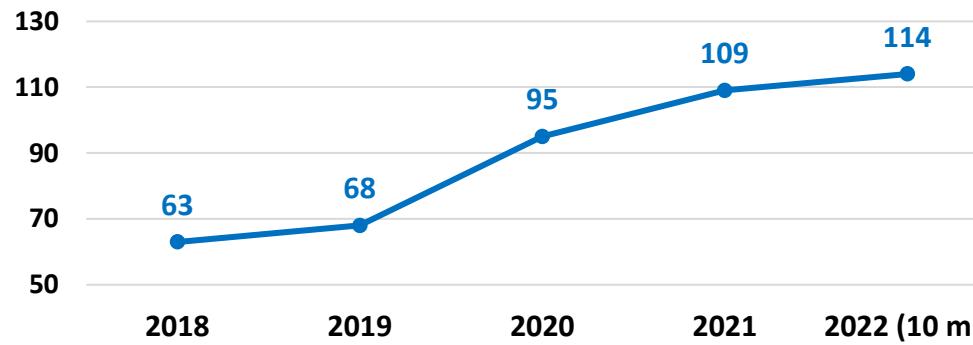
Laboratories dismantled by the Police and the Security Service



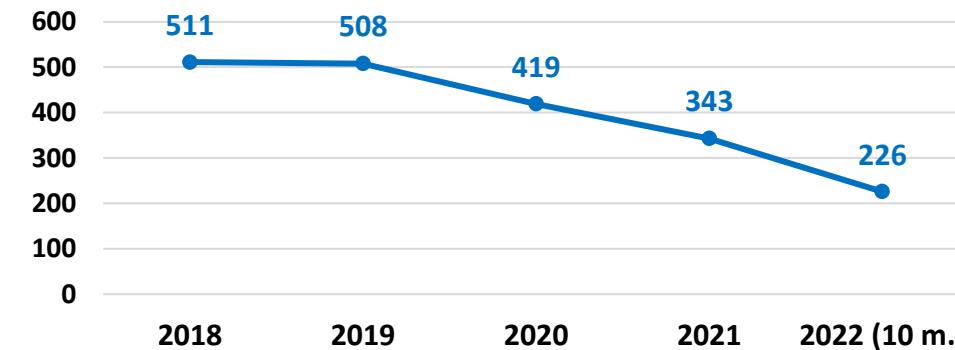
International drug trafficking channels blocked by the Police



Organized drug crime groups exposed by the Police



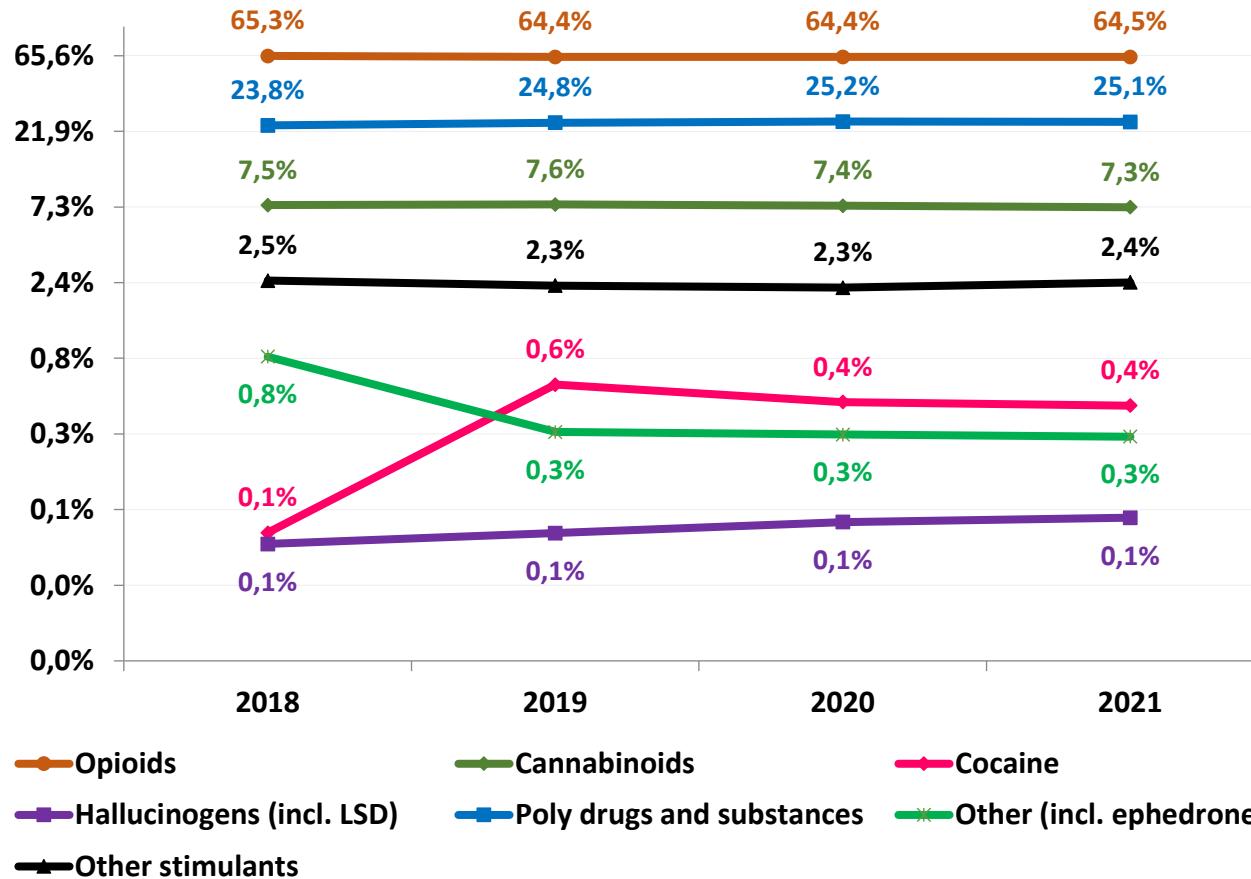
Drug dens closed by the Police



Source: [National Police & Security Service](#)

# Other Indicators

## Prevalence of drug use in 2018-2021 (%)

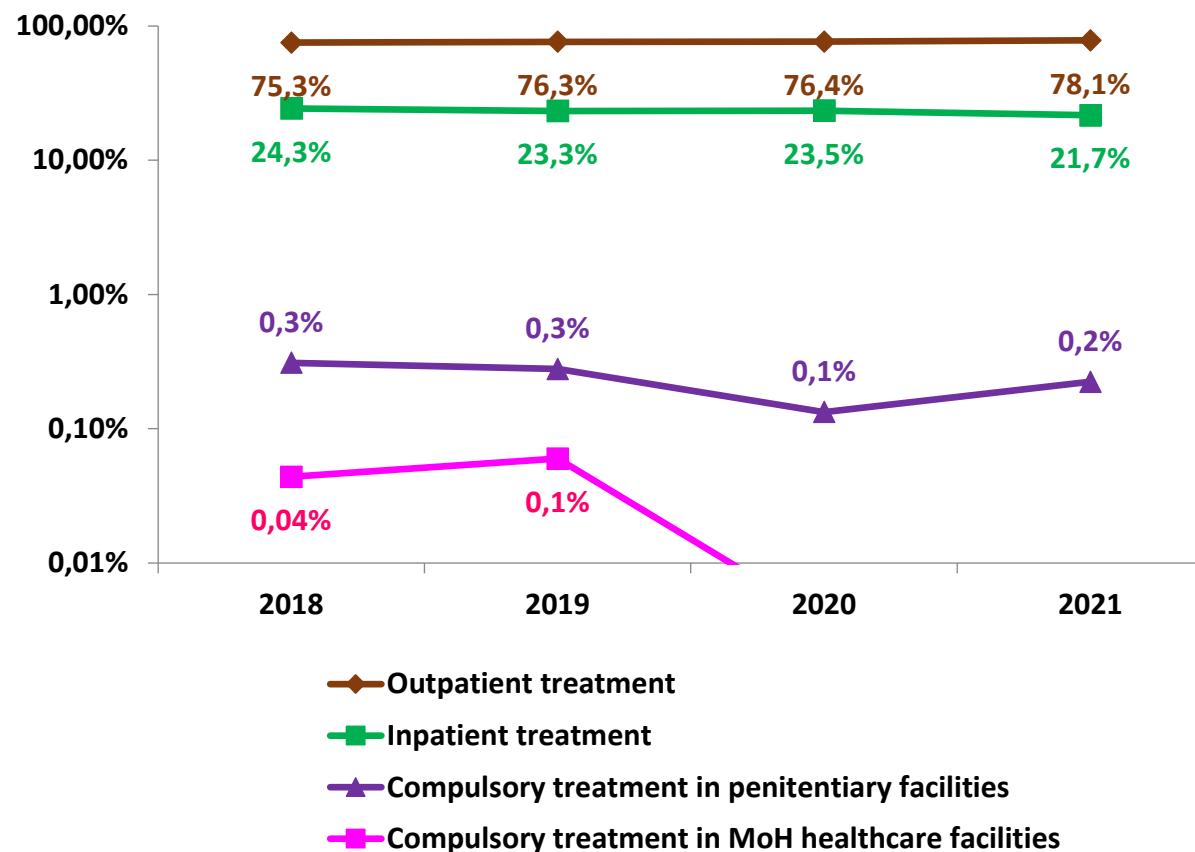


**In general, the trend of prevalence remains unchanged:**

- Over 64% of persons use opioids.
- Nearly 25% of persons use poly drugs.
- Some 7,5% use cannabinoids.
- Less than 1% of persons use cocaine and hallucinogens.
- Almost 90% of substance users are urban population.
- Nearly 58% of substance users are 36 years and older, while the proportion of persons younger 17 years is only 0,03%,

Source: [Ministry of Health](#)

## Proportion of substance users covered with treatment in 2018-2021, by form of treatment



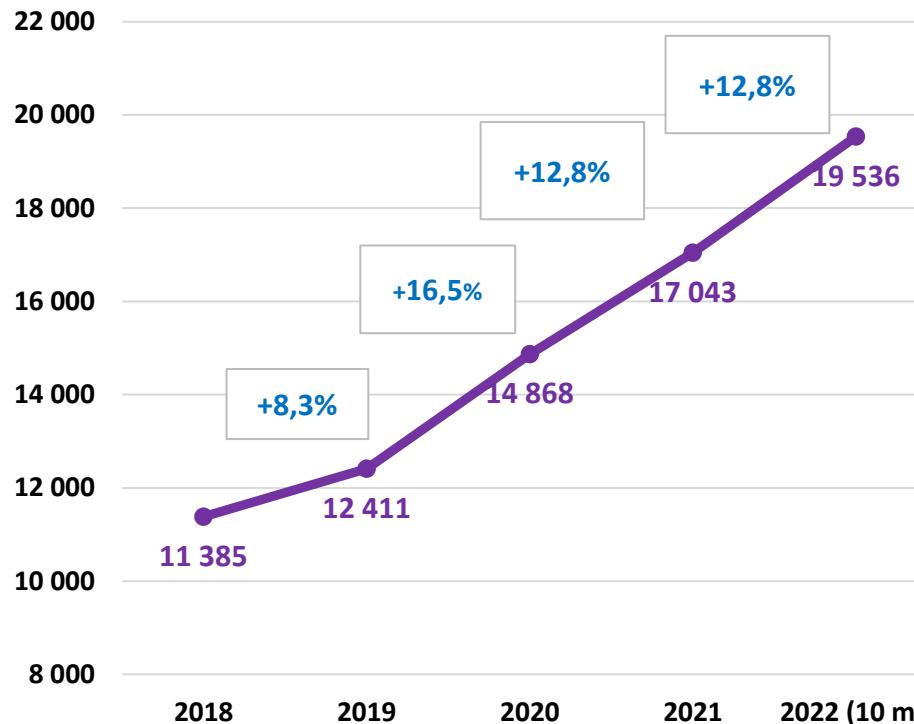
### Forms of drug addiction treatment:

- 76,5% of persons receive outpatients treatment (trend of increase in their number).
- Over 23% of persons receive inpatients treatment (trend of small decrease in their number).
- 0,2% of persons receive compulsory treatment in penitentiary facilities (stable).
- Very few persons receive compulsory treatment in healthcare facilities (trend of considerable decrease in their number). E.g. 1 person in 2020 and 2021.

Source: [Ministry of Health](#)

## Treatment demand: Opioid substitution therapy (OST) in 2018-2022

Number of OST patients in 2018-2022

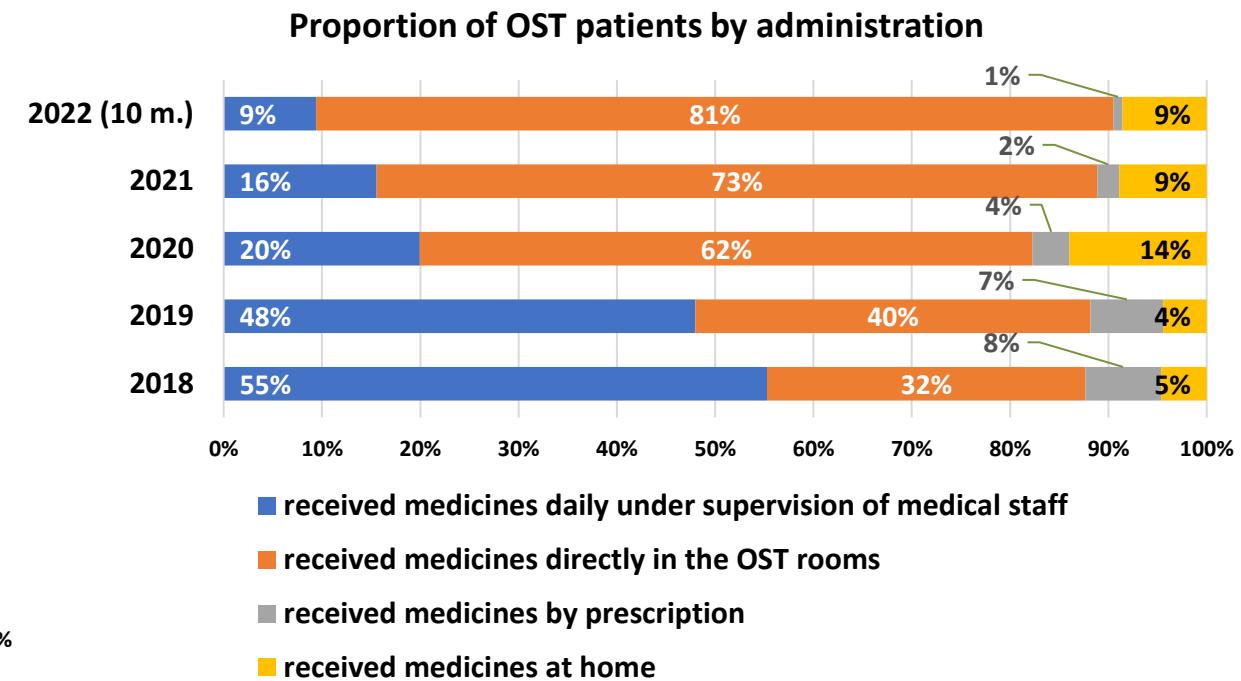
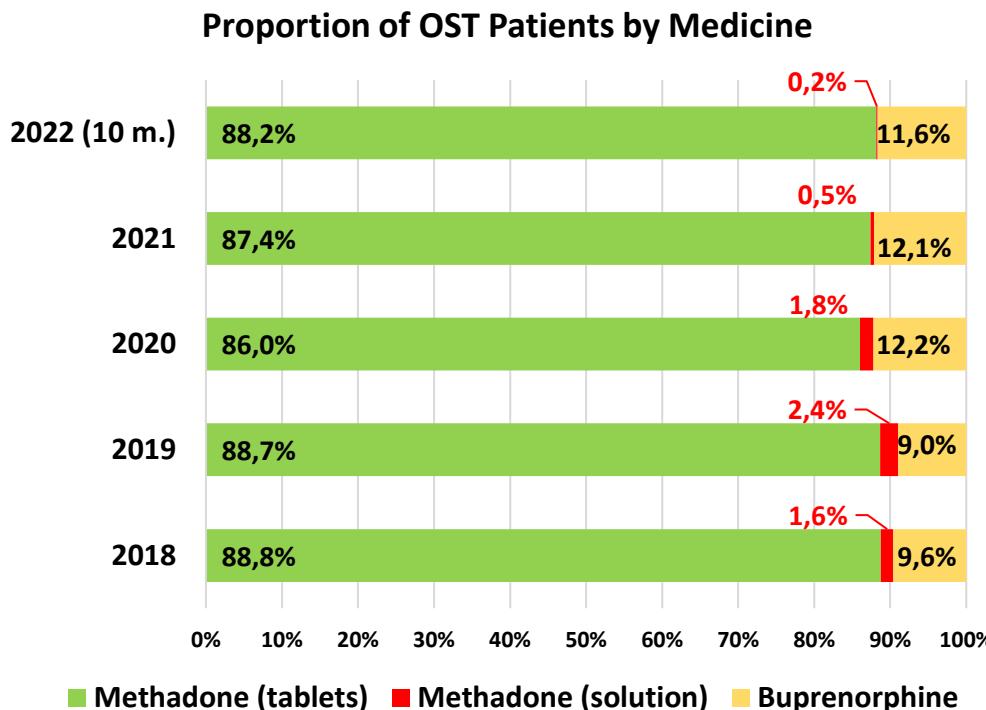


### OST services during the war:

- Trend of increase in OST patients remains sustainable.
- Due to the invasion a part of facilities that provided OST services were closed or ruined, especially on the occupied territories.
- There were problems with OST medicines supplies in the first month of war.
- Sources of OST medicines supplies: public procurement and humanitarian aid.
- It is planned to launch a pilot project of providing OST services using video technology.
- Some 2000 OST patients displaced to other regions of Ukraine. No proven data on OST patients moved abroad (Around 60 persons started OST treatment abroad as of 1 June 2022).
- No data on individuals who need OST services on the occupied territories.

Source: [Public Health Center](#)

## Treatment demand: Opioid substitution therapy (OST) in 2018-2022

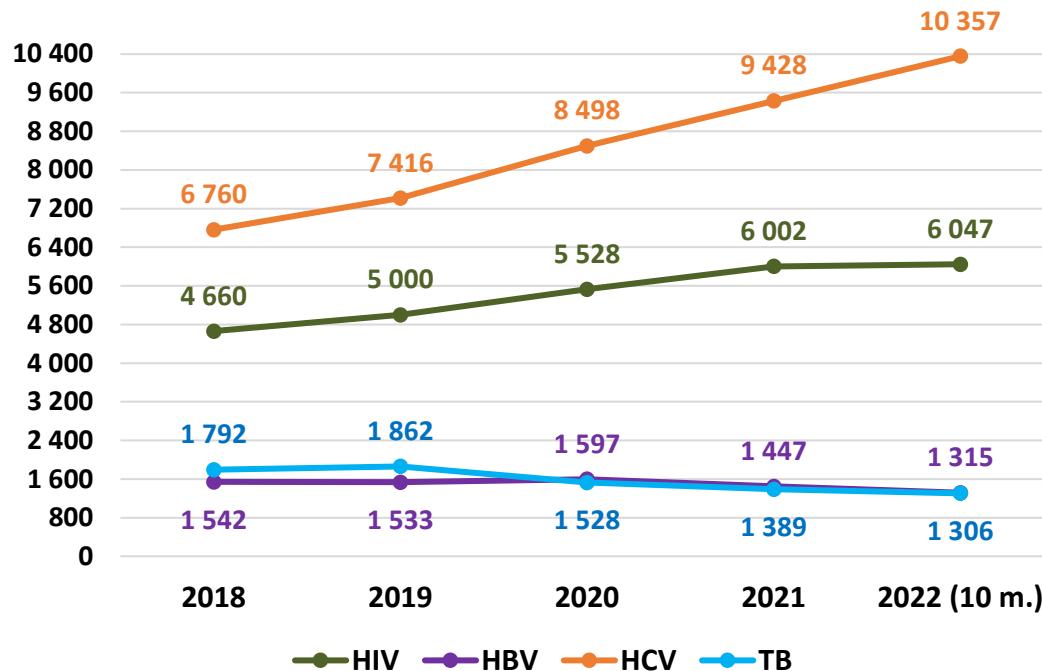


- The key medicine remains methadone hydrochloride in pills (over 85%)

- Trend of increase in OST patients who receive medicines in OST rooms
- Important decrease OST inpatients and those who receive medicines by prescription

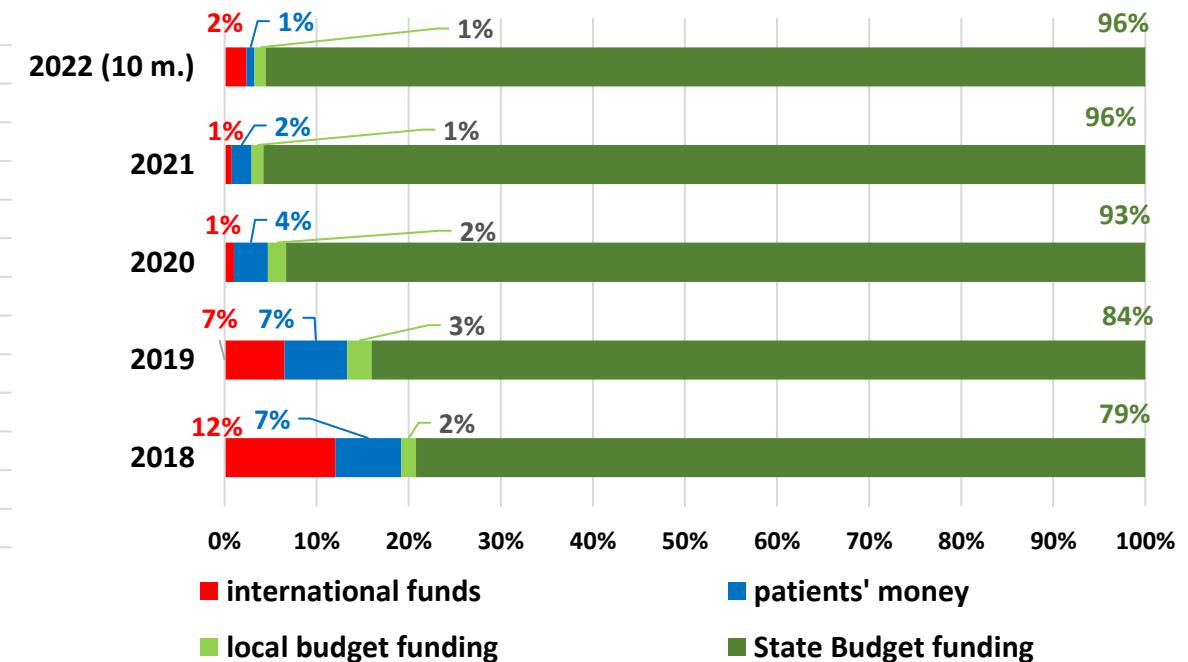
## Treatment demand: Opioid substitution therapy (OST) in 2018-2022

OST patients with infectious deseases (persons)



- Trend of increase in OST patients with HCV and HIV.
- Trend of decrease in OST patients with HBV and TB.

Proportion of OST patients by funding source

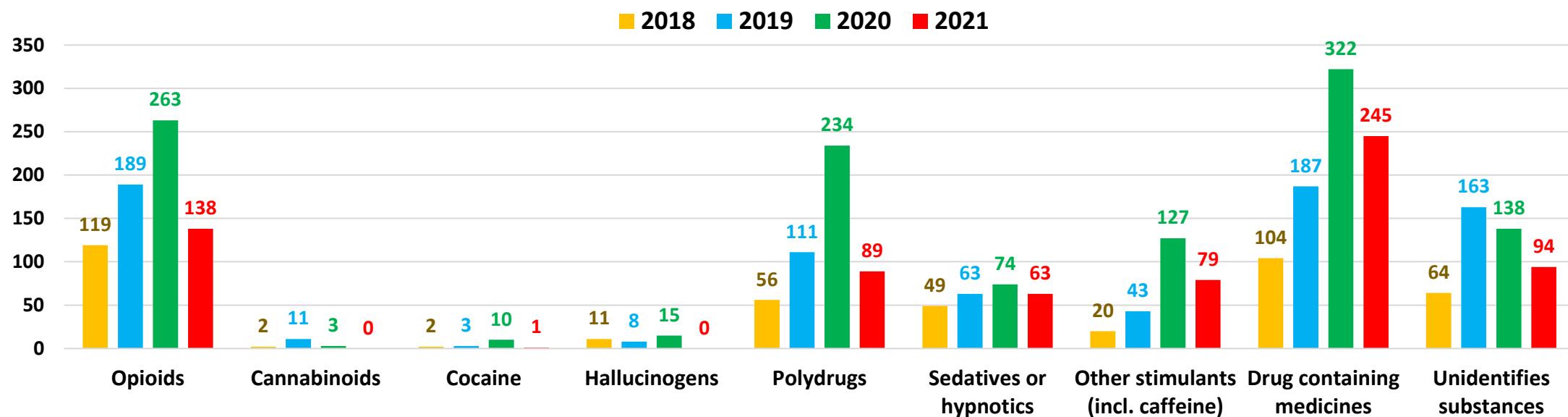


Trend of transferring to the full State Budget funding of OST Programs.  
The invasion led to the growth of international aid (humanitarian)

Source: [Public Health Center](#)

# Drug-related deaths with the identified evidence of psychoactive substances in the biological material in 2018-2021

Number of deaths with the identified evidence of psychoactive substances in the biological material, by substance

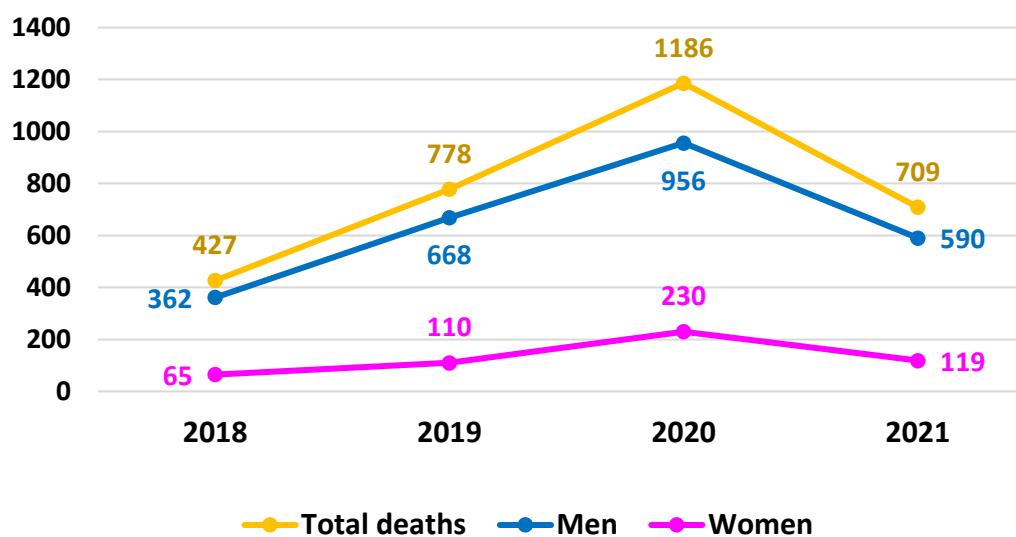


- Trend of annual increase in drug-related deaths (NB: data for 2021 are incomplete).
- In terms of proportion, there observed a trend of increase in deaths due to the use of drug-containing medicines from 24% in 2018 up to 35% in 2021, while the share of deaths due to opioids use decreased from 28% in 2018 to 20% in 2021.
- The most deaths are due to the use of drug-containing medicines (27%), opioids (23%), poly drugs (15%) and unidentified substances (15%).

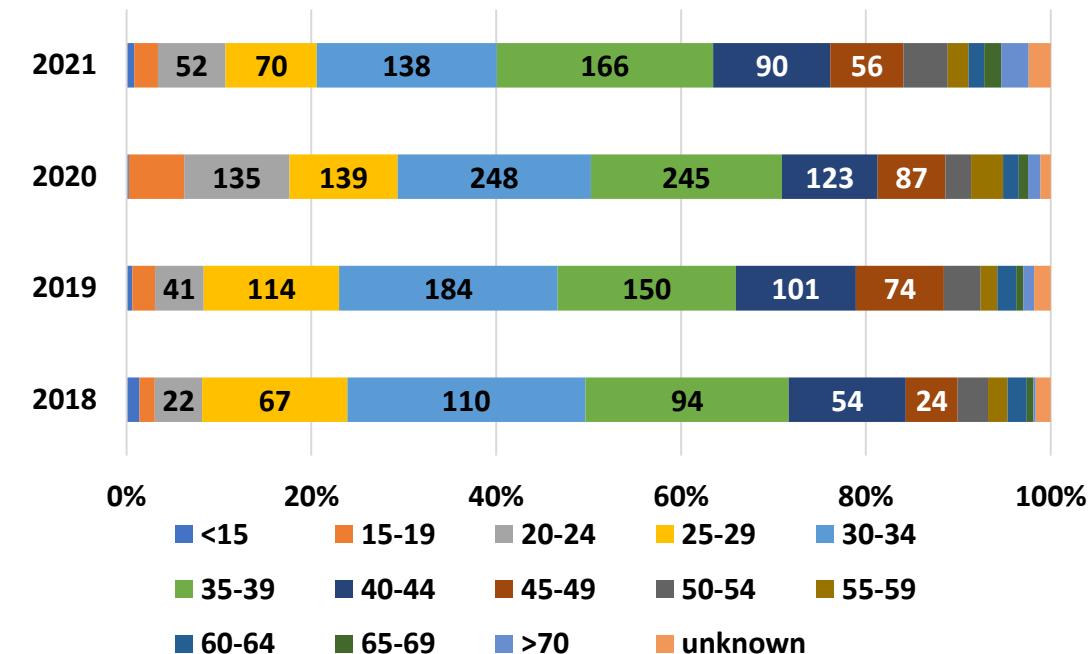
Source: [Bureaus of Forensic Medical Examination](#)

## Drug-related deaths with the identified evidence of psychoactive substances in the biological material in 2018-2021

Number of deaths with the identified evidence of psychoactive substances in the biological material, by gender



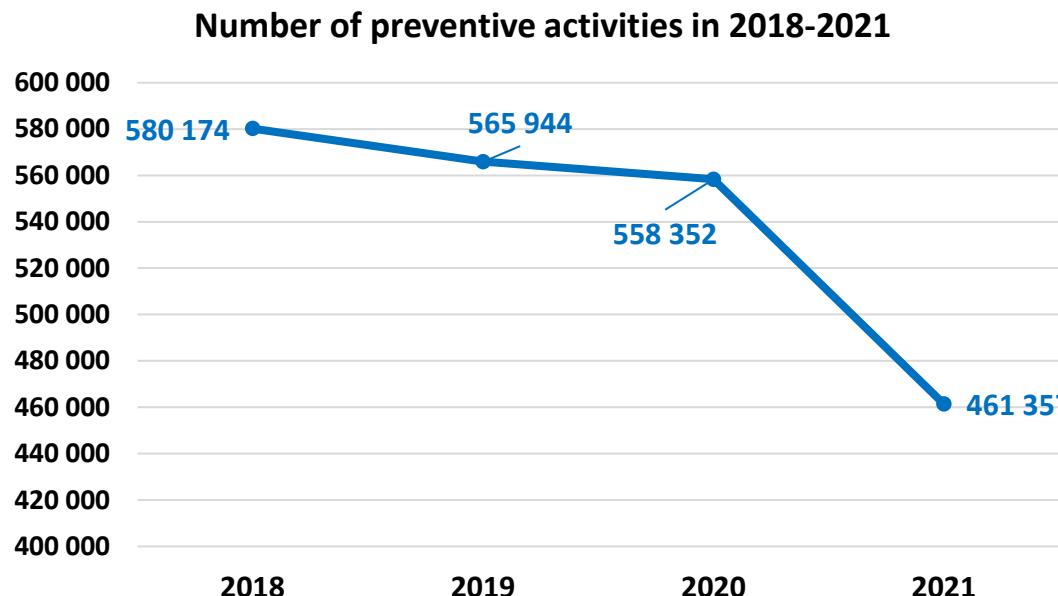
Proportion of deaths with identified evidence of substances in the biological material, by age



- 80% are men death cases.
- The most of drug-related deaths are in the age group of 30-39 y.o. (some 50% of all deaths).

Source: [Bureaus of Forensic Medical Examination](#)

## Preventive activities in 2018-2021

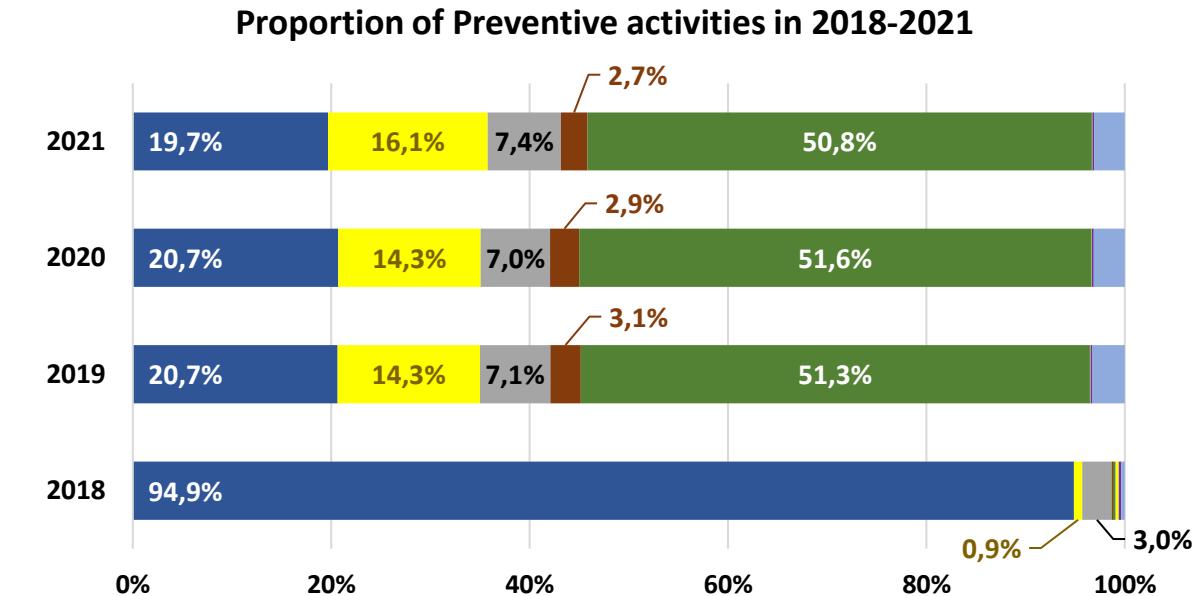


The total number of preventive activities has been decreasing from year to year.

Main preventive activities before 2019 were interviews (95%)

Main preventive activities starting from 2019 (average percentage):

- trainings (51%)
- Interviews (20%)
- Educational hours (15%)
- Lectures (7%)
- Seminars (3%)

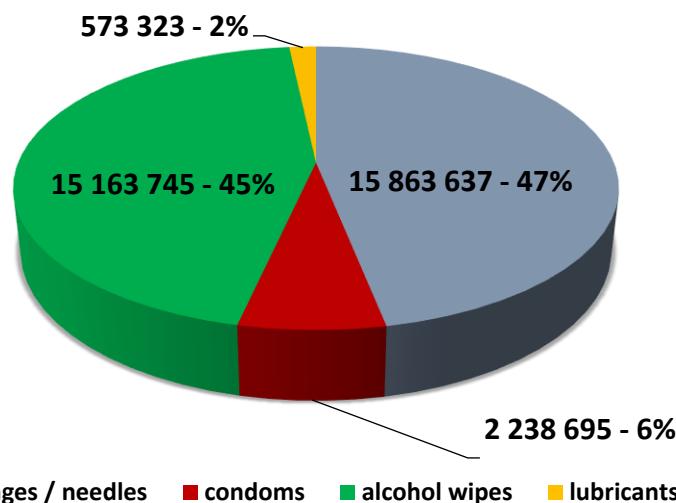


- Individual interviews
- Educational hours
- Lectures
- Seminars
- Trainings
- Publications
- TV broadcasts
- Radio appearances
- Other activities

Source: [Ministry of Science and Education](#)

## Harm reduction activities for PWID: State budget funding 2021 vs 2020

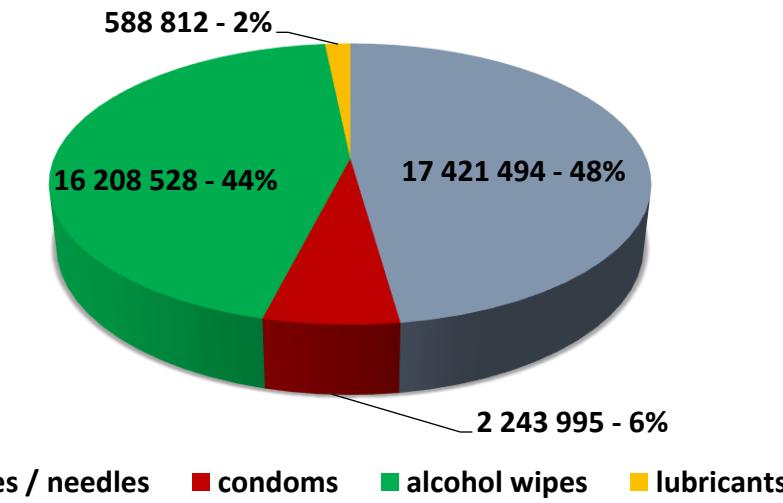
Distributed personal protection supplies among PWID at the expense of State Budget in 2021



PWID in 2021 = 164 717 persons

- 96 syringes and needles per 1 PWID (target: 200)
- 14 condoms per 1 PWID (target: 20)
- 3 lubricants per 1 PWID (target: 2)
- 92 wipes per 1 PWID (target: 200)

Distributed personal protection supplies among PWID at the expense of State Budget in 2020



PWID in 2020 = 181 651 persons

- 96 syringes and needles per 1 PWID (target: 200)
- 12 condoms per 1 PWID (target: 20)
- 3 lubricants per 1 PWID (target: 2)
- 89 wipes per 1 PWID (target: 200)

Source: [Public Health Center](#)

# Drug monitoring challenges and general conclusions

## Drug monitoring challenges:

- Data collection has become more complicated due to military operations, occupation of territories, regular shelling, destruction of infrastructure, loss of databases, and changes in government priorities in all areas of life.

## General conclusions on current drug situation in Ukraine:

- The drug situation in Ukraine has not changed significantly after the Russian invasion.
- The drug demand remains high due to worsening social and economic situation in the country.
- Drug dealers have been searching and trying new channels of smuggling and selling substances, as the traditional ones have been broken.
- There is expected an increase in manufacturing dangerous new synthetic cathinones.
- There remains a trend of importing drug and precursor-containing medications that are not registered in Ukraine from India, China, and Turkey.
- The most common substances in Ukraine for internal users are cannabis, methadone, amphetamine family substances.

# Thanks for your time and attention!

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