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## **THE FIGHT AGAINST ORGANIZED CRIME IN THE FIELD OF DRUGS TRAFFICKING**

The constant growth of global drug trafficking is leading not only to an increase in the number of people suffering from drug addiction, but also to an increase in crime, violence, deaths, family breakdowns and irreparable damage to health. In recent decades, drug trafficking and abuse have become one of the global problems of humanity.

The problem of combating drug crime is one of the most acute social and legal problems of Ukraine at the beginning of the XXI century. According to criminal statistics, the share of drug crimes over the past five years ranges from 13.4 to 15.4% of the total number of crimes. The National Police has registered more than 14,000 crimes committed by drug addicts and registered almost 170,000 drug users.

The development of technology and the rapid growth of the number of Internet users, especially among minors, and the extraordinary mobility and accessibility of the Internet create a new wave of opportunities for drug traffickers to sell drugs with minimal risk [1, p.39].

In 2017, 143 gangs involved in drug trafficking via the Internet were exposed in Ukraine. More than 4 tons of narcotic drugs and psychotropic

substances worth at least UAH 130 million were seized. Law enforcement officers documented 113 facts of the organization of underground laboratories.

The range of substances available on the drug market has also expanded significantly, becoming more diverse. Opium production is growing, and the cocaine market is booming. In 2016, world opium production increased by one third compared to the previous year, and this was mainly due to the increase in the opium poppy crop in Afghanistan. The expansion of the cocaine market is also confusing, for example, in 2013-2015, coca bush cultivation increased by 30%, mainly due to increased cultivation in Colombia. After a decline, there are signs that cocaine use is growing in the two largest markets, North America and Europe.

Ukraine's geopolitical position is determined by the fact that the state has become an intermediate link in the chain of drug traffickers. Previously, drug trafficking was organized through West Africa and the Balkan Peninsula. But in recent years, Europe has begun to step up the fight against drug trafficking and has taken serious steps to block drug smuggling channels from West Africa and the Balkans used by the Albanian mafia. So Colombian drug cartels and Afghan opium kings began looking for new ways to supply dope to Europe. To this end, they actively use the Black Sea basin, including the following three ports: Varna, Bulgaria, Constanta, Romania, and Odessa, Ukraine and Illichivsk. The traditional heroin route through Turkey and the Caucasus now also runs through Black Sea ports [2, p.13].

International drug syndicates have intensified their activities in Ukraine and the import and consumption of synthetic drugs from China and India have increased. According to international experts, until recently, 5-6% of all European drug traffic passed through Ukraine, which in monetary terms exceeded 2 billion dollars per year, today these figures have almost doubled and are equal to 10% and 4-5 billion dollars, respectively. It is primarily cocaine, but a significant proportion is also synthetic drugs from India and China, Afghan heroin. We will add to this that large consignments of marijuana from the Maghreb and Africa in transit through Moldova to Russia are also constantly trying to be transported through our territory.

In addition, criminals use route verification schemes. There are cases when criminals sent cars with caches, which instead of drugs contained baking soda, and thus the reliability of the channel was checked.

According to the practice of anti-drug and drug trafficking legislation in Ukraine and other countries, low thresholds for small amounts of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances contribute to deepening drug latency, increasing the number of people convicted of drug possession and

use, and expanding the illegal drug market. Thus, the reduction of small sizes of certain drugs back in 2010 contributed to the prosecution of not so much drug dealers as drug users [3, p.594].

Thus, drug trafficking in Ukraine remains one of the most common activities of organized crime. Using the geographical location of the state, organized crime is actively reaching the transnational level in the field of drug trafficking. Of particular concern is the fact that due to the development of technology, the rapid growth in the number of Internet users, especially among minors, and the extraordinary mobility and accessibility of the Internet, drug traffickers are gaining a new wave of opportunities to sell drugs with minimal risk. Against the background of the growing number of drug addicts, the lack of purposeful state programs and mechanisms aimed at reducing drug trafficking activity in Ukraine becomes obvious.

Unfortunately, official statistics do not reflect the real state of drug trafficking in the country, which indicates the high latency of this type of organized crime. Therefore, combating this type of organized crime requires more effective and timely, and punishment – inevitable.

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