



# Key Findings from the 2005 Local Drug Trend Monitoring System in Frankfurt

## MosyD (**M**onitoring **S**ystem **D**rug **T**rends)

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## 1. Introduction

This summary report presents the key trends in legal and illicit drug use in Frankfurt/Main, Germany from the 2005 Drug Trends Monitoring System MoSyD (Monitoring System Drug Trends). MoSyD is a local monitoring system whose aim is to provide reliable and timely data on trends in legal and illicit drug use (such as current patterns of drug use, types of drugs being used, how they are used, in what combinations, by which social groups and changes in drug consumption over time) and thus provide information that is essential for policy makers and service providers.

This is the fourth year that MoSyD has been conducted. It is an integrated information system that applies different quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches where data from different sources is collected and evaluated on an ongoing annual basis. The combined information from these sources is used to draw a broad picture of the drug using phenomena in Frankfurt and to detect and identify emerging trends in drug use. In this manner MoSyD functions as an early warning system.

The research design with its single modules and different methods is geared to informing itself on a steady basis. Thus, the quantitative module of the latitudinal school survey is for example modified according to collected information on new emerging drug trends from the trend scout panel. Conversely, remarkable findings of the school survey can be brought into the qualitative modules of the expert and trend scout panel. Thus it is possible to get early signs regarding the epidemiology of new trends in drug using behaviour and also regarding the question, if and when these observed trends become a larger social phenomenon.

The characteristic feature of MoSyD is its longitudinal research approach that pursues a continuous monitoring of the phenomenon of legal and illicit drug use. It is locally focused on the city of Frankfurt and covers the whole spectrum of drug consumption – that is the wide range of the use of legal and illicit drugs within established, socially integrated and inconspicuous social contexts up to the problematic social setting of the ‘open drug scene’. The individual research modules cover all areas of life-worlds where a) drugs are consumed (different drug scenes respectively leisure time milieus) or b) professional sectors which are directly confronted with the drug using phenomena (drug aid, youth services, police, education sector etc.). According to the aim of providing detailed information on emerging drug trends, MoSyD is based on four research modules: the expert panel, the school survey, the trend scout panel and the open drug scene survey. Since one of the modules, namely the open drug scene inquiry, was not – according to its bi-annual frequency – conducted in 2005, the following description of the methodological approaches and key findings of the 2005 survey is narrowed to the other three research modules<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> A summary report of the open drug scene survey 2006 in English is available at the Centre for Drug Research.

## 2. Drug trends in Frankfurt/Main 2005 – executive summary

### Alcohol

Alcohol is by far the most used drug. More than 90% of the 15-18-year-old students have drunk alcohol at least once in their lifetime and 70% did so in the last month. Several key figures for the consumption of alcohol among students are declining after an increase in the previous survey. This applies especially to a current use as well as an intensive use among schoolgirls and among students aged 15. In contrast to this trend among students, the alcohol use in techno party scenes tends to increase further – an observation that was communicated by the experts and can also be confirmed through statements by the ‘trend scouts’ (key persons). This tendency is apparently linked to a continuing positive image of alcohol in these scenes, which is partly due to new and ‘trendy’ alcoholic beverages (most of all new beer sorts and shandies). However, related to the whole

sector of party resp. recreational scenes, a stagnating alcohol use can be observed. All in all the different settings seem to have assimilated to each other – this apparently counts for the level of consumption as well as for the favoured alcoholic beverages.

### Tobacco

Tobacco is still after alcohol the second most widespread drug. Roughly 80% of the 15-18-year-old students have smoked tobacco at least once in their lifetime; 44% did so within the last month. After an explicit decline in 2004 the prevalence rates have gone up again. This applies particularly for the group of schoolgirls, where the rates for the lifetime prevalence are higher than in precedent surveys. Yet, the general rates for a current use are substantially lower than in 2002 and 2003. In contrast, the prevalence for a current use among the youngest respondents has by tendency dropped. Additionally, the proportion of students who named cigarettes as their favourite drug has steadily become smaller. The findings of the trend scout panel also show a decrease in the consumption of cigarettes especially for the first half of 2005. This was, among other things, reasoned by a rise in prices; although this decline did not seem to perpetuate to the end of 2005. According to the expert round, the established smoking ban at Hessian schools has led to more discussions around the topic of smoking among youths. The ban also has created some problems

#### Brief Summary of Key Findings

- Stagnation of the prevalence rates for cannabis and hard drugs after a strong decline in 2004.
- Slight increase for tobacco consumption after a decrease in the prior year
- Slight drop for the prevalence of alcohol use after an increase in the previous year
- Increased equalization of patterns of drug use in different recreational scenes
- Further decline for an intensive use of alcohol and cannabis
- Indications for a splitting of the ‘open drug scene’ (users who are affiliated with the drug aid system vs. ‘hidden’ users)
- Indications for a more critical attitude toward cannabis use among juveniles and young adults

though, which is mainly because of students who used to smoke outside the school grounds. A broad trend in 2005 is the high popularity of shisha pipes (oriental water pipes) among juveniles and young adults.

### **Other legal drugs**

Furthermore, there are still other legally traded drugs like herbal ecstasy, ephedra or salvia divinorum that are sporadically used, but the prevalence rates are very low. Only 1% of the interviewed students have experience with herbal ecstasy and the trend scouts did not report any changes of the very low and mostly just experimental use of legal nature drugs either. In contrast, the experts noticed a temporary rise of information requests regarding particular exotic nature drugs among party people who already use other party drugs intensively. The relatively high consumption level of energy drinks in party scenes corresponds with previous surveys. After an increase in 2004, the use of inhalants (like glue or other solvent-containing substances) among students has decreased this year. Currently, every seventh student has sniffed such inhalants. The other research modules did not supply any indication of a prevalence of inhalants.

### **Cannabis**

Cannabis is still the most widespread illicit drug among juveniles, in party scenes as well as in the population in general. The clearly declined prevalence rate for cannabis use among students aged 15-18 in the prior year levelled off in 2005. Unvaried, a little less than two out of five students have used cannabis at least once in their lifetime, and the rate for a current use (within the last 30 days) remains at one-eighth. The present use among 15-year-old students has further decreased. A declining popularity of cannabis among younger juveniles is also supported through statements of the expert round. In part, an intensive cannabis use of older siblings or acquaintances seems to function as a 'cautionary tale'.

In distinction to juveniles, the spread of cannabis use among adults does not seem to decline. Albeit, there is no further potential developmental growth ascribed to the drug. However, the trend scout survey reveals ambivalent observations. For several scenes it was reported that the level of consumption is at an unaltered high and that to a great extent cannabis is used parenthetically, whereas for other scenes it was stated that particularly older persons reduce or quit using cannabis. It was also partly reported that an open and visible use of cannabis has become less tolerated. The amount of requests for counselling and treatment regarding cannabis has, according to the opinion of the experts, not further increased in 2005. Here preparations for medical psychological investigations due to cannabis use in road traffic as well as in cases of juveniles and adults with intensive patterns of use make up the largest part of the counselling practice.

### **'Hard drugs'**

Almost every tenth 15-18-year-old student in the 2005 survey has experience with at least one 'hard drug' (all illicit drugs apart from cannabis); every twentieth has used one of those substances within the last year and 3% within the last month. The lifetime prevalence is thereby falling, whereas the rates for the 12-month and the 30-day prevalence remain

steady. Reductions of the corresponding values are only detected among female respondents. The trend scouts reported a stagnating, potentially slightly increasing use of those substances. Steadily declining figures become apparent when analyzing the data regarding the hard drug use of friends as well as the number of students who were offered hard drugs at least once.

### **Ecstasy**

For the entire survey period (since 2002) an increase of the prevalence rates of this drug can be observed, although the substantially dropped values in the prior year have remained more or less stable in 2005. Currently 3% of the 15-18-year-old students have experience with ecstasy. The suspected (ongoing) process of the techno culture's receding in importance in 2004 and the correlating decrease in the use of ecstasy, seems to have gone into reverse this year. Thus more students as compared to the previous year stated an explicit preference for techno music, and the prevalence rates of ecstasy use among techno adherents have gone up again. Data from the trend scout panel indicate a growing relevance of ecstasy related to improved quality and lower prices. Also, the image of ecstasy tends to be more positive. The experts, however, stated a declining prominence of ecstasy in their respective fields. Thus, no explicit trend could be observed for this substance.

### **Amphetamines (speed, crystal meth)**

With a lifetime prevalence of 3% for speed, the rate among students has remained more or less on the same level as compared to preceding years. After a clear backward trend in 2004, the level of amphetamine use in party scenes has also stayed pretty much the same. Albeit, it has to be stressed that prior inquiries already showed rapidly changing preferences for this substance (as well as for other party drugs), which is partly due to its availability and quality. In contrast, the expert round reported a further increase of amphetamine use within party scenes. It has to be emphasized that none of the research modules showed any indications regarding a noteworthy use of crystal meth.

### **Cocaine**

Among the students aged 15-18, the values for the lifetime prevalence as well as for the 12-month prevalence of cocaine are constant throughout the inquiry period. Currently 4% have experience with the use of cocaine, and approximately half as many used the substance within the last 30 days – this rate has gone up slightly. The amount of students who have been offered the drug has also increased. The information from the trend scout survey presents an altogether sparsely changed level of consumption. However, in case of an improvement of the economic situation cocaine is attributed with a potential future growth in prevalence. Contrary to those signs that indicate a stagnating to increasing use of cocaine, the experts reported a continuously decreasing number of counselling and treatment requests.

### **Crack cocaine**

Crack cocaine is still the most used illicit drug within the context of the 'open drug scene'. Yet, the use seems to have reached its peak. A use of crack cocaine outside the social context of the open drug scene still seems to be limited to individual cases, since the drug's image still carries a strong connotation as a junkie drug. Among the students the drug does not play any role. Although 2% have tried the drug, current use is hardly observed.

### **Hallucinogens**

The use of psychoactive mushrooms has significantly gone down since 2002. Only 4% of the students have experience with the substance and just a few reported a regular use. Like other hallucinogenic substances, LSD, with a lifetime prevalence of 2%, plays only a minor role. In party scenes (bar small sections) hallucinogens hardly play any role either. For LSD even a further decline was observed. Also the use of other hallucinogens (DOB, DOM, DMT) by individuals from certain party scene segments has apparently more or less disappeared.

### **Heroin**

Concerning heroin, the 'classic' drug of the 'open drug' scene, the findings in 2005 (like in the prior year) indicate a rise in consumption. Outside the social context of the open drug scene, heroin is still the most condemned drug, as the use is strongly associated with a 'junkie' image. Thus heroin is by far the most deprecated drug among students and merely 1% have experience with the substance. In party scenes heroin does not seem to be prevalent either.

### **Other drugs**

4% of the 15-18-year-old students have taken hormones for building muscles. The experts reported a relatively high prevalence of these substances among particular groups of migrant youths. A slight increase of user experience can also be stated for laughing gas. Six percent of the students have tried this substance, although this is mostly based on sporadic use experiments. The trend scout survey also showed certain indications of a rising use of laughing gas. More or less constant are the very low prevalence rates (each 1% lifetime prevalence) for GHB ('liquid ecstasy') and opium among students. In contrast, the trend scout survey reveals signs for an awakening interest in opium, a substance that seems to have a comparatively positive image but is hardly available. GHB as well as ketamine ('special K') are still just consumed in individual cases within party scenes.

### **3. Expert Panel**

#### **3.1 Methodological Design**

The expert panel consists of 11 representatives who are professionally associated with the drug using phenomenon (drug aid, youth services, education system, police and prosecution). The data collection is based on the qualitative method of focus group discussions. The module is designed as a panel survey, meaning that a preferably constant group of experts get together to report and discuss drug-related observations in their respective professional field. The focus groups allow the panel members to update each other on a regular basis (twice a year) in order to gain an overview on topics related to the drug phenomenon.

With relatively low effort the focus group method provides profound and purposeful data that is, especially in view of complex sociological phenomena, of high quality. The discursive exchange between the experts opens up extensive, comparative insights into the drug using phenomenon, whereby it becomes easier to identify directions and key aspects of its development. Above all, the procedure sensitizes the panel members to which extent observations from other institutional contexts apply to their own professional field. The group becomes in a way its own corrective in the sense that observations are reconstructed adequately and controlled through the reflection of others' information and views. Are the observations really valid? Do they reflect a part of the empirically accessible reality of one's field or are these just single observations that might be – due to a general hysteria or a salient speciality – hastily generalized resp. declared as a latitudinal phenomenon? Thus, within the process of the focus group discussions an element of validation arises automatically.

#### **3.2 Key Findings**

##### **Techno party scenes**

Within this field the use of alcohol has apparently further increased, which can be traced back to new alcoholic (mix) beverages and an advancement of the drug's image. Ecstasy, on the other hand, has become less important mainly because of a greater significance of speed. An increased interest was noticed for biogenic drugs.

##### **Juveniles and young adults**

In principle, no changes in the use of psychoactive substances occurred in this age group. Due to the implementation of the smoking ban at Hessian schools, the use of tobacco became a more discussed topic. Among the younger age groups a reverse trend in regards of cannabis can be identified in that way that the image of the substance has become more negative. Because of their intensive pattern of alcohol and to some extent other illicit drugs use, the street punk scene in the city centre was detected as a particular problematic group.



### **Open drug scene**

The prevalence of crack cocaine within this social setting apparently has exceeded its climax. In addition, signs for a possible increase of heroin and benzodiazepine use were observed. The previously reported spreading of the scene across other parts of the city due to an increased police presence in the main train station area has obviously continued. Although there are no indications for newly formed permanent gathering places in other parts of the city to-date, a splitting of the scene seems to emerge. Whereas part of the scene members become more hidden and invisible for the low-threshold drug aid, others become more integrated in those services. For particular parts of the drug scene (mainly women) this development apparently goes with an increase in mental and physical burdens.

### **Cannabis**

Concerning the spreading and image of the substance in the general population, there are no hints of basic changes. The previously increasing rates of counseling cases with a problematic, intensive cannabis use have remained steady. Counseling requests for the preparation of a medical psychological investigation (MPI) are also relatively frequent, yet independent from patterns of use.

### **Other substances**

A slight increase of amphetamine use outside a party setting was observed, although this did not have an effect on the counseling rates. The counseling requests concerning cocaine use have declined. The experts did not give any hints for a noteworthy emergence of new drugs or new methods of use.

## 4. School Survey

### 4.1 Methodological Design

The school survey is the quantitative epidemiological pillar of MoSyD and is the necessary addition to the qualitative modules of the expert and the trend scout panel. This research module can be viewed as an empirical corrective, since the herein collected representative data demonstrates to what extent singular, for certain scenes typical phenomena and trends are also of quantitative relevance. This is important due to the fact that only the combination of a qualitative understanding of a drug phenomenon and a quantitative measurement of its actual prevalence generates the essential condition for making appropriate statements on the need, manner and success of intervention methods.

Within the school survey, a representative part of late adolescents (aged 15-18 years) is interviewed. This age group is of high importance for the research interest of MoSyD and also especially in regard to the conception of drug preventive measures, since drug using preferences evolve in this age range. The survey is carried out annually with a sample size of 1500 students from secondary and vocational schools in Frankfurt. The inquiry is anonymous, applying a structured questionnaire. It is conducted by interviewers from the University of Frankfurt within the school class setting of one lesson. In order to increase the response readiness and to avoid underreporting, teachers are not present during the interview situation.

### 4.2 Key Findings

#### 4.2.1 Experience with drugs and current use in 2005

**Tobacco:** 79% of the 15-18-year-old students have smoked cigarettes at least once in their life (on average at the age of 12.7 for the first time). Sixty-five percent have smoked within the last 12 months and 44% can be considered current smokers using tobacco in the last 30 days. Twenty-two percent smoke more than five cigarettes a day and 4% can be classified as heavy smokers who smoke more than 20 cigarettes per day.

**Alcohol** is still the most widespread psychoactive substance. Ninety-two percent have experience with this legal drug. The prevalence for the last 12 months adds up to 86% and 71% of the sample has drunk alcoholic beverages within the last 30 days. The average initiation age is 12.9 years. Forty-five percent were drunk at least once in the previous month and 12% drank alcohol more than ten times in the same period of time.

**Cannabis:** Thirty-seven percent of the 15-18-year-old students have used cannabis at least once in their lifetime. The initiation age averages 14.5 years. Twenty-six percent have used marijuana or hashish in the last 12 months and 13% in the last 30 days. A consumption of more than ten times in the prior month was reported by 4% of the students and 2% of the sample can be classified as intensive users with a daily consumption of cannabis products.

**Other (illicit) drugs:** Fourteen percent have experience with the use of inhalants, mainly adhesives or other solvent-containing substances. Seven percent have sniffed such substances within the last 12 months and 4% did so in the last 30 days. Six percent have tried laughing gas and 4% have used hormones for building muscles. Experience with illicit drugs other than cannabis ('hard drugs') have 9% of the respondents; 5% have consumed such substances within the last 12 months and 3% in the last 30 days. Among these illicit drugs, psychoactive mushrooms and cocaine (4% each) as well as speed and ecstasy (3% each) have the highest life time prevalence rates, followed by LSD and crack cocaine (2% each). The values for all other illicit drugs is 1% or below.

Five percent of the interviewees have never used any legal or illicit drug. Ten percent had been abstinent within the last 12 months and 24% within the last 30 days.

#### 4.2.2 Changes over the 4-years course

The use of tobacco has gone up again slightly after a decrease in the prior year – this applies especially to the lifetime and the 12-month prevalence rates, which are the highest in the entire inquiry period. In contrast, the 30-day prevalence rate has only slightly gone up from 42% to 44% and is below the values of 2002 and 2003. A light decrease, after a rise in the precedent year, can be noted for the current use of alcohol; this counts for the 30-day prevalence rate as well as for the value of drunkenness within the last month. This rate has gone down from 48% to 45%. Since 2002, the percentage of students with a monthly use of alcohol of more than ten times has declined steadily (2002: 18%, 2005: 12%).

The strong declining prevalence rate for cannabis use in the previous year has levelled off in 2005. In the long run, it can be observed that the decline of cannabis use continues. This applies especially for the use among younger respondents but also for a decreasing amount of those who use cannabis more than ten times a month (2002 and 2003: 8%, 2004: 5%, 2005: 4%). Regarding the values for the lifetime and the 12-month prevalence, such a trend can also be observed for the rest of the illicit drugs. So, the rate for the experience with 'hard drugs' has for example gone down from 14% (2003) to 9%. A deeper analysis shows a significant decrease for the use of ecstasy and psychoactive mushrooms, whereas the 30-day prevalence for those substances has remained more or less on the same level. With a prevalence rate of 2%, cocaine is currently the most commonly used 'hard drug'. The figures for the use of inhalants (2004: 21%, 2005: 14%) precipitately decline, whereas the lifetime prevalence rate for laughing gas has gone up from 3% to 6% this year.

**Table: Some prevalence rates for licit and illegal drugs among 15-18-year-old students in Frankfurt (2002-2005) (%)**

Substance	Prevalence	2002	2003	2004	2005
Tobacco	Life time	77	77	74	79
	12 month	62	63	59	65
	30 day	47	49	42	44
	> 5 times per day	25	30	22	22
Alcohol	Life time	94	93	93	92
	12 month	90	88	89	86
	30 day	78	71	74	71
	> 10 times per month	18	17	16	12
	Drunkenness last month	48	48	48	45
Cannabis	Life time	46	45	38	37
	12 month	35	33	23	26
	30 day	21	20	12	13
	> 10 times per month	8	8	5	4
Laughing gas	Life time	5	5	3	6
	12 month	2	1	1	1
Inhalants	Life time	17	17	21	14
	12 month	7	7	8	7
Cocaine	Life time	4	5	4	4
	12 month	3	3	2	3
Psych. mushrooms	Life time	8	9	5	4
	12 month	4	4	2	2
Speed	Life time	5	5	4	3
	12 month	3	2	2	2
Ecstasy	Life time	5	5	3	3
	12 month	3	2	1	1
LSD	Life time	3	3	2	2
	12 month	1	1	1	1
Crack	Life time	1	2	1	2
	12 month	1	1	<1	1
Heroin	Life time	1	1	1	1
	12 month	<1	<1	<1	<1
Hard drugs	Life time	13	14	10	9
	12 month	8	7	5	5

In parallel to a declining use of illicit drugs, the percentage of students who did not use any legal or illicit substance within the last 30 days has increased since 2002 (16%) to 24% in 2005. Clearly decreasing values can also be observed for information on the use of illicit drugs among the interviewees' friends and in view of drug offers. In contradiction to the development described above, the number of students who report to have smokers among

their friends has declined along with the portion of students that state cigarettes as their 'favourite drug'. Analogue to the development of cannabis use, a declining percentage of students stated that the substance is currently the 'most discussed drug'.

#### **4.2.3 Opinions and knowledge on drugs**

In general, the students' information level about the status of prohibition or legality of various substances can be classified as good. Regarding the utilization of diverse information sources on drugs, a steadily increasing importance of the internet can be identified. The peer group as well as the school and other media are also utilized frequently, whereby books, information pamphlets and parents rate the highest in the students' confidence in drug information.

Barely any changes are observed concerning the reasons for not using illicit drugs. The vast majority stated to simply have no interest in drugs. Conversely, the vast majority of drug users stated that curiosity was the most important motive that caused them to begin using drugs. Other frequently reported reasons included 'forgetting everyday life', 'experiencing something exciting' as well as an 'aimed manipulation of senses and feelings'.

#### **4.2.4 Gender specific differences**

According to previous years, the use of psychoactive substances is in general higher amongst male students than among females. In view of alcohol, differences to precedent years do not appear only in more frequent use, but males slightly outnumber females in all other prevalence rates. This is especially true for intensive patterns of use. Concerning cannabis, the prevalence rates of male students are particularly higher than those of females. All key figures for this substance have gone down for both genders in the last years with the exception of intensive use of more than ten times per month. Here the percentage of females has remained more or less steady. In respect to the prevalence rates for 'hard drugs' the gap between frequently using males and females has grown wider in 2005. No gender specific differences were observed for the use of inhalants and tobacco.

#### **4.2.5 Comparison of prevalence rates according to life satisfaction and frequency of going out**

The most significant prevalence differences regarding the (dis)satisfaction in various spheres of life can be detected for the familial situation. Students who express discontent with their family are more regular users of tobacco, cannabis and 'hard drugs'. Amongst those who express feeling dissatisfied with their 'life in general', a heightened use of cigarettes and 'hard drugs' becomes apparent. Daily cigarette use of more than twenty times is over-represented among those students who declared to be unhappy with their school situation. Alcohol use in contrast in the 'malcontents group' is not extraordinarily high.

A correlation between the frequency of going out and the use of alcohol, tobacco, cannabis and 'hard drugs' can be observed: the more the students tend to go out, the higher are the prevalence rates for using these substances. However, the data also reveal that the prevalence rates for using 'hard drugs' have clearly gone down over the past years for those students who go out very frequently. This decline does not apply to the rest of the sample.

#### **4.2.6 Comparison of the different school types of the entire sample**

Based on the entire sample, which also includes students aged over 18 years, a comparison between secondary schools and vocational schools was carried out. Students from vocational schools have higher prevalence rates of tobacco and 'hard drug' use. They also use alcohol a bit more frequently and intensively and are more experienced with the use of cannabis. Distinct from the prior year, no differences can be observed regarding a current use of cannabis as well as a consumption of inhalants. In addition, it has to be mentioned that students from secondary schools stated more frequently than the vocational school students to be discontented with their school situation.

#### **4.2.7 Music preferences and drug use (entire sample)**

Students with a preference for music styles that do not comply with mainstream youth culture show higher prevalence rates for cannabis and partly other illicit drugs. A current use of cannabis is most widespread among reggae fans, whereas experiences with the drug are most prevalent among goth adherents. Compared to 2004, the explicit preference for techno as well as the current use of hard drugs among techno adherents has increased.

## 5. Trend Scout Panel

### 5.1 Methodological Design

This research module represents in particular the qualitative ethnographic approach of MoSyD. In order to detect new drug use phenomena it is necessary to have a pool of key persons, meaning informants, who have direct and wide contacts to drug using social milieus or scenes. These connections usually relate to their social position and closeness to drug using social contexts, usually due to their leisure-time activities and/or occupation. Due to this particular function these key persons can be understood as trend scouts.

Like the expert survey this module is also designed as a panel. The sample consists of a relatively constant group of 20 informants who are interviewed every six months using a structured questionnaire with both open and closed questions. When putting together such a panel, attention has to be paid to the fact that the sample should cover the relevant spectrum of leisure-time scenes, subcultures, youth scenes and social milieus in which drug use plays – or potentially could play – a significant role. Due to the assumption that drug consumption is closely related to recreational time and youth culture, the panel mainly consists of key informants representing such social contexts with a focus on the extended area of techno party scenes.

The key persons can be understood as participating observers who are members of the social scenes of interest and who can directly and authentically report on new emerging drug trends from inside these networks. It is crucial that they give insights into larger social groupings that reach beyond their own micro social networks of friends and acquaintances.

### 5.2 Key Findings

**Drug use in various scenes:** The patterns of drug use in the examined scene sectors have not changed significantly in 2005. Still, a wide range of drug use patterns can be identified that reaches from a rare consumption of illicit drugs over a partly intensive use of cannabis to a relatively frequent use of various illicit substances. The latter applies in particular to segments of electronic music scenes. In contrast to 2004 where the consumption of illicit drugs tended to be generally moderate, a slight tendency of an increased drug use can be noted for the first half of 2005. Yet, this trend apparently did not continue in the second half of the year. The use of illicit drugs is still concentrated on the four most popular substances - cannabis, speed, ecstasy and cocaine. Concerning legal drugs, a clear tendency for reduced tobacco use can be noted in the first inquiry in 2005. The use of alcohol, as already observed in 2004, is estimated to have levelled off. Unchanged to previous years, the use of heroin, crack cocaine and benzodiazepines, substances which are strongly related to compulsive users within the street scene, are to a large extent condemned in all evaluated scenes.

**Patterns of Drug Use/ Overview:** Regarding the sequence of the ‘most popular drugs’, slight changes compared to the prior year appear. According to the key informants’ estimated prevalence rates, alcohol is now, like in 2002 and 2003, the most prevalent drug, followed by

nicotine, energy drinks and cannabis. For the first time within the four year inquiry period, the prevalence of energy drinks is estimated to be higher than the prevalence of cannabis at the end of 2005.

**Noticeable trends concerning single drugs:** Also in 2005, the data does not indicate a further increase of the relevance of **alcohol**. The consumption of alcopops no longer plays a remarkable role in any of the examined fields and the use has shifted back to beer and shandies as well as long drinks, cocktails and hard liquors. What is striking is the observation that the consumption of alcohol seems to equalize between the different investigated scenes – this applies for the prevalence as well as for the type of alcoholic beverages. The use of **nicotine** is estimated much lower than in 2004. Here, the price increase of tobacco goods in 2004 apparently has had a certain delayed effect on the smoking behaviour of scene members. In view of **other legal drugs** it can be stated that the prevalence for energy drinks has significantly increased compared to prior years. This is obviously linked to the broad loss of alcopops, since energy drinks are usually mixed with alcohol and therefore probably function as a substitute for these alcoholic beverages. Legally obtainable nature drugs still have a minor presence in the evaluated sectors, although some informants speculated on a slightly increased prevalence of herbal ecstasy and guarana.

**Cannabis** is still by far the most frequently used illicit drug in the examined fields. Both the quantitative and the qualitative data indicate that the cannabis prevalence is not further increasing. In 2005, variations regarding the use of cannabis become apparent. On the one hand, the visible use in clubs seems to have decreased due to stricter controls on the part of organizers. On the other hand, the tolerance concerning intensive cannabis use seems to have declined. It was also observed that scene members who do not smoke cannabis at all are more self-confident in holding their opinion.

The consumption of **ecstasy, speed and cocaine** – substances that most likely can be attributed with the role of party drugs in the investigated segments – seems to have slightly gone up in 2005. In terms of ecstasy an increased use can be observed for the first half year, with the effect that the prevalence of the drug is for the first time since 2003 estimated higher than the spread of speed. The rise can be particularly traced to an increased availability of ecstasy pills. At the same time it was reported that the quality of ecstasy has remained steady or even improved, although the prices have dropped. Parallel to this, a light decline in the use of ecstasy in the second half of the year was linked to a fluctuating resp. a decreasing quality. Another change compared to precedent years is that the informants reported an enhanced ecstasy use within private settings. In view of cocaine it can be noted that its use is assessed to be stagnating for most of the scenes. However a potential rise of cocaine use in case of an improved economic situation was brought up as a subject. It is noteworthy that an increase of cocaine use was observed in some segments that are not assigned to the ‘classic’ techno music oriented party scenes. A slightly increased consumption of speed was reported at the end of 2005, which was mainly attributed to increased availability and better quality. In all, it becomes apparent that the availability, price and quality of substances as well as the consequential valuations and attributions have a great impact on the drug using phenomena whereby trends can change within a short period of time.



In terms of **hallucinogens** the use of LSD was estimated to have decreased further in 2005. This is on the one hand attributed to the low availability of the substance, and on the other hand it was explained by the hard-to-control effects. In contrast, the prevalence of psychoactive mushrooms was estimated to be stable, although it was reported for some scenes that psilocybin-containing mushrooms are increasingly consumed within the setting of after hour parties. All other only occasionally appearing illicit drugs were not estimated to have the potential for an increasing prevalence. This applies, apart from various amphetamines derivatives and hallucinogens, to **GHB** as well as to the 'junkie drugs' **heroin** and **crack cocaine**. Only for opium an increased interest of individual members of some scene was stated, whereby it was also reported that this interest is confronted with and limited through a very low availability of the substance.

No notable trends are observed regarding the combined use of drugs. The mixing of drugs might have slightly increased, since the key informants reported less often the occurrence of scene members who for example purposely avoid the combined consumption of alcohol and cannabis. On the other hand it seems that cocaine has lost its special role in regard to combined use. Thus, compared to prior years, a more frequent combined consumption of cocaine and other illicit drugs was reported. Concerning drug related risks and problems a further decline of situation related problems becomes apparent. In addition to that, it was speculated that psychosocial issues due to intensive use of cannabis have also decreased, whereas mental and psychosocial problems due to intensive use of party drugs were mentioned more often than in the prior year.