Paoli
Illegal Drug Trade in Russia

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Illegal Drug Trade in Russia

A Research Project Commissioned by
the United Nations Office for
Drug Control and Crime Prevention

Letizia Paoli

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for Michel

Preface

In the decade following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Russia's transition to a market economy and the liberalisation of people and commodity movements have been accompanied by a rapid expansion of illegal markets and organised crime. Over the past ten years, in particular, the Russian Federation has recorded a fast growth of illegal drug consumption and trade and, together with other former Soviet States, it has become a transit country to transfer drugs – most notably, heroin – from producing countries into Western European final consuming markets.

To counter these phenomena, in early 1999 the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (UNODCCP) launched a wide-ranging project of "Immediate Technical Assistance on the Control and Prevention of Drugs and Related Organised Crime in the Russian Federation". Its research component, a study on illegal drug trade in Russia, was commissioned to the Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Criminal Law (MPI). The final report of the study, which was written by Dr. Letizia Paoli, is being published here. Drawing upon its findings, appropriate measures of technical assistance are currently being elaborated and implemented by the UNODCCP Regional Office in Moscow together the competent Russian agencies.

Letizia Paoli's report constitutes the first large-scale empirical analysis of illegal drug trade in post-Soviet Russia. Field research was, in fact, conducted by Russian scientists and outreach workers in nine Russia cities, including Moscow, St. Petersburg, Nizhniy Novgorod, Krasnoyarsk and Vladivostok, on the basis of research instruments designed in the Max Planck Institute. In co-operation with Russian authorities, the author additionally analysed a wide sample of drug-related judicial verdicts and intelligence documents, which were up until now inaccessible to Western scholars.

As such, the present volume does not only provide the basis for realistic strategies to prevent and combat drug abuse and crime in Russia, but also represents an important, down-to-earth contribution to an often confuse and emotional debate on Russian organised crime that has been going in Russia and abroad since 1991. The results of the project, in fact, both prove and

correct some 'major' theses about illegal drug markets in Russia. There is no doubt that the country is experiencing an escalation of illegal drug consumption and trade, which is fostered by a deep social, political and economic crisis. However, contrary to the assumptions of most Russian and Western observers alike, the production, smuggling and sale of illegal drugs are not dominated so far by large-scale criminal organisations. Instead of a few mafia-type cartels, the trade in illegal drugs is carried out by a myriad of small groups, clans, gangs and individuals, who are independent of one another.

For their work and commitment, I would like to thank all those who have participated in the research project and, in particular, the project coordinator, Dr. Letizia Paoli. I am also grateful to Mr. Bruno Dato, the UNODCCP Representative for Russia and Belarus, for providing valuable assistance to the MPI research team and for fully integrating this research project into his Office's wider programs of intervention. Finally, my gratitude goes to the Russian authorities – *in primis* the Drug Control Department of the Russian Ministry of the Interior and the Prosecutor General's Office – which made this project possible and generously shared information and materials with the staff of the UNODCCP and the Max Planck Institute.

Freiburg, January 2001 *Prof. Dr. Hans-Jörg Albrecht*

Contents

Introduction

Today Russia is a country in which a variety of illegal drugs are produced, transited to final markets in Western Europe, and consumed by a growing number of young people. The former USSR did not significantly participate in the international narcotics markets as a consumer or supplier of illicit substances. This pattern of relative self-sufficiency, however, drastically changed during the 1990s, at the same time as Russian drug demand consistently expanded and diversified.

To reconstruct the evolution of illegal drug consumption and trade in Russia, in summer 1999 the Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Criminal Law (MPI) was entrusted with a research project by the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (UNODCCP). This constitutes the research component of the larger project "Immediate Technical Assistance on the Control and Prevention of Drugs and Related Organised Crime in the Russian Federation" (AD/RUS/98/D46), which was launched in 1998 by the UNODCCP in co-operation with the Russian authorities.

Under my leadership, the MPI research project started in September 1999 and the present document constitutes its final report, which is organised as follows: The first chapter briefly overviews the illegal drug demand and supply in Russia throughout the 20th century, specifically focusing on the last two decades of the Soviet regime. The second reconstructs the evolution of illegal drug use after 1991, with a final section on the users themselves. The third chapter is devoted to local drug markets: it describes their growth and the diversification of the drug supply in the 1990s, reviewing the psychoactive substances that are most commonly used in Russia today. Furthermore, the chapter analyses the geography and social organisation of retail markets: where and how the drug demand meets its supply.

Drug production and trafficking are the main themes of the fourth chapter. The domestic illicit drug production as well as source countries and drug smuggling into Russia are examined in the first two sections. The extent to which Russia has become a transit country for illegal drugs en route to Western Europe and the USA is also assessed. The fifth chapter focuses

on traffickers and dealers, analysing their ethnic origin, organisation and *modus operandi* on the basis of official statistics, judicial sentences and fieldwork in several Russian cities. Drug dealers' involvement in other illegal activities and their relations with other sectors of Russian organised crime are also investigated.

Finally, the sixth chapter reviews the current Russian drug policy. Its first section reconstructs the evolution of the legal framework since the 1980s. The following ones are primarily devoted to the law enforcement's counternarcotics strategies and action, evaluating the co-operation among law enforcement agencies of the CIS states in this area, but also briefly examining what is being done in the field of prevention, treatment and harm reduction by other state agencies and NGOs.

The MPI Research Project: Methodology, Research Partners and Fieldwork Sites

To reconstruct the evolution of drug use and trade in Russia, a variety of research methods were envisaged and implemented during the research project. Primary and secondary sources were employed and, in particular, the present volume relies on the following:

- 90 in-depth interviews with key observers in different parts of the Russian Federation: law enforcement officials, drug-treatment providers, politicians, members of relevant NGOs, and journalists
- 30 in-depth interviews with drug users in Moscow and St. Petersburg
- 50 drug-related judicial sentences that were issued by the courts of four different Russian cities
- relevant statistics on drug production, trade, and abuse in the Russian Federation and other CIS states, which are produced by domestic law enforcement and drug-treatment agencies, as well as by foreign and international bodies
- Russian and international secondary literature on drugs and organised crime, ranging from academic publications to reports of domestic and foreign law enforcement agencies and other public bodies
- relevant Russian and CIS legislation on drug and organised crime
- articles on drug trafficking and related organised crime published in local and national newspapers of the Russian Federation.

Besides collecting nationwide data, field research work was conducted in the following cities and regions:

- Moscow: the capital of the country and, with over ten million inhabitants, Russia's largest city. It is located in the European part of Russia, in the Central region.
- St. Petersburg: the second largest city (4,700,000 inhabitants) and, together with Moscow, the most westernised. It is located on the Baltic Sea in the North-western part of Russia and was the capital of the Russian Empire from 1712 to 1918.
- Nizhniy Novgorod (formerly Gorky): with one and a half million inhabitants, it is the third largest city but, unlike the previously mentioned ones, was long closed to foreigners because it was one of the bastions of the Soviet defence and heavy industry. It lies 350 kilometres east of Moscow on the confluence of two large Russian rivers, the Volga and the Oka.
- Krasnoyarsk and its region, which is one of the main administrative districts of Siberia. Though the area is scarcely populated (with only three million inhabitants), its size is four times larger than France.
- the Republic of North Ossetia, in Northern Caucasus: it has about 640,000 residents, half of whom live in the capital, Vladikavkaz. The region borders with Georgia, to a large extent with the maverick region of South Ossetia. For centuries its Daryal Pass has been the main connecting route between the two sides of the Caucasus range (see Figure 1).

Some empirical research was carried out in Moscow by the Research Institute of the Prosecutor General's Office (RIPGO), the MPI's main research partner in Russia, which also collected and analysed nationwide statistics and judicial sentences. Additionally, four social workers of NAN (No to Alcoholism and Drugs), one of Moscow's largest NGOs, conducted 15 in-depth interviews with former and current drug users.

The fieldwork in St. Petersburg was accomplished by three researchers of the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences (St. Petersburg branch): Prof. Yacov Gilinsky, the Director of the Institute, and two younger staff members, Maya Rusakova and Yakov Kostukovsky, who are completing their PhDs on drug consumption patterns and organised crime in Russia, respectively. Maya Rusakova carried out 14 interviews with drug users explicitly for this project.

The empirical research in Nizhniy Novgorod was carried out by Prof. Dr. Ludmila Obidina and her staff (University of Nizhniy Novgorod) and in Krasnoyarsk by Dr. Ludmila Maiorova (University of Krasnoyarsk) and her assistants. Finally, Dr. Eliko Ciklauri Lammich was entrusted with the fieldwork in North Ossetia and on the Russian-Georgian border.

To carry out comparable interviews with key observers, I developed a questionnaire that was then employed by all local research teams (see the enclosed questionnaire in the Appendix). Additionally, all the research partners were provided with detailed instructions about the people to interview, the penal proceedings and statistics to collect, and the final structure of the site reports.

All in all, in the five selected cities 90 in-depth interviews with different types of experts were carried out. I, personally, conducted more than 30 of them in Moscow and St. Petersburg.

To acquire information about other local drug markets, shorter site reports were also requested from the staff of drug-related NGOs operating in four different Russian cities, who co-ordinate outreach projects on behalf of the Open Society Institute. The selected cities are:

- Rostov-on-Don: a large city of one million inhabitants, Rostov is a southern port on the Azov Sea, close to the border with the Ukraine
- Balakovo (200,000 inhabitants): on the Volga, the city is one of the major centres of the Saratov region, which borders with Kazakhstan
- Khabarovsk, a city of 600,000 inhabitants and the capital of the homonymous region in the Far Eastern part of the country (whose area of 824,600 km² is more than twice the size of Germany)
- Vladivostok (640,000 inhabitants): the main Russian seaport in the Far East and the capital of the Primorye region (see Figure 1).[1]

The reports in the four above-mentioned cities were written, respectively, by Sergej Saukhat from Anti-AIDS South, Ludmila Markoryan and Gennadiy Rakitsky from the Balakovo and Khabarovsk sections of NAN, and Yelena Zavadskaya from the Vladivostok AIDS-Centre.

To make the comparison easier, avoid undue repetitions and to homogenise style and quality differences, the nine site reports are not presented here in their extended form. In agreement with the Moscow Office of the

[1] Except for Balakovo, the data on the inhabitants of the above cities were drawn from Götz and Hallbach (1994). Balakovo's datum was provided by Ludmila Markoryan (2000).

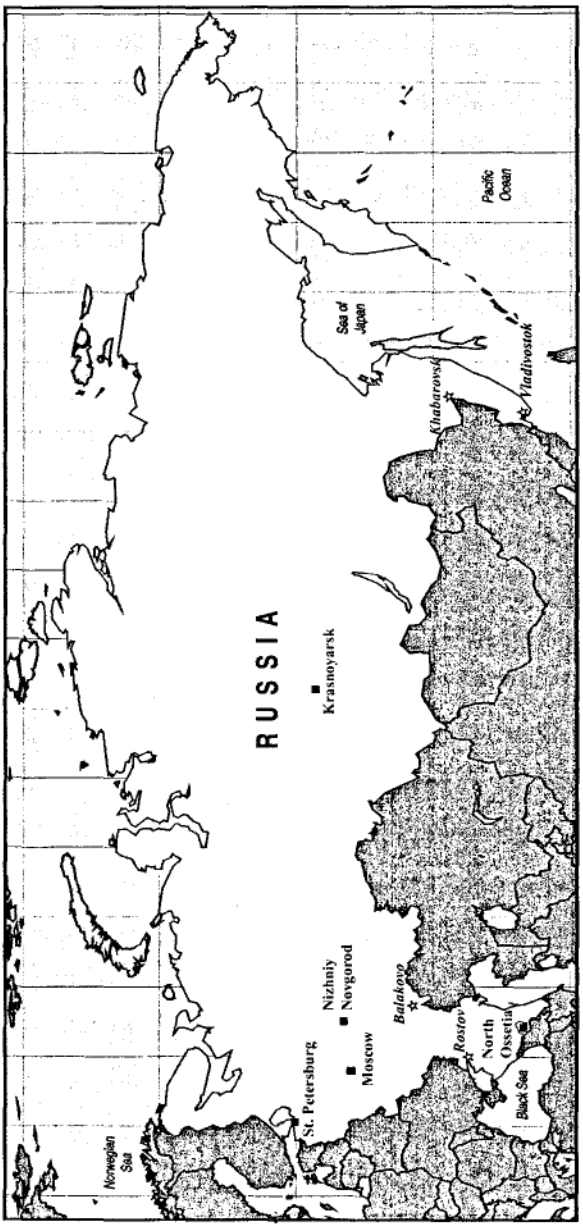


Figure 1: The Russian cities and regions where fieldwork was carried out during the present research

UNODCCP, it was decided that I should summarise and compare their findings and, though relying on a variety of other sources, I have basically done so in the first five chapters of this volume. The last chapter heavily relies on an extended research report on the legal framework of the fight against drug trafficking and organised crime in Russia, which was written by another MPI researcher, Dr. Siegfried Lammich.

For their co-operation and commitment, I thank all the Russian and German members of the MPI research team. In particular, I am grateful to Dr. Siegfried Lammich and his wife, Dr. Eliko Ciklauri Lammich, who provided me with important background information and, thus, helped me to better understand Russia and to organise my research work there in an effective way. Mrs. Lammich additionally deserves a special thanks for spending more than a month in her native region of North Ossetia and the neighbouring Georgia, where she conducted the fieldwork for this project under the most difficult weather and logistic conditions. In fact, she went there in January 2000 at a point when Western citizens were strongly discouraged from visiting all the Russian and Georgian regions bordering Chechnya, due to the ongoing war.

I am also deeply indebted to Bruno Dato, the UNODCCP Representative for Russia and Belarus: it is thanks to him and his very co-operative staff that my missions in Russia were not only pleasant and informative, but also very productive. Within the UNODCCP Moscow staff, a special mention is due to Colonel Vladimir Ibragimov, who up to late 1999 headed the Inter-agency Drug Control Centre, which is attached to the Russian Ministry of the Interior (MDV). I am grateful to Colonel Ibragimov for helping me select and contact Russian and foreign law enforcement officials to be interviewed during this research project. Likewise, I would like to thank Valeri Ananiev, my direct counterpart at the Research Institute of the Prosecutor General's Office (RIPGO), for translating some of the interviews that I carried out with Russian experts and nicely mediating my contacts with the other RIPGO researchers throughout the project.

Among the people whom I met in Moscow, I would like to thank Anna Alexandrova of the Open Society Institute (OSI) for putting me in contact with OSI's partners in Rostov, Balakovo, Khabarovk and Vladivostok. I am also grateful to Lieutenant General Alexander Sergeyev, the Head of the Drug Control Department of the Russian Ministry of the Interior, and his Deputy, Major General Leonid Tanzorov, for the time they devoted to me and for the information they kindly provided. My gratitude also goes to

Colonel Viktor Marieov of the State Customs Committee and Colonel Vasily Rogosin of the Federal Security Board, who agreed to be interviewed for this project and gave me useful documentation.

Without mentioning them individually, I would also like to thank, even in name of my research partners, all the people who agreed to be interviewed and provided information during this research project.

In Freiburg, Irina Korobko, my Russian research assistant at the MPI, was most helpful not only in translating a variety of Russian documents (including many site reports), but also in keeping contact with our Russian partners. Without her clever and committed support, the project could not have proceeded so smoothly. Many thanks are also due to Irina Mirimovitsch, who translated some Russian material into English, to Rachel Velin and David Schmitter, who revised the English style of this volume, and to Beate Lickert, who drew one of the maps contained in this volume and assisted me in many other ways.

As is often the case in empirical research, this project relies on the inputs and co-operation of many different people. Nonetheless, I alone have been in charge of planning and co-ordinating the project, comparing the information gathered at the different sites and writing this volume. I take, therefore, full responsibility for any imprecision or mistake it may contain.

Freiburg, December 2000 *Letizia Paoli*

I. Illegal Drug Demand and Supply Before 1991

Illegal drug use in Russia does not constitute an entirely new phenomenon, which developed only after the breakdown of the USSR. As much as in other Western countries, morphine and other opiates, but also cannabis, were freely consumed by a restricted middle- or high-class public in Russia's largest European cities at the turn of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th. Furthermore, according to the Russian Ministry of the Interior (MVD), at that time at least one million people regularly smoked hashish and opium in Central Asia (MVD, 2000). Only in 1915, following the 1912 Convention of The Hague, did Russia adopt its first drug law, which was entitled "On Measures to Fight Opium Smoking". This provision, however, could not stop the spread of cocaine during the First World War. Despite the enactment of a second drug law focusing on the latter substance in 1918, cocaine was widely consumed by high ranking military officials, bohemians and the ladies of the elite. Progressively losing its social acceptance, cocaine remained available up to the early 1930s, when its use was largely confined however to the subjects of the underworld and to vagrant orphan youths, the so-called *besprizorniki* (Rusakova, 1998: 142; Pilkington, 1994: 62; MVD, 2000).[1]

Even more radically than in Europe and the United States, the use of opiates (such as morphine and heroin) and cocaine largely waned in Russia from the early 1930s onwards. The consolidation of an international drug control regime in the second and third decades of the 20th century (Lowes, 1966) and, even more decisively, Stalin's iron dictatorship eradicated the use of the prohibited psychoactive substances from the largest part of the Russian territory. Cannabis and opium consumption survived only in those parts of the Soviet Union, such as the Central Asian republics and the Russian Far East, where cannabis and poppies grow wildly and the use of these plants' derivatives are ingrained in local traditions (MVD, 2000; Pannier, 1996).

[1] To make international comparisons, see Musto (1973), Berridge (1999), and Lowes (1966).

1. The Growth of Illegal Drug Use in the Last Two Decades of the Soviet Regime

Long unacknowledged by state authorities, illegal drug use began to broaden again in the late 1970s, most visibly among those non-conformist youths who were influenced by the US hippie counterculture and who resorted to drugs in order to define their identity and to protest the constraints of the Soviet society (Rozin, 1990; Rusakova, 1998: 142-143). As much as in other developed countries, even in Russia the use of illegal psychoactive drugs has since then progressively spread to an even wider strata of the general youth population. Unlike Western democratic countries, however, this process of diffusion has been effectively slowed down in Russia, first, by the constraints of the Soviet regime and then, by economic difficulties of the post-Soviet era.

By the mid-1980s even Soviet state authorities began to admit that their country had a problem of drug abuse. According to a 1990 report of the Soviet Ministry of the Interior (MVD), the number of Soviet citizens "who had tried drugs or used them" totalled around 1.5 million (Lee, 1992: 178). In *ad hoc* studies, academic scholars reached even higher estimates.

Most striking, in particular, are the results of a school survey, which was carried out in 1988-89 by a prominent Georgian researcher, Anzor Gabiani, who then headed the Caucasian branch of the MVD's All-Union Research Institute. Out of 5,801 secondary school students, 597 respondents, or 10.2 percent, admitted to taking illegal drugs. Gabiani estimated that the categories surveyed, which covered roughly high-school students between the ages of 14 and 17, included 15.2 million people nationwide. By extrapolation, the number of drug users in these categories was calculated at more than 1.5 million, and the total number of Soviet citizens who had taken drugs at least once in their lives was estimated at more than 15 million (Gabiani, 1990). Whatever the true number of drug users in the USSR, it is thus clear that the contemporary revival of drug use has its roots in the Soviet era (see Morvant, 1996 and Kramer, 1991).

Especially in the European republics of the former Soviet Union, the demand for illegal drugs underwent a considerable expansion in the second half of the 1980s. The number of people registered as addicts by the Soviet Ministry of Health almost doubled between 1984 and 1990, growing from 35,254 to 67,622 (91.8 percent increase; see Table I.1). In the Russian Federation the growth rate was slightly above the national average. In 1984

14,324 addicts were registered; by 1990 their number had risen to 28,312 (97.7 percent increase). Much higher growth rates were recorded in the Ukraine (197.4 percent), Belarus (399 percent), Moldova (415 percent), and the three Baltic republics (i.e. Latvia: 383.1 percent; Estonia: 190.5 percent) (All-Union Research Centre, 1990; Lee, 1992; Vrublesky *et al.*, 1993).

Table I.1: Drug addicts registered by the Ministry of Health in the Soviet Union ~ 1984-1990

	1984	*1985*	*1986*	*1987*	*1988*	*1989*	*1990*
USSR	35,254	38,585	43,205	55,292	61,086	64,210	67,622
Russian Fed.	14,324	14,551	16,408	21,110	24,859	26,451	28,312
Ukraine	7,173	9,996	11,937	15,558	18,151	19,867	21,336
Belarus	94	110	169	259	351	379	469
Moldova	67	93	218	277	284	299	345
Latvia	83	90	143	245	333	363	401
Lithuania	200	210	237	302	368	388	N/A
Estonia	42	36	52	77	113	123	122
Armenia	397	368	264	209	264	208	209
Georgia	882	909	883	883	978	953	993
Azerbaijan	463	499	499	440	912	1,115	1,402
Kazakhstan	2,703	2,639	3,433	6,215	4,716	4,601	4,579
Kyrgyzstan	1,307	1,305	1,316	1,167	1,116	1,166	1,182
Turkmenistan	5,191	5,297	5,117	4,444	3,850	3,654	3,512
Tajikistan	203	209	257	365	424	444	505
Uzbekistan	2,125	2,273	2,272	3,741	4,367	4,199	4,255

Source: All-Union Research Centre on Medical–Biological Problems of Narcology, Ministry of Health, 1990.

It would be methodologically simplistic to assume that the sudden growth of addicts registered by the Ministry of Health unbiasedly reflects a corresponding increase of problematic drug users in the former Soviet Union. It is, instead, fair to hypothesise that the former trend was at least partially caused by a change in the registration procedures and/or the efficiency of the Ministry of Health. As Penny Morvant puts it,

> "all Russian statistics must be treated with caution, but those regarding drugs appear particularly unreliable. It is often unclear what degree of drug dependence or use is signified by terms such as 'drug addict' or 'drug user'. (...) There has been a tendency to make no distinction between marijuana and hashish, on the one hand, and highly addictive narcotics, on the other" (1996: 20).

However, though no precise equations can be made, the growth of registered addicts in the second half of the 1980s most probably also reflects an increase of drug use in the Soviet society. Other sources, such as local academic studies, also point to such a growth (Rusakova, 1998; Gilinsky *et al.* 2000; Morvant, 1996). Furthermore, several experts interviewed by the MPI research teams in Moscow and St. Petersburg also recalled a parallel increase of drug use and its public visibility in the second half of the 1980s (Interviews D2 and C1).

Among the myriad of informal (*neformaly*) youth groups, that developed "like mushrooms after the rain" in the wake of Gorbachev's *perestroika*, the regular or occasional use of illegal drugs became a frequent means of distinction. These youth groups and lifestyles radically differed from one another not only in their composition and organisational stability, but also in their values and worldviews. They were united only by their counterposition to the formal Soviet youth organisations, such as the Komsomol. Under the umbrella definition of *neformaly*, punks as well as the neo-hippies, pop and heavy metal fans together with the so-called *stiliagi*, who oriented themselves towards the rock' n' roll style of the 1950s, were to be found. Though in different ways and degrees, illegal drugs were used by the members of these differing groups either to stress their bonds to analogous Western youth movements, which they imitated, or to manifest their opposition to the Soviet mainstream society (Pilkington, 1994).

Despite the rising trends registered in the European republics, it is worth stressing that in the early 1990s drug use was still comparatively more widespread in Central Asia, where cannabis and opium poppy cultivation and consumption belong to well-rooted local habits (Pannier, 1996; Kotlyarov, 1990). Again, though not unbiased, this datum clearly emerges from the register of drug addicts held by the Soviet Ministry of Health. In the Central Asian republics the rate of drug addiction averaged 27.6 per 100,000 inhabitants and was 45 percent higher than the rate in the Russian Federation (19.1 per 100,000 inhabitants) and 68 percent higher than the rate in the Baltic republics (16.4 per 100,000 inhabitants). Turkmenistan hosted proportionally more drug addicts than any other union republic, totalling 94.8 per 100,000 inhabitants (All-Union Research Centre, 1990). The Ukraine, however, ranked in second place, at 41.3 per 100,000 inhabitants. This Ukrainian pre-eminence, which has lasted up to the present (Dehne *et al.*, 1999), is usually associated with the large numbers of oil-bearing poppies (a lower-potency strain of the opium poppies) that grow in the republic (Lee, 1992: 182-183).

2. *Drug Availability and Supply in the USSR*

Up until the fall of the Soviet Union, in the Ukraine as much as in the other Soviet Republics, the largest part of the drug demand was supplied with locally produced substances. Due to the strict border control, imports represented a negligible share of the Soviet drug market and even the domestic trade was rather limited because most people were not free to move. It is not by chance that the spread of the two drugs that are considered the most dangerous in the Western world (i.e. heroin and cocaine) was very low. None of them, in fact, were produced in the Soviet territory. As Rens Lee put it, up until the early 1990s "the country [was] virtually self-sufficient in narcotics" (*ibidem*: 184). This assessment is confirmed by the data gathered by the Drug Enforcement Division of the Soviet Ministry of the Interior: accordingly, 98 percent or more of the drugs consumed in the USSR were of domestic origin.

Cannabis products, poppy straw, opium, and a variety of locally produced synthetic substances were the most popular illegal drugs in the USSR, as several studies carried out in the second half of the 1980s demonstrate. According to a second multi-regional survey conducted by Anzor Gabiani in 1988-89 among almost 3,000 regular and occasional drug users,[2] the three most frequently used drugs nationwide were marijuana-hashish (a combined category), *koknar* (essentially ground-up poppy straw), and opium (see Table I.2). 55 percent of the respondents declared, in fact, either hashish or marijuana to be their drug of choice. *Koknar* was the main drug for 29.4 percent of all respondents. 28.9 percent of them indicated opium. Codeine, either in tablets or powder, was the fourth most popular drug (18.1 percent) (Gabiani, 1990).

Likewise, in another study conducted by Boris Levin in Kazakhstan during the same period, 24.3 percent of the 428 respondents (who were prisoners convicted for one or another infraction of drug law) indicated marijuana as their preferred drug, 15 percent hashish, 11 percent *koknar*, and 5.8 percent *kimka* (a more refined version of *koknar* that is injected rather than ingested) (Levin, 1988). Heroin and cocaine, in contrast, were

[2] The survey was conducted under the auspices of the Soviet Ministry of the Interior in the cities of Moscow and Tashkent, in the Baltic Republic of Latvia, in the regions (*kraj*) of Stavropol and Primorye and in the *oblast* (departments) of Gorky (the actual Nizhniy Novgorod), Novosibirsk, and Lvov (the first two are in the Russian Federation, the third is in the Ukraine).

relatively rare. In Gabiani's study these substances were indicated by 1.2 and 3.6 percent of the respondents, respectively. In the Kazakhstan survey conducted by Levin, the value for each substance was 1.4 percent.

Table I.2: Illegal drugs used by the respondents of Gabiani's multi-regional survey ~1988-1989

	Percent of respondents
Hashish/Marijuana	55.3 %
Koknar	29.4 %
Opium	28.9 %
Codeine	18.1 %
Chifir	13.5 %
Promedol	13.0 %
Ephedrine	11.3 %
Morphine	10.8 %
Omnopon	8.9 %
Noksirin	7.4 %
Cocaine	3.6 %
Efir	1.4 %
Heroin	1.2 %
Other	7.6 %

Source: Gabiani, 1990: 17.

"The Soviet narcotics market [was] highly imperfect by capitalist standards" (Lee, 1992: 186). A developed drug distribution system hardly existed and many users either produced or harvested their drugs themselves. Only a minority of consumers bought illicit psychoactive substances from a professional dealer. In Gabiani's multi-regional survey, for example, almost nine percent of all respondents declared that they were manufacturing drugs themselves. Many more (about 30 percent) harvested hemp or poppies on their own. 31.5 percent obtained their supply of narcotics from friends, relatives, or associates, while 8.7 received medical drugs (especially opiates such as morphine or codeine) from workers in pharmacies and other medical institutions and 5.1 percent got them with illegal or stolen prescriptions. Less than half of the respondents (43.3 percent) bought drugs from dealers and most of these acquired them from known dealers (28.3 percent). As a result, money often did not even change hands in a drug transaction (Gabiani, 1990).

The supply was also rather undeveloped. Sophisticated production facilities for processing narcotics were relatively rare. Most manufactured

drugs were homemade, usually prepared in the owner's own kitchen. Far from being managed by large-scale criminal organisations, most transfers and sales of drugs were carried out by individuals or small crews. It was predominantly a kind of 'ants' trafficking', which only rarely overcame the regional boundaries.

As no nationwide distribution system existed, drug consumption varied significantly by region and was largely dependent on the local availability of illegal psychoactive substances. People in the Northern European parts of the USSR were far more likely to consume amphetamines and toxic substances than people in the southern regions and the Far East, where plant-based substances were readily available.

This regional diversity clearly emerges from the already quoted multi-regional survey carried out by Anzor Gabiani in 1988-89. As shown by Table I.3, hashish and marijuana were smoked by 91.7 percent of the respondents in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan; by 81.7 percent of those residents in Primorye (the region around Vladivostok, in the Russian Far East) and by 73.3 percent of those living in Stavropolsky Kraj (a Southern Russian region next to the Black Sea). However, only 15.6 percent of the respondents in Latvia and 4.9 percent of those living in Gorky (currently Nizhniy Novgorod) region regularly consumed cannabis products.

Table I.3: Percentage of respondents admitting to regular drug use, by drug and by region

	Hashish-marijuana	*Opium*	*Koknar (Poppy straw)*	*Ephedrone*
Tashkent	91.7	56.9	59.1	N/A
Primorye	81.7	N/A	N/A	2.9
Stavropol region	73.3	N/A	N/A	N/A
Latvia	15.6	15.6	N/A	N/A
Gorky region	4.9	8.9	2.0	15.8
Moscow City	N/A	N/A	N/A	21.8

Source: Gabiani, 1990: 17.

The rate of opium and *koknar* (poppy straw) consumption also presented the same regional variations. For both substances it exceeded 50 percent in Tashkent, whereas only 8.9 and two percent of the respondents living in the Gorky region admitted to using opium and *koknar*, respectively. On the contrary, the use of ephedrone, an amphetamine product, was over-proportionally registered in the latter region and in Moscow (respectively 15.8 and 21.8 percent), but was very low in the Far East (2.9 percent).

In turn, the data of the Soviet Ministry of Health show that the use of toxic substances not officially classified as illegal drugs (such as glue, acetone, gasoline, or weed killers) was predominantly spread in the Russian Federation and in the European parts of the Soviet Union. In fact, out of 9,684 people registered as *toksikomany* (i.e. addicts of toxic substances) by the Ministry of Health in 1990, 6,688 lived in the Russian Federation (69.1 percent), 1,130 in Ukraine (11,7 percent) and another 7.5 percent in the other European Republics. Only small groups of toxic addicts were, instead, known in the Central Asian republics (see Table I.4).

Table I.4: Toxic addicts registered by the Ministry of Health in the Soviet Union ~ 1990

	Number	*%*
Russian Fed.	6,688	69.1
Ukraine	1,130	11.7
Belarus	225	2.3
Moldova	63	0.7
Latvia	226	2.3
Lithuania	N/A	-
Estonia	121	1.2
Armenia	14	0.1
Georgia	46	0.5
Azerbaijan	80	0.8
Kazakhstan	369	3.8
Kyrgyzstan	35	0.4
Turkmenistan	50	0.5
Tajikistan	120	1.2
Uzbekistan	517	5.3
USSR	**9,684**	**100**

Source: All-Union Research Centre on Medical–Biological Problems of Narcology, Ministry of Health, 1990.

In the Baltic republics toxic addicts represented roughly half of the registered illegal drug addicts (the so-called *narkomany*) and in the Russian Federation there were 4.4 registered illegal drug addicts for each known toxic addict. In Central Asia and Ukraine, however, the ratio of drug addiction to toxic addiction was significantly different and much higher indeed. Drug addicts outnumbered toxic addicts, respectively, by 12.5 : 1 and 18 : 1.

Though the use of illicit and toxic substances was relatively widespread in the USSR, the Soviet regime effectively limited the import, internal movement and availability of illegal psychoactive drugs. The same regulations that firmly restricted the movement of people and licit commodities also hampered the trade of the latter's illicit counterparts.

II. The Demand for Illegal Drugs After 1991

The 1990s registered a rapid growth of illegal drug use in Russia. Since the fall of the Soviet Union a true nationwide market for illegal drugs has developed, that now involves even the most remote areas of the country. This process has not only fostered domestic drug production, but has also promoted Russia's integration into international drug trade. Though large drug quantities merely transit through the Russian territory to reach final consumers in Western Europe and Japan, the domestic market today absorbs a growing and overwhelming portion of the illegal drugs that are produced and smuggled in the country. To understand and assess drug trafficking in Russia, it is thus necessary to reconstruct the evolution of the drug demand and the local drug markets.

1. The Meanings of Illegal Drug Use in the Post-Soviet Era

The disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the difficult transition to democracy and market economy have fostered the expansion of drug use and abuse in Russia during the 1990s. Even more than for their forerunners in the 1970s and 1980s, for contemporary Russian urban youths illegal drugs have become a means to demonstrate their assimilation to Western lifestyles and to display their newly obtained freedom of action. For the tiny elite of the so-called 'New Russians', who have rapidly accumulated large wealth, and the millions of others who struggle to improve their living situation and adapt to the exigencies of the capitalist economy, illegal drugs have often become a symbol of the long desired and usually hardly fought integration into the Western lifestyle (see also Houben, 1999b: 18).

In a country that has undergone a rapid individualisation process over the past ten years, drugs are also used to re-create community feelings within a peer group, to experience a sense of belonging, and eventually to construct a collective body opposing the mainstream society (Pilkington, 1995: 265). "Though there are many reasons why people start to use drugs", the 19-year-old heroin-user Ksenia notes, "most try because they are lonely, bored, or because there is nothing to do" (Interview H13). According to another drug user, Alexander, "boredom and the desire to be accepted into a group of friends are the primary reasons why young people use drugs. They want to feel good, to experience satisfaction, to dream" (Interview H15; see also Interviews H9, H7, and H2).

Furthermore, drug use increasingly reflects the lack of orientation suffered by many Russian youths. In a society that has abandoned its old value system and has not yet established a new one, young people recognise neither their parents nor their teachers as role models. In contemporary Russia, older people's values, lifestyles and experiences are largely considered meaningless and without any practical significance. As Igor Ilynsky, the Rector of the Institute of Youth Studies in Moscow, puts it,

> "The crisis of spiritual-theoretical, moral and aesthetic values has engendered in Russian society a most crude *generation conflict* which is not confined to the 'fathers and sons' (sic!) differences in opinion on dress and hairstyle, tastes in music, dance and behaviour style – immanent in all societies and at all times; this generation conflict affects philosophical, spiritual and attitudinal principles of social and human development, basic views on economics and production, on society's material life. The older generation finds itself in a position where the material and spiritual legacy, which by laws of continuity it should and is obliged to pass on to its successors, is to all intents and purposes, absent. (...) Russian society is actually facing not so much a conflict as a *break in generations* reflecting a rupture of continuity, a rupture in historical development, a transition of society to a principally different economic, social and political system" (1995a: 106; emphasis in the original; see also Kaiser, 1999).

Drugs are thus a means to express youth opposition to older generations' models and one's willingness to go one's own way, radically departing from standard life-paths.

In this anomic society, even the law is being less and less valued. A substantial portion of young people sees nothing reprehensible about breaking the law. Many youths, indeed, consider it to be almost inevitable and their restraints are further reduced by the realisation that many fortunes have been rapidly accumulated with illegal or semi-legal means (Ilynsky, 1995b: 22). As a result, the illegal status of many psychoactive substances hardly represents a disincentive for most youths and, indeed, for some of them it is a veritable lure to try these products.

For a small, but rapidly growing minority of Russian youths, drugs increasingly represent what Robert Merton called the "retreatist adaptation": that is the rejection of a society's cultural goals and institutional means (Merton, 1949: 142-144). Unable to reach the glamorous goals of a society, for which wealth is becoming the primary and exclusive measure of people's value, young people increasingly resort to illegal drugs to escape their harsh living conditions, to forget their 'broken' dreams, and to cope with unemployment and marginalisation. This point was emphatically made in a drug report presented by the Ministry of the Interior of the North Ossetia-Alanja Republic in January 2000:

> "the lasting instability of the society, the drop of living conditions, the growing number of the unemployed, the decay of moral values in some sections of the society create the conditions for a further growth of drug use in the population of the North Ossetia-Alanja Republic and a consequent increase of drug-related crime" (MVD-North Ossetia, 1998; quoted in Ciklauri, 2000: 8).

Indeed, the social and economic status of the over 30 million Russian citizens aged 15 to 29 have in most cases sharply worsened during the first decade of the post-Soviet era. Today two-thirds of them (primarily students and young villagers) live below the official poverty line. The wages of young people, which usually comprise about half of what experienced workers obtain, have drastically decreased (Ilynsky, 1995a).

Further, young people are being squeezed out of the labour market. The official unemployment rate is still rather low in comparison to the rates recorded in Western Europe. In 1998 1.8 million people were registered as unemployed, who constituted 2.7 percent of the economically active population. Yet there is also disguised unemployment, which multiplies the number many times. Applying the ILO methodology, in its 1999 report on the Russian Federation the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) estimated that almost nine million people were unemployed in 1998, up from 3.6 million in 1992. Whereas in that year unemployed people represented 4.8 percent of the economically active population, in 1998 their percentage was 13.3 (UNDP, 1999: 57; see also AFP, 2000b; Tichonova, 1998).

Growing unemployment has hit young people who enter the labour market most harshly. In Kaliningrad, for example, one of the Russian cities most hit by the explosion of drug use, 80 percent of the higher and technical school graduates remain unemployed because of the inflexibility of the education system, which continues to prepare specialists of redundant profiles (such as sailors, fishermen, etc.) (UNAIDS, 2000b: 3). In other Russian cities the situation may not be so extreme, but young people still have great difficulties finding a job, not to mention a well-paid one. On the one hand, the dying state economy is unable to use young people's labour potential. On the other hand, the new production is struggling to establish itself and can offer employment to only a few young people. Almost half (48 percent) of high school and university students interviewed in North Ossetia in spring 1999 linked the growing illegal drug use to the worsening of the general economic conditions and to the rise of unemployment among the youth (Ciklauri, 2000: 12).[3]

[3] The results of this survey were described in a report written by F. Guthof (1999). Unfortunately, no precise data were given about the number of respondents (see Ciklauri, 2000:12-13).

As a result of these transformations, even the attitude of young people toward work has drastically changed. No longer seen as a source of stability, work has rapidly lost its meaning as a means of self-assertion and self-realisation. Young people want to live well and buy the status symbols of an increasingly consumerist society, but are not prepared to work hard and diligently, if they are not well rewarded. "For the absolute majority of the young", Igor Ilynsky notes, "work is meaningless and does not represent a natural component of life. Work is mostly viewed as a necessary evil, a forced action" (1995b: 15).

For many young people, 'real life' begins outside the factory gates, since they are primarily oriented toward leisure and amusement. And the latter are often to be achieved through – or complemented by – illegal drugs, which are used to forget daily problems, to stress one's own non-conformity or, simply, to get 'high' and feel good. It is by no chance that in Moscow, St. Petersburg and other Russian cities illicit psychoactive drugs are frequently bought and used in discos, clubs and bars where young people meet after work. In those circles, as much as in Western countries, illicit drugs have become an important complement to youth nightlife (Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 9-15; see Interviews D2 and D3).

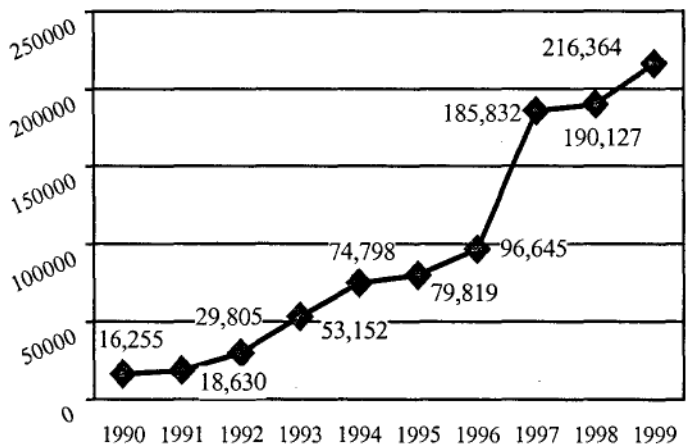
On the wave of the above radical changes, it is hardly surprising that illegal drugs have experienced a surge in their popularity in post-Soviet Russia. Their spread has also been favoured by the growing availability of illegal drugs. The latter, in turn, can be regarded as a negative side effect of the political and economic transformation undergone by Russia since the disintegration of the USSR. On the one hand, the country's opening to the outside world, the abolition of travel restrictions for Russian and former USSR citizens and the economic reforms have substantially eased the trade of illegal drugs within and to Russia. On the other hand, the difficulties of these changes and the lawlessness that has often accompanied them, have made illegal drug production and trafficking increasingly attractive not only for confirmed professional criminals, but also for impoverished peasants and urban youth. In order to rapidly earn some money, a growing part of the latter is ready to deal with illegal drugs and to face the risks of interception by law enforcement.

2. Nationwide Data...

As a result of the above factors, during the 1990s the use of illicit psychoactive drugs rapidly expanded and this escalation clearly emerges from

a plurality of statistical data. The most immediate indicator is represented by the growth of drug offences (Articles 228 – 233 of the Criminal Code). As we will see in Chapter VI, most of these involve drug users, although since 1991 drug consumption as such is no longer a criminal offence. From 1990 to 1999 drug offences increased more than 1,200 percent (see Graph II.1). In fact, whereas 16,255 drug offences were registered in 1990, their number rose to 216,364 in 1999. The most spectacular yearly increases were recorded in 1993 and 1997: during 1993, drug offences grew by 78.3 percent up from 29,805 in 1992.[4]

Graph II.1: Drug offences in the Russian Federation ~ 1990-1999



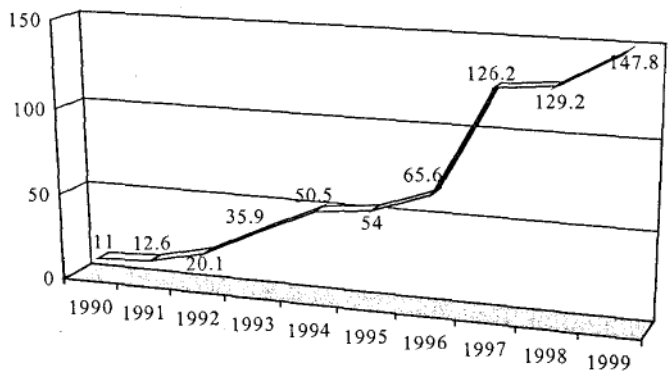
Source, MVD, 2000.

In 1997, they almost doubled, rising to 185,832 from 96,645 in 1996. In that year, the new criminal code came into effect and a new drug law was elaborated in Parliament and subsequently signed by the President in December. The growth of drug offences thus reflects not only the spread of

[4] It is necessary to point out that these statistical data include only the reports made by the Ministry of the Interior. Penal proceedings initiated by other investigative bodies, such as the Federal Security Service (FSB, the former KGB), are not included (Ciklauri, 2000: 17).

drug trade and consumption, but also the increasing attention to the phenomenon paid by Russian law enforcement and the media.

Graph II.2: Rate of drug offences per 100,000 inhabitants ~ 1990-1999



Source, MVD, 2000.

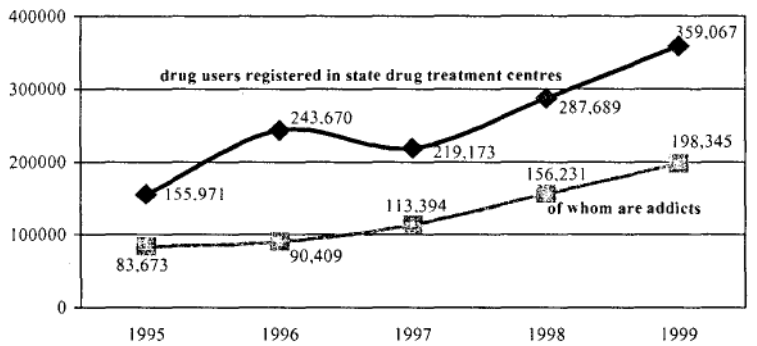
Nonetheless, the constant rise of drug offences throughout the 1990s is too large to be merely attributed to the latter factors, but also necessarily reflects the expansion of the drug market. During the 1990s the percent rate of drug offences per 100,000 inhabitants grew from 11.0 in 1990 to 147.8 in 1999 (see Graph II.2).

Furthermore, since 1990 the number of registered drug users increased almost 400 percent. In 1990, in fact, 52,034 people were listed as drug users by the Russian Ministry of Interior (MVD). By 1998, their number had escalated to 255,529. In 1999 359,067 drug users were registered in state drug-treatment centres, up from 155,971 in 1995 (130 percent increase). With the exception of 1996, throughout the second half of the 1990s more than 50 percent of the registered drug users were considered *narkomany*, i.e. veritable drug addicts (see Graph II.3).

According to (unknown) experts quoted by the MVD, in 1998 there were about 1.5 million users of illegal drugs and toxic substances in Russia (MVD, 1998: 3). In its report, the Research Institute of the Prosecutor General's Office (RIPGO) presents even larger estimates, considering the num-

ber of drug consumers in the Russian Federation to be 2.5-3 million people (RIPGO, 2000). The latter figure is also presented by the MVD in its latest 1999 report, which estimates that about half a million people are veritable drug addicts (MVD, 2000). These figures are based on the widespread conviction among epidemiologists that there are at least ten unknown drug users for each person officially registered as such (Barabanshikov and Konrad, 1999).

Graph II.3: Drug users and addicts registered in state drug-treatment centres ~ 1995-1999



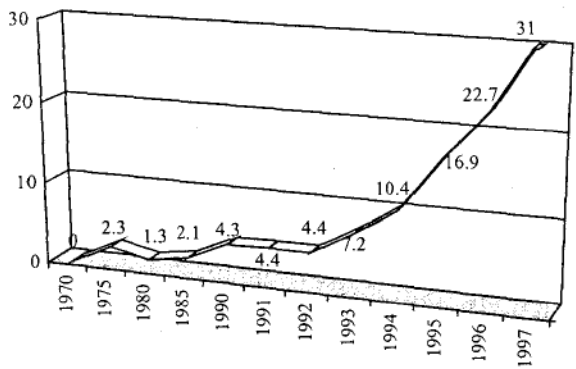
Source: MVD, 2000: 11.

Considering that Russia's population consists of about 146 million people (UNDP, 1999: 67), these figures, in their absolute value, are not staggering. In the United States, the number of current drug users far outweighs the larger size of the population, which totalled 275 million in 1999 (CIA, 2000). According to the latest National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, in fact, an estimated 14.8 million Americans were current users of illicit drugs in 1999, meaning they had used an illicit drug at least once during the 30 days prior to the interview (SAMHSA, 2000). In the United States, the latter represent about 5.4 percent of the whole population. In Russia, instead, even if the figure of three million is taken into account, the rate of drug use is less than half: 2.1 percent.

As hinted by the data previously presented, what is staggering in Russia is the sudden growth of drug use and, above all, drug abuse. The abrupt expansion of these phenomena also clearly emerges from the data collected

by the United Nations Development Program about the first-time diagnoses of drug-related disorders in the Russian Federation. In 1975 2.3 cases per 100,000 inhabitants were recorded yearly. By 1991 their number had almost doubled reaching 4.4 (see Graph II.4). During the 1990s, however, there has been a veritable escalation and in 1997 31 first-time diagnoses of drug-related disorders were made per 100,000 inhabitants (UNDP, 1999: 69).

Graph II.4: Number of first-time diagnoses of drug and toxicant abuse per 100,000 inhabitants of the Russian population ~ 1970-1997



Source: UNDP, 1999: 69.

3. ...and Local Trends

None of the cities, which were focused in the present research avoided the sudden expansion of drug use and abuse. In St. Petersburg, for example, drug offences grew almost twenty times during the 1990s, rising from 773 in 1990 to 14,964 in 1999 (see Table II.1). Correspondingly, during the same span of time the rate per 100,000 inhabitants increased from 15.4 to 315.3. Whereas Moscow's rate (149 offences per 100,000 inhabitants) is slightly above the national average (147.8 offences per 100,000 inhabitants; see Graph II.2), in St. Petersburg the rate was more than twice that. As a matter of fact, only the Jewish autonomous region, a small province bordering with China and the Khabarovsky Kraj registered a higher rate (369.2 offences per 100,000 inhabitants).

Table II.1: Drug offences in St. Petersburg ~ 1990-1999

	Number	*Rate per 100,000 inhabitants*
1990	773	15.4
1991	880	17.5
1992	1,195	23.9
1993	1,490	30.1
1994	2,310	47.3
1995	2,999	62.1
1996	5,656	117.8
1997	12,224	254.7
1998	10,998	234.0
1999	14,964	315.3

Source, MVD, 2000. RIPGO, 2000.

Additionally, the number of first-time diagnoses for drug abuse grew five times since the early 1980s in St. Petersburg. In this city of about 4.7 million inhabitants, in fact, 803 such diagnoses were issued by state drug-treatment centres in 1983. In 1991 these were 1,235. By 1998 their number had soared to 4,633. Correspondingly, the rate of diagnoses for drug abuse escalated from 16.4 per 100,000 inhabitants in 1983 to 98.2 in 1998 (Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 14; see Table II.2 and Graph II.4).

The diagnoses for toxicant abuse reached their peak in the early 1990s, when 325 diagnoses were issued at a rate of 6.5 per 100,000 inhabitants. With the growing sophistication of the local drug market, they progressively diminished down to 274 in 1998 (5.8 per 100,000 inhabitants) (see Table II.2).

The number of local drug users, however, is much higher, as state treatment centres only intercept a minimal portion of them. Already in 1994, the Chief Narcologist estimated the existence of 150,000 drug users in St. Petersburg, representing about three percent of the city population (Argomenty i Fakty, 1994). Also meaningful are the results of several surveys that were carried out in St. Petersburg throughout the 1990s. About 12 percent of the over 1,800 high school students in the 8th to 10th grades (aged 14-16) who were interviewed in 1989-90, admitted to trying illicit drugs or toxic substances. In the mid-1990s a survey conducted under Shpilenya's supervision found out that 19 percent of the boys and 14 percent of the girls attending St. Petersburg's secondary schools (9th-11th grades, aged 15-17) experimented with illegal drugs. According to several experts, whom were

interviewed by the MPI local research team (Interviews A10, C5; D7 and F4), nowadays there are about 500,000 cannabis users, 100,000 heroin users, 30,000 users of poppy straw, 10,000 cocaine users and about 5,000 ecstasy users in St. Petersburg. 30 percent of these are to be considered veritable drug addicts (Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 15).[5]

Table II.2: First-time diagnoses for drug and toxicant abuse in St. Petersburg ~ 1983-1998

	First-time diagnoses for drug abuse	*Rate per 100,000 inhabitants*	*First-time diagnoses for toxicant abuse*	*Rate per 100,000 inhabitants*
1983	805	16.4	-	1.7
1984	783	16.7	-	1.9
1985	930	19.1	111	2.3
1986	1,031	21.2	139	2.8
1987	1,484	29.9	245	4.9
1988	1,824	36.5	281	5.6
1989	1,787	35.6	314	6.3
1990	1,235	36.3	325	6.5
1991	1,900	37.3	325	6.5
1992	2,133	42.9	316	6.4
1993	2,378	48.3	312	6.3
1994	2,645	54.5	276	5.7
1995	2,964	61.7	287	6.0
1996	3,259	68.2	270	5.7
1997	3,413	71.9	254	5.4
1998	4,633	98.2	274	5.8

Source: St. Petersburg Health Office, 1999.

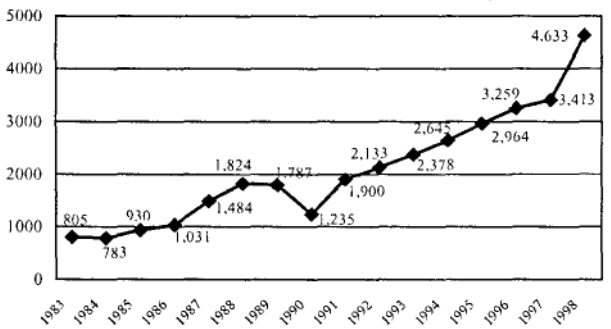
There is no proof to verify the reliability of these estimates, nor it is possible to check whether they exclusively refer to regular users or also include occasional ones. There are no doubts, however, that the consumption of different illegal substances has rapidly spread in the 1990s not only in St. Petersburg and Moscow, but everywhere in Russia. The site reports written by the MPI experts are unanimous on this point.

In Nizhniy Novgorod, Russia's third largest city, the number of registered drug users grew almost 30 times in the mere eight years between

[5] Lower estimated are, instead, quoted by UNAIDS. Accordingly, there are about 200-300,000 'experimenting' drug users in St. Petersburg and 120,000 addicts (UNAIDS, 2000a: 6).

1992 and 1999. According to the data provided by the local Police Department for the Fight Against Drug Trafficking (UBNON), in fact, 2,220 drug users were recorded in 1992. By 1999 their number had escalated to 65,000 (Obidina, 2000). A survey carried out in 1994 reached the conclusion that about 150,000 persons had used illicit drugs at least once in their life. They represented four percent of the 3,750,000 inhabitants of the Nizhniy Novgorod region. Drug users' number is now estimated at about 280,000 people, making up 7.5 percent of the population (*ibidem*).

Graph II.4: First-time diagnoses for drug abuse in St. Petersburg ~ 1983-1998



Source: St. Petersburg Health Office, 1999.

According to Ludmila Markoryan, in Balakovo, a large city of 217,000 inhabitants in the Saratov region, drug use as a social phenomenon hardly existed during the 1980s. According to most 'experienced' local users, in the early 1980s there were no more than 100 injecting opiate users in town. Most consumers then had a criminal background or came from socially problematic families. Since 1995, however, a sudden change took place, as drug use diffused among young people of all strata and backgrounds. From 1996 to 2000 the number of injecting drug users increased tenfold. Though the officially registered drug users number 1,500, the real number of injecting drug users is thought to be ten times larger. According to the coordinators of an outreach project, there are currently between 12,000 and 15,000 injecting drug users in Balakovo. As this city on the Volga has 207,000 inhabitants, the rate of injecting drug users ranges between 6,000 and 7,200 per 100,000 inhabitants.

A tremendous increase in drug use has also been registered in Krasnoyarsk, a city of about a million inhabitants in Siberia, whose *Kraj* (region) has been governed since 1998 by General Alexander Lebed. In 1989, 300 drug users were officially registered by the local branch of the MVD. By 1994, however, their number had risen to 3,667; by 1998 to 8,779 users (see Table II.3). Despite showing the rapid growth of the phenomenon, official statistics only include a minimal portion of local drug users. According to health officials, the latter now number about 34,000 people (Interviews C6 and C7). Two local journalists interviewed by Ludmila Maiorova estimated as many as 50,000 (Interviews F5 and F6; see Maiorova, 2000).

Table II.3: Drug users registered by the Russian Ministry of the Interior in Krasnoyarsk ~ 1989-1999

1989	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*
300	3,667	4,846	5,489	7,468	8,461	8,779

Source: MVD, Krasnoyarsk Branch, 2000.

Official data also show an increase of drug users in the Republic of North Ossetia-Alanja, though less steep than in other parts of the country. In this republic of 640,000 inhabitants on the border with Georgia, the number of registered users grew threefold from 739 in 1990 to 2,196 in 1999 (see Table II.4). According to the experts interviewed by Eliko Ciklauri, however, the lower increase rates registered in the late 1990s do not point to a stabilisation of drug consumption in the region but are, instead, primarily the consequence of a change in registration procedures. The staff of state drug-treatment centres by and large stopped reporting their new clients to the local Ministry of the Interior. Hence, only drug users who are involved in a penal investigation, end up listed in the official register. The real number of users is thought to be eight to ten times higher than that of registered consumers. In a January 2000 report, the Drug Control Department of the local Ministry of the Interior estimates that there were about 15,000 drug users in North Ossetia in 1999 (MVD-North Ossetia, 2000; Ciklauri, 2000: 11).

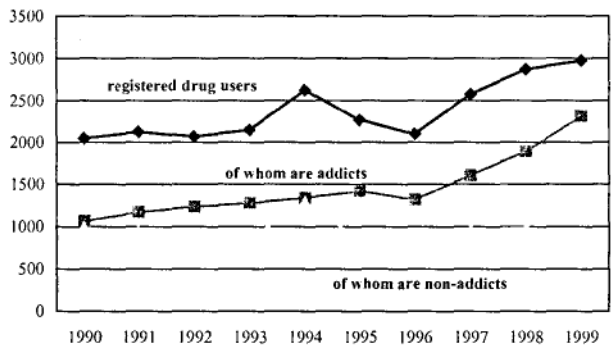
Table II.4: Drug users registered by the local Ministry of the Interior in the Republic of North-Ossetia-Alanja ~ 1990-1999

1990	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*
736	1,538	1,736	1,832	2,136	2,196

Source: Ministry of the Interior, Republic of North Ossetia-Alanja, 2000.

In Rostov, the official number of drug users grew even more moderately during the 1990s. In this Southern city of a million inhabitants located on the Azov Sea, already over 2,000 drug users were known by the local health authorities in 1990. The closeness to the Ukraine, where poppy straw was widely available probably explains this unusual datum, which is clearly above the national average. (In Krasnoyarsk, which has a comparable number of inhabitants, only 300 drug users were registered in 1989). By 1999, there had been a 50 percent increase and 2,975 users were on the register of state drug-treatment centres. It is not known if and, eventually, to what extent this moderate increase has been due to changes in registration procedures. What has rapidly grown, however, is the percentage of drug

Graph II.5: Registered drug users in Rostov ~ 1990-1999



	Registered drug users	*Drug addicts*		*Drug users*	
		Number	%	Number	%
1990	2,048	1,066	52.1	982	47.9
1991	2,123	1,173	55.3	950	44.7
1992	2,067	1,237	59.8	830	40.2
1993	2,145	1,279	59.6	866	40.4
1994	2,623	1,342	51.2	1,281	48.8
1995	2,265	1,421	62.7	844	37.3
1996	2,098	1,321	63.0	777	37.0
1997	2,573	1,609	62.5	964	37.5
1998	2,872	1,892	65.9	980	34.1
1999	2,975	2,305	77.5	670	22.5

Source: Saukhat, 2000.

addicts *vis-à-vis* the mere users. The latter represented 47 percent of the registered users in 1990. By 1999, however, their percentage had diminished to 22.5 percent. Correspondingly, the veritable addicts grew from 1,066 in 1990 to 2,305 in 1999 (Saukhat, 2000; see Graph II.5).

According to Sergej Saukhat from Anti-AIDS South, who wrote the Rostov site report, the official data point to an effective shift in drug use patterns and, specifically, to a veritable increase of injecting drug use. A rapid assessment, which was carried out in 1998, showed that 28.8 percent of the people contacted used drugs intravenously. Local experts estimate that in 1999 there were at least 10,000 injecting drug users (Saukhat, 2000).

Rostov's datum is, alas, not an exception. All cities included in the MPI's project registered an increase of injecting drug use. In Balakovo, for example, from 1996 to 2000 the number of injecting drug users has increased more than 10.5 times (Markoryan, 2000). In the Khabarovsk region in the Far East (total population: 1.5million), there are at least 26,000 injecting drug users, who constitute about a sixth of the estimated 155,000 locals who regularly or occasionally use drugs (Rakitsky, 2000). This trend is also confirmed by a variety of scientific studies. A recent survey carried out by Médicins sans Frontières conservatively estimated that one percent of Moscow youth (aged 15-25) currently inject drugs, and five percent had injected drugs sometime in their life (MSF, 1999; see also Dehne *et al.*, 1999: 744).

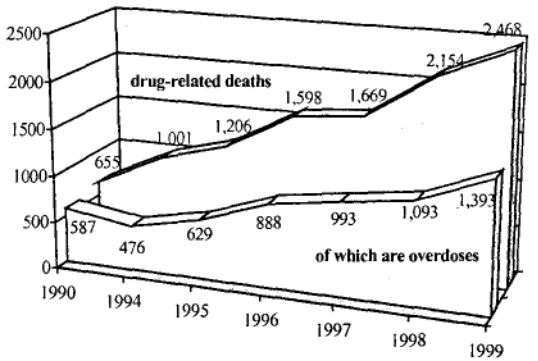
4. Drug-Related Harm and HIV

Following the spread of intravenous drug use, the number of drug-related deaths and, specifically overdoses, has rapidly increased. From 1990 to 1999 the former grew almost four times, rising from 655 to 2,468 cases. Though less steeply, overdose deaths have also risen significantly: from 587 in 1990 to 1,393 in 1999 (MVD, 2000: 15; see Graph II.6).

In the late 1990s injecting drug use has turned into a formidable means of spreading HIV and AIDS. The World Health Organisation recently reported "an explosive increase in HIV infections" in Russia. In 1999, in fact, 14,980 cases of HIV infection were recorded – a threefold increase over the 1998 total and more than the total number of cases reported in all preceding years (Wines, 1999; Reuters, 2000a). As of May 2000, 37,400 cases of HIV infections were registered in the Russian Federation from the beginning of

the epidemic (BBC Monitoring, 2000; UNAIDS, 2000c; see also Interview G1 and C3; Dehne *et al.*, 1999).

Graph II.6: Drug-related deaths, including overdoses in the Russian Federation ~ 1990-1999



Source: MVD, 2000: 15.

The HIV epidemic in Russia and the CIS is now largely due to needle sharing among intravenous drug users (Bijl, 1999; Dehne *et al.*, 1999; see also Burrows *et al.* 1999). Up until 1997 most cases were restricted to homosexuals, but a noticeable shift took place in the following two years. Since 1999, most HIV-positive people are drug users, who now account for almost 90 percent of all known cases (Argomenty i Fakty, 1999: 2; see Interviews C3 and G1).

Initially, the North-western Russian enclave of Kaliningrad was the most affected region, with more than 20 percent of the total number of reported cases. After reaching its peak in 1997 (1,330 new cases), the number of infections detected in Kaliningrad started to decrease: 754 cases were recorded in 1998 and 417 in 1999 (UNAIDS, 2000b: 4). In 1996 injecting drug use represented the dominant transmission route (86.3 percent of all cases); in the following years the weight of sexual transmission has increased. Up until 1999, however, more than half of all the new HIV infections in Kaliningrad were due to injecting drug use (*ibidem*: 6).

After Kaliningrad, numerous HIV cases were first recorded in other port cities or those located close to main transportation routes. In 1996 and 1997 other Russian cities with rapidly spreading HIV epidemics included Tver,

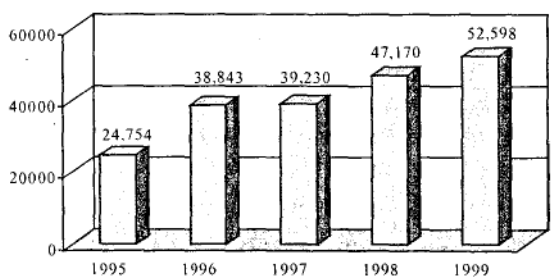
Nizhniy Novgorod, Saratov, Rostov, and Krasnodar in Central and Southern Russia, Krasnoyarsk, Tumen, Tuva and Irkutsk in Siberia (Pokorvsky et. al., 1998; Burrows *et al.*, 1998; Wines, 2000).

In 1999 a major outbreak occurred in Moscow and the surrounding region. According to the data released by the Moscow Municipal Centre for AIDS Prevention and Treatment, almost 50 HIV cases are registered in the capital every day. 2,259 HIV-positive patients were registered alone in 1999. This is significantly higher than the records of previous years. Since 1987, when the registration first began, until 1998 only 920 cases were registered (Moskovky Komsomolets, 1999: 1). Moreover, according to the Moscow Sanitary and Epidemiological Inspectorate, a quarter of the number of HIV cases registered in 1999 involved minors (Moskovky Komsomolets, 1999: 1; see Interviews C3 and G1).

5. Illegal Drug Users and Prevalence Rates

The high rate of HIV infection among minors in Moscow is not an exception, but points to a larger phenomenon. Russian drug users are young, often much younger than their Western counterparts, as official statistics and local surveys alike show. Minors used to represent 6.8 percent of all registered drug users in 1990 (MVD, 1999). By 1999, their percentage had grown to 14.6, after peaking 17.9 percent in 1997. In absolute values, their number more than doubled in five years. In fact, it grew from 24,754 in 1995 to 52,598 in 1999 (MVD, 2000: 11; see Graph II.7).

Graph II.7: Minors registered as drug users in state drug-treatment centres ~ 1995-1999



Source: MVD, several years.

After carrying out a high school survey among students of the 8th to 11th grades (aged 14-17), S.V. Volkova and her team estimated that there are about 42.700 Moscow students of those classes who had tried illicit drugs at least once in their lifetime. By extrapolation, it was calculated that 248,000 Moscow teenagers had used drugs at least once in their lifetime. More than half a million Moscovites younger than 30 years old are thought to have experimented with illicit drugs: almost six percent of the total Moscow population (Volkova, 1999; Barabanshikov and Konrad, 1999; RIPGO, 2000: 74-75).

Throughout the 1990s the age of first contact with illicit drugs has been constantly sinking. According to the official data of the Russian Ministry of Health, the first experience with illicit drugs usually takes place at an age of 15-17, though more and more cases of drug use are reported among children aged 11 to 13 (Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000; Barabanshikov and Konrad, 1999). An anonymous survey of 402 drug users, which was conducted in 1999 by outreach workers in St. Petersburg (belonging to the NGO called 'Return'), shows that 75 percent of them tried drugs before they reached 15 years of age (UNAIDS, 2000a: 9). Similar age levels of drug initiation are also reported by several MPI local research teams. In Rostov, Vladivostok and Khabarovk, a consistent portion of the drug users contacted by the outreach workers, who wrote the site report, had started to use drugs when they were younger than 14 years old (Saukhat, 2000; Zavadskaya, 2000; Rakitsky, 2000).

Table II.5: Lifetime and past-month prevalence rates of the most common illicit drugs among 4,022 Moscow high school students (age 15-16) ~ 1999

High-school students	**N= 4,022**
Lifetime prevalence of cannabis use	18.1 %
Past-month prevalence of cannabis use	6.7 %
Lifetime prevalence of inhalant use	8.1 %
Past-month prevalence of inhalant use	3.6 %
Lifetime prevalence of ecstasy use	2.2 %
Lifetime prevalence of heroin use	5.1 %

Source: Barabanshikov and Konrad, 1999.

Several surveys carried out in the 1990s show that the prevalence rates of cannabis use among Russian teenagers are rapidly equalling those recorded in the USA and Western Europe. Proof of this statement is given, for example, by a survey carried out among 4,022 Moscow high school stu-

dents of the 9th and 10th grade (aged 15-16) in April 1999. 18.1 percent of the respondents, in fact, admitted to having used cannabis at least once in their life, while 6.7 percent used cannabis at least once in the last 30 days (see Table II.5). The second most popular psychoactive substance were inhalants, which were sniffed by 8.1 percent of respondents at least once in their life and by 3.6 percent of all adolescents in the last thirty days. Experience with ecstasy and heroin was reported by 2.2 and 4.1 percent of the respondents, respectively (Barabanshikov and Konrad, 1999).

If only the pupils of the 10th grade and students attending professional technical schools are considered, the prevalence rates are consistently higher. Almost a quarter of them admitted to trying cannabis at least once in their lives. 8.4 percent had smoked it at least once in the thirty days preceding the interview (see Table II.6). Over ten percent had experience with inhalants and 4.5 percent had used these toxic substances in the previous thirty days. Finally, 2.7 percent had tried ecstasy at least once and an astonishing 7 percent heroin (Barabanshikov and Konrad, 1999).

Table II.6: Lifetime and past-month prevalence rates of the most common illicit drugs among 3,415 Moscow senior high-school and professional school students (age 16) ~ 1999

Senior high-school and professional school students	**N= 3,415**
Lifetime prevalence of cannabis use	24.6 %
Past-month prevalence of cannabis use	8.4 %
Lifetime prevalence of inhalant use	10.5 %
Past-month prevalence of inhalant use	4.5 %
Lifetime prevalence of ecstasy use	2.7 %
Lifetime prevalence of heroin use	7.0 %

Source: Barabanshikov and Konrad, 1999.

By comparison, according to the 1999 National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, 7 percent of US youth aged 12-17 had smoked marijuana at least once in the thirty days before the interviews (No data are gathered in the United States on ecstasy use, whereas inhalants are seldom used both in Western European countries and in North America) (see SAMHSA, 2000). In a slightly older age group, similar values are also reported by the nationwide survey of drug use, which was last carried out in 1997 in Germany. 20.6 percent of 573 Western German respondents aged 18-20 had used cannabis at least once in their life and 8.4 admitted smoking it in the

thirty days before the interview (see Table II.7).[6] The lifetime prevalence of ecstasy use is significantly higher in Germany than in Moscow: 4.6 percent of the German respondents admitted to having used it at least once in their life (Kraus and Bauernfeind, 1998a: 33).

Table II.7: Lifetime and past-month prevalence rates of the most common illicit drugs among Western German young adults (age 18-24) ~ 1999

Lifetime prevalence of cannabis use	20.6 %
Past-month prevalence of cannabis use	8.4 %
Lifetime prevalence of ecstasy use	4.6 %
Lifetime prevalence of heroin use	0.3 %

Source: Kraus and Bauernfeind, 1998a: 33.

It is also very interesting to consider the results of the 'European Project of School Research in Alcohol and Drug Use' (EPSAD). High school students aged 15-16 were interviewed in 22 countries in 1997; in Moscow the same methodology was applied in a survey of 2,937 students of 250 different high schools in 1999 (Vishinsky, 1999).

Among the Moscow respondents, who were all born in 1983, 24 percent admitted to using an illicit drug at least once. For the majority (22 percent), one of these illicit substances was cannabis. Two percent had tried ecstasy and four percent LSD. As shown by Table II.8, Moscow prevalence rates of lifetime cannabis use may be located in the upper end of the 22 countries' list. Though they are higher than the rates recorded in most other countries, they are significantly lower than the prevalence rates of Great Britain (41 percent) and Ireland (37 percent). The same can also be said for the rates of lifetime ecstasy and LSD consumption. Moscow rates are lower than those recorded in Great Britain, Ireland, and Italy (and in the case of ecstasy also Croatia) and are similar to those of the other countries involved in the project.

If the Moscow rates of cannabis, ecstasy and LSD use are comparable to those of other European countries, the rate of heroin use is certainly not. In Western high-school surveys, less than one percent of the overall respon-

[6] The data refer only to Western German rates because Eastern Germans still present considerably lower prevalence rates of illicit drug use.

dents report having used heroin at least once in their lives.[7] It is therefore astonishing that in two different surveys of Moscow high school and professional school students, at least six percent of the respondents admitted to using heroin at least once in their lives (Vishinsky, 1999; see Table II.8). In the study conducted by Barabanshikov and Konrad (1999), the percentage reached seven percent. In fact, 3.9 percent of the respondents said that they had smoked heroin, whereas 3.1 percent reported "other forms of consumption", among which the most frequent is to believed to be injection (see Table II.6).

Table II.8: Lifetime prevalence rates of the most common illicit drugs among 15-16 year-olds in 22 countries interviewed in the ESPAD project ~ 1997 and 1999 (Moscow)

	Cannabis	Heroin	LSD	Ecstasy	Amphetamines
Great Britain	41	2	15	8	14
Ireland	37	2	13	9	3
Denmark	18	2	0	1	2
Island	10	1	2	2	3
Norway	6	1	1	2	2
Finland	8	0	1	0	1
Switzerland	6	0	1	1	1
Italy	19	2	5	4	3
Cyprus	5	2	5	4	3
Malta	9	1	2	2	1
Portugal	7	0	1	1	2
Turkey	4	1	1	1	1
Hungary	5	0	1	1	1
Poland	9	1	2	1	3
Slovakia	9	1	1	0	1
Slovenia	13	1	2	2	1
Croatia	9	1	1	3	1
Czech Republic	22	1	3	0	2
Lithuania	2	0	0	0	0
Estonia	8	0	1	0	1
Ukraine	15	0	1	0	0
Moscow	**22**	**6**	**4**	**2**	**1**

Source: K. Vishinkiy, 1999.

[7] In the above quoted nationwide German survey, for example, only 0,9 percent of the 6.380 respondents of all age groups reported heroin use at least once in their lives. See Kraus and Bauernfeind (1998a: 33).

Whereas heroin became widespread in Russia only in the late 1990s (see Chapter II), the high prevalence rate of heroin use among Russian high school students point to a larger trend: the spread of injecting drug use among teenagers and young adults. As a matter of fact, the latter constitute the bulk of injecting drug users in Russia. This datum partially emerges even from official statistics which, however, tend to underestimate the younger drug consumers. In fact, state treatment centres and police alike, usually record drug users only when they are well advanced in their drug career.

Whereas in most Western European countries the majority of injecting drug users is over 30 (see, for example, Paoli 2000a), in Russia the latter still represent a minority. According to the data published by the Russian Ministry of the Interior, users older than 30 constitute 23.9 percent of the users officially registered in state drug-treatment centres. As shown by Table II.9, their percentage has remained fairly stable throughout the second half of the 1990s.

Table II.9: Drug users and, specifically those older than 30, registered in state drug-treatment centres ~ 1995-1999

	1995	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*
Registered drug users	155,971	243,670	219,173	287,689	359,067
of whom older than 30 years-old	37,166	62,805	49,047	79,984	85,989
Percentage	23.8 %	25.8 %	22.4 %	27.8 %	23.9 %

Source: MVD, 2000.

In Moscow and St. Petersburg, where the drug epidemic started earlier, there are a corresponding larger number of older users. In Moscow, for example, people younger than 30 represent 'only' 58.9 percent of the users officially registered in state treatment centres (RIPGO, 2999: 76). An analogous percentage is shown by official statistics in St. Petersburg (Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 15). Nonetheless, even in Moscow and St. Petersburg minors and young adults constitute a considerable portion of drug users, including the injectors. Many of the 15 drugs users interviewed in Moscow by NAN workers stress this point and, according to Vika, "it is not rare to see drug addicts that are only 12 or 13 years old" (Interview H11; see also Interviews H4, H8, H9, H10, H13, and H15).

The drug users' perception is confirmed by *ad hoc* surveys and experts' estimates. According to Médicins sans Frontières, which has carried out an outreach program in Moscow since 1996, the majority of injecting drug users are between 12 and 24 years old (Bijl, 1999). In Nizhniy Novgorod, according to public drug-treatment providers and private outreach workers, most injecting drug users are under 30 (Obidina, 2000). In Khabarovsk in the Far East, almost 90 percent of the intravenous drug users are 16 to 30 years old. The users' average age is 22 (Rakitsky, 2000). In Vladivostok, most of the injecting drug users contacted by the local outreach workers are 16 to 25 years old (Zavadskaya, 2000). In Rostov too, according to Sergej Saukhat, "there is a troubling tendency toward a decreasing average age of drug users due to the increasing number of teenagers using illicit drugs" (Saukhat, 2000).

Even the age of first injection is usually very low. This is clearly shown by the results of an outreach project conducted between October 1996 and September 1998 in Yaroslavl, an industrial city of 670,000 inhabitants, located 250 kilometres north-east of Moscow. The majority of the 484 injecting drug users who participated in the project, in fact, had started to inject drugs at a very young age, between 15 and 18 (Sergeyev *et al.*, 1999: 785-786).

Above all in Moscow, but to a lesser extent also in other Russian cities, some of the worst off and youngest drug users are street children. According to Médecins du Monde, the latter total at least 5,000 in St. Petersburg (UNAIDS, 2000a: 13; Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 9). In Moscow the local office of the Ministry of the Interior registers every year about 6,000 homeless children and teenagers, who predominantly come from other parts of the Russian Federation (55 percent) or from CIS countries (40 percent). It is estimated, however, that over the past few years about 28,000 orphaned or abandoned children migrated to Moscow yearly. According to official statistics, there are currently 50,000 street children in Russia's capital and at least 9,000 of them use drugs (RIPGO, 2000: 75). The Red Cross, however, estimates that there are at least 100,000 street children in Moscow and two or three million in the whole country (Stabile, 2000).

In most cities included in the research, women constitute about 25-30 percent of the local drug using population (Zavadskaya, 2000; Saukhat, 2000; Vishinsky, 1999). According to several observers their percentage has kept growing over the 1990s. In some cities, such as St. Petersburg,

women are estimated to represent about 40 percent of the local drug using population (Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 15; see also Interviews H5, H7, and H8).

In Western Europe injecting drug use is usually widespread among low-class, marginalised youth. In Russia, on the contrary, no such straightforward association is possible and indeed, drug use, including injecting drug use, seems to involve young people belonging to all social classes and ethnic groups. Only cocaine, due to its high price, is still consumed prevalently within the tiny elite of the well-off 'new Russians'. Though street children also take part in local drug markets, cannabis, ecstasy and opiates, including heroin, are predominantly consumed by the children of middle-class families, most of whom are neither particularly disadvantaged, nor poor by Russian standards. Indeed, whereas in Western Europe heroin use is usually accompanied by social and economic marginalisation, several experts interviewed by MPI researchers openly made a contrary association. Accordingly, heroin, which became widely available in Russia only in the late 1990s, predominantly attracts children of relatively well-off families (*ibidem*; Zavadskaya, 2000; Saukhat, 2000). Though the latter are rapidly threatened by marginalisation and criminalisation as soon as their heroin consumption becomes regular, according to most experts, heroin users hardly come from underprivileged classes.

Russian drug users, including those who inject, are usually well educated. In Yaroslavl, for example, approximately 40 percent of the almost 500 injecting drug users, who participated to the peer-driven intervention project, were high-school graduates. Another 40 percent have had some professional or university training (Sergeyev *et al.*, 1999: 785).

This diversified picture of Russian drug users and, indeed, the prevalence among them of relatively wealthy high school or university students are confirmed by users themselves. Almost all the 15 users interviewed by NAN workers are students themselves, belonging at least to middle-class families and none of them describe their drug using peers as particularly poor and disadvantaged. Indeed, according to Stephan, "many drug users come from *intelligentsia* circles and are fashionably dressed (Interview H1, see also Interviews H2, H3, H5, H7, H9, H10, H12, H13, H14, and H15; see also Morvant, 1996: 21).

Notwithstanding the engagement of Russian state authorities, the use of illicit drugs, above all cannabis, but also opiates and heroin, has rapidly gained popularity among Russian youths. As much as in Western Europe and the United States, even in Russia it is becoming a sort of *rite de pas-*

sage, which involves a large number of teenagers and young adults. Some of these, though by no means the majority, go beyond the experimenting phase and become regular users of heavy drugs, often seriously damaging their health and chances of success in life.

III. Drugs and Local Markets

The rapid increase of drug users by no means constitutes the only major change affecting the illicit drug market in Russia during the 1990s. The market itself expanded in both its turnover and geographic extension, so much that illegal drugs of some kind are available even in the most remote parts of the country. The drug supply, too, diversified tremendously. In order to get their 'high' or forget their sorrows, drug users all over Russia are no longer obliged to rely on homemade products or derivatives of locally grown plants. If they can afford it, they can easily buy the same illicit psychoactive drugs that can be found in any Western European or North American city and that are imported from countries as far away as Colombia, Afghanistan and Holland. As one of our interviewees, a drug consumer herself, put it, "over the past ten years drugs have become accessible to whomever wishes to buy them" (Interview H11).

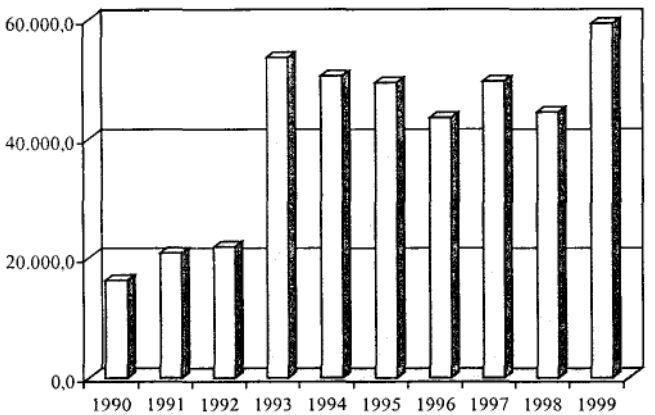
1. The Growth and Geographical Expansion of the Russian Drug Market

Though primarily reflecting the efficiency of law enforcement institutions, drug seizures represent the most immediate indicator of the expansion undergone by the Russian drug market in the 1990s. As shown by Graph III.1 and the accompanying table, the amount of drugs confiscated by the Russian Ministry of the Interior (MVD) grew 3.5 times during the last decade of the 20th century.[1] In 1990, the MVD seized 16,260 kilograms of illicit drugs. The largest increase was registered in 1993, when a 145 percent

[1] In the Russian Federation no agency systematically collects the data concerning all the seizures of illicit drugs which were carried out in the country. The Ministry of the Interior and the State Customs Committee publish figures about the drug seizures in which they were involved. Despite its involvement in many drug operations, the Federal Security Service (FSB, the former KGB) publishes no figures on the matter. The data of the different agencies cannot be added, because most seizures (though it is not known how many) are carried out jointly. Unless otherwise specified, in this report we have largely relied on the data published by the Ministry of the Interior, which is involved in most drug operations carried out inside Russia. According to several Russian and foreigner experts interviewed in Moscow and other cities (Interviews A3, A4, A5, B1, B3), the MVD's data should be the most comprehensive.

growth in drug seizures took place. After declining slightly in the following years, seizures grew again considerably in 1999, when 59,343 kilograms of illicit drugs were intercepted.[2]

Graph III.1: Drugs seized in the Russian Federation by the MVD (in kilograms) ~ 1990-1999



1990	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*
16,260	20,832	21,886	53,726	50,514	49,425	43,528	49,625	44,491	59,343

Source: MVD, several years.

The expansion of the Russia drug market has not merely affected its turnover, but also its geographic extension. Most illicit drugs are currently available in virtually all Russian regions, where they find a growing number of consumers. In a report on the drug situation in the Russian Federation published in 1999, the Drug Control Department of the MVD states:

[2] From 1994 onwards, the data concerning seizures were drawn from the annual reports prepared by the Drug Control Department of the MVD. For the early 1990s we relied on data provided by the Research Institute of the Prosecutor General's Office (RIPGO), whose researchers provided a decade-long time series. Though these data were said to rely on MVD's sources, some of the figures concerning 1995 and 1996 are not coincident with those found in the MVD's reports. There is hence no certainty that the data referring to 1991-1993 are consistent with those provided by the MVD for the rest of the decade.

"Today there is no inhabited locality where there would be no people misusing drugs (sic!)" (1999b: 5). According to the MVD's estimates, in 1985 only four Russian regions hosted more than 10,000 illicit drug users. By 1998 there were 32 regions. Correspondingly, the number of regions with less than 1,000 illicit drug users decreased from 38 to eight (MVD, 1999b: 5-6; see Table III.1).[3]

Table III.1: Drug users in Russian regions according to the estimates of the MVD ~ 1985 and 1998

	1985	*1998*
up to 1,000 users	38 regions	8 regions
from 1,000 to 10,000 users	35 regions	38 regions
more than 10,000 users	4 regions	32 regions

Source: MVD, 1999b: 5-6.

In 1990, the rate of registered users per 100,000 inhabitants exceeded 100 in only eight of the 78 regions belonging to the Russian Federation and Russia's average rate was 35.7 per 100,000 inhabitants. In 1998, the situation was reversed. In 44 regions the rate of registered users was more than 100 per 100,000 inhabitants, with some regions like the Khakass republic (636.4), the regions of Novossibirsk (459.0) and Samara (439.9) recording sensational rates. Even the national rate exceeded the 100 person limit. On the average, in fact, 173.7 illicit drug users were officially registered per 100,000 inhabitants in Russia.

Not only registered drug users, but also drug offences have grown significantly in all regions of the Russian Federation. In 1990 only six regions registered more than 30 drug offences per 100,000 inhabitants, among these were the regions of Primorye, where Vladivostok is located, and Khabarovsk. By 1999, only three regions were left under the rate of 30 drug offences per 100,000 inhabitants and all the others scored higher (see Table III.2). Indeed, 45 regions exceeded the rate of 100 drug offences per 100,000 inhabitants. Among the latter are almost all the areas of Russia included in this study: Moscow (149.0) St. Petersburg (312.9), the regions of Khabarovsk (258), Primorye (262.1), and Krasnoyarsk (169.1), and the Republic of North Ossetia (130.6).

[3] The sources of MVD's estimates are not known.

Table III.2: Ranking of regions belonging to the Russian Federation by the rate of drug offences per 100,000 inhabitants ~ 1999

up to 30	Nenets autonomous region (19.7), Ust'-Ordinsky autonomous region (19.5), Chukotsky autonomous region (4.8)
30 to 60	Komi (48.8), Mordovia (33.9), Chuvash Republic (50.3), Evenk autonomous region (30.8), Ivanovo region (36.1), Kirov region (47.9), Murmansk region (44.2), Penza region (41.7), Komi – Permiartsky autonomous region (44.2), Pskov region (43.8), Ryazan region (48.5), Tula region (54.6), Aginsko-Bouriatsky autonomous region (49.3)
60 to 100	Republic of Bashkortostan (70.7), Dagestan (86.4), Ingushetia (75.0), Sacha (61.5), Udmurt region (62.4), Taimyr autonomous region (74.4), regions of Belgorod (71.9), Bryansk (73.7), Vladimir (62.9), Vologda (68.3), Voronezh (93.2), Kaluga (71.6), Leningrad (96.0), Lipetsk (70.3), Moscow (67.4), Nizhegorodsky region (64.9), regions of Novgorod (97.2), Oryol (82.7), Perm (92.8), Smolensk (87.6), Tambov (75.0), Tver (61.5), Tyumen (72.0), Ulyanovsk (78.5), Yaroslavl (63.4)
100 to 130	Republic of Kabardino-Balkaria (112.6), Tatarstan (101.3), regions of Astrakhan (119.0), Kostroma (112.8), Kurgan (119.7), Kursk (110.1), Magadan (112.1), Omsk (124.5), Saratov (113.9), Sakhalin (120.9), Chelyabinsk (105.2), Chita (126.6)
130 to 200	Adigeiya (186.2), Republic of Altay (187.5), Kalmykia (197.7), Charachaevo-Cherkessian republic (197.7), Karelia (147.7), Mariy El (151.7), North Ossetia (130.6), Chachassia (174.5), Altay region (167.5) , Krasnoyarsk region (169.1), Stavropol region (187.7), regions of Volgograd (147.1), Irkutsk (160.6), Kaliningrad (145.5), Kemerovo (147.0), Moscow (149.0), Orenburg (144.5), Sverdlovsk (188.7), Tyumen (136.3), Yamalo-Nenets autonomous region (141.2)
200 to 300	Republic of Tyva (206.2), Krasnodar region (239.9), Primorye region (262.1), Khabarovsk region (258.0), regions of Amur (209.1), Kamchatka (212.8), Novosibirsk (254.3), Rostov (220.9), Samara (289.6), Tomsk (249.3), Chanty-Mansiysk autonomous region (285.2)
over 300	The Jewish autonomous region (369.2), St. Petersburg (312.9)

Source: RIPGO, 2000: 17-18.

Even more than other types of statistics, law enforcement statistics should not be taken at face value, as they represent the 'world out there' through the eyes of the agency that collects the data (see Kitsuse and Cicourel, 1963; Mikhailovskaya, 1994; Butler, 1992). More than anything else, they reflect the activity of the agency itself. In Russia more prudence is necessary than elsewhere, because for a long time the statistical data were distorted to achieve political goals (RIPGO, 2000: 6-7). It is well known, for example, that Soviet authorities did not want to recognise that their country also had a drug problem because the latter was thought to be specific to

"decadent" Western capitalist societies (Morvant, 1996). As a result, the number of drug offences and illegal drug users was kept artificially low. But even without assuming wilful manipulation, a sort of reaction lag needs to be taken into account. As it happened in other countries, even Russian law enforcement and drug-treatment agencies needed some time to perceive and adjust to the growth of illegal drug use and trade. As we noted in the case of North Ossetia, furthermore, the co-operation between different agencies is not always optimal and this fact also negatively affects the data collection process and further reduces the reliability of statistical data.

Their reliability is further lowered by the discretion enjoyed by police forces. According to Eliko Ciklauri, in North Ossetia – although the same considerations seem to be true elsewhere –

> "we can assume that the initiation of a formal penal proceeding for a drug offence is more often the exception than the rule. This is due not only to the corruption of police officers, but also to their lack of interest in law enforcement, which they often consider as extra non-reimbursed work. In the countryside and smaller places, law enforcement officers also need to take precautions to avoid conflict with the local families. 'In the worst case', a drug dealer himself maintained, 'the police take my stuff and I am beaten and chased away'. A report is made only if a special drug operation is underway and the police must reach a specific target output" (2000: 17-18).

In North Ossetia as well as in other republics, the suspects of a drug offence are often able to buy their freedom by bribing police officers (see *infra*) and this further reduces the reliability of law enforcement statistics. As a Moscow drug user puts it, "patrolling policemen seem to work according to the motto: 'money, release; no money, arrest'" (Interview H13).

Despite this caveat, the changes recorded by the statistics presented above are too large to be attributed exclusively to variations in registration policy and procedures. Though undeterminably, the above statistical data reflect an effective spread of drug use and trade to even the most remote regions of Russia. As a matter of fact, this spread also emerges from the ad hoc inquiries carried out by the MPI research teams in nine different Russian contexts as well as by the intelligence reports of Russian and foreign law enforcement agencies.

Emblematic is the case of Sverdlovsk (the former Ekaterinenburg), which is located at the centre of the Urals region. As pointed out by an FSB intelligence report, no illicit drug is produced or cultivated in the region, which is also far away from any drug producing country. Nonetheless, all the most common illicit drugs are imported in Sverdlovsk from several

countries through a variety of communication routes. In particular, according to the FSB,

> "opium and heroin come from Afghanistan and Pakistan through Tajikistan; marijuana and hashish from Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Synthetic drugs, cocaine and amphetamines are imported from the Baltic countries via Belarus and the Ukraine, through Moscow and St. Petersburg" (FSB, 2000: 9).

Though many peripheral regions are still dependent on their drug supplies from Moscow and St. Petersburg, many others, above all in Southern and Eastern Russia, are developing their own independent supply channels, which entirely bypass Moscow. This, for example, is the case of the Omsk region in Western Siberia. According to the FSB, in 1998 there was a shift in the local drug trafficking activity, which is no longer oriented towards Moscow and St. Petersburg, but towards Afghanistan and the Central Asian republics of the Commonwealth of Independent States. As a result, though no drug cultivation is possible, the Omsk region is abundantly supplied with highly pure illicit drugs. Indeed, thanks to its closeness to Kazakhstan and its well developed communication network, this part of Western Siberia imports not only plenty of opium and heroin for its own drug users, but it is also increasingly used by drug dealers to transfer drugs to both Eastern and Western Russia (FSB, 2000).

2. The Diversification of the Drug Supply in the 1990s

As described in Chapter I, in the Soviet era the most popular illicit psychoactive drugs in Russia were cannabis and opium derivatives, particularly poppy straw and synthetic preparations, such as morphine, codeine, that were diverted from drug factories and pharmacies on the drug market. Due to the bottlenecks of the Soviet drug distribution system, in some parts of the country toxic substances, such as glue, acetone, and gasoline, were also widely resorted to for lack of better alternatives. Powerful anaesthetics with hallucinogen effects were also frequently misused.

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, toxic substances and anaesthetics have constantly lost popularity and are increasingly replaced by illicit drugs, whose availability has rapidly grown everywhere. Though cannabis has retained its predominance, there is also a shift from homemade to ready-to-use preparations (Vishinsky, 1999; Barabanshikov and Konrad, 1999). In particular, in the late 1990s heroin spread very rapidly, attracting most of the users who previously injected homemade solution drawn from poppy straw, opium, anaesthetics, and medical drugs.

Cannabis

As much as in Western Europe and the United States, cannabis is today still the most frequently used illegal drug in Russia. The surveys, which were presented in Chapter II, clearly demonstrate that cannabis is extensively used by drug users of all different age groups and, above all, by teenagers. In one survey 18 percent and, in the other 22 percent of the respondents (15 and 16 year old Moscow high school students) admitted to using cannabis at least once in their lives. In the survey conducted by S. V. Volkova, 8.4 percent of the interviewees additionally reported using cannabis in the previous 30 days (Volkova, 2000).

As in numerous other countries, even in Russia cannabis constitutes not only the most common drug, but also the illicit psychoactive substance most people try first. In Vishinsky's study, out of the 24 percent of the respondents who admitted to using an illegal drug at least once, 22 percent had exclusively smoked hashish or marijuana (Vishinsky, 1999).

The success of cannabis is also confirmed by the expert interviews, which were carried out by the MPI researchers in different parts of the country. Law enforcement officials as well as public drug-treatment providers and the staff of drug-related NGOs all unanimously point out that cannabis is the most commonly used illicit drug (Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 16-17; Saukhat, 2000; Rakitsky, 2000). Cannabis' success is also proved by the seizures carried out by the MVD in co-operation with other law enforcement agencies. As shown by Table III.3, throughout the 1990s cannabis products have represented a very considerable amount of the illicit psychoactive substances seized in Russia and since 1998 they make up for more

Table III.3: Cannabis products seized in the Russian Federation by the MVD (in kilograms) ~ 1994-1999

	1994	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*
Marijuana	-	-	18,968	22,976	22,899	33,802
Hashish	-	-	651	888	1,096	711
Hashish oil	-	-	42	68	103	141
Cannabis products (total)	21,046	21,033	19,661	23,931	24,097	34,654
Percent of cannabis on total seizures	41.7 %	42.6 %	45.2 %	48.2 %	54.2 %	58.4 %

Source: MVD, several years.

than half of the drugs seized annually by the MVD. In 1999, in particular, they represented over 58 percent of the total (MVD, 2000).

Unlike Western European countries, cannabis availability in Russia is increased by the fact that the cannabis plants still grow wild or are cultivated in numerous Russian locations. According to the US Department of State, over 1.5 million hectares of cannabis grow wild in the eastern part of the country (BINMLE, 1997: 55). In its latest drug report, the Russian Ministry of the Interior (MVD) estimated that cannabis grows wild on "more than a million hectares" (MVD, 2000: 16).

In 1999, cannabis plants were eradicated from 78,300 hectares and the MVD estimates that 600 tons of marijuana were thus prevented from entering the drug market (*ibidem;* see also UNDCP, 1997c). These operations, however, had no impact on cannabis' availability. Cannabis' yield and resistance constitute major hindrances to the effectiveness of law enforcement action. Depending on the climate, cannabis plants may produce up to ten million seeds per hectare and these maintain their reproduction capacity for an average period of five years, which may last as long as eight years in Southern Russia. Furthermore, the deteriorating economic conditions of the country have led many farmers to cultivate plants containing illegal psychoactive principles because the latter promise higher profits than those obtainable from legal agricultural products (see Morvant, 1996).

The cannabis plant grows, above all, in Southern Russia and Siberia, the Northern Caucasus and the Far East. It is hence no wonder that the MPI research teams in North Ossetia and Rostov-on-Don in the South-western part of the country, Krasnoyarsk in Siberia, as well as Khabarovsk and Vladivostok in the Far East all point out a widespread availability of both hashish and marijuana in their own cities (Ciklauri, 2000; Saukhat, 2000; Maiorova, 2000; Rakitsky, 2000; Zavadskaya, 2000). As Rakitsky from Khabarovsk noted, "since cannabis is very widespread, the market cannot be controlled by law enforcement agencies" (2000: 3). Though less frequently than in the past, many local consumers still go and harvest cannabis in abandoned fields directly.

Both marijuana and hashish (the dried leaves and the resin of the cannabis plant respectively) are, however, easily available in practically all cities and towns of the country, even those that lie outside production areas. In Moscow, for example, more than 50 percent (53.7) of the senior high and professional school students interviewed by Volkova and her team maintained that they could provide themselves with cannabis (Volkova,

2000; see also Barabanshikov and Konrad, 1999). For 22 percent of them it was, indeed, easy to find cannabis. Cannabis availability was also confirmed by the 15 drug users who were interviewed by NAN (Interviews H1, H2, H5, H6, H8, H10, H11, and H14). In St. Petersburg, too, both marijuana and hashish, called *anasha*, *plan*, or *plastilin* (hashish only) are on sale and, due to their low prices, are also very popular among young people. Indeed, according to several drug users and experts, cannabis use is spreading further in the city (Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 17). According to the FSB, cannabis is available in all Russian regions and in virtually all of them is the most frequently used illegal drug (FSB, 2000).

In Moscow, St. Petersburg, Nizhniy Novgorod, and Vladivostok a gram of marijuana can be bought for as little as half a US dollar: according to police officers and drug users alike, the prices of a ready-to-smoke joint range between 12 and 20 rubles (US$ 0.40-0.70).[4] The standard selling unit is however not the gram, but the so-called 'box' (i.e. a matchbox). The amount of substance varies from three to ten grams depending on the type of cannabis products placed in the package. A 'box' of hashish, usually containing two to three grams, is sold for a price ranging between 120 and 240 rubles (US$ 5-8), depending on the drug quality (Interviews D5, D6, H5, and H6; Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 17-18; Obidina, 2000; Zavadskaya, 2000). In cities close to cannabis fields the prices are even lower. In Rostov a 'box' containing enough hashish for five to seven joints costs 70-150 rubles (US$ 2.40-5.20) (Saukhat, 2000).

Raw Opium and Poppy Straw

For a long time, poppy straw and opium were Russia's second most popular illicit drugs. In Southern Russia and in the Caucasus region raw opium was traditionally smoked or ingested. Additionally, from the late 1970s poppy straw or, less frequently, opium itself started to be processed into a strong solution of opioid alkaloids (containing codeine, morphine, and heroin in varying proportions), which is injected by users. This solution, which was home produced virtually throughout the former USSR, is most frequently called *chornyi* (black) or *hanka*[5] (Rhodes *et al.*, 1999; Dehne *et al.*, 1999).

[4] In spring 2000, when most of the interviews were carried out, a US dollar was traded in Russia for about 28.6 rubles.

[5] The latter term strictly speaking indicates only raw opium, but is often used to point to its derivatives as well (Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000).

Up to the late 1990s homemade opiates remained the preferred drug of the growing population of Russian injecting drug users. In the European part of Russia, they were for a long time predominantly extracted from poppy straw, which was easier to find. In fact, the oil-bearing poppy, a lower-potency strain of the opium poppy, out of which poppy straw is usually made, thrives in Southern Russia and the Ukraine. From the early 1990s, however, raw opium became more available and even in the European regions of the Russian Federation it was more frequently used, instead of poppy straw, to prepare *chorniy* (Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 18-19).

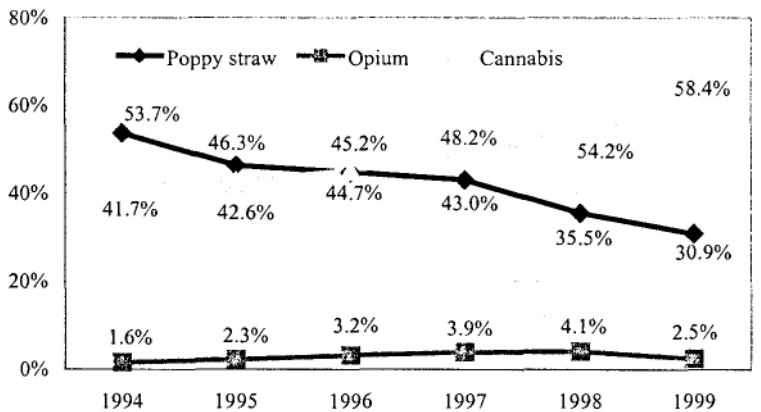
The production of *chornyi* involves fairly basic chemistry using acetone or similar industrial solvents, acetic anhydride, vinegar, and soda and is usually carried out at one of the users' place. It consists of several different steps, which are basically the same everywhere, though some local variations are known. First, ground poppy straw or raw opium is mixed with sodium bicarbonate (i.e. baking soda) and boiled with acetone or another strong solvent in an enamel bowl or pot. After filtering the solution (usually with a cotton cloth when starting with poppy straw), it is mixed with boiling water and vinegar, and subsequently with acetic anhydride, then it is boiled several times, until all the water is evaporated. In the end a thin brown layer, containing acetelylated opiate alkaloids, is left on the bottom and side of the enamel pot. The pot is taken off the stove and, with some three to four millilitres of water, the opiate film is stirred into solution again and through a filter made from cotton wadding it is drawn into a large syringe (5-20 ml). At that point, the solution is frequently mixed with an antihistamine, called Dimidrol, and it is then filtered once more before injection (Dehne *et al.*, 1999: 748-749; see also Rakitsky, 2000).

Usually groups of five to 20 users meet together in one of their flats to prepare *chornyi*, pooling the poppy straw or opium they had previously bought. The cook usually gets his (or her) dose free of charge. These groups often prepare *chornyi* not only for their personal consumption, but also sell some of it to other users who cannot prepare *chornyi* themselves. Non drug-using professional dealers, who produce *chornyi* exclusively for profit, are still rare according to most interviewees, including drug users themselves, though their number has progressively increased in the last few years (Interviews H12, D5, and A1).

Chornyi's usual selling unit is the glass, which nowadays costs about US$ 15-20 (430-570 rubles). Out of it, about 50 'bricks' of *chornyi* can be prepared, each 'brick' containing about one ml of opiate solution. The av-

erage daily dose for experienced users consists of about seven to eight 'bricks', out of which two or three injections are prepared (Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 18). A gram of poppy straw, out of which *chornyi* can be prepared, costs 80-100 rubles (US$ 2.80-3.50), but if large quantities are purchased, the price can easily go down to 25-50 rubles (US$ 0.80-1.70) (Interviews A6, and A1). In Nizhniy Novgorod, according to the local Drug Control Department, a gram of raw opium costs 100-150 rubles (US$ 3.50-5.20) (Obidina, 2000). At the street level it is however sold in tiny plastic bags, called *chek*, which contain 0.5-0.6 grams. In Rostov-on-Don each *chek* of raw opium costs about 50-60 rubles (US$ 1.70-2.10) (Saukhat, 2000).

Graph III.2: Poppy straw, opium and cannabis seized in the Russian Federation by the Ministry of the Interior (absolute values in kilograms and percentages on the total drugs seized) ~ 1994-1999



	1994	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*
Poppy straw	27,101	22,865	19,470	21,353	15,815	15,815
Raw opium	811	1,157	1,401	1,938	1,804	1,507
Cannabis	21,046	21,033	19,661	23,931	24,097	34,654

Source: MVD, several years.

Chornyi's popularity clearly emerges from the data concerning the drug seizures carried out by the Russian Ministry of the Interior (MVD). As shown by Graph III.2 and the accompanying table, up until 1996 poppy straw, out of which *chornyi* is usually made, accounted for more than half

of all illicit drugs intercepted in Russia. Though growing in the second half of the 1990s, raw opium seizures are considerably less consistent and from 1994 to 1999 their percentage of the total of seized drugs oscillated between 1.6 (1994) and 4.1 percent (1998) (MVD, 2000).

As clearly shown by the above graph, the absolute amount and percentage of poppy straw seizures have been steadily declining since their peak in 1994. In that year more than 27,000 kilograms of poppy straw, representing more than half of all the seized narcotics, were intercepted in Russia. Five years later, a consistent decline can be noted in terms of both the absolute value and the percentage. In 1999, in fact, 'only' 15,815 kilograms of poppy straw were seized, representing 30.9 percent of the total. In terms of price value, the decline was even more consistent. According to the Ministry of the Interior, in fact, poppy straw's share of the total value of confiscated drugs declined from 22.4 percent to 5.1 percent between 1994 and 1998 (UNODCCP, 1999: 10).

Heroin

From 1995 onwards, homemade opiates have been progressively pushed aside by heroin. The latter's growing popularity is clearly shown by the seizures carried out by the Russian Ministry of the Interior. Heroin was largely unknown until 1992, when only five grams were seized in all of Russia (see Table III.2). Since then heroin seizures have grown continuously, reaching 695 kilograms in 1999. This is a value that is comparable to those of the major Western countries: in the US, for example, 668 kilograms of heroin were intercepted by the Drug Enforcement Administration and local police forces in 1999 (DEA, 2000a). In Germany, where heroin use is more widespread, the amount was slightly higher: 796 kilograms were seized in 1999, with a 16 percent increase *vis-à-vis* the previous year due to a single large seizure (BKA, 2000). In Italy, in 1998, 703 kilograms were confiscated (DCSA, 2000). In less than a decade, at least as far as heroin seizures are concerned, Russia has closed the gap, which separated her from the larger Western countries.

Table III.2: Heroin seized in the Russian Federation by the Ministry of the Interior (kilograms) ~ 1990-1999

1990	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*
-	-	0.005	4.4	8.8	6.5	18.1	40.3	192.8	695.1

Source: MVD, several years.

Though rapidly growing, heroin still represents a small percent (1.2 percent in 1999) of the total amount of narcotics seized in Russia. In terms of price value, however, its share accounts for 36.2 percent (UNODCCP, 1999: 10).

Heroin first became available in big cities. In Moscow, according to the drug users we interviewed, heroin first appeared in 1995 and in the following years rapidly spread among intravenous drug users. As soon as heroin prices became affordable, the latter preferred it to *chornyi* because it has more powerful effects, it is easier to carry and hide and is bought ready to use. By 2000, *chornyi* had virtually disappeared from the market, according to several drug users and two staff members of the outreach program sponsored by Médecins sans Frontières (Interview D6; see also Interview H1; H6, H8, H10).

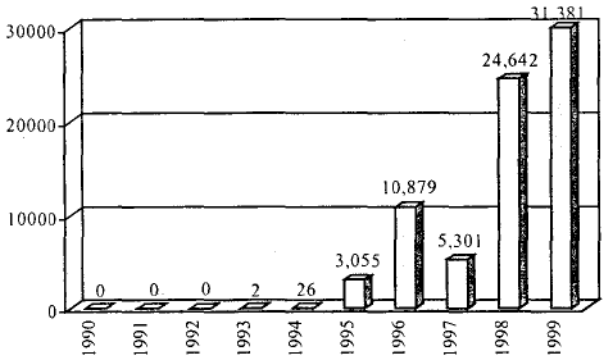
In the second half of the 1990s, heroin also became attractive for non-injecting drug users. Initially, the latter snorted it, but most of them were obliged to inject it in the attempt to reduce their expenses. For all the 15 drug users interviewed by NAN outreach workers the rapid spread of heroin use represents the most meaningful change affecting the city drug market in the last five years. Indeed, some of them go as far as to say that heroin is currently the most popular illegal drug. For example, according to Andrej, "the most commonly used drug is heroin, then marijuana" (Interview H6). Likewise, the 19-year-old Anthone maintains that "today heroin has a priority position in the Moscow drug market, as much as ten years ago, opiates and cannabis had" (Interview H7; see also Interviews H8, H11, H10). Heroin's increasing popularity was also pointed out by law enforcement officers and drug-treatment providers (Interviews A3, A4, A7, A6, B7, C1; see Bijl, 1999 and MSF, 1999).

Heroin's growing availability is also demonstrated by the rapid increase of heroin seizures in Moscow. As shown by Graph III.3, in the early 1990s heroin was hardly present in the Russian capital's drug market. In 1993, for the first time, two grams were seized, in the following year 260 grams. Starting in 1995, however, the amount of heroin seizures rapidly increased and in 1999 more than 31 kilograms were intercepted.

According to the drug users contacted, a gram of heroin now costs about 1,000 rubles (US$ 35). If the user is ready to go outside of Moscow, in the so-called Moscow region, he can get a gram of heroin for as little as US$ 30. On the street, however, the usual selling unit is the *chek*, a dose of 0.1 grams, which is enough for two users if they are still at the beginning of

their drug career, or for one experienced user. A *chek* is now sold at about 200-250 rubles (US$ 7-8.50), depending on quality, the dealer, and the place of purchase (Interviews H5, H6, H7, H8, H9, H10, and H11).

Graph III.3: Heroin seized in Moscow (grams) ~ 1990-1999



Source: RIPGO, 2000.

Heroin prices precipitously decreased throughout the second half of the 1990s: in 1997 a gram of heroin still cost US$ 100-150, almost four times the actual price, and in 1996 it usually exceeded US$ 200 (Interviews B2, A6, and D6). Moscow's heroin prices are now similar to those of major cities in Western Europe. They are, for example, only 10-15 percent higher than those recorded in Frankfurt am Main, which has one of the largest open drug scenes in Germany. There, in fact, a gram of heroin can be bought on the street today for as little as DM 50-60 (700-840 rubles; US$ 23.80-28.60),[6] though one may need to pay DM 150 (2,100 roubles; US$ 71.40) in order to get a gram of better quality. The basic street selling unit contains 0.2 grams and instead costs DM 20-25 (280-350 roubles; US$ 9.50-12) (Paoli, 2000a).

Moscow's heroin prices are already considerably lower than the US prices of non-Mexican heroin.[7] According to the last multi-city survey spon-

[6] The exchange rates of early 2000 were adopted because the data on prices in both Moscow and Frankfurt were gathered at that time.

[7] Mexican heroin, called 'black tar', is in fact low quality compared to heroin coming from South-east and South-west Asia and Colombia.

sored by the US Office for National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), in fact, in late 1998 a 'bag' of heroin (containing 0.1 grams) was sold in New York at about US$ 10, while in Chicago a gram of Chinese white heroin cost US$ 160-175 (ONDCP, 1999).

However, as Russian standards of living are much lower than those of Germany and the United States, in real terms heroin is still much more expensive in Moscow than in Western Europe or the United States. It suffices to recall that, according to the calculations of the United Development Program, the US GDP per capita is almost eight times larger than that of Russia (UNDP, 2000). Moscow drug users estimate that, depending on the quantity of the drugs, most heroin injectors spend weekly a sum ranging between 1,000 and 10,000 rubles (US$ 35-350), in order to buy the doses they need (Interviews H6; H8, H9, H10, H11, H12, and H13).[8] These variations are due to the fact that for some Russian youth injecting drug use appears to be largely a recreational activity, in which persons engage once or twice a week, in contrast to the United States and Western Europe, where most heroin users inject several times a day (Sergeyev *et al.*, 1999: 788). In any case, even 1,000 rubles a week is a huge sum: it is enough to say that the average per capita monthly income was estimated at 1,469 rubles (US$ 51.40) in July 1999 (UNDP, 1999: 44).

Since 1997, consistent price drops have also made heroin popular among injecting opiate users in St. Petersburg. In 1995 a gram of heroin cost about US$ 250-300 and was considered an elite drug that only rich people could afford. At the beginning of 1997 a gram of heroin still cost as much as gram of cocaine: US$ 150. In late 1997, however, heroin prices drastically sank and since 1998 they are around US$ 15-35 a gram (430-1,000 rubles at April 2000 exchange rates; see SCC, 2000; Interview H15). Though rapidly growing in terms of rubles after the 1998 August crisis, US$ denominated heroin prices remained stable up to early 2000. According to Gilinsky and his team, this was the result of a deliberate marketing strategy to induce injecting drug users to shift to heroin. In early 2000, when this shift had largely taken place, prices began to grow again (Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 23).

The spread of heroin in St. Petersburg is clearly demonstrated by the escalation of heroin seizures. Up to 1996 heroin was very rarely confiscated by the local police and no ad hoc statistic was kept. In 1997 281 heroin sei-

[8] An analogous estimate is also made by the experts interviewed in Nizhniy Novgorod by Obidina (2000).

zures were carried out. By 1998 their number had risen to 3,812 and in the first nine months of 1999 5,177 heroin seizures took place in St. Petersburg (UNAIDS, 2000: 10; see Table III.3).

Table III.3: Heroin seizures in St. Petersburg ~ 1997-1999

before 1997	*1997*	*1998*	*1999 (9 months)*
single cases	281	3,812	5,177

Source: UNAIDS, 2000:10.

By 1999, most injecting drug users had shifted to heroin, abandoning homemade opiates. Out of 402 respondents interviewed in 1999 by the outreach workers of Return (a St. Petersburg NGO), 76.4 percent mainly used heroin and only 19.4 percent took other opiates. In 1997, the percentages were reversed. Homemade opiates were the primary drug of choice for 63 percent of the injecting drug users contacted by Return. Only 21 percent of the respondents regularly consumed heroin in 1997 (UNAIDS, 2000: 9). Experts interviewed by Gilinsky also unanimously pointed out this substitution process (Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: *passim*; Interviews A1, A3, A4, A7, B1, B2, B3, B7, C1, C2, and C3).

Heroin is not only substituting homemade opiates, but also synthetic ones, such as methadone and codeine. Methadone use is prohibited under Russian law; nonetheless, this preparation, which is used in many Western European countries in substitution therapies for heroin addicts, is contained in several legal drugs that are on sale in Russian pharmacies. Likewise, codeine can be found in several cough syrups, which can be bought on prescription. These substances enjoyed some popularity in the 1980s, when natural opiates were hard to find. As the latter and, above all, heroin, became available, methadone and codeine were increasingly discarded by users.

From Moscow and St. Petersburg heroin has spread into other Russian cities, as the rapid multiplication of heroin seizures in different parts of the country well shows. In 1996 the MVD seized heroin in 14 Russian regions; in 1997 in 43; in 1998 in 67, and in 1999, heroin seizures were conducted in more than 70 different regions of the Russian Federation (MVD, 1999b: 16; 2000: 12).

In Vladivostok, in the Far East, heroin became available in large quantities at the beginning of 1998 and by the end of 1999 had occupied the leading place of the illegal heavy drug market (Zavadskaya, 2000). In the 'neighbouring' Khabarovsk, heroin made its appearance in late 1998. At

about the same time, it also became available in Irkutsk, a rundown river city of 650,000 in Southern Siberia just north of Mongolia, spreading rapidly among local opium addicts (Rakitsky, 2000). Since then heroin has virtually penetrated every corner of the Irkutsk region, which borders with Krasnoyarsky Kraj, surfacing even in small places in the Far North that are only reachable by plane (Wines, 2000). Likewise, at the end of the 20th century, heroin also became available in the Northern Karelia region, which stretches towards the Polar Circle along the border with Finland (FSB, 2000).

In Balakovo, a city in the Southern Volga region, the heroin boom began in 1999. In 1998 heroin was still considered a rarity in the black market and the most commonly used drug was raw opium or *hanka*, as it is called by drug users. By the end of 1999, however, only 50 percent of injecting drug users still used *hanka* and in the first half of 2000 *hanka* almost completely disappeared from the market and was substituted by heroin. The geographical position of the city, which is close to the border of Kazakhstan, favoured such a rapid shift, ensuring the supply of relatively pure and cheap heroin. In Balakovo, heroin currently costs less than in Moscow. According to Markoryan and the drug users she interviewed, the price of a gram of heroin ranges between 500 and 1,000 rubles (US$ 17.50-35). Depending on the purity, a single dose can be bought for about 50-100 rubles (US$ 1.80-3.50) (Markoryan, 2000).

In the other cities involved in the research, however, heroin spread seems to have been effectively slowed down by its high prices, which have prevented many injecting drug users from abandoning the much cheaper homemade opiates. In Rostov-on-Don, for example, *chornyi* still represents the primary drug of choice for over 70 percent of the city's injecting drug users. By early 1999 only about a third of them had shifted to heroin (Saukhat, 2000). In fact, poppy straw, out of which *chornyi* is made, is abundantly and cheaply imported from the bordering Ukraine.

In Krasnoyarsk, according to the estimates of the local police, in early 2000 there were about 7,000 injecting opiate users and 4,000 heroin users (Maiorova, 2000). In Khabarovsk, the predominance of opium is even clearer. According to Rakitsky, in fact, heroin accounts for only 5.9 percent of the local drug use and over 70 percent of the region's users smoke or inject opium and its derivatives (Rakitsky, 2000). Even in North Ossetia, opium is still the most popular drug after cannabis, though heroin has spread since 1997 in some circles of users and it is generally regarded as

fashionable (Ciklauri, 2000: 18). Likewise, according to the FSB, high prices have so far prevented heroin's large-scale spread in the Kursk, Belgorod, Bryansk, and Stavropol regions in Western and South-western Russia, that are still predominantly supplied by cheap poppy straw imported by the neighbouring Ukraine (FSB, 2000).

In smaller cities, which are far way from heroin producing countries and trading routes, heroin is much more expensive than in Moscow and St. Petersburg. In Khabarovsk in the Far East, for example, a gram of heroin still costs US$ 50-100. In Vladivostok, the furthest city from Moscow, the prices range between 2,500-3,000 rubles (US$ 87-105) (Zavadskaya, 2000). Even in Nizhniy Novgorod, in early 2000 a gram of heroin still cost as much as a gram of cocaine: 1,400-1,600 (US$ 49-56) (Obidina, 2000). Keeping the average Russian income in mind, it is no wonder that heroin is considered a drug that only children of well-off families can afford.

Ephedrine and Other Stimulants

During the 1980s a variety of liquid stimulant-type drugs became popular among Russian injecting drug users and their spread has been only partially reduced by the recent success of heroin. In Moscow, according to researchers of the Russian Narcology Institute and non-state outreach workers, about 60-70 percent of injecting drug users currently use heroin; the remaining 30 percent a methamphetamine solution, whose street name is *vint*. In the mid-1990s, however, the latter used to be much more (Interviews C1, D2, D5, and D6) and, indeed, according to drug users themselves, *vint* was at least as popular as *chornyi*, if not even more (Interviews H1, H13, H10, and H14). In some cities, such as Yaroslavl, liquid stimulant-type drugs were up to 1998 the first drug of choice for the majority of injecting drug users (Sergeyev *et al.*, 1999:787).

As much as *chornyi*, methamphetamine, known as *vint* (screw), *belyi* (white) and *pervitin*, and methcathinone, called *ephedron* or *jeff*, are usually produced domestically by the users themselves. The active precursor, ephedrine, is extracted from the ephedra shrub and is part of many over-the-counter and prescription medications. China and Romania are important legal producers of this substance, supplying legal pharmaceutical industries and illegal drug producers as well. Methamphetamine and methcathinone are produced from ephedrine found in cough syrups (such as Solutan®) and antiasthmatics or sold in the black market in its crystalline form (Dehne *et al.*, 1999: 740; Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 20-21).

For as little as 100 rubles (US$ 3.50) one can buy a cube of ephedrine on the street market and the price further decreases if large quantities are bought: according to some Moscow drug users, seven cubes can be obtained for 300 rubles (US$ 10.50) (Interviews H12, H13, and D6). Ephedrine can also be purchased as powder in plastic or paper bags of 0.5 grams (*chek*), which suffice for 2-3 injections and cost 50-60 rubles (US$ 1.80-2.10) (Saukhat, 2000). In European Russia, however, *vint* and *jeff* are most frequently produced out of Solutan®, which costs approximately US$ 10 for a 50 ml bottle. Solutan® is prescribed by physicians, but some pharmacies located away from city centres are willing to sell it under the counter. Solutan® can also be purchased on the street and is usually sold by elderly women to whom it is widely prescribed.

To users who could not prepare it themselves (as processing smells badly and requires an isolated place), *vint* and *jeff* are usually sold in ready-to-use doses, most frequently in a syringe, which usually contain one or a few milligrams (Interviews D6, H15, H12). Their high can last up to 24 hours, and prolonged use produces many of the side effects associated with amphetamines, such as delusional and paranoid thinking, malnutrition, and extreme fatigue (Sergeyev, 199: 787).

The spread of these liquid stimulant-type drugs has been eased by their low prices and now it is at its peak in the Far Eastern part of the country, whose local markets are abundantly supplied with ephedrine directly from China and, to a lesser extent, even North Korea. In Khabarovsk, for example, a tablet of ephedrine can be bought for as little as two rubles. In this region ephedrine users represent at least 40 percent of drug injectors. Even there, however, since 1998 there has been a stabilisation and then a decline of ephedrine use (Rakitsky, 2000).

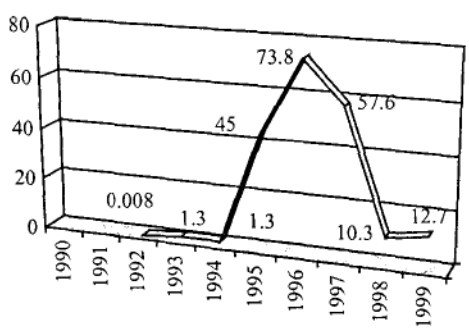
Before heroin invaded the market, another popular injectable substance was *ketamin* (or *kalipsol*), which is an anaesthetic typically stolen from veterinary clinics, hospitals and pharmacies and sold on the black market. *Ketamin* is sold in either two or ten ml vials for approximately US$ 10 and is typically injected intravenously or intramuscularly in a 1-2 ml dose. The high is described as psychedelic and lasts 30 to 50 minutes (Sergeyev, 1999: 787). *Ketamin* was the third most popular drug among the 484 injecting drug users contacted in Yaroslavl between 1996 and 1998. Though still present on the market, *ketamin*'s consumption is reported as declining by drug users interviewed in Moscow and St. Petersburg (Interviews H12, H3, D6).

Cocaine and Party Drugs

Following the loosening of border controls and the liberalisation of trade, illegal drugs, such as cocaine and ecstasy that were long popular in Western Europe, have become available in Russia as well. Due to its prohibitive prices, however, cocaine is still consumed by a tiny minority of 'new Russians', the only ones who can afford it. Emblematically, in 1998 the St. Petersburg police arrested Yelizaveta Berezovskaya, the daughter of the most powerful and best known Russian 'oligarch', for the illegal possession of cocaine (Moscow Times, May 15, 1998).

A gram of cocaine still costs around US$ 150 (4,300 rubles), almost three times the Russian average monthly income (Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 19; Saukhat, 2000; MSF, 2000). It is a price considerably higher than those commonplace in Western European countries. In Milan or in Frankfurt a gram of cocaine can be bought at the retail level for as little as DM 150 (US$ 70 at early 2000 exchange rates) (Paoli, 2000a). This gap, which is much more pronounced for cocaine than for other drugs, can probably be explained by the distance separating Russia from cocaine producing countries in Latin America and the meagreness of the Russian demand. As there are only a few customers, cocaine imports are still largely entrusted to a limited number of non-professional drug entrepreneurs, who are either not able or not interested in importing larger lots of cocaine at cheaper prices (see Chapter IV).

Graph III.4: Cocaine seized in the Russian Federation by the MVD (kilograms) ~ 1990-1999



Source: MVD, several years.

The small dimensions of the Russian cocaine market are also demonstrated by the trend of cocaine seizures. As shown by Graph III.4, these are today still rather limited. In 1999, for example, 12.7 kilograms of cocaine were seized in all of Russia in operations, which involved the Russian Ministry of the Interior. The only exception to this trend was the seizure of almost a ton of cocaine in 1993 by customs officials at Vyborg, a Russian city on the border with Finland. The lot, however, was merely transiting through Russia en route to Western Europe and was not bound for the Russian domestic market (Handelman, 1995: 195-196; DEA, 1995). Except for that episode, the record of cocaine seizures was established in 1996, when over 70 kilograms were intercepted.

Despite the regression imposed by the August 1998 financial crisis, however, cocaine use is slowly expanding out of the restricted circles of 'new Russians' at least in large cities, such as Moscow and St. Petersburg (Gilinsky et. al., 2000: 8-9). According to the FSB, furthermore, cocaine availability and use increased in early 2000 in many cities around Moscow such as Tver, which is located about 150 kilometres from Moscow en route to St. Petersburg; Vladimir, a town of 300,000 inhabitants halfway between Moscow and Nizhniy Novgorod; Vologda, about 400 kilometres north-east; and Ryazan, 200 kilometres south-east of Moscow. The same trend was also noted in Novgorod, one of Russia's oldest cities, which is 190 kilometres south-east of St. Petersburg and in the Arkhangelsk region on the Baltic Sea. Cocaine also allegedly made its appearance in Southern European parts of Russia (most notably, in Penza, Saratov, Ulyanovsk, Mary El, and the Chuvask republic), in the Urals (Sverdlovsk, Orenburg, Perm and the Republic of Bashkortostan), and in Siberia (above all, in the Altay Territory and the Krasnoyarsky Kraj), and even further east, in the Khabarovsky Kraj and in the Sakhalin peninsula on the Okhotsk Sea (FSB, 2000).

Presently in Russia cocaine is almost exclusively snorted. Cocaine prices are simply too high to make the drug attractive for drug injectors. Whereas in most Western European cities a considerable percentage of injecting drug users regularly make use of cocaine, (Blanken *et al.*, 1999; Nabben and Korf, 1999; Paoli, 2000a), so far no such case is known in Russia.

In the second half of the 1990s even ecstasy appeared on the Russian market and, according to the MPI research teams in Moscow and St. Petersburg, it can now be easily bought in bars, discos and cafés, where young people meet (Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000; Morvant, 1996). As much as in Western Europe, the spread of ecstasy and other amphetamine products

was fostered by techno- and acid house music, which was imported to Russia in the early 1990s and became very popular in second half of that same decade (Parker *et al.*, 1998; Measham *et al.*, 1998). For the fans of techno music, ecstasy pills are a necessary complement to techno parties in discos and open-air events, called raves. In Russia, however, ecstasy soon lost its close link to the techno music and rapidly also gained popularity among Russia's mainstream youth.

At least in Moscow and St. Petersburg, ecstasy prices are now similar to those common in the West, where a single ecstasy pill is usually sold to end-consumers for a price ranging between DM 25 and DM 50 (Paoli, 2000a). In Moscow, for example, according to police officers of the city drug department, an ecstasy pill is sold at US$ 15-20. As soon as several pills are purchased, however, the prices can become as low as US$ 3-12 (Interviews A1 and A6). In St. Petersburg, an ecstasy pill currently costs about US$ 10. Prices ranging between 300-400 rubles (US $10-14) were also reported in Rostov, where ecstasy users allegedly account for about 7-8 percent of the city's users of illicit drugs. In St. Petersburg regular ecstasy users are estimated at about 5,000 people (Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 15; Saukhat, 2000).

According to the FSB, ecstasy is also on sale in most cities of the European Russia, such as Smolensk, Pskov, and Novgorod, on the Northwestern side; Tula, Vladmir, and Vologda around Moscow; Kursk, Belgorod, and Oryol on the Ukrainan border; Nizhniy Novgorod; and the Southern cities of Saratov, Penza and Samara in the Low Volga region up to Rostov and Krasnodar in the Russian Caucasus.

Ecstasy has also become available in the largest cities of the Urals, such as Sverdlovsk, Perm, and Orenburg, and in Krasnoyarsk in Siberia. In several areas of European Russia, however (most notably in Bryansk and Belgorod, close to the Belarussian and Ukrainan border, respectively), synthetic drugs have not yet become widely available, due to their relatively high prices. For the same reasons, a market for ecstasy still struggles to develop in Stavropol, close to the Caucasus area (FSB, 2000).

LSD (lysergic acid diethylamide) stamps[9] were used since the late 1980s by a tiny group of (25-30) people in St. Petersburg who wanted to have mind-expanding experiences, following the LSD-therapy of Stanislav

[9] LSD is usually sold as blotter paper, which is sheets of paper soaked in or impregnated with LSD, covered with colourful designs or artwork and perforated into one-quarter inch squares, which are individual dosage units.

Groff. Since the fall of the Soviet Union, however, the use of LSD has expanded out of these 'alternative' circles and found followers among artists and trendy businessmen and, more generally, among students. According to Vishinsky's survey, about four percent of Moscow senior high-school students reported experience with LSD (1999). Despite the survey results and interviews confirming availability (Interviews H1, H6, and H11), only small quantities of LSD were seized in Moscow during the 1990s. As shown by Table III.4, for several years no LSD was seized and only in 1996 137 stamps were intercepted. In the following years, however, the quantities rapidly decreased again and in 1999 only four stamps were intercepted.

Table III.4: LSD stamps seized in Moscow – 1990-1999

1990	*1991*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*
-	-	0	0	0	24	137	1	0	4

Source, RIPGO, 2000: 78-81.

An LSD 'stamp' currently costs about US$ 10-20 (280-560 rubles) (Interviews D6, A1). Except for in Moscow and St. Petersburg, LSD does not yet seem to be easily available in the country. LSD's presence was however, reported by the FSB in several European cities, such as Vologda, Arkhangelsk and Nizhniy Novgorod, the Altay territory in Siberia and as far away as the Yakutia Republic in the Far East. In Vladivostok, however, according to Yelena Zavadskaya, a local outreach worker, LSD is still hard to find and its use is very rare (2000).

In addition to LSD, other, both synthetic and natural hallucinogens, are popular in the most westernised Russian cities. Among the synthetic drugs, in addition to LSD, PCP (phencyclidine), a veterinary anaesthetic that has strong hallucinogenic effects, is also available. Among the natural ones, there are several mushrooms belonging to the family of Psilotsibum (*Mycena pelianthina* or *Marasmius oreades*, that are called 'Liberty Cap'). The latter are widely consumed in St. Petersburg because they can be picked in its surroundings in late summer. The most powerful effects are obtained if the mushroom is eaten raw. However, they can also be fried, boiled or dried. During the mushroom season, 100 grams of mushrooms cost about US$ 3-5. In the following months the price rises. Cases of poisoning among users are very frequent because poisonous mushrooms are sometimes falsely thought to be hallucinogenic mushrooms (Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 19-20).

3. Open and Closed Marketplaces

Following the growth and geographic expansion of the Russian drug market and the increasing diversification of its supply, it has become easier to supply oneself with different kinds of illicit drugs in all Russian cities. In St. Petersburg, according a young consumer, "you have the impression that you can buy drugs everywhere" (Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 21). The growing drug availability involves not only the metropolis, but also the middle and smaller centres, where the changes have probably been even more spectacular. In the mid-1980s, for example, in Balakovo there were still only two or three places to buy drugs, according to local, experienced drug users. In this city of 207,000 inhabitants close to the border of Kazakhstan, 176 dealing places were known to the police in early 2000 and their real number was probably much higher (Markoryan, 2000).

In most cities there are open places where drugs are on sale. In Moscow, for example, since the mid-1980s the Lubjanka Square and the underground metro station are the best-known meeting place for drug users, especially the injectors. Even in Soviet times the square was a magnet because the Apteka Nr. 1, the first state pharmacy, was located on it. Today, however, drugs are less and less frequently bought on the Lubjanka because there is too much police control and the drug quality is very low. Only inexperienced users or those coming from outside of Moscow go there to buy drugs. A few of Moscow's injecting users simply meet there to eventually make contacts with a dealer or to pool the money together to buy drugs cheaper somewhere else. Along the Tverskaja Avenue, *vint* can be bought especially in the evening, though the market has sharply reduced since the mid-1990s. The largest marketplace for *vint*, however, used to be the bird market on the Taganskaya square before all the dealers were arrested (Interviews D6, H14, and H15).

More generally not only in Moscow, but in most Russian cities, illegal drugs can be bought in the open-air markets for food and clothing. According to local police officers, in virtually all of Moscow's 26 food markets illegal drugs are on sale (Interviews A1 and A6). Likewise, in St. Petersburg illicit drugs can (or at least could up to late 1999) be purchased in the Pravoberezny Market on Debunk Street, the Nekrasovsky market, the market near the metro Prospect of Prosveshenia, and the metro station Vosstania Square in the middle of the Nevsky Prospekt (Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 28). In Vladikavkaz, the capital of North Ossetia, even common people are

well aware that the central market Alan is good place to supply oneself with illicit drugs (Ciklauri, 2000: 21; see also Rakitsky, 2000; Maiorova, 2000).

In most cities, there are a few well-known meeting places for drug users, such as Lubjanka Square in Moscow (Interviews D6 and H7). Especially *vint* users often gather in small groups of 10-15 people to hang out and get high together (Saukhat, 2000). Nonetheless, in hardly any Russian urban centre is there a veritable open drug scene, where drug users and dealers meet and spend most of their day, as is the case in many Western European cities (Paoli, 2000a; Ruggiero, 1992). Though more and more retail drug exchanges are carried out in open air food markets, most drug dealing still takes place indoors. This is partially due to the weather, which can be very cold in winter, and to the extremely low social legitimacy enjoyed by drug use, a practice unknown to most Russians up until a few years ago.

The high penalties foreseen even for the possession of very small quantities of illegal drugs also constitute another major hindrance to development of veritable open drug scenes in Russian cities. It is, however, not only the police repression that causes a submersion of the local drug markets. According to all users interviewed in Moscow and St. Petersburg and to some Russian and foreign experts as well, the major constraint of open-air drug exchanges is represented by police corruption. In some areas, apparently, patrol officers have gone as far as to establish a veritable extortion regime, collecting a 'protection tax' from local dealers and some users, who have to pay in order to be able to supply themselves without being arrested. In the Lubjanka metro station, for example, drug users sometimes have to pay 100 rubles a day, just to be allowed to be there. It is hence no wonder that no more than 50 drug users ever meet there (Interviews D6, H9, H11, and H14). Even in Rostov, according to interviews with local drug users, some police officers systematically extort drug dealers, who are obliged to pay them bribes in order to work undisturbed (Saukhat, 2000).

Such institutionalised extortion regimes are probably the exception rather than the rule. In Moscow, St. Petersburg and Rostov, however, most of the users interviewed by the MPI research teams recall paying bribes to police officers in order to avoid being arrested or to be released. As an interviewee in St. Petersburg put it,

> "if I have to describe all the occasions I gave money to the police, it is going to become a lengthy volume. If I am arrested when I have money or drugs, I always pay. If I have no money, I call my girlfriend or some other friend by mobile phone to come and help me" (Interview H18; Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 31-32).

200-300 rubles (US$ 7-10.40) seem to be the minimal amount drug users have to pay, when they are caught with drugs. Depending on the amount of the drugs seized and the economic means of the user, however, the amount of the requested bribe can rapidly escalate. If the negotiation takes place on the street, the user is likely to get away with a small 'fee'; if it takes place in the police car, the price is higher; even larger sums need to be paid, if the arrestee has already been brought to the police station. The 32-year-old Anthone, for example, who has smoked cannabis since the late 1980s, refers that he was once arrested for illegal possession of hashish by the militia after being 'framed' by his own supplier. In the car on the way to the police station, he was offered a chance to buy his freedom by the officers, but the US$ 50 he had in his pocket at the moment were not deemed sufficient (Interview H5; see also Interviews H2, H4, H6, H7, and H15). In Rostov and in St. Petersburg, several interviewees recall having to pay up to US$ 300. According to users, between 30 and 90 percent of patrolling police officers collect money from drug sellers and users. Some of the higher-ranking police officers interviewed in Moscow and St. Petersburg also admitted corruption in lower ranks, but tended to play down its extent (Interviews A1, A6, A3, and A7; see also Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 19; Saukhat, 2000; Ciklauri, 2000).

To avoid both police repression and extortion, drug exchanges tend to take place in close settings, above all private flats, but also schools, bars and discos, where the chances of being bothered by the police are the lowest (Maiorova, 2000; Saukhat, 2000; Markoryan, 2000; Ciklauri, 2000). The common practice of selling drugs in private flats is also connected with the spread of *chornyi* and *vint*, which were up to few years ago the most frequently used illegal drugs in the country after cannabis and still maintain their pre-eminence in some contexts (Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000). As we have seen above, both *chornyi* and *vint* are extracted, respectively, from poppy straw or raw opium and from cough syrups or ephedrine, through simple "kitchen chemistry" (Dehne *et al.*, 2000: 739). The final customers either assist in the production of the *chornyi* and *vint* in the improvised lab, to get high together in a group of friends, or wait for the drug solutions in the surroundings of the flat itself. Even if there is no friendship relationship between the cook and the customers, the latter usually are allowed to inject the drugs in the former's flat to avoid being caught by the police. In fact, though consumption as such is prohibited but is not a criminal offence, minimal doses of *chornyi*, *vint* or, even worse, heroin are sufficient reason

to be arrested by the police for illegal possession of narcotics on a large scale (see Chapter VI). Even carrying a syringe is already a big risk because drug users can easily be extorted by the police if they are found with it (Interviews D1, D5, and D6; Saukhat, 2000).

Even dealers who do not cook *chornyi*, however, often let their customers come to their place because they believe that, in so doing, they minimise their interception risks (Rakitsky, 2000). Absolute strangers are not admitted. New customers have to be introduced by already acquainted ones. The latter are able to enter the flat by making themselves recognised with a conventional sign (a particular ring or knock on the door). Additionally, according to Markoryan, the entrances to the dealers' flats are usually reinforced so that, in case of a police raid, the dealer has enough time to destroy the incriminating evidence (2000).

Especially in larger cities, virtually all the peripheral quarters host at least a few flats where illicit drugs can be bought without going to the centre (Interviews H4, H5, H10, H11, H13, and D5). These are also frequently sold in high schools, university campuses and dorms. In Moscow, according to several users, drugs can be easily found on the campuses of the University Patrick Lumumba, where many students still come from Third World countries, and the Russian State Humanitarian University (Interviews H11, H14, and H15).

In a survey among high-school and university students of Vladikavkaz (the capital of North Ossetia), 64 percent of the respondents reported that illicit drugs are routinely on offer in the school buildings, adding that the dealers are perfectly known to the police, who have close connections with them. As a student put it, "whoever reports these facts to the police is thus in a serious danger of his own physical safety" (MVD-North Ossetia, 2000; Ciklauri, 2000: 22).

As much as in Western Europe, ecstasy and synthetic drugs are usually purchased by final consumers in discos and night cafés. In order to avoid police interference, however, even hashish and marijuana are, much more often than in any Western European city, sold in indoor meeting places for youth (Saukhat, 2000). In St. Petersburg, according to Gilinsky, Rusakova and Kostukovsky, many disco or café owners are often either directly involved in the distribution of illicit drugs in their clubs or they at least tolerate it (Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 23; see also Interviews H1, H2, H11, and H13).

Depending on the substance, contacts between the final users and the dealer are increasingly made with mobile telephones or pagers. After making an appointment, the drug exchange usually takes place at the agreed time and place in the street or in a café. This practice, which is widespread in Western Europe (Paoli, 2000a), is so far limited to the most expensive drugs in Russia, above all cocaine, but, according to several drug users, it is also becoming popular for other drugs, such as heroin, cannabis, and ecstasy (Interviews H5, H11, H12, and H13; Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 21; Saukhat, 2000).

IV. Drug Production and Trafficking After 1991

Since the fall of the Soviet Union drug production and trafficking have grown substantially in Russia. As we have seen in the previous chapters, the expansion of the domestic demand was the most powerful factor that fostered their growth. Following the opening of borders and the liberalisation of trade, however, a variety of illegal drugs also transit through the country to reach final users in Western Europe, Japan, and the United States.

Despite the recent expansion and the increasing sophistication and professionalisation of drug suppliers, the threat of the illegal drug trade should not be overemphasised, as is routinely done by a large part of the Russian media, which present drug traffickers as the prototypical 'internal enemy'. Rather, this *contra legem* activity should be matter-of-factly assessed within the larger context of Russia's economic and organised crime. Illegal drug trade, in fact, still represents a relatively small part of the booming Russian illegal and semi-legal economy and it has not (yet?) become the primary source of revenue for the galaxy of Russian organised crime. Though drug trafficking certainly has huge potential for growth, the largest fortunes in Russia are still collected in the wide 'grey area', where the distinctions between the legal and illegal economy are blurred (see Ledeneva and Kurkchiyan, 2000).

1. Domestic Cultivation and Production of Illegal Drugs

Notwithstanding Russia's integration into the international drug trade, a considerable portion of the growing internal demand for illegal drugs is still satisfied with substances produced inside the country. According to the Ministry of the Interior, still today about 50 percent of all seized drugs are of domestic origin (MVD, 1999: 10).[10]

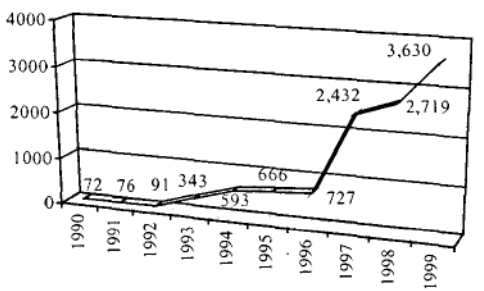
The penal proceedings initiated by the MVD for the crime of illegal cultivation of narcotic substances (Article 231 of the Russian Criminal Code) increased dramatically during the 1990s. At the beginning of that decade, in

[10] This rate would certainly be higher, if the substances produced in the Central Asian republics and Ukraine were considered of domestic origin, as it was in the Soviet times.

fact, only 72 penal proceedings for this offence were started (see Graph IV.1). By 1999, they had escalated to 3,630, with an overall increase of almost 5,000 percent. The above data, however, have to be considered with prudence, as they also reflect, to an unknown extent, the intensification of law enforcement repression.

All in all, there is a clear national trend favouring imported drugs *vis-à-vis* domestically produced ones. Nonetheless, other sources confirm that in several parts of the country the cultivation of plants containing psychoactive substances is still extensive and, indeed, may have grown since 1991.

Graph IV.1: Illegal cultivation of narcotic substances (Art. 231 of the Russian criminal code) – Reported offences ~ 1990-1999



Source: MVD, 2000.

In the Khabarovsky Kraj, for example, impoverished peasants are increasingly involved in the cultivation and gathering of cannabis and, according to Rakitsky, "for many of them this activity has become the main source of income in an epoch characterised by economic instability and production decay" (2000). Cannabis grows wild and is extensively cultivated even in the neighbouring Jewish Autonomous Republic. There, as even the Federal Security Service admits, "the decline of agriculture production has obliged a significant part of the rural population to gather cannabis in order to survive" (FSB, 2000).

In some areas of Southern Russia, furthermore, unlawful poppy crops are traditional: people cultivate poppies on their own small plots of land to get the seeds for their own bakery products. According to the MVD, the total area of such small crops does not exceed 100 hectares in all of Russia (MVD, 2000: 15). An unknown percent of this domestic production ends

up supplying the illegal market. Most opium and poppy straw that are currently consumed in Russia, however, are imported, since the opium poppies and the oil-bearing poppies, out of which poppy straw is made, grow prevalently in the Central Asian republics and the Ukraine.

Though some Russian farmers have become increasingly dependent on it, even cannabis is increasingly imported. Except for some areas where the cannabis plant has a high tetra-hydro-cannabinol (THC) content, cannabis is gathered less and less by users, though it grows wild over an estimated one million hectares of the Russian territory. In its 1999 report, the Bureau of International Narcotics Matters of the US Department of State points out that "despite the 1.5 million hectares of wild cannabis, we have no evidence that 5,000 or more hectares are being harvested" (BINMLE, 1999, pt. 5: 18).

As a result, locally cultivated plants on the average account for a decreasing portion of the illegal drugs that are consumed daily in the country. There are, of course, variations depending on the zone. In some areas of Northern Russia, due to the harsh weather conditions, hardly any illegal as well as legal crop grows or can be cultivated (FSB, 2000). In other areas, instead, the demand for cannabis products is still satisfied by local production, which is sometimes large enough to supply neighbouring areas. According to Zavadskaya, for example, the cannabis growing wild in the Primorye region is sold throughout the Far East. Drug users still mainly go themselves to gather cannabis in the less populated areas of the region and then bring it to urban centres for their own personal consumption and sale (2000). In North Ossetia, too, cannabis gathering is practised by local users (Ciklauri, 2000: 19-20).

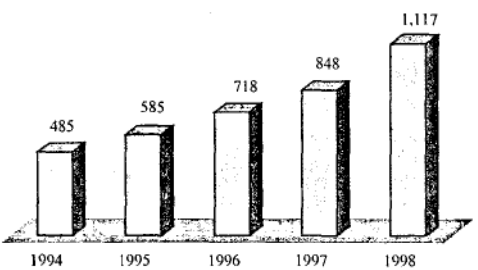
In other areas, however, where local cannabis has only a low THC content, the gathering practice has largely come to an end. In the Saratov region, for example, local cannabis is gathered only during the blooming period. Above all, teenagers of Saratov, Engels, Balakovo and the other cities of this Low Volga region use it to make *kasha* (a kind of porridge) or 'milk', which they then ingest. Although gathering wild cannabis was a widespread habit in the past, most local users now prefer marijuana or hashish from the neighbouring Kazakhstan, because the latter are much better and anyhow not particularly expensive. A 'glass' of marijuana costs about 400-600 rubles (US$ 14-21); hashish is sold at 50-100 rubles (US$ 1.70-3.50) a gram (Markoryan, 2000). Even in Rostov, users no longer go gathering cannabis or poppy straw in the city surroundings, though this ac-

tivity represented the main source of drugs ten years ago (Saukhat, 2000). Likewise, in the Yakutia Republic, in North-eastern Siberia, most psychoactive drugs are currently imported from the Primorye region, the Central Asian republics, the Ukraine, Buryatiya, and Moscow, although cannabis grows wild on at least 800 hectares of the republic's territory (FSB, 2000).

More generally, even in regions such as Primorye and Khabarovsky Kraj, where local cannabis is still used, there has been a diversification of the drug supply: next to local products, a variety of psychoactive drugs are now available to whomever has interest and enough money to pay for them (Zavadskaya, 2000; FSB, 2000).

Though still significant, even the domestic production of illegal drugs is declining. Although the number of clandestine laboratories discovered by the Ministry of the Interior steadily increased between 1994 and 1998, rising from 483 to 1,117, this growth seem to be largely attributable to an intensification of law enforcement activity (see Graph IV.2). All other sources unanimously point to the declining availability and consumption of home-produced drugs (see Chapter III). *Chornyi,* but to a lesser extent also *vint* and *jeff,* are reported as decreasing in most parts of the country. It is not by chance that the number of clandestine laboratories discovered by the police sharply decreased in 1999 (MVD, 1999b: 39).[11]

Graph IV.2: Clandestine laboratories discovered by the Ministry of the Interior ~ 1994-1998



Source: MVD, 1999.

[11] No figures were however provided by the MVD for 1999.

Furthermore, most of the laboratories discovered by law enforcement officials are rather primitive; most of them are run by the users themselves. On the point the MVD notes:

> "In most of revealed laboratories, drugs were produced primitively, the laboratories were located in flats, private houses, garages, sheds, summer kitchens etc. 700 of the dismantled clandestine laboratories produced various opium solutions; over 200 of them produced such drugs as hashish or hashish oil from cannabis" (MVD, 199b: 39).

After the fall of the Soviet Union, many Western law enforcement officers feared that Russia's thousands of experienced chemists would start mass producing synthetic drugs and, above all ecstasy, for the local and European markets. This hypothesis seems to have come true only to a minimal extent. As we will see in the following pages, even ecstasy is largely imported from Western European countries, most notably the Netherlands, and to a lesser extent from Poland. As a high MVD officer put it, "there is no need to produce drugs that can be easily and cheaply imported". In its latest drug report on the international narcotic control strategy, even the US Department of State pointed out that "Russia is a minor producer of illicit amphetamines, cannabis and opium poppy, mostly supplying domestic consumption" (BINMLE, 2000, pt. 5: 18-19).

As a matter of fact, the involvement of professional chemists could be proved in only few of the clandestine laboratories discovered by police forces. In the late 1980s and early 1990s several students of the Moscow and St. Petersburg Universities were involved in the production of synthetic drugs in the university labs (Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 26). Ephedrine and other illegal drugs were also manufactured in laboratories of educational institutions in Kirov, in the Middle Volga region, and Kurgan in the Urals (MVD, 2000). In April 1998 two persons were convicted for producing illicit drugs two years earlier in a laboratory rented from the Russian Chemical Technical University (BINMLE, 1999, pt. 5: 16). In December 1999, MVD officials in St. Petersburg dismantled a laboratory where methyl-fentanyl (a synthetic, more powerful form of heroin) was produced. They seized the precursor chemicals, lab equipment, 1.2 kilograms of the substance and arrested five persons (BINMLE, 2000, pt. 5: 20; Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 26). Ethonitazen, a synthetic opiate much more powerful than heroin, was also manufactured in a lab dismantled in February 1999 (MVD, 1999b: 39). In both cases, however, the chemists were still in the experimenting phase and the dangerous substances had not yet been marketed.

The primitive stadium of illegal drug manufacturing was even recognised by the Federal Security Service in a 2000 intelligence report. With reference to the European Russia, the report states:

> "Illegal manufacturing of drugs in industrial scale in this region (as in the rest of the country) is not yet developed and it has only breeding grounds and an amateurish character. Most narcotics come from abroad. It is, in fact, much more profitable for dealers to import and sell foreign drugs, despite the smuggling and transportation risks. As a matter of fact, these risks have largely decreased in recent years, due the weakness of the customs and border control at some parts of the Russian borders, the scarce financial means and the scant staff of law enforcement institutions in charge of counteracting the drug trade and the impossibility to block all drug smuggling channels " (FSB, 2000).

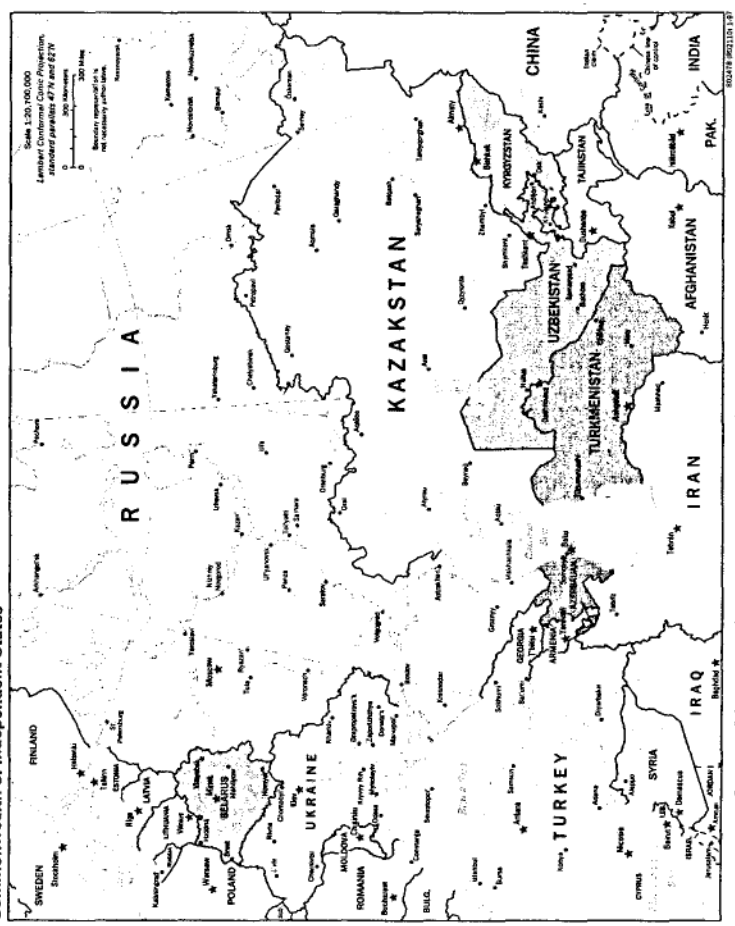
2. Source Countries and Drug Smuggling

The Russian drug market is increasingly supplied with substances of foreign origin. Whereas drugs of foreign origin account for about 50 percent of the Russian market, in Moscow, St. Petersburg and other major cities their proportion is about 80-90 percent (MVD, 1999b: 15-16). Globalisation, in fact, affects not only legal markets, but also the illegal ones and, indeed, due to the illegal status of their commodities, the latter can be even less protected by state authorities than their legal counterparts. Even more than in the Russian legal economy, in its large clandestine appendix market forces have been free to play at will following the liberalisation of trade and the opening of borders. As a result, illegal, in addition to legal commodities, tend to be imported from the countries that are able to offer them at the best price-quality rate. This is true for illegal psychoactive substances, as well as for hamburgers, refrigerators, or cars.

In the illegal drug markets of all Russian cities, domestically-produced psychoactive substances tend to be increasingly substituted by more powerful and easier-to-use drugs from abroad. A considerable and probably preponderant part of the latter are imported from countries belonging to the Commonwealth of Independent States (see Figure IV.1). Poppy straw predominantly comes from the Ukraine, which used to be the major producer of this substance even in Soviet times. As we noted in the previous chapter, however, poppy straw's popularity rapidly declined in the late 1990s and the State Customs Committee reports that in 1999 the poppy straw flow from the Ukraine "decreased dramatically" (SCC, 2000: 7).

Kazakhstan is currently the major supplier of raw opium and cannabis products, though these substances are also imported from other former So-

Figure IV.1: The Commonwealth of Independent States



Source: The General Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin.

viet republics. Proof of that is given by the large seizures carried out by Russian customs along the Kazakh border. On April 13, 1999 Magnitogorsk customs officials detained a vehicle coming from Kyrgyzstan that concealed 1,480 kilograms of marijuana among 11 tonnes of onions. The latter were also used to hide 118 kilograms of hashish that were recovered ten days later by Kourgansk customs officials from two trucks trying to enter Russia from Kazakhstan. Four days later, again at the Kazakh border, 1,498 kilos of marijuana were retrieved in Orsk from a truck coming from Kyrgyzstan. Finally, 506 kilos of marijuana were seized by Novosibirsk customs officers in a Kazakh truck also transporting onions in order to disguise the drug's smell (SCC, 2000: 15).

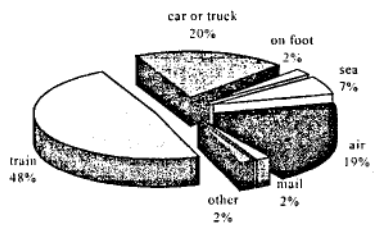
Significant seizures of cannabis and opium coming from Central Asian republics were also carried out in the late 1990s in several Russian cities. In 1999, for example, 76 kilograms of raw opium coming from Osh in Kyrgyzstan were seized in Krasnoyarsk: the seizure was the largest carried out in the region (Maiorova, 2000). In that year, the local law enforcement agencies also intercepted a 32-kilogram lot of raw opium, which was imported from Kyrgyzstan and was bound for Khabarovsk. Likewise, in 1997 the Nizhniy Novgorod branch of the MVD seized 37 kilograms of marijuana, which was part of a larger lot coming from Kazakhstan (Obidina, 2000). In September 2000 three men were sentenced by the Surkhandarya Regional court, in the Uzbek South, for an attempt to smuggle 700 kilograms of drugs. A man offered two drivers US$ 3,000 for delivering eight tons of lemons, with 700 kg of drugs hidden inside boxes with the lemons, from the Tajik capital, Dushanbe, to the Russian town of Krasnoyarsk. It is not known what kind of drugs the three were attempting to smuggle (Uzland.uz, 2000).

All in all, according to the MVD, 84 percent of the hashish, 60 percent of the opium, and 53 percent of the marijuana seized by the Russian law enforcement authorities in 1998-99 came from former Soviet Central Asian republics (MVD, 2000: 13; see also Houben 1999b: 9-12). As a matter of fact, smuggling illegal drugs into Russia from other CIS states is particularly easy and riskless because most of the newly established borders are not effectively patrolled. Especially along the 6,500-km long border between Russia and Kazakhstan, drug smugglers can easily bypass official checkpoints and cross the border in the steppe.

Most drugs are transported by motor vehicles or, even more frequently, by rail (see Graph IV.3). In 1999, almost half of the seizures carried out by

Russian customs officers involved rail transportation. In 20 percent of the cases, drugs were smuggled by car or truck. Planes were used in a slightly lower number of cases (19 percent). The data of the State Customs Committee are consistent with the information collected locally by the MPI research teams in St. Petersburg, Rostov, Balakovo, Krasnoyarsk, Khabarovsk, and Vladivostok (Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000; Saukhat, 2000; Markoryan, 2000; Maiorova, 2000; Rakitsky, 2000; Zavadskaya, 2000).

Graph IV.3: Drug seizures carried out by Russian customs, shown by the drug's means of transportation ~ 1999



Source; SCC, 2000: 14.

Tajikistan, but to a lesser extent also the other Central Asian republics, are increasingly transited to smuggle heroin into Russia from Afghanistan. According to the estimates of the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (UNODCCP), in 1999 the latter country accounted for 75 percent of the global opium production. In that year, over 4,500 tons of raw opium were produced, a 115 percent increase over the 1998 total of 2,100 metric tons. In 2000, however, Afghanistan's production of raw opium has sharply decreased due to a drought in the Southern part of the country and is currently estimated at 3,600 tons (UNODCCP, 2000b: 34 and 1999b; Wren, 2000; Pannier, 1996).

Since 1993 the 1,200-km long mountainous border between Afghanistan and Tajikistan is patrolled by the Russian Federal Border Guards. Despite that, drug trafficking thrives as both Afghanistan and Tajikistan are torn by civil war and are extremely poor. Afghanistan has known no peace since 1979 when the USSR invaded the country. Though the fundamentalist Is-

lamic Taleban movement was able to seize most of the country in the mid-1990s, warfare goes on in Northern Afghanistan, from which the Taleban try to chase their opponents, most notably the army led by Ahmad Shah Masud. Both factions rely on opium cultivation and heroin trade to finance the ongoing war. Afghan gross domestic product has fallen substantially over the past 20 years because of the loss of labour and capital and the disruption of trade and transport caused by the civil war. Narcotic trafficking is a major, if not the largest, source of revenue (CIA, 2000; Interfax, 2000, Izvestia, 2000; Interview A7; OGD, 2000: 44-47).

In Tajikistan civil war broke out in the early 1990s, when the country gained independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union. A peace agreement among rival factions was signed in 1997, but implementation has progressed slowly (see Atkin, 1997). Furthermore, Tajikistan is suspected to have become a hotbed for Islamic extremists, who have been active since the late 1990s in other CIS countries, particularly Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan (Izvestia, 2000; Thumann, 2000; see also Lange, 1996).

Tajikistan has the lowest GDP per capita among the 15 former Soviet republics and its economy has been gravely weakened by six years of civil conflict and by the loss of subsidies from Moscow and of markets for its products (CIA, 2000). 65 percent of the population of six million live below the poverty line and at least half currently face acute undernourishment. According to high-ranking officials of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), 35 percent of Tajikistan's gross domestic product comes from drug trafficking (Fitchett, 2000; see also OGD, 2000: 40-41; Interview A7; Birkenes, 1997; Reuters, 2000d).

The escalation of drug smuggling along the Tajik-Afghan border can be deduced from the rapid growth of the seizures carried out by the Russian Federal Border Guards. In 1994, they seized 260 kilograms of raw opium and heroin; in 1995 1,700 kilograms, in 1996 and in 1997, about two tons respectively, in 1998 one ton and in 1999 600 kilograms. Whereas the late 1990s registered a considerable decrease in total weight of seized drugs, heroin's percentage rapidly increased and accounted for over half of the drugs seized in 1999 (MVD, 1999b: 22).

In 1999 and 2000 the Russian Border Guards time and again reported clashes with Afghan and Tajik smugglers and multi-kilogram seizures of drugs (Itar-Tass, 1999a, 1999b, and 1999d; Izvestia, 1999; AFP, 2000e and 2000f; Reuters, 2000a, 2000e and 2000f). In the first eight months of 2000, more than 60 Afghan smugglers were killed along the frontier in over 30

clashes (AFP, 2000f). Furthermore, having reorganised with the help of the UNODCCP, even the Tajik police have begun to seize considerable quantities of drugs. In 1999, in fact, they intercepted 700 kilograms up from 71 kilos in 1998 (AFP, 2000c and 2000e).

According to intelligence information, many clandestine laboratories in Pakistan and Afghanistan were moved to the Afghan provinces bordering with Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. Transhipment bases were installed in practically all the main cities and villages close to the border and, in particular, in the cities of Kunduz, Imamsahib, Taklukan, Faizabad. To transfer heroin and opium into Tajikistan, smugglers use the Pamir's road (Khorog – Osh) and motor roads such as the Khorog – Kalaii Humb – Dushambe and Moskovsky – Dushambe. From the capital of Tajikistan drugs are then shipped to Russia and Western Europe through Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan. According to estimates quoted by the MVD, up to 1,500 tons of drugs are transported annually through Tajikistan (MVD, 2000: 22).

Even the neighbouring and equally impoverished Kyrgyzstan is becoming a major transit and consumer country of heroin and opium from Afghanistan. According to some estimates, 100 kilograms of processed opium originating in Afghanistan flows north every week across Tajikistan to Osh in Kyrgyzstan. Most people living in this Southern Kyrgyz city and its surrounding region are involved in the import, processing and dealing of raw opium, as there is hardly alternative means of sustenance (Russia Today, 1998; UNODCCP, 2000).

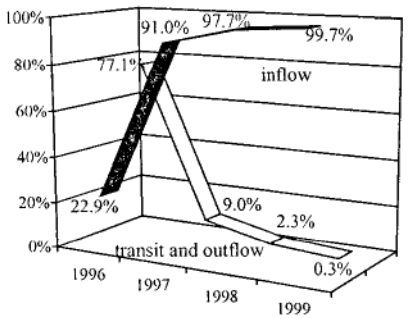
The growth of heroin trafficking into Russia and the increasing involvement of the former Soviet Central Asian republics were noted by the Russian State Customs Committee in its latest drug report:

> "Before 1995 heroin smuggling had a traditional transit nature: heroin was discovered and seized by the Russian Customs mainly from foreign nationals travelling through Sherementyevo airport, in transit from South-east Asia and the Middle East (Golden Triangle and Golden Crescent) to Western Europe and the USA.
>
> In 1996 some cases of heroin smuggling to the Russian Federation were noted. The attempts were made by Russian and foreign nationals: mainly Nigerians travelling from South-east Asia and the Middle East (India, Pakistan, Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand, and Singapore). The first single seizures of heroin from Central Asia were made.
>
> 1997 became the turning point: the expansion of heroin from Central Asia began, mainly from Tajikistan. Heroin began to supplement other drugs on the market. Russia became a consumer of heroin" (SCC, 2000: 20-21).

As shown by Graph IV.4, still in 1996 only 23 percent of the heroin seized by Russian customs was bound for Russia's domestic market, whereas the

rest of the intercepted lots were supposed to reach foreign countries. By 1998 the percentages had drastically changed: virtually all the heroin seized was supposed to supply the expanding internal market (SCC, 2000: 21).

Graph IV.4: Heroin seized by Russian customs by drug's intended destination ~ 1996-1999



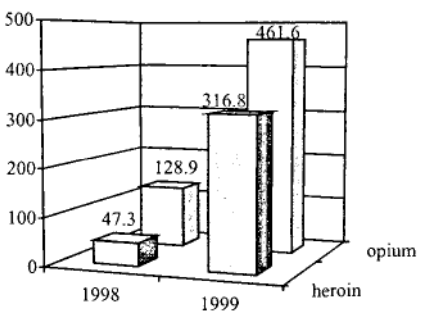
Source: SCC, 2000: 14.

Even larger quantities of heroin and opium are trafficked into Russia from the Central Asian republics, as the escalation of the seizures carried out by Russian customs proves. Heroin seizures grew almost seven times and opium seizures more than 3.5 times between 1998 and 1999 (see Graph IV.5).[12] In January 1999, a very large lot of heroin was seized for the first time. 220 kilograms of heroin were intercepted at the seaport of Astrakhan on the Caspian Sea. The heroin was concealed in an additional fuel tank of a truck, which was transported by ferry from Turkmenistan (SCC, 2000: 24; Alexandrov, 1999, July 5; BINMLE, 2000, pt. 5: 20). It is not clear whether the lot was supposed to supply the Russian domestic market or to head for Western Europe, as two Turkish nationals drove the truck. As a matter of fact, according to Western law enforcement *liaison* officers, the 220 kilograms were certainly bound for Western Europe, though neither the sender nor the final recipient of the load has been identified so far (Interviews B1, B4, B5, and B7).

[12] Unfortunately no absolute values for heroin seizures before 1998 were published by the Russian Customs in their 1999 drug report.

Another relatively large seizure was conducted in December at Moscow's second international airport, Domodedovo. More than ten kilos of heroin were found in two water melons carried by a passenger flying from the capital of Tajikistan, Dushambe. A few days earlier six kilos of heroin had been retrieved at the same airport from a sealed sack containing official correspondence of the Tajik State Courier Service, which had just landed from Dushambe (SSC, 2000: 18; see also Saukhat, 2000). Thirty-five kilograms of heroin were seized in February 2000 on the Kazakh border (Interview A7).

Graph IV.5: Heroin and opium seized by Russian customs (kilograms) ~ 1998-1999



Source: SCC, 2000: 10.

Despite occasional large seizures, most of the heroin seems to be smuggled into Russia in small lots. Especially when the final destination is Moscow or some other city of European Russia, heroin is more and more frequently carried by couriers who conceal the substance in their body or, less frequently, in their luggage. This method was first resorted to by the Nigerians who imported the first lots of heroin in the mid-1990s. Since then, it has been adopted by Tajiks, who use it to smuggle heroin into Russia from their home country (MVD, 2000: 12; see also Interviews A7 and D6). In 1998 13 so-called 'swallowers' were detained by Russian customs; by 1999 their number had grown more than twelvefold to 165. In July 1999, for example, Kourgan customs officers on the Kazakh border detained five Tajik nationals who had all together ingested a little more than a kilo of heroin in 420 latex-wrapped pellets. Travelling on the Leninabad-Moscow intercity

bus, the group was on its way to the Russian capital, where the Tajiks intended to sell the drugs (SCC, 200: 16-17).

None of the former Soviet Caucasus countries seem to represent a major supplier of illicit drugs to Russia. Despite the involvement of local ethnic groups in the drug distribution system of several Russian cities, only small quantities of illegal drugs were seized at the border to Northern Caucasus countries, such as Azerbaijan, Georgia, and (indirectly) Armenia. As even the Russian State Customs Committee admitted, "the small volume of drugs and psychotropic substances seized on the border in our opinion does not reflect the fact that in the major parts of Russian regions drug markets are controlled by organized ethnic groups of Caucasian nationals" (sic!) (SCC, 2000: 6).

Chechens' involvement in drug trade has been denounced since the early 1990s repeatedly by the Russian press and the Russian government has time and again hypothesised that the maverick republic financed itself with drug production and smuggling. Especially in nearby Orthodox North Ossetia, local government authorities and the local press claim that most drugs come from the Muslim republics of Ingushetia and Chechnya (Ciklauri, 2000). In its 2000 drug report, the North Ossetian Ministry of the Interior maintained:

> "most illegal drugs come to us from Central Asia and the neighbouring republics. It is no secret to anybody that in Chechnya heroin is produced in underground laboratories and the drugs are then trafficked through Ingushetia to reach the border regions of the North Ossetia-Alanja Republic and, specifically the village Cermen. Law enforcement investigation showed that practically every other family of the village is involved in drug trafficking" (MVD-North Ossetia, 2000; Ciklauri, 2000: 18-19).

Ciklauri's fieldwork, however, proved that North Ossetians' role in drug trafficking is much more relevant than the local Ministry of the Interior would like to admit and that most opiates come from Central Asia, whereas Chechnya plays a much more marginal role (Ciklauri, 2000: 19-20). Even in Rostov and Balakovo, the two cites of Southern Russia that were focused on in this research, only minor quantities of drugs are smuggled from Chechnya and the Caucasus; most cannabis as well as opium derivatives are imported from Central Asia (Markoryan, 2000; Saukhat, 2000).

No major inflow of illegal drugs seems either to take place from Baltic countries, though there is an extensive 'ants' trafficking' in both directions by drug users from Russia and the three small Baltic republics (Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 24). Even at the north-western border most of the small drug

shipments, which were seized by Russian customs in 1998 and 1999, originated from Russia (SCC, 2000: 5).

Drugs currently flow into Russia also from non-CIS countries. In particular, China remains the largest supplier of ephedrine, though in European Russia this amphetamine-type stimulant is predominantly extracted from cough syrups that are on sale on prescription in pharmacies. In China ephedrine was sold without restrictions up to late 1998 and was smuggled into Russia's Far East by air, sea and land. According to both the State Customs Committee and the FSB, the controls implemented by the Chinese government strongly reduced the ephedrine smuggling flow in 1999 (SCC, 2000: 6; FSB, 2000). Minor quantities of ephedrine are also imported from North Korea, above all into Primorye and Khabarovsk regions (Rakitsky, 2000; Zavadskaya, 2000).

Finally, cocaine and synthetic drugs are both imported from far away. Cocaine arrives from South America, either directly or after transiting one or more Western European or African countries. As we saw in the previous section, due to the drug's high prices, cocaine consumption is still restricted to Russian elites and its inflow shrank further after the August 1998 financial crisis. Not only did the seizures of the Ministry of the Interior sharply decline (see Graph III.4.) but also those carried out by Russian customs decreased considerably. In 1998 the latter intercepted 50 kilograms of cocaine. According to high-ranking customs officials, cocaine seizures exceeded 100 kilograms in both 1995 and 1996.[13] In 1999, however, the overall amount was reduced to less than a third of the 1998 total: 14.9 kilograms (SCC, 2000: 10). The decline was, above all, noted at Moscow's first international airport Sheremenyevo, where direct flights from Latin America were cut from four to two after the August 1998 crisis (Interview A8).

Though there were few attempts at direct production, most ecstasy, LSD and other party drugs are imported into Russia from Poland and, above all, from Western Europe, most notably the Netherlands and Germany (Interviews A1, A3, B3, B2, and B7).

[13] No exact data were, however, submitted.

3. Drug Transit

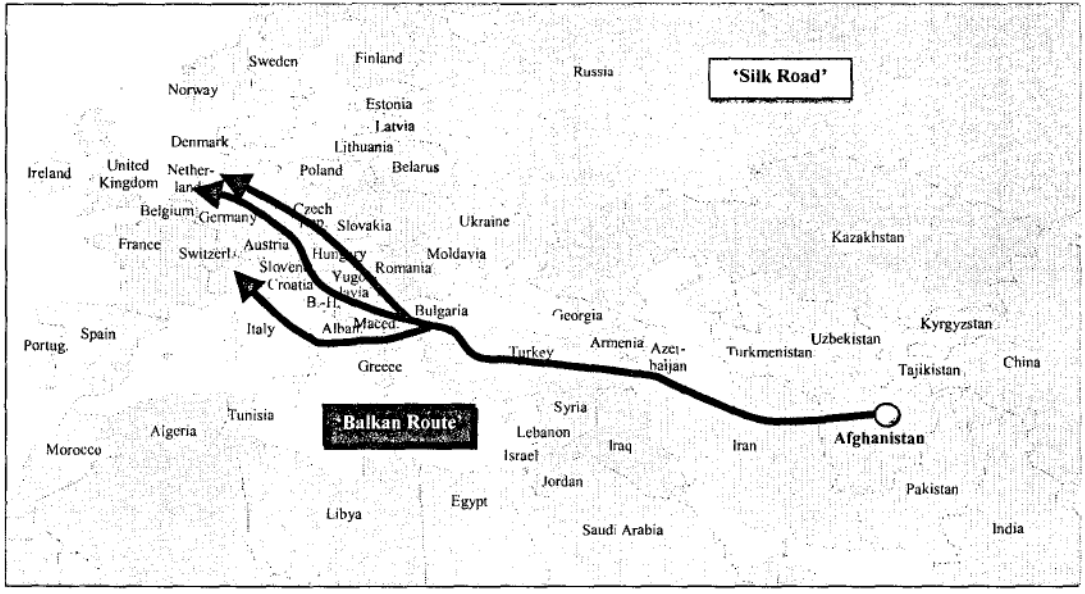
After the one-ton cocaine seizure intercepted at Vyborg in 1993, both Western and Russian law enforcement officials hypothesised that South American drug cartels could be focusing on Russia as a new transit corridor (see for example Handelman, 1995: 195-196). To a great extent, however, such fears did not materialise, as local drug markets in Western Europe keep on being supplied either directly from producing countries or through well-established entry points, *in primis* Spain and the Netherlands (Paoli, 2000a; DEA, 1995; EMCDDA, 1999: 60).

Russia is, instead, increasingly used to transfer illicit drugs, most notably hashish and heroin produced in CIS countries and in Afghanistan, into Western Europe.[14] In spring 1996, two transhipments, each of more than 1,700 kilograms of hashish, were intercepted at the Russian-Latvian border. The drug was hidden each time in two containers, which had been sent from Afghanistan and were bound to reach Holland by train. In May 1996 a third lot of 1.7 ton of hashish, which also came from Afghanistan most probably through the same route, was seized in Rotterdam (BKA, 2000; see also MVD, 2000: 24-25).

Up to early 1990s heroin from Afghanistan and Pakistan was smuggled into Western Europe through Iran, Turkey and the Balkan countries, most notably the former Yugoslavia, along the so-called 'Balkan route'. As civil war broke out the latter country, alternative routes were established either by sea through Greece and Italy or further north on the original track through Bulgaria, Romania, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and, to a lesser extent even Poland. Since the mid-1990s the 'Balkan Route' and its deviations are increasingly supplemented by the so-called 'Silk Road', which goes from Afghanistan to Eastern and Western Europe through the Southern CIS states and in most cases also Russia (Flormann, 1996; Deckers, 2000; see Figure IV.2).

[14] It is interesting to note that large-scale hashish trafficking through Russian territory went on even before the fall of the Soviet Union, despite strict border controls and limited passenger and cargo flows. In 1986, in fact, one ton of hashish was seized in Moscow in a rail container going from Kabul to a Western destination. In 1987, five tons were seized in Montreal. The consignment was shipped from the Russian port of Murmansk on the Barents Sea after passing by rail from Afghanistan through the Central Asian republics. In 1998, finally, 3.5 tons of hashish were intercepted in Great Britan. The container was transported by rail from Afghanistan to Moscow and then shipped to the UK from the St. petersburg port (UNDCP, 1997b).

Figure IV.2: Drug smuggling routes from Afghanistan into Western Europe: the 'Balkan Route', the 'Silk Road' and their variations



Source: BKA, 2000.

The new 'Silk Road' has, so to speak, two major paths though endless variations are possible each time. Along the first path, heroin and hashish are shipped from Afghanistan through one of the directly neighbouring CIS states (Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan) and the Caucasus countries in Turkey or Southern European states back on the traditional 'Balkan Route' (see OGD, 2000: 37-40). In this case, the Russian territory is not necessarily crossed. The second path, instead, necessarily foresees transhipment through Russia and the smuggling of heroin and hashish through Russia's north-western neighbours (the Baltic countries, Belarus, and the Ukraine) into Western Europe.

Table IV.1: Seizure of drug container transhipment from Afghanistan ~ 1992-1999

Date of seizure	*Place of seizure*	*Amount of the seizure*	*Transportation means*	*Route*	*Destination*
August 1992	Termez, Uzbekistan, close to the border with Afghanistan	1,300 kg hashish	train wagon	?	?
August 1993	Termez, Uzbekistan, close to the border with Afghanistan	1,000 kg heroin	refrigerator truck	?	?
April 1994	Mary, Turkmenistan (about 300 km from the Afghani border)	1,050 kg hashish	2 containers on train wagon	Afghanistan-CIS-Germany	Germany?
April 1996	Beryouki Sebezh, Russian-Latvian border	1,735 kg hashish	2 containers on train wagon	Afghanistan-CIS-Latvia-Holland	Holland
May 1996	Rotterdam	1,700 kg hashish	2 containers on train wagon	Afghanistan-CIS-Latvia-Holland	Holland
May 1996	Beryouki Sebezh, Russian-Latvian border	1,739 kg hashish	2 containers on train wagon	?	?
August 1996	Maiskaja, Turkmenistan	2,524 kg hashish	containers on train wagon	Afghanistan-CIS-Slovakia	Holland
August 1996	Maiskaja, Turkmenistan	7,365 kg hashish	containers on train wagon	Afghanistan-CIS-Slovakia	Holland
August 1996	Maiskaja, Turkmenistan	12,149 kg hashish	containers on train wagon	Afghanistan-CIS-Slovakia	Holland
February 1997	Kushka, Turkmenistan on the Afghan border	2,800 kg hashish	2 containers	?	?
February 1997	Turkmenistan	7,459 kg hashish	2 containers on train wagon	Afghanistan-CIS-Germany	Holland-Germany?
February 1997	Kushka, Turkmenistan on the Afghan border	6,020 kg hashish	2 containers on train wagon	Afghanistan-CIS-Ukraine	?

March 1997	Kushka, Afghanistan	3,688 kg hashish	2 containers on train wagon	Afghanistan-CIS-Romania	Holland?
March 1997	Maiskaja, Turkmenistan	4,125 kg hashish	2 containers on train wagon	Afghanistan-CIS-Albania	?
May 1997	Kushka, Turkmenistan on the Afghan border	10,588 kg hashish	3 containers on train wagon	Afghanistan-CIS-Russia	?
September 1997	Kushka, Turkmenistan on the Afghan border	502 kg heroin	2 containers on train wagon	Afghanistan-CIS-Azerbajan	?
October 1997	Kushka, Turkmenistan on the Afghan border	1,221 kg heroin	refrigerated truck	Afghanistan-CIS-Turkey	Germany?
November 1997	Kushka, Turkmenistan on the Afghan border	2,976 kg hashish	truck	?	?
March 1998	Kushka, Turkmenistan on the Afghan border	2,255 kg hashish	2 containers on train wagon	Afghanistan-CIS-Ukraine	Holland?
April 1998	Maiskaja, Turkmenistan	7,460 kg hashish	2 containers on train wagon	?	?
August 1998	Kushka, Turkmenistan on the Afghan border	316 kg heroin 1,399 kg hashish	2 containers on train wagon	Afghanistan-CIS-Russia	Germany?
October 1998	Kushka, Turkmenistan on the Afghan border	7,450 kg hashish	truck	Afghanistan-CIS-Russia	?
January 1999	Astrakan, Russia	220 kg heroin	truck	Afghanistan-CIS-Russia	?
February 1999	Kushka, Turkmenistan on the Afghan border	3,586 kg hashish	container on truck	Afghanistan-CIS-Azerbaijan	?
February 1999	Frankfurt/Oder Germany	316 kg heroin	truck	?	Germany
March 1999	Cardzou, Turkmenistan on the Uzbek border	41,265 kg hashish	2 containers on train wagon	Afghanistan-CIS-Czech Republic	Germany?
February 2000	Frankfurt/Oder Germany	4,081 kg hashish	truck	?	Germany

Source: BKA, 2000.

In its 1998 report, the International Narcotics Control Board estimated that up to 65 percent of opiates intended for export from Afghanistan may have passed through the porous Central Asian borders to Eastern and Western Europe (INCB, 1999). So far no supranational agency systematically collects data on the illicit drug trade along the 'Silk Road'. To fill this gap of knowledge, since the mid-1990s the German Bundeskriminalamt (BKA) has started to collect information on the drug container transhipments from

South-west Asia, which were intercepted by law enforcement forces (see Table IV.1).

According to the BKA's database, which however has no guarantee of exhaustiveness, most heroin and hashish cargos from Afghanistan were so far seized in Turkmenistan and other Southern CIS states. It is not yet clear whether this datum points to a prevalence of the Southern branch of the 'Silk Road' or not. In most cases, in fact, the investigation was not furthered after the seizure and very little information on both the sender and the receiver are available. Only in a few cases could the route be reconstructed with certainty. According to German law enforcement officers (Interviews B4 and B5) however, the Northern CIS states, including Russia, as well as other countries of the former Warsaw Pact are increasingly used as a stopover by drug traffickers. To avoid interception, in fact, containers carrying illegal drugs are no longer sent directly from Afghanistan or Central Asian republics to Western Europe, but are first shipped into a Northern country of the former Soviet bloc and, after changing trucks and the fake accompanying documents, are then smuggled into Western Europe.

As is well known, heroin from Afghanistan is either consumed locally (above all, in Pakistan; see Bearak, 2000) or smuggled into Western Europe. Since the early 1980s, in fact, the so-called South-west Asian heroin has virtually disappeared from the American market, which is instead supplied by South-east heroin from Burma, Thailand and China, from 'black tar' heroin from Mexico and, increasingly, from high-quality white heroin from Colombia (DEA, 2000b; UNODCCP, 2000b). Nonetheless, in 1999 Russian law enforcement agencies detected some attempts of smuggling Afghan 'brown sugar' heroin into the United States from CIS countries through Russia. In particular, in Moscow in August 1999 they seized three packages, each containing 100-150 grams of heroin, which had been shipped in Kyrgyzstan and were bound for the USA (SCC, 2000: 26).

Though no large drug seizures ever took place in the region, North Ossetia and the other Russian republics of Northern Caucasus have the potential to become a major transit point for drug transhipments en route to Western Europe. Nowadays Georgian drug users and dealers regularly cross the Daryal Pass to buy their drug supplies in North Ossetian villages on the other side of the border. Illegal drugs, most notably heroin, opium and hashish, allegedly cost less than half the retail Georgian prices there.

During her fieldwork, furthermore, Eliko Ciklauri was told time and again by local people that it is totally unproblematic to smuggle illegal drugs or other commodities between the two countries, because border controls are carried out only seldom and, in any case, customs officers can be easily bribed. Furthermore, she could observe herself how scarce the controls are and how poorly equipped the Russian and Georgian customs officers are. In her report she writes:

> "drug smuggling from North Ossetia to Georgia is eased by the catastrophic equipment of both the North Ossetian and Georgian customs that lack the technical apparatus to detect narcotics. There is only a very low probability that narcotics are discovered during a border control. This observation also concerns the border controls done by the North Ossetian customs, though these are much more severe than those carried out by the Georgian officers" (Ciklauri, 2000: 27).

Georgian customs officers earn a monthly salary of US$ 20 and throughout the 1990s they were often not paid at all for several months. As a result, it has become a widespread practice for many of them to 'require' gifts of varying dimensions from all trucks that cross the border, even from those who transport legal goods. As a Georgian trader put it, "every policeman has a family to feed!" (Urban, 1999).

Illegal drug smuggling seems to be particularly easy in South Ossetia and Abkhazia, two maverick regions of Georgia that border on Russia. With the support of the Russian military, the latter revolted against the central government in Tblisi and since then have become a sort of no man's land (see Ormrod, 1997, and Jones, 1997). The two republics are the ideal transit points for smuggling of all sorts. Police or customs controls are neither carried out on their border with Russia, because the two regions have hardly any trained law enforcement officers, nor on their border with Georgia, because the Georgian state authorities claim sovereignty on the whole territory of the country and do not want to recognise the internal border (Ciklauri, 2000).

Anyhow, except for petty cross-border trade, drug export from Russia itself is not yet very large. According to the MVD, however, "it grows from year to year" (MVD, 2000: 14). Likewise, in its latest drug report, the State Customs Committee claims that the sharp decrease in heroin prices in Russia "created favourable conditions for the outflow of Central Asian heroin from Russia to other countries, Western Europe and the USA in the first instance (sic!)" (SCC, 2000: 23). Both the MVD and the State Customs Committee report that cases of drug exports to Germany, Finland, Sweden, Israel, Latvia, Australia and the USA were registered in 1999.

As Russia further integrates in the international drug trade, it is highly probable that even in the future small lots of illegal drugs, originally bound for the domestic market, will be exported by Russian intermediate dealers or even drug users themselves. As far as large drug transhipments are concerned, however, Russia is likely to remain a transit country, given that hardly any illegal psychoactive substance widely consumed in Western countries is locally cultivated or produced.

Nor it is clear which role Russian nationals will assume in the transcontinental wholesale drug trafficking. According to the State Customs Committee, "it is highly probable that Russian organised criminal groups with some authority in criminal circles of Western Europe will play a leading role in the transit of heroin to Western Europe" (SCC, 2000: 23). This hypothesis, however, has, for the moment, only a loose empirical base. Only in five of the 25 large seizures accounted for by the BKA, could the involvement of Russian offenders or the resorting to Russian front-companies be proved. In many other cases, heroin and hashish cargos were supposed merely to transit, if at all, through the Russian territory and the transhipments were clearly organised by traffickers of other nationality (Interviews B7 and B1).

V. Traffickers and Dealers

The expansion of the Russian drug market during the 1990s entailed the emergence of a nationwide drug distribution system, which brings illicit drugs from producers to consumers, and the consolidation of the professional role of the drug dealer. As much as in Western Europe and the USA up to the mid-1970s, the latter role did not exist in Russia up to the early 1990s. As we have seen in Chapter I, in Soviet times there was no nationwide drug distribution system, nor was Russia integrated into the international drug trade. Soviet drug users largely consumed illegal psychoactive substances that were available in their region and often either harvested or produced the drugs themselves.

Only with the diversification of drug supply in the 1990s and Russia's entrance into international drug trade did the 'drug dealer' as a professional role emerge to link producers to consumers and to regularly supply large urban centres with a variety of illegal drugs coming from distant regions. Who carries out these intermediary functions in contemporary Russia? Who are the drug traffickers and dealers? How do they operate? Are they organised in large-scale enterprises or are there prevalently small drug dealing groups and single entrepreneurs? To what extent are drug dealing enterprises linked – or indeed superimposed – with organised crime? And, last but not least, what is the meaning of the term 'organised crime'? These are the main questions this chapter aims to answer.

1. Russian Law Enforcement Agencies' Analyses and Statistics

In official reports, Russian law enforcement authorities present a very 'organised' picture of the drug trade. In its latest report on drug and organised crime, for example, the MVD categorically states that "drug crime is always organised" and the same view was repeated by several law enforcement officers interviewed in Moscow (Interviews A4 and A7). Furthermore, the MVD proposes a very top-down explanation of the expansion of the Russian drug market. As shown by the following quote, in fact, the latter is linked to the integration of Russian organised crime groups into large international drug cartels:

> "A considerable part of Russian criminal societies have entered into an alliance with international drug cartels and have become an integral part of them. The con-

> sequence of this integration is the rapid growth of drug criminality, which is accompanied by a steady increase of drug users in Russia. Experts believe that nearly 1,600 criminal groups in Russia are engaged in the drug trade, which are composed of at least 6,000 people" (MVD, 2000: 5).

In their turn, the so-called "criminal societies" are described as follows:

> "Criminal leaders actively develop united societies. The development of these societies, the management of their finances, and the division of their spheres of influence are carefully planned. These structures have centralised administrations with subordinate units and strict discipline of their members as well as intelligence and counterintelligence, technical maintenance and armed security services. This powerful support enables them to take root practically everywhere and influence important spheres of life in the Russian regions. It can be stated that organised crime dictates the terms of functioning to branches of the economy as well as norms of social behaviour to different regions" (MVD, 2000: 3).

According to MVD's estimates, there are currently about 10,000 organised crime groups in Russia, with nearly 60,000 active members (MVD, 2000: 3). The same 'conspiratorial' view is shared by the Federal Security Service (FSB). Talking about drug trade in the Kaliningrad area, for example, the latter agency notes:

> "The local organised crime groups, which are founded on ethnic ties (such as the Azerbaijani and the gypsies) have steady interregional relations, numerous members, they are well armed, equipped with modern technology and are highly organised. They are integrated into the entrepreneurial activity of commercial structures and companies, have links with corrupt state authorities and the law enforcement, and aspire to monopolise the drug market. The approximate annual turnover of their illegal trafficking is estimated at about 12 tons of drugs" (FSB, 2000).

In the Middle Volga region, according to the same institution, "groups of drug traffickers are developing, having clearly divided functions, discipline, a high level of secrecy, and a good organisational structure". Likewise, in Krasnoyarsk,

> "a precise distribution of roles can be observed in the structure of organised criminal groups involved in drug trafficking, with leaders having contacts to wholesale suppliers in Central Asia and to corrupt officials of law enforcement agencies. These groups consist of several dozen people" (FSB, 2000).

The idea that drug trafficking is dominated by large, structured criminal groups finds, however, scarce support even in law enforcement statistical data. As shown by Table V.1, in fact, the crimes committed by "organised crime groups" represent less than one percent of the total drug offences reported in Russia and in 1999 accounted for only 4.1 percent of drug trafficking cases. The percent values are somewhat higher, if the crimes committed by "groups" are considered. The latter accounted for 4.7 percent of total drug offences in 1999, down from 6.5 percent in 1995. Their percent

value is higher, if the drug trafficking cases are considered: in 1999, in fact, 23.8 percent of drug trafficking offences were committed by a "group". Even this percent value, however, has almost halved since 1995, when over 45 percent of all drug trafficking cases involved a group.

However, the concept of group criminality is very loosely defined in the Russian criminal code, as two people suffice to build such a group. Article 35, par. 1, in fact, states: "a crime shall be deemed to be committed by a group of persons, if two or more perpetrators without prior collusion participate in the commission thereof" (Butler, 1997: 23). The third paragraph of the same article sets forth the conditions under which a crime is considered committed by an "organised group": "if it is committed by a stable group of persons, who combined beforehand to commit one or several crimes" (*ibidem*). Even in this case no quantitative parameter is set and the only two requirements entail cohesiveness and previous agreement. Even a blood family that deals drugs can thus be considered an organised crime group.

Table V.1: Drug offences reported in Russia, including those committed by a group and an organised crime group ~ 1995-1999

	1995	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*
Drug offences (total)	79,819	96,645	184,832	190,127	216,364
Drug trafficking (art. 228, p. 2,3,4; art. 234, p. 1,2,3)	11,448	19,982	28,979	33,562	42,883
- committed by a group	5,205	6,489	7,549	6,499	10,199
% of total drug offences	6.5	6.7	4.1	3.4	4.7
% of drug trafficking cases	45.5	32.5	26.0	19.4	23.8
- committed by an organised crime group	-	562	1.439	913	1,763
% of total drug offences	-	0.6	0.8	0.5	0.8
% of drug trafficking cases	-	2.8	5.0	2.7	4.1

Source: MVD, 2000: 15.

The 10,000 organised crime groups that, according to the MVD, are active in Russia, and the 1,600 of them that are involved in drug trafficking, can therefore be seen in a new perspective. Indeed, given the above definition, it is fair to assume that not all of them are large, highly structured and powerful criminal groups. The latter traits are, in fact, reserved to what the Russian Criminal Code defines as a "criminal society". The fourth paragraph of the already quoted Article 35 states:

> "A crime shall be deemed to be committed by a criminal society (criminal organisation), if it was committed by a cohesive organised group (or organisation) created for the commission of grave or especially grave crimes or by the combining of organised groups created for the same purpose" (*ibidem*).

According to the data reported by a high-ranking official of the MVD in September 1999 in a UN-meeting in Vienna, in Russia there are currently 98 such criminal communities, out of which 22 are of most serious concern (Kichanov, 1999). If organised crime is defined as a set of large-scale, stable criminal organisations entailing some sort of internal division of labour, the latter and not the 10,000 figure is the number to be taken into account. Unfortunately, no data are published on the involvement of Russia's 98 'criminal communities' in illicit drug trade.

As the staff of the Research Institute of the Prosecutor General's Office (RIPGO) noted, the analysis of law enforcement statistics leaves us in a "paradoxical situation":

> "On the one hand, the public opinion's view, which is spread by the mass media, seems to be realistic. Accordingly, the Russian drug mafia is at work, as it results from the mass spread of illegal drug use. Offenders specialising in illegal drug trafficking could have promoted the spread of drug use even to those regions that previously never had had socio-cultural experience with illegal drugs (such as the Northern and Central parts of Russia and Siberia). On the other hand, this activity is not reflected in statistical data, i.e. it does not come to light, is not exposed and is not punished" (RIPGO, 2000: 59).

2. Drug Dealing and Trafficking in Judicial Sentences

Neither "criminal societies" nor large-scale organised crime groups emerge from the analysis of the 52 drug-related sentences that was carried out by the Research Institute of the Prosecutor General's Office (RIPGO) together with the MPI. As shown by Table V.2, almost half of the sentences analysed (25) were issued by a criminal court of St. Petersburg; 11 were pronounced by a district court in Krasnodar (a city of 627,000 inhabitants in Southern Russia, close to the Black Sea); nine by a district court in Omsk (1,159,000 inhabitants) in South-western Siberia,[15] close to the border with Kazakhstan; five by a district court in the Nizhniy Novgorod region and one in Moscow. All the sentences were issued between December 1997 and December 1999. The judicial cases were selected by the RIPGO, with the

[15] In both cities the number of inhabitants refers to 1990 and was drawn from Götz and Hallbach (1994: 204; 256).

aim to provide a representative picture of drug-related sentencing in Russia in the late 1990s.

Table V.2: Judicial sentences analysed by RIPGO and MPI, according to the location of the district court that issued them

St. Petersburg	25
Krasnodar	11
Omsk	9
Nizhniy Novgorod	5
Moscow	1
Total	**52**

Source: Elaboration of data provided by RIPGO, 2000.

Heroin was involved in 22 of the judicial cases examined and most of these (18) were dealt with by a St. Petersburg court (see Table V.3). In 13 cases the primary drug was either opium or poppy straw: only one of the these cases was examined by St. Petersburg courts, which instead took care of the only two penal proceedings involving ecstasy and LSD. Cannabis products were seized from the defendants in 16 cases, which were issued either by the courts in St. Petersburg (seven), those in Krasnodar (six), or those from Omsk (three). Ephedrine was mentioned in only two of the sentences, both of which were issued by the Krasnodar courts. Seized drugs ranged from a few one hundredth of a gram of heroin to 2.5 kilograms of poppy straw. All the 78 defendants were sentenced for the offences they were charged with.

*Table V.3: Judicial sentences analysed by RIPGO and MPI, according to the drug seized**

	Heroin	***Cannabis***	***Opium or poppy straw***	***Ephedrine***	***Ecstasy***	***LSD***
St. Petersburg	18	7	1	-	1	1
Krasnodar	-	6	3	2	-	-
Omsk	2	3	5	-	-	-
Nizhniy Novgorod	2	-	4	-	-	-
Moscow	1	-	-	-	-	-
Total	**23**	**16**	**13**	**2**	**1**	**1**

Source: Elaboration of data provided by RIPGO, 2000.

** The sum exceeds 52 because more than one drug was mentioned in several penal proceedings.*

In 11 of the cases, the defendants were sentenced exclusively for purchase or possession of illegal drugs "on a large scale", but "without the purpose of sale" (Art. 228, par. 1) (see Table V.4). In a much larger number of cases, however, the defendants were sentenced for the offence of "acquisition or keeping of illegal drugs for the purposes of sale", which is defined in the second paragraph of Art. 228. However, the second paragraph itself was not resorted to in any of the sentences analysed (see also *infra*, Chapter VI). In 14 cases, reference was made to the aggravating circumstances foreseen by the third paragraph of Article 228, which states:

> "The acts provided for by paragraph two of the present Article committed:
> (a) by a group of persons by prior collusion;
> (b) repeatedly;
> (c) with respect to narcotic means or psychotropic substances on a large scale –
> shall be punished by deprivation of freedom for a term from five up to ten years with or without confiscation of property" (Butler, 1997: 134).

In almost half of the sentences analysed (23), the fourth paragraph of Art. 228 was employed:

> "The acts provided by paragraphs two and three of the present Article committed by an organised group with respect to narcotics means or psychotropic substances on an especially large scale – shall be punished by deprivation of freedom for a term from seven up to fifteen years with confiscation of property" (*ibidem*).

The application of the latter provision was particularly frequent in St. Petersburg's cases (18), whereas Omsk courts resorted much more frequently to the third paragraph of Article 228. Finally in three sentences of the Krasnodar courts, Article 231, entailing the offence of "illegal cultivation of flora containing narcotic substances prohibited for tilling" was applied (see Butler, 1997: 136-137).

Even if we focus on only the 40 sentences in which drug dealing or drug production were foreseen (Art 228, par. 3 and 4, and Art. 231), we cannot find proof of any large criminal group. In some cases there are 'crews', partnerships of three or four people who buy and sell illegal drugs. The sentence issued on May 12, 1999 by the Kuibyshevsky Federal Court of St. Petersburg's Central District, for example, involves four women, three of whom worked together for more than half a year as drug dealers. The trio bought 40-gram lots of marijuana from unidentified persons at least nine times, and in January 1998 repeatedly bought a kilo of marijuana and sold the drug in smaller portions to several customers, including the fourth defendant (Kuibyshevsky Federal Court, 1999).

*Table V.4: Judicial sentences analysed by RIPGO and MPI, according to the article of the Criminal Code applied**

	Art. 228, 1st par. only	*Art. 228, 3rd par.*	*Art. 228, 4th par.*	*Art. 231*
St. Petersburg	4	3	18	-
Krasnodar	5	3	-	3
Omsk	-	6	3	-
Nizhniy Novgorod	2	1	3	-
Moscow	-	-	1	-
Total	**11**	**13**	**25**	**3**

Source: Elaboration of data provided by RIPGO, 2000

* *The first column includes only the sentences in which the defendants were exclusively accused of the offence defined by the first paragraph of Art. 228. The second and third columns include sentences in which the most serious offence was respectively represented by the third or the fourth paragraph of Art. 228. In nine of the cases listed in the second column and ten of those listed in the third one, however, less serious offences (most frequently, the first paragraph of Art. 228) are also mentioned.*

Aramais A. and Ararat A., two Armenian nationals, were sentenced in Omsk, respectively, to nine and four years imprisonment, for repeatedly buying and selling heroin from and to unidentified persons. Though they were only two persons, in this case the fourth paragraph of Art. 228 was applied, which foresees the involvement an "organised group", because 34 grams of heroin were seized (Sovietsky District Court, 1999a).

Another sentence issued by an Omsk Court was directed against five defendants, who were convicted according to Art. 228, par. 3, alternatives (a), (b), (c). After buying at least 339.4 grams of opium from an unknown person, Andrej G. recruited the couple Andrej V. and Julia L. for the drug's retail sale and left most of the opium at their place of residence (300 grams were subsequently seized there by the police). Unwilling to sell opium herself, Julia L. packed it in smaller bags and passed it on to Olga, who probably sold some of it and was arrested with 0.9 grams of opium (Leninsky District Court of Omsk, 1999).

According to the analyses made by the RIPGO, the purpose of sale was not even clearly proved in all the sentences issued according to the third or fourth paragraphs of Article 228. In November 1998, for example, the Nizhniy Novgorod District Court convicted three young women, aged 24 to 30, to five years and six months imprisonment because they had harvested poppy in a backyard garden of a suburb town and extracted opium out of it.

Apparently no further investigation was made to check whether the three women prepared the opium for their own consumption or for sale. Even in their case, however, the third paragraph of Article 228 was applied and, in particular, the provisions foreseen by conditions (a) and (b): "by a groups of persons by prior collusion", and "repeatedly" (Nizhniy Novgorod District Court, 1998).

In many cases, furthermore, even when the third or the fourth paragraph of Article 228 was applied, no group existed *strictu sensu* at all. As the staff of the Research Institute of the Prosecutor General's Office put it,

> "the groups described in the sentences do not meet the conventional criteria of a group nor present the well organized character of the criminal activity related to illegal drug trafficking. In most sentences, a drug transaction between the buyer and the seller or even the common purchase of illegal drugs by two users are considered sufficient to prove the existence of a group" (RIPGO, 2000: 52).

Furthermore, according to the Russian jurisprudence, this assumption holds even when the other components of the group remain unknown. This is often the case as most sentences, even those resorting to the third and fourth paragraph of Article 228, entail only one defendant. Out of the 52 that were analysed, in fact, in only 16 cases was there more than one defendant: two persons stood together on trial in 12 proceedings; three persons in two, and four and five persons in one penal proceeding each (see Table V.5).

Table V.5: Judicial sentences analysed by RIPGO and MPI, according to the number of defendants

1 defendant	36
2 defendants	12
3 defendants	2
4 defendants	1
5 defendants	1
Total	**52**

Source: Elaboration of data provided by RIPGO, 2000.

Galina G., for example, was sentenced by the Petrograd District Court of St. Petersburg on August 19, 1999 to three years imprisonment according to Art. 228, par. 4, for having bought 0.082 grams of heroin, transporting it home and selling it to a second person (Petrograd District Court, 1999e). The 25-year-old Ruslan P. was sentenced by the Kuibyshevsky Federal Court of St. Petersburg's Central District in October of the same year and according to the same penal provision, for the purchase of less than half a gram of heroin (0,451 grams) from an unidentified person. On at least two

occasions he sold two doses (0,022 and 0,015 grams each) to I. and on the basis of these transactions, Ruslan P. was thought to be belong to "an organised criminal group" as foreseen by Art. 228, par. 4 (Kuibyshevsky Federal Court, 1999a).

In some cases, relatively large quantities of illegal drugs were involved. In the sentence issued by a St. Petersburg court in the penal proceeding No. 1-922, the three defendants were convicted for purchasing a record of 48 kilograms of poppy straw and selling it in smaller doses (RIPGO, 2000: 52).[16] Alexander T. was convicted in October 1999 by a court of the same city for having once bought at least 993 grams of marijuana and selling the drug in smaller portions to several customers. The defendant admitted to using drugs himself and dealing since 1996, to pay for his own consumption habits and to earn a living. Though he worked alone, he was sentenced under the first and fourth paragraphs of Article 228 to four years and six months imprisonment (Petrograd District Court, 1999i). Likewise, in Nizhniy Novgorod two Tajik nationals were sentenced *ex* Art. 228, par. 4, for smuggling at least 144 grams of heroin from their home country. Shamsodkula D. allegedly passed the drug in latex-wrapped pellets to the younger Abdukarim S. at the train station in Dushambe, the Tajik capital. The latter ingested the pellets and carried them to Nizhniy Novgorod and there the drug was seized from them by the police (Moscovsky District Court, 1999).

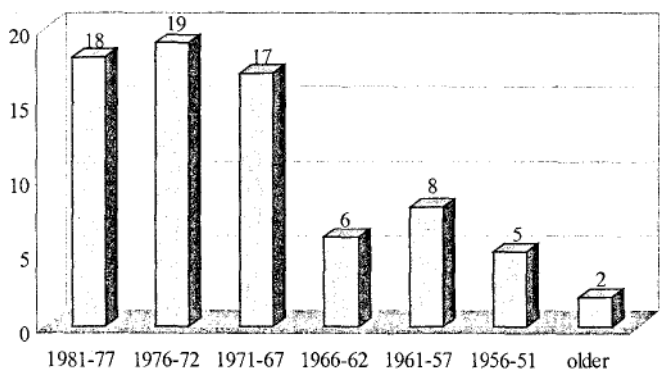
In some other penal proceedings, however, the third and fourth paragraphs of Article 228 were applied, though the quantities of the retrieved drugs were small (by Western standards at least) and the accomplices of the defendant remain unknown. Eleonora K. was sentenced to five years imprisonment pursuant to Art. 228, par. 1 and 3, for purchasing ephedrine and manufacturing 3.3 ml of *vint*, though no purposes of sale could be proved (Leninsky District Court, 1997). The amount was considered "large scale" by the Court, which hence applied alternative (c) of Art. 228, par. 3. The same considerations led to a 5-year prison sentence for Olesia S., who sold 0.15 and 0.17 grams of opium, after buying it from an unidentified person (Sovietsky District Court, 1999b). The Petrograd District Court of St. Petersburg even applied the fourth paragraph of Art. 228 against the 28-year-old Jury T., who had bought 0.091 grams of heroin and partially sold it to a

[16] The above sentence was mentioned by RIPGO in its final report, but it was not included in the ad hoc survey carried out jointly by the RIPGO and MPI. No further details are available. For this reason, it is not included in the list of the 52 examined sentences.

second person P. The latter transaction was allegedly deemed sufficient for fulfilling the criteria set by the above provision, which should refer to crimes "committed by an organised group with respect to narcotics means or psychotropic substances on an especially large scale" (Petrograd District Court, 1999c). The same provision was also resorted to in the case against Denis T. and Maxim G., who had bought 0.0058 grams of heroin together and subsequently sold it in ready-to-use syringes (Petrograd District Court, 1999f).

Despite the growing complexity of the Russian drug market, the sentences show that, especially out of Moscow and St. Petersburg some drug users still harvest or cultivate plants containing psychoactive substances, most notably cannabis and poppy. Three of the 52 cases reviewed, in fact, involved the cultivation of cannabis plants (28, 166, and eight respectively) by the three defendants on their own pieces of land (Leninsky District Court of Krasnodar, 1999b; Sovietsky District Court of Krasnodar, 1998b and 1999a). In three other cases, all processed by courts in Nizhniy Novgorod, the defendants were convicted for collecting wild poppy and extracting poppy milk (Nizhniy Novgorod District Court, 1998; Kniagininsky District Court of Nizhniy Novgorod, 1999; Tonshaevsky District Court, 1999).

Graph V.1: Defendants of the judicial sentences analysed by RIPGO and MPI, according to their year of birth



Source: Elaboration of data provided by RIPGO, 2000.

Most of the defendants were relatively young. The overall majority was not yet 30 years old when the investigation started (see Graph V.1). Out of 78,

in fact, 54 defendants were born in or after 1967. 18 of them were not older than 22 years old when they were sentenced. Older and, supposedly more experienced, dealers are less frequently present in our sample.

At least half of the convicted persons are drug users themselves. In many other cases, however (according to the RIPGO's own calculations in 48.2 percent of all cases), the courts made no effort to prove whether the defendants used illegal drugs (RIPGO, 2000: 51). According to the RIPGO, this is not the only shortcoming of the sentences examined. In its own report, in fact, the Research Institute of the Prosecutor General's Office states:

> "the analysis of penal proceedings shows the poor quality of the investigations conducted in all examined cases. As a rule, the proof of the drug sale consists in two, maximally three episodes of elementary drug exchanges with a friend or a known person. In none of the examined cases could the supplier of the drug seller be found. (...)
>
> Though it was obviously very simple to prove the guilt of the defendants, in 19.3 percent of the examined cases the courts admitted to an infringement of procedural norms concerning law enforcement investigations" (*ibidem*).

3. The 'Invisible Hand' of the Market

The relatively 'disorganised' nature of drug trafficking and distribution in Russia is further proved by the fieldwork in several Russian cities. In all of them a multi-level drug distribution system developed and today users increasingly buy their drugs from the dealers, instead of cultivating or harvesting themselves. The latter's demands, however, seem to be neither satisfied nor promoted by large, hierarchically-organised firms that monopolise local markets. It is understandable that professional and non-professional observers hypothesise the involvement of a powerful 'Russian mafia' to explain the sudden expansion of illegal drug consumption and trade in Russia (see Ciklauri, 2000; Maiorova, 2000; Obidina, 2000; Wines, 2000). Nonetheless, the fieldwork as well as interviews with several experts provide no backing for such a hypothesis. The phenomenal growth of drug use can rather be attributed to the 'invisible hand' of the market: the local drug markets of Russian cities are today largely supplied by a myriad of drug dealers who tend to operate alone or in small groups and often consume illegal drugs themselves. In many cases the latter do not even possess any previous criminal expertise and deal with illegal drugs to make a living or to supplement the meagre income they obtain from licit activities. As a Moscow police officer put it,

> "there are no Colombian drug cartels here. There are instead many small groups that are made of people belonging to the same nationality or ethnic group. There is not one single river, but many streams that flow independently on one another" (Interview A6).

In all cities the lowest and most dangerous levels of the local distribution systems are increasingly occupied by drug users themselves. In order to pay their own consumption habits, the latter are obliged to sell small quantities of drugs, work as intermediaries and, more rarely, to transport drugs (Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 23; Markoryan, 2000). As a drug user interviewed in St. Petersburg put it, "if I sold less then one gram of heroin per day, I had no money for my doses. I was always obliged to sell drugs to buy my dose. Sometimes I had no success for two or three days and I hence borrowed money. As a result my debt grew..." (Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 29). Likewise, another user interviewed in Moscow admitted, "Drug addicts often are themselves dealers, due to the business' high profits: if you deal, you can leave purer heroin for your own consumption and cut and sell the rest" (Interview H14).

The higher levels of the local drug distribution systems are often occupied by dealers and user-dealers belonging to ethnic minorities, most notably members of the Roma community, Caucasians as well as Tajik and Afghan nationals (see Durgan and Kalachev, 1997).

Having tenaciously resisted integration in Soviet society, a considerable fraction of the over 150,000 gypsies who were officially resident in the Russian Federation in 1987 (Crowe, 1994: 193) turned to illegal or semi-legal activities to make a living after the collapse of the Soviet Union. In particular, many of them got involved in retail drug dealing and now sell drugs on the periphery of most Russian cities and towns. In Moscow, as well as in Rostov, in Krasnoyarsk as well as in Khabarovsk or Vladivostok, the Roma villages that are located at the city's outskirts are the best place to buy drugs, local drug users report (Interviews H13, D6, and A1; Saukhat, 2000; Maiorova, 2000; Rakitsky, 2000; Zavadskaya, 2000). According to a study of the Research Institute of the Russian Ministry of the Interior, Roma women are more involved than men in the drug trade, which often constitutes an important source of the family income. Gypsies, however, are largely active at the retail level of the drug market and, despite the existence of Roma communities in most Russian regions, they are scarcely involved in the interregional wholesale trade (RIMVD, 2000; Interviews H13 and A6; *contra* FSB, 2000, *passim*).

Especially in the European parts of Russia, Caucasian nationals are also active in street dealing. In several cities, the latter were described by many

drug users as the typical dealers. As one of them, interviewed in St. Petersburg, put it,

> "The typical drug dealers are *zverki* (persons of Caucasian nationality) and gypsies. There are family clans that have been sold drugs for a long time. They are preferred by users, because in general our Russian sellers are either drug addicts themselves or undercover policemen ... or they do not sell drugs in good places...." (Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 25).

In many cities of the European Russia, Caucasians and, above all, Azeris work in and often run the open-air markets for food and clothes. When the *perestrojka* reforms allowed private trade, the migrants from the Caucasus areas were the first to exploit this chance and began to trade in vegetables, meat and clothes. Many of these new traders had moved to Moscow, St. Petersburg or other large European Russian cities in the late 1970s and early 1980s to work as contract workers in the building industry and in other sectors of the economy. Unlike those who migrated after the Second World War, *limitschiki*, as contract workers are nicknamed in Russia, had serious difficulties to integrate in Soviet and then, Russian society. Lacking better alternatives, many of those who remained after the contract expired, and the few who had migrated independently in the late 1980s, exploited the chances opened by Gorbachev's reforms and became street traders (Snisarenko, 1997: 142-144).

Especially in the case of Azeri migrants, their presence in Russia rapidly increased after the collapse of the Soviet Union, when thousands of people migrated from the war-torn areas in Nagorno-Karabakh and at the Armenian border (see Hunter, 1997; Halbach, 1999; Goldenberg, 1994). According to some estimates, there are now two million ethnic Azeris living in Russia (Kurbanov, 1999). In most Russian cities and, above all in Moscow, the Azeri communities rapidly expanded during the 1990s. According to the Russian Ministry of the Interior, half a million Azeris lived in Moscow alone in 1998. The Azeri embassy estimated their real number in one million people (Halbach, 1999: 28). In St. Petersburg, there were 12,000 Azeris, less than one percent of the city's population, when the last census was carried out in 1989. Even according to the most conservative estimates, their number at least doubled in 1990s. According to Dajag, the association representing Azeri migrants in St. Petersburg, there were between 300,000 and 500,000 non-registered Azeris in the second half of the 1990s (Snisarenko, 1997: 144).

Most of the new migrants, however, did not register themselves as residents, because in most cases they would have been refused a residence

permit, nor claimed a refugee status, though they were entitled to it. The Russian migration offices, in fact, usually do not allow refugees to live in large cities, but send them in other regions or in smaller cities and villages of the surrounding regions (Snisarenko, 1997).

Having no resident and work permit, most of the new migrants have no access to the legal economy and, in order to survive, have no choice but to work in the city's underground economy. Most of them end up finding jobs in the open-air markets. As a result, since the mid-1990s most traders have had an irregular status and the markets have become a lawless space, where the order is guaranteed by the chiefs of the most powerful clans. Due to their secrecy, the authority structure of Azeri or Caucasian markets has not been properly studied yet. It is clear, however, that this structure is at least potentially an alternative to state power, which is largely unable to control and to regulate the market (*ibidem*).

In such a context, illegal drugs can easily become an attractive commodity for the most entrepreneurial and/or the most needy migrants working in open-air markets. For those who are used to living and working in irregular conditions, selling illegal drugs does not probably look much different than selling, say, potatoes or onions. Furthermore, the informal rules and procedures that were created to regulate the import and trade of legal goods can be applied without problems even to illicit drugs. Finally, there are practical advantages: market traders are used to importing commodities from abroad or other distant Russian regions and often can use the shipments of their usual legal goods to smuggle illegal drugs.

Caucasian drug dealers are often described as belonging to large criminal organisations, which are mafia-like (Dunn, 1997; FSB, 2000, *passim*). According to two police officers interviewed in Moscow and to information drawn in other Russian cities, however, Caucasian drug dealing groups seem rather to be composed of a limited number of people and to be based on family, clan or locality ties (Interviews A1 and A6). Indeed, though migrants from the Caucasus are often lumped all together, they belong to a variety of ethnic groups and solidarity relationships, which are most useful for the accomplishment of illegal activities and are usually founded on very localised principles, such as the membership in the same family, clan, or village (Snisarenko, 1997).

Despite the advantages deriving from the reliance on family or locality ties, Caucasian dealers increasingly feel the competition of Afghan and Tajik sellers, who have an incomparable strength. The latter two originate

from the No. 1 world heroin producer country and from heroin's first, almost unavoidable, transhipment point respectively. Several drug users, interviewed in Moscow and St. Petersburg, point out that their dealers are Afghan and, above all, Tajik nationals. The latter, coming from a former Soviet republic, have no problems entering the country, usually speak Russian, and have either many contacts or even a residence permit in Russia. As the 19-year-old Anthone notes, "in Moscow there are a lot of Tajik dealers by now" (Interview H7; see also Interviews H9, H12, D6, A1, and A6). Throughout Russia local MPI research teams reported the involvement of Tajik nationals in the heroin trade and street distribution (Maiorova, 2000; Markoryan, 2000; Rakitsky, 2000; Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000; 25-26; Obidina, 2000; Zavadskaya, 2000).

According to many interviewees, many Tajik dealers are themselves drug consumers and belong to no large-scale criminal organisation, but often bring themselves heroin from Tajikistan to make ends meet. As the 25-year-old heroin user Alesia states, "many Tajik dealers use drugs themselves" (Interview H8). Likewise, a drug user in St. Petersburg maintains:

> "... I usually buy drugs in the open-air market. The typical seller there is Tajik or, anyhow, 'black'. As a rule, he is very fussy, sometimes on drugs. They buy heroin in Tajikistan (about $3 per gram) and bring it to Russia in condoms, distribute it among street dealers in small portions and sell it at a much higher price" (Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 25; see also Interviews H7, H8, H9, H12).

According to Russian customs' sources, many Tajik traders are blackmailed by drug trafficking organisations and obliged to smuggle heroin into Russia. Relying on the statement of several detained couriers, in its latest drug report the State Customs Committee described the following recruitment scheme. An aspiring Tajik trader is granted a loan to buy some goods (most usually, vegetables and fruits) for sale in Russia. Before the shipment, the cargo is stolen or destroyed, as if by accident. The trader falls in financial difficulties and he is offered the chance to smuggle heroin to repay his debt. His family and relatives are often held as hostages and his house and assets as a kind of mortgage. If the trader refuses or he is detained by law enforcement authorities, the mortgaged properties are sold or destroyed (SCC, 2000: 18).

It is impossible to say how often this recruitment scheme is employed. Given the dire economic conditions and the widespread availability of heroin in Tajikistan, however, it is probably not necessary to resort to it very often, as there must be plenty of volunteers (Interviews B7 and F3). As a Russian law enforcement officer put it, "people have to live somehow and

often have no choice but to deal drugs" (Interview A7). The huge expected profits of heroin smuggling are also a powerful lure for impoverished Tajik and Afghan citizens. In fact, a gram of heroin costs as little as US$ 3 (86 rubles) in Tajikistan and even less in Afghanistan (US$ 1-1.5; see OGD, 2000: 41). In Moscow or any large Russian city, the same amount can be sold for at least 400 rubles (US$ 10.50) at the wholesale level, or for 1,000 rubles (US$ 35) at the retail one. A kilogram of heroin can be bought for US$ 2,000 in Tajikistan and sold for US$ 20,000 or slightly less in any major Russian city (Interviews A6, A3, A6, and B2). The real mark-up, however, is not merely tenfold, as these figures would imply, but much higher because heroin can be cut several times before it reaches the final consumer.[17]

According to Moscow's police officers, groups of heroin smugglers from Afghanistan and Tajikistan are usually composed of five to ten people, which may on exception expand up to 20-25. Only when the whole smuggling network from Tajikistan to Moscow is taken into account, may the number of people involved reach 50. The strength and cohesion of these (and other) illegal networks, however, should not be overestimated. Although long-term relations may develop among network members, the majority of them are arm's-length buyer-seller relationships, which are neither exclusive in any sense nor centrally organised. Each drug dealer is usually free to look for other partners to execute the next transaction and often belongs to more than one network at the same time, since he has contact with several suppliers and has numerous customers to whom he can sell his merchandise. Moreover, in any position of the network, the actors generally know only their immediate supplier(s) and buyer(s) and have no idea of the network's overall extent and structure. Finally, it must never be forgotten that illegal networks are volatile constructions. They constantly change their form and extension, as partners are included, are occasionally or permanently discarded, or are replaced because they have been targeted by law enforcement action (Paoli, 1999a and 1999b; see also Interviews A1 and A6).

[17] The expected profits of heroin trade are such that the business is attractive not only for impoverished peasants but also for many well-off Tajiks. It is enough to say that in May 2000 the Kazakh National Security Committee seized 62 kilograms of heroin and a large amount of foreign currency from a car belonging to Tajikistan's ambassador and further ten kilos were discovered in the embassy's garage (Reuters, 2000c; AFP, 2000d).

The activity of Tajik dealers is prototypically described in a judicial sentence that was provided by Moscow militia officers and was issued in December 1998 by a Moscow City District Court. Four Tajik nationals, three men and a woman, were the defendants in this case and they were all found guilty of membership in a "criminal society" to smuggle large quantities of heroin from their home country (District Court of Moscow, 1998).[18] Šerali K. and Armonśo M. (born in 1968 and 1969 respectively) were the leaders of the group, which was also composed of the younger Farkhod D. (born in 1976) and Dilorom H. The latter is a woman in her thirties with three small children, who used to teach at the Tajik State National University and who had no previous police record. Undercover agents of the Moscow police had contacts with Dodov and organised several controlled purchases for amounts ranging from one to 500 grams of heroin. In the sentence, the Moscow district court stresses the efficiency and organisation of the group, which is regarded as a veritable "criminal society". In fact, it writes:

> "In the course of the investigation it was proved that all four defendants joined their forces for the common purposes of expanding the illicit business of drug dealing on a large scale. The criminal society is characterised by its steadiness, hierarchic structure (leaders, subordinates who perform the tasks, the exact distribution of functions and duties), strictly elaborated scheme of drug trafficking operations. For example, the addresses of the drug deposits are never revealed; drugs and money are exchanged only through several intermediaries. The buyer never knows in advance the place where the transaction will take place, a first meeting is made in a place and, when the buyer arrives there, he is told to go somewhere else. The criminal group was ready to traffic unlimited big amounts of drugs, as long as there was a demand for them, and was ready to deliver them in a short-term. Furthermore, the criminal group was well informed about the source of the drug smug-

[18] They were, in fact, convicted according to the previously mentioned Art. 228, par. 4 and to Art. 210, which defines the "Organisation of a Criminal Society" and states:

1. The creation of a criminal society (or criminal organisation) in order to commit grave or especially grave crime, and likewise the leadership of such a society (pr organisation) or structural subdivision therein, and also the creation of an association of organisers, leaders, and other representatives of organised groups for the purpose of working out plans and conditions for the commission of grave or especially grave crimes –

shall be punished by deprivation of freedom for a term of from seven to fifteen years with or without confiscation of property.

2. Participation in a criminal society (or criminal organisation or in an association of organisers, leaders, or other representatives or organised groups –

shall be punished by deprivation of freedom for a term of from three up to ten years with or without confiscation of property (Butler, 1997: 124).

> gling to Moscow, and about the place where the drugs were stored" (Moscow City District Court, 1998).

Though the group is classified as a "criminal society", none of the information provided by the court seems sufficient to prove the existence of a structured and stable organisation from a sociological point of view.[19] According to the latter standards, the group under examination can be rather considered a 'crew' (i.e. a short-term partnership). Composed of four people, it operated for less than a year, before being dismantled by the law enforcement operation. Though there was certainly an elementary division of labour and an internal hierarchy, the group *de quo* was far from being comparable to any large-scale legal corporation. Furthermore, many of the precautions listed by the court are usual for every person or group selling illegal commodities (Reuter, 1983; 1985; Reuter and Haaga, 1989; Moore, 1974; Paoli, 2000a). The label "criminal society" lets many Western observers think about powerful criminal associations resembling the mythical image of the Italian-American Mafia, as it has been described in many popular books and movies (e.g. Puzo's *The Godfather*) (Bäckmann, 1998; Rosner, 1995). Beyond the label, however, the reality seems to be much different not only in the USA, but also in Russia.

As relatively small amounts of heroin are each time imported from Tajikistan, the drug distribution chain is usually rather small and does not entail more than three or four levels, including the final consumer. The importer is at the same time the wholesale dealer, who sells heroin in smaller lots, when he arrives in a Russian city. The latter's customer sometimes sells directly heroin to the users but most often he supplies a retail dealer, who distributes on the street (Interviews H1, H12, and H13; see also Saukhat, 2000 and Markoryan, 2000).

According to Moscow's police officers, many, though not all, Tajik dealing groups have to pay a 'protection tax' to more established criminal associations that claim sovereignty on specific Moscow quarters. In some cases, up to 25-30 percent of the drug profits need to be passed on by the dealers to these extortionist gangs (Interviews A6 and A5). However, the large groups as such have so far remained largely uninvolved in the drug business (see *infra*).

Up to the mid-1990s even the Chechens were said to be heavily involved in drug trafficking and distribution (RIMVD, 2000) and, indeed, their

[19] It is not known if the court formulated its judgement on additional information that was not reported in the sentence.

groups and clans were often presented as the prototype of the Russian organised crime (Dunn, 1997). Chechens' presence in Russia, however, rapidly sank during and after the first war in Chechnya (1994-1996), when many of them went back: according to Russian law enforcement forces, to fight in the separatist guerrillas, according to Chechen organisations and international NGOs, to escape growing racism and discrimination in Russia. Following the start of the "anti-terrorist campaign" in August 1999 (in West known as second Chechnya war), many came back as refugees, though they have not been officially granted such a status. According to some estimates, between 50,000 and 100,000 Chechens currently live in Moscow alone (Hille, 2000; see also Halbach, 1999: 12-14). Whereas in the early 1990s Chechen gangs were said to terrorise the city (Handelmann, 1995), most Chechens now maintain a low profile, to avoid falling in the law enforcement net. Unidentified Chechen persons have been, in fact, suspected of organising the series of bomb explosions that has hit Russia, and, most importantly, Moscow since the summer 1999. Numerous Chechens report being arbitrarily arrested, detained and even tortured by the police in the aftermath of each terrorist attack (Hille, 2000; Amnesty International, 1999).

According to the local law enforcement forces, Chechens and Ingushes still play a central role in the supply and distribution of illegal drugs in the neighbouring North Ossetia (MVD-North Ossetia, 2000; Ciklauri, 2000). Chechens' involvement in drug trafficking was also reported by the FSB in some European cities, such as Kirov, in the Saratov region in Southern Russia, in the Kurgan region in the Urals, the Tyumen and Tomsk areas in Western Siberia, and the Tyva Republic in Eastern Siberia (FSB, 2000, *passim*; see also BBC, 2000).

According to both the FSB and the Research Institute of the Ministry of the Interior, members of other ethnic minorities, above all Georgians, Dagestanis, and Armenians, but also Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Kyrgyzs and, to a lesser extent, Chinese supply illegal drugs to local markets of numerous Russian cities (FSB, 2000; RIMVD, 2000). In Moscow and St. Petersburg, black Africans are also said to be involved in drug smuggling and dealing and, according to several observers, the latter were the first to import heroin in Russia. Many of these are registered as students and in Russia's capital, live and work above all around the Lumumba University (Interviews B2 and D6).

Though the members of some ethnic communities may be overproportionally represented in the drug distribution system of many Russian

cities, they are far from occupying it all. Indeed, the central role Caucasians and Tajiks end up assuming in the official and popular accounts of Russian thriving illegal drug markets is also due to their visibility – the former usually sell drugs in open markets - and to the growing ethnic prejudices of large sectors of the Russian population towards "Caucasian nationals" and, more generally, southerners (see Kurbanov, 1999; Snisarenko, 1997; Brednikova *et al.*, 1997; Human Rights Watch, 1995). This stigmatisation process is most evidently carried out in the Christian Orthodox Republic of North Ossetia *vis-à-vis* the neighbouring Muslim people of the Ingushetia and Chechenya. Above all in the local media, but also in the reports and official statements of the local government authorities, the latter are constantly presented as the archetypal dealers. Furthermore, they are accused of employing drugs to weaken the North Ossetian people and corrupt their genetic make-up. On December 10, 1999, the *Severnaja Ossetia*, the most widely read local newspaper, wrote:

> "The spread of narcotics in our republic goes beyond drug traffickers' financial interests and assumes the character of a clearly-planned, long-term action. The specialists of the Drug Control Department of the North Ossetian Ministry of the Interior are currently analysing shocking information: our republic has been recently supplied from certain regions with heroin, that was cut with the blood of AIDS-infected people. According to the investigators, there are grounds to talk about a specific attack against the genetic make-up of the North Ossetian nation. If such a preparation were to be diffused, the consequences could be incalculable" (Cikluari, 2000: 30).

The rivalry with the Ingush and Chechen neighbours is so well rooted that there is no need to specify which "the certain regions" are (*ibidem*).

Contrary to many stereotyped expectations, the members of ethnic minorities are not alone in their involvement in the drug trade. In contemporary Russia illegal drugs are produced and sold also by many people who cannot be easily classified in a precise scheme, because they belong to the mainstream Russian population. As Ludmila Markoryan from Balakovo points out,

> "it is not easy to refer the drug dealers of our city to specific social groups. Dealer might a housewife, a jobless person, or a businessman. The age range of middle and high-ranking drug dealers also varies tremendously: there are young people as well as retirees. In the last few years we noted a tendency to engage adolescents aged 10-14 in drug use and dealing, since they cannot be legally prosecuted" (Markoryan, 2000).

This point was also recognised by some drug users, interviewed in Moscow and St. Petersburg. According to the 19-year-old Anthone, for example,

"the production, transportation, and sale of illegal drugs are carried out by all social and national groups" (Interview H7).

Throughout the 1990s retail drug dealing has become a last resort to make ends meet for those who have been most hit by Russia's economic and social transformations. As the 21-year-old Vika points out, "next to pharmacies, in subway stations, many old women sell drugs" (Interview H11). Unable to live on their meagre state pensions, scores of otherwise respectable old people have entered into the drug business in Moscow and other Russian cities. Elderly pushers usually sell medicines they obtain on prescription, above all, the cough syrup Solutan®, which drug users process to obtain *vint*. In the late 1990s, up to 50 elderly dealers were brought into the Kitaj Gorod police station near the Lubjanka square every day. Though some of them were sentenced for drug trafficking, most of these pensioners were searched, held for a few hours and usually released after paying a fine (Franchetti, 1998).

In North Ossetia, women account for 90 percent of the people arrested for drug dealing in the late 1990s. According to Eliko Ciklauri,

> "the typical profile of these women is as follows: aged 30-40, jobless, divorced or single mothers of two or three small children. Already this typical profile lets us suppose that they are not 'professional dealers' but have been obliged by their living conditions to sell drugs" (2000: 23).

In this region illegal drugs are also smuggled by North Ossetian nationals, who migrate back from Central Asian republics, where they had been deported in 1994. Together with the neighbouring Chechen and Ingush people, several thousands of North Ossetians were forced to migrate by Joseph Stalin in 1944 for their 'collaboration' with Nazi German troops. Many of them came back in the late 1950s and 1960s, when the Soviet leader Nikita Kruschev allowed them to do so. The few who had remained there have largely migrated since 1991, because as Russians they were increasingly marginalised by the dominant nationalities of the new Central Asian republics (see Halbach, 1997). Once they sell their property, many of these migrants allegedly buy narcotics, above all heroin, which, being valuable and easy to carry, has become a kind of reserve currency. It is used to transport values from one country to another and to avoid all kinds of border and tax controls. On the point the head of the local FSB noted,

> "a great influence on drug trafficking in North Ossetia is played by the migration flows from Central Asian countries, where a large number of North Ossetian people lived up to a short while ago. Often, even those who had no previous contact with illegal drugs, are obliged to exchange their property with drugs and transport

> the latter in North Ossetia. The import takes place either directly or indirectly, via Moscow or other Russian cities" (FSB-North Ossetia, 1998; Ciklauri, 200: 21).

Even in other Russian regions, drug production and trafficking have become a viable alternative to make ends meet for a significant part of the population. As we noted in Chapter IV, in the Far East as well as in several Russian regions many farmers are increasingly involved in the cultivation, harvest and distribution of cannabis, in order to survive (see Rakitsky, 2000 and Saukhat, 2000; Morvant, 2000).

To understand why this happened, it is probably helpful to recall a few data on the effects of the transition to the market economy in the 1990s. According to the data provided by the State Statistics Board, real money incomes decreased by almost 50 percent since 1990. The August 1998 crisis caused a drop in the real money incomes of the population below the 1992 level. Not only was the average per capita monthly income estimated at a mere 1,469 rubles (US$ 51.40) in July 1999, but also almost half of the workforce did not receive regular pay during the second half of the 1990s. In July 1998 it was calculated that at least eight to ten percent of Russian employees had not been paid wages for more than six months. In July 1999 the average monthly pension in Russia amounted to only 418 rubles (US$ 14.60), or 30 percent of the average wage. As of July 1999, there were 51.7 million people who lived below the subsistence level, representing 35.3 percent of the whole population (UNDP, 1999: 42-46; Tchernina, 1998).

Furthermore, in addition to the drop in average per capita incomes during the 1990s, there has been a drastic increase in inequality of incomes and wages. Though different estimates have been produced, most scholars maintain that inequality in Russia today is commensurable to the Latin American level. According to one study, the incomes of the top ten percent wealthiest exceeded the incomes of the ten percent least wealthy by 65 times (UNDP, 1999: 65).

Inequality and the contemporary appearance of a wide range of goods and services, which were unknown and unavailable to most Soviet citizens, further exacerbate the perception of one's own poverty. As R.V. Ryvkina noted:

> "Poverty is not only a material status, but also a state of mind. The differentiation between people and the social distance between the rich and the poor, which has dramatically worsened during liberalization of the economy, are aggravating the sense among people of their own poverty. And since, not only rich, but also super-rich people have appeared in Russia for the first time, and not only appeared but also changed the nature of many spheres of services ... this increases the feeling of poverty among the bulk of the population" (Ryvkina, 1998: 18-19).

To avoid starvation or to afford a small luxury, most people are obliged to look for a secondary income, in addition to their first official one. According to Russia's tax authorities, around 20 million people, i.e. more than a quarter of the country's economically active population, have a non-reported part-time job. Most people obtain only 30 to 35 percent of their income from their so-called main place of work. The remaining 75 percent is achieved on the side from second and third jobs, which no statistics take into account and which are not subject to any taxation. Between 25 percent (the State Statistics Board's estimate) to 50 percent (the Interior Ministry's estimate) of the total Russian GDP is created in the shadow sector (UNDP, 1999: 45; see also Dolgopjatova *et al.*, 1999; Glinkina, 1999; Ledeneva, 1998).

As most people are used to participate (at least as a buyer) in the country's booming underground economy, for the most destitute or entrepreneurial ones it may seem a short step to start dealing illegal drugs. The moral restraints are furthered lowered by the realisation that many of the rich and super-rich 'New Russians' have accumulated their fortunes by illegal or semi-legal means. As a result, Ludmila Markoryan notes, "there are whole families whose main income is earned through drug dealing" (2000).

4. The Drug Trade and Organised Crime

In the academic and international political debate, there is no unanimous definition of organised crime. Indeed the latter is an ambiguous, conflated concept, produced by a stratification of different meanings, which have been attributed to the term 'organised crime' since the end of the Second World War (Paoli, 2001). Depending on the definition we select, the Russian drug trade or its participants can be regarded organised crime or not.

In the American and Northern European scholarly debate, organised crime is often equated with the provision of illegal goods and services: hence, for example, according to Block and Chambliss, "organized crime [should] be defined as (or perhaps better limited to) those illegal activities involving the management and co-ordination of racketeering and vice" (1981: 13). Organised crime is thus considered a synonym of illegal enterprise. Indeed, according to a review of definitions carried out by Frank Hagan in the early 1980s, a consensus now exists among American criminologists that organised crime involves a continuing enterprise operating in

a rational fashion and focused toward obtaining profits through illegal activities (Hagan, 1983).

If this definition is accepted, it is obvious that illegal drug production and trafficking, in Russia as anywhere else, represents a form of organised crime. In the scientific, but above all in the political debate, however, organised crime is not usually understood as a set of illegal activities, but it is instead identified with a set of large-scale organisations that are either illegal *in se* or are predominantly involved in *contra legem* activities. This second conception is well illustrated by the following definition: "organized crime consists of organizations that have durability, hierarchy and involvement in a multiplicity of criminal activities. (...) The Mafia provides the most enduring and significant form of organized crime" (Reuter, 1985: 175).

If this second definition is accepted, the answer to the above question needs to be changed. In fact, we have yet no grounds to affirm that drug production and trafficking in Russia are run by organisations fulfilling the criteria set by Peter Reuter's definition. Though there are contrasting opinions on this matter (MVD, 2000; FSB, 2000), this conclusion is backed by the analysis of judicial sentences and the fieldwork in several Russian cities. It is also confirmed by the statements of some Russian and most foreign law enforcement officials who were interviewed during the present research. As one of the latter put it,

> "I hardly dare to tell it my colleagues back home, but for the moment we have no proof of a large-scale involvement of Russian organised crime in the illegal drug trade. Our investigations so far show that the latter is characterised by a low level of sophistication and organisation" (Interview B1; see also Interview B7).

A 'disorganised' view of the supply side of the Russian drug market was also offered by the head of the North Ossetian FSB in a 1998 parliamentary hearing in Vladikavkaz. On the basis of the preceding analysis his conclusions can also be extended to other Russian regions:

> "The available information does not support the hypothesis that a narco-mafia exists on the territory of our republic. Narcotics are usually smuggled by single persons or group of people, that are not linked to one another" (FSB-North Ossetia, 1998; Ciklauri, 2000: 28).

This representation of the illegal drug trade in Russia mirrors the functioning of illegal drug markets in Western Europe and the USA. In a recent project sponsored by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), for example, Paoli found out that in two major Western European cities, Frankfurt and Milan, the great majority of drug deals, even those involving large quantities of drugs, are carried out by

numerous, relatively small, and often ephemeral enterprises. Some of them are family businesses: that is, they are run by the members of a blood family, who resort on an *ad hoc* basis to a net of non-relatives in order to carry out the most dangerous tasks. Some are veritable non-kin groups, which are formed around a (charismatic) leader and then manage to acquire a certain degree of stability and develop a rudimentary division of labour. Others are 'crews': loose associations of people, which form, split, and come together again as opportunity arises. Indeed, especially at the intermediate and lower levels, many dealers work alone, either to finance their own drug consumption habits or, more rarely, to earn fast money. Most of these drug entrepreneurs have no contact whatsoever with the underworld, but are often inconspicuous persons, who can hardly be distinguished from 'normal' people (Paoli, 2000a).

Even Southern Italian mafia families, whose members were deeply involved in large drug deals in Milan during the 1980s and early 1990s, do not seem to operate as monolithic productive and commercial units. On the contrary, their members frequently set up short-term partnerships with a few other mafia affiliates or even with external people to make drug deals. These 'crews' are far from being stable working units that could be compared to the branch office of a legal firm. Their composition frequently changes depending on the moment when deals take place or on the availability of single members. After one or a few drug transactions some teams are disbanded, while others continue to operate for a longer time, eventually changing their composition to some extent (see also Paoli, 2000b and 2000d).

More generally, it is worth stressing that in all Western countries, but to a lesser extent also in Russia, drug entrepreneurs of all kinds are subject to the constraints deriving from the illegal status of the products they sell. These constraints have to do with the fact that all illegal market actors – and particularly drug traffickers and dealers - are obliged to operate 1) without and 2) against the state.

1) Since the goods and services they provide are prohibited, illegal market suppliers cannot resort to state institutions to enforce contracts and have the violations of contracts prosecuted, nor does the illegal arena host an alternative sovereign power to which a party may appeal for redress of injury (Reuter, 1983; 1985). As a result, property rights are poorly protected, employment contracts can hardly be formalised, and the development of large, formally organised, enduring companies is strongly discouraged.

2) All suppliers of illegal commodities – and specifically drugs – are bound to operate under the constant threat of being arrested and having their assets confiscated by law enforcement institutions. In reality, the effective risk of arrest and interception of assets varies according to the situation and the counterparts involved. Some illegal entrepreneurs are so successful in bribing representatives of state institutions and/or the latter are so weak and inefficient that the risk is in effect strongly reduced. In most Western countries, however, the risk of arrest and interception of assets can hardly be disregarded in the long run. In varying degrees, all illegal market actors risk imprisonment and the seizure of their properties by law enforcement agencies and must take precautions against such events.

As we saw in the previous pages, due to the low pay, poor equipment and corruption of Russia law enforcement forces, this risk may be currently lower in Russia than in most Western countries. Nonetheless, it cannot be completely neglected even by illegal drug entrepreneurs operating in Russia. Each participant in the drug trade will thus try to organise his activities in such a way as to assure that the risk of police detection is minimised. Incorporating drug transactions into kinship and friendship networks and reducing the number of customers and employees are two of the most frequent strategies that drug entrepreneurs employ to reduce their vulnerability to law enforcement efforts (Reuter, 1983; 1985; Moore, 1974: 15-31).

These constraints have so far prevented the rise of large, hierarchically organised firms to mediate economic transactions in the illegal marketplace. The factors promoting the development of bureaucracies in the legal section of the economy - namely to take advantage of economies of scale and specialisation of roles - are outbalanced in the illegal arena by the very consequences of product illegality. Due to these constraints, within the drug economy there is no immanent tendency towards the consolidation of large-scale, modern bureaucracies.

The large criminal organisations, which are presented as the dreadful Russian Mafia by the domestic and foreign press, are at the moment apparently not interested in the drug business, though some of their younger 'affiliates' may deal drugs. As a matter of fact, not even these groups constitute unitary, hierarchical bureaucracies, which can be compared to legal multi-national corporations. As a Russian law enforcement officer put it, these groups are "much smaller and more loosely organised than foreign journalists often maintain" (Interview A6). No single group is composed of several thousand members, as it is instead often stated in media reports,

instant and scientific books alike (see, for example, Dunn, 1997; Roth and Frey, 1995; Lallemand, 1997; Koschko and Dazkewisch, 1995).

These organisations, be it the Solntsevskaya, Ismalovskaya or Kurganskaya in Moscow, the Tambovskaya, Malishev's or Kazanskaya in St. Petersburg, can be rather understood as loose confederations of a plurality of independent groups that are united either by the same geographic origin, by their location or by the recognition of the same leader. The Kurganskaya, for example, draws its name from Kurgan, a city in the Urals, out of which most of its members came to Moscow. Likewise, most of the members of the Kazanskaya come from Kazan, the capital of the Republic of Tatarstan and those belonging to the Tambovskaya come from Tambov, which lies 450 km south of Moscow. The famous Solntsevskaya draws its name from Solntsevo, a south-western district of Moscow; the Ismalovskaya from the Ismailov open air market in North-eastern Moscow (Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 54-84; Interviews A5 and A6).

Even when crime groups draw their name from their leader, the latter is far from having absolute powers. Malyshev's organisation was indeed, founded by A. Malyshev, but it soon grew to become a confederacy of several dozens groups that operated independently under one 'roof'. The leaders of these groups were originally supposed to pay a sort of license for using Malyshev's name but, after a while, many gangsters stopped doing it, without recognising his 'property rights'. Not even the other criminal syndicates can be regarded as a unitary Moloch. According to Gilinsky, Kostjukovsky and Rusakova, for example, the Kazanskaya

> "is not an united organization with one leader. There are several independent groups (Kinoplyonka, Zhilploschadka, Al'metievskaya, Chelninskaya, and some others), which co-operate every now and then. (...) Most of the groups consist of mobile commandos, which operate only for a while in St. Petersburg. These gangs commit a series of crimes and then flee back in Tatarstan and their place is taken by the following crew (*vakhta* method). Only 'residents' live in St. Petersburg" (Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 53-54).

Likewise, by the mid-1990s the Tambovskaya "looked like a kind of business club: its representatives are united only by the common membership" (*ibidem*: 53). Though they can co-operate, they basically work independently, merely exploiting a common brand (see also Galeotti, 1992).

The same can be said of one of Moscow's best-known criminal organisations, the Solntsevskaya. The name itself is an umbrella definition to indicate a variety of small youth gangs that developed in the 1980s in the Solntsevo district to carry out extortion and thefts. In the late 1980s and

early 1990s some of the group leaders were able to earn large sums of money by importing computers and other electronic equipment and later on, by organising fraud schemes and running casinos. For several years Sergej Michailov was considered the leader of the group though it is not clear how wide his powers ever were. It is certain, instead, that "the Solntsevskaya no longer exists as a single organisation" (Interview A5; see also Interview B5). It has split in several smaller groups, which compete with each other for the control of the territory and of the resources. In the late 1990s there were several shootings among the rival fractions of the Solntsevskaya, one of which spectacularly took place next to the Kremlin (*ibidem*; see also Interview A6).

As much as the Solntsevskaya leaders, in the late 1980s and early 1990s the high-ranking leaders of the most prominent organised crime associations earned fabulous wealth in the no man's land that was left by the end of the planned economy. Though they also established protection rackets and organised fraud schemes, the bulk of their wealth came from the import and sale of perfectly legitimate goods and services. By using a variable mix of corruption, violence, and entrepreneurial skills, they merely supplied the Russian people with commodities they had long dreamt of, but were still desperately scarce in the last phase of the Soviet command economy and its immediate aftermath: computers, autos, electronic equipment, gambling. The extraordinary enrichment chances offered by the transition to a market economy explain, according to some interviewees, the lack of interest of the largest criminal groups for drug trafficking. As a law enforcement officer put it, "they have such huge opportunities to make money in the so-called legal economy, that it makes no sense for them to deal drugs" (Interview B2).

The leaders and high-ranking members of Moscow's largest and most famous criminal groups have accumulated so much wealth during the 1990s in the legal and semi-legal sectors of the economy that they have now no interest to 'dirty their hands' with drugs. Indeed, they usually have the opposite problem: namely, how to legitimise their ill-gotten fortunes and gain a respectable reputation, as the case of Michailov, the one time leader of the Solntsevskaya gang (Hoffman, 1999). Whereas a new generation of organised crime groups may consolidate, those who amassed huge riches in the wild phase of Russia's transition to the market economy now want to become legitimate businessmen. This wish is understandable and in some respects may even be desirable for the whole society, as much as the legitimation of American robber barons produced positive effects for the

19th century American economy (Interviews E4 and E5; Rutland and Kogan, 1998; see also Lapina, 1997).

However, the transfer of illegal methods in the legitimate economic and political competition should be thoroughly prohibited much more than it has done so far. Violence, extortion and corruption are still widely resorted to in Russia in both the legal and illegal side of the economy, though these and, above all, violence, should be thoroughly prohibited from the legal economic competition. As Max Weber noted,

> "the appropriation of goods, through free, purely economically rational exchange ... is the conceptual opposite of appropriation of goods by coercion of any kind but especially physical coercion, the regulated exercise of which is the very constitutive element of the political community" ([1922] 1978: 640).

In the early 1990s contract killings were basically a method to settle conflicts within the underworld. Since the mid-1990s they have been increasingly used in the legitimate economy and there have been many victims among high-ranking businessmen and politicians (see Radaev, 2000 and Volkov, 2000). In St. Petersburg alone, more than 17 prominent politicians and businessmen were shot dead between October 1995 and April 2000, including Ivan Lushinsky, the chairman of the Baltic Sea Lines, Mikhail Manevich, St. Petersburg's Vice Governor, and Galina Starovoitova, a deputy of the State Duma and leader of political movement 'Democratic Russia' (Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 45).

Despite its totalitarian past, the Russian state is today largely unable to effectively exercise the monopoly of violence, which is the defining trait of territorial political institutions (Weber, [1922], 1978). As shown by Table V.6, the number of murders more than doubled during the 1990s. At the beginning of that decade 15,566 murders were reported in the Russian Federation; by 1999 their number had escalated to 31,140, after reaching the peak value of 32,386 in 1994. Out of these 30,000+ murders, about 500 are identified by the police as contract killings each year. The murder rate per 100,000 inhabitants correspondingly increased from 10.5 in 1990 to 21.3 in 1999. This is an astonishing rate that is second only to the South African one among developed countries, but it is three to 14 times higher than the rate registered in most Western countries. According to the international comparisons, which were carried out by the British Home Office in 1997, the corresponding rate in Germany was 1.44 per 100,000 people, in the United Kingdom 1.49, in France 1.60, and in the USA 7.34 (Home Office, 1998: 210-222).

Table V.6: Murders reported in Russia ~ 1990-1999

	number	*rate per 100,000*
1990	15,566	10.5
1991	16,122	10.9
1992	23,006	15.5
1993	29,213	19.7
1994	32,286	21.8
1995	31,703	21.4
1996	29,406	19.9
1997	29,285	19.9
1998	29,551	20.2
1999	31,140	21.3

Source. Elaboration on data provided by RIPGO, 2000.

Though the sudden expansion of illegal drug use may have been shocking for most Russians, who were not used to it, the anomaly of contemporary Russia does not lie in the development of the illegal drug markets and trade, which, in varying measures, can be found in virtually all developed and developing countries of the world. Russia's anomaly lies in the inextricable intertwinement of the legal and illegal portions of the economy. Between the two there is no solution of continuity yet. On the one hand, as we have just seen, the leaders of many of the most famous Russian criminal groups made their fortunes by importing scarce legal goods and by exploiting loopholes in the national legislation. On the other hand, many of today's most successful entrepreneurs have built their fortunes in a shady way. Crony capitalism has dominated the privatisation process, under which 70 percent of Russia's state-owned industry has been transformed into privately owned joint-stock companies (Glinkina, 1994, 1998 and 1999; Shelley, 1994 and 1995; Gilinsky, 1998a and 1998b; Rawlinson, 1998: 257-261; Black *et al.*, 1999; Pleines, 1998; Lapina, 1997; Dolgopjatova *et al.*, 1999; Ledeneva, 2000; Fituni, 2000). Tax evasion and illegal export of capital remain still today widespread practises among many legitimate firms and the members of the upper class (Busse, 2000). It is enough to recall that capital flight from Russia was still about US$ 1 billion per month in the early 2000, down from the annual US$ 15 billion in 1999 and US$ 25 billion at the height of the Russia's financial crisis in 1998 (Reuters, 2000b).

Meaningfully, after almost two years of investigating the movement of billions of dollars through the Bank of New York, US federal law enforce-

ment officers came to the conclusion that most of the money involved tax evasion by Russian businesses. In what began as one of the biggest money-laundering investigations in US history, law enforcement officers determined that much of the wrongdoing appears to have occurred in Russia. US$ 300,000 was moved through the Bank of New York to pay a ransom for a kidnapped businessman. The "vast majority" of the US$ 7 billion channelled out of Russia from 1996 to 1999 originated from tax evasion and tax fraud (Weiser and Bergmann, 2000).

The most difficult challenge currently facing the Russian government is to set up a viable and effective legal framework, which has to be administered by a truly *super partes* authority, to regulate the legitimate economy and to separate sharply the latter from the underground and *tout court* criminal ones (see Stiglitz, 1999). In a society where less than two decades ago all forms of entrepreneurship were considered criminal and where the word *byznes* still carries a pejorative tone (Bäckmann, 1998), this would be the only way to make Russian citizens finally appreciate the difference between legitimate business and organised crime.

VI. The Russian Policy Against Illegal Drug Trafficking and Abuse[1]

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, the Russian state authorities have reacted with great determination to the expansion of illegal drug trade in their country. Several important steps have been taken at both the domestic and international level to hamper the growth of such trade. Several measures have also been enacted to tackle the phenomenal increase of illegal drug use and abuse. However, due to budget constraints, only few of the latter provisions have been fully enacted. According to several, both Russian and foreign, observers, the current drug policy in Russia is still too much focused on supply reduction, whereas more funds should be invested on the demand side, for drug prevention, treatment, and harm reduction.

1. The Legal Framework of the Fight Against Drug Trafficking

The legal framework for the fight against drug trafficking is primarily defined by the Russian criminal code. Since January 1, 1997 a new criminal code has been in effect, which has however incorporated the drug offences foreseen by the 1961 code (the only major difference being that the latter referred only to narcotic drugs and did not mention psychotropic substances; see Lammich, 2000 and Morvant, 1996). In the 1996 criminal code drug offences are now defined by Articles 228-233.

Article 228, "Illegal Manufacture, Acquisition, Keeping, Carriage, Sending or Sale of Narcotic Means or Psychotropic Substances" has already been partially analysed in Chapter V. Its first paragraph regulates the "illegal acquisition or keeping without the purpose of sale of narcotic means and psychotropic substances on a large scale", which is punishable with imprisonment up to three years. Instead, the possession of narcotics "not on a large scale" is not considered a criminal offence, but an administrative infraction. The possible sanctions are a fine, corrective labour and arrest for a maximum period of two weeks (Mordowez, 1998: 22; Lammich, 2000: 20; Morvant, 1996: 22; UNDCP, 1997a). The sanction may be sus-

[1] This chapter relies on an extended research report on the legal framework of the fight against drug trafficking and organised crime in Russia, which was written by Dr. Siegfried Lammich.

pended if the offender voluntarily begins a detoxification program (Art.44/1). The 1996 criminal code thus confirms and, indeed, somehow widens a partial decriminalisation which was first introduced in 1991, with an amendment to the 1961 code. Until 1997, in fact, the possession of narcotics drugs even in a small scale could still be punished as a criminal offence, if the person had already received an administrative sanction for the same action.

The meaning of "a large scale" varies according to the different psychoactive substances. Following the approval of the 1996 criminal code, their respective amounts are determined by the Standing Committee on Narcotic Drug Control of the Russian Ministry of Health. Previously, the amounts were defined by each court on the basis of guidelines published by the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation. In December 1996 the Standing Committee published a table which is still valid, though it has been modified several times. In its version of December 2, 1998, 64 narcotic drugs and 16 psychotropic drugs were mentioned (in the 1996 original table these were 58 and 13, respectively) (Standing Committee on Narcotic Drug Control, 1998). "Not large scale" amounts are considered the following:

- hashish: up to 0.1g
- dried marijuana: up to 0.1g
- not dried marijuana: up to 0.5g
- opium: up to 0.1
- morphine: up to 0.1g.

In the explanations accompanying the table, the Chairman of the Standing Committee makes clear that the above amounts were defined not only on the basis of medical criteria, but also according to their social danger. In particular, the Standing Committee considered very dangerous the rapid expansion of heavy drugs, which were previously unknown in Russia, and, as a result, the table sets no figure for heavy drugs (such as heroin), to avoid the explicit decriminalisation of the acquisition and possession of even very small amounts (Babayan, 1998; see also Lammich, 2000: 10-11).

In 1998, however, the Russian Ministry of the Interior, in agreement with the Supreme Court and the Prosecutor's Office, issued a recommendation, in which it stated that a penal proceeding can be initiated, only if a "portion" of illegal drugs capable of producing psychoactive effects on its user was seized (1998a; 1998b; 1998c). As the analysis of judicial sentences in Chapter V showed, the notion of portion is very conservatively interpreted and a few milligrams of heroin may be enough to open a penal

proceeding for the acquisition and possession of drugs on a large scale. In the Russian jurisprudence, in fact, heroin above 0.005 grams and LSD above 0.0001 grams are usually considered already a large amount (Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 32).

In agreement with the Supreme Court and the Prosecutor's office, the MVD also set forth that, according to Art. 14, par. 2 of the criminal code, an act, which formally fulfils the conditions set by Art. 228, may not be punished if its danger for the society is considered insignificant. It is up to the investigating authorities (hence, without court control) to decide "under consideration of the total circumstances of the act", if an act is to be considered a criminal offence or an administrative infraction (MVD, 1998a; 1998b; 1998c; see Lammich, 2000: 11).

As mentioned in Chapter V, the second, third, and fourth paragraphs of Article 228 concern the "acquisition or keeping of illegal drugs for the purposes of sale, manufacture, processing, carriage, sending or sale of narcotic means of psychotropic substances". Even if the only small amounts of drugs are seized, imprisonment for three up to seven years is foreseen by the second paragraph. If the above acts are committed either "(a) by a group of persons by prior collusion, (b) repeatedly; or (c) with respect to narcotic means or psychotropic substances on a large scale", deprivation of freedom from five up to ten years with or without confiscation of property is foreseen by the third paragraph (Butler, 1997: 134). The following one concerns the cases in which the crime was committed by an "organised group with respect to narcotic means or psychotropic substance on an especially large scale of drugs". The punishment in this case is imprisonment for a term from seven up to fifteen years with confiscation of property (*ibidem*).

It is interesting to point out that the second paragraph is used only very rarely. As Gilinsky and his team put is, "the 'large' amounts of drugs are defined so restrictively, that acquisition and keeping for the purposes of sale cannot practically take place in any other amount, but large" (2000: 32-33). As we saw in Chapter V, depending on the circumstances, but also probably on the local courts' jurisprudence, the third or the fourth paragraphs of Art. 228 are applied.

The 1961 criminal code foresaw exemption from criminal responsibility, if the offender voluntarily surrendered the drugs in his/her possession and underwent a drug-treatment program (Note of Art. 224, 1961 criminal code). This provision, however, was not incorporated in the 1996 criminal

code. A new note now states that exemption from criminal responsibility should be granted, only if a person

> "voluntarily surrendered narcotics means or psychotropic substances and actively facilitates the eliciting or suppression of crimes connected with the illegal turnover of narcotic means or psychotropic substances, the unmarking of persons who committed them, or the discovery of property extracted by criminal means" (Butler, 1997: 135).

The restrictive conditions set by the new criminal code for granting exemption from criminal responsibility (above all, active support to law enforcement investigations) are negatively assessed by several academic scholars, public narcologists, and drug-treatment providers and the staff of several NGOs (Gilinsky and Zobnev, 1998; Interviews C2, C1, and E6; Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 30-31; Lammich, 2000: 13-14).

Besides Art. 228, the following five articles of the criminal code also define drug offences. Art. 229 defines the offence of "stealing or extortion of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances". The basic punishment is imprisonment for a term of three to seven years. If the crime is committed by "an organised group", "by a person convicted two or more times for stealing or extortion", or with violence or if a large amount of drugs is involved, the punishment is much higher: imprisonment for a term of eight to fifteen years with confiscation of property.

Article 230 defines the offence of instigation to drug use. According to its first paragraph, the basic punishment entails "limitation of freedom for a term of up to three years, or by arrest for a term of up to six months or by deprivation of freedom for a term of from two to five years" (Butler, 1997: 136). Aggravating circumstances are foreseen by the following paragraphs of the same article.

A further offence is the illegal cultivation of plants, containing narcotic substances, which is defined by Art. 231 and which was punished in two of the sentences analysed in Chapter V. Either a heavy fine or imprisonment for a term of up to two years are set by the first paragraph of Art. 231. Aggravating circumstances are foreseen by the second paragraph (*ibidem*: 136-137).

Article 232 defines the offence of "organisation or maintenance of dens for consumption of narcotic means or psychotropic substances". Under normal circumstances, imprisonment up to four years is foreseen; if the crime is committed by an organised group, from three up to seven years (*ibidem*: : 137).

Finally, the last drug-related offence is the illegal issuance or forgery of prescriptions or other documents giving right to receive drugs or psychotropic substances (Article 233). The punishment is imprisonment up to two years with or without deprivation of the right to occupy specific positions or to engage in a professional activity for a term of up to three years.

In addition to the offences defined by the criminal code, the legal framework for the fight against drug trafficking is further specified by the new 'Federal Law on Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances', which was approved on December 10, 1997 and came into effect on April 11, 1998[2]. The eight chapters of the law regulate the following matters:

- basic activities in the circulation of drugs and for the fight against their illegal circulation (Ch.2)
- the licensing of the activity connected with the circulation of drugs and psychotropic substances (Ch.3)
- the conditions under which several types of activities connected with the circulation of drugs are performed (Ch.4)
- the use of drugs and psychotropic substances for medical purposes (Ch.5)
- the fight against the illegal circulation of drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors (Ch.6)
- the medical treatment of addicts (Ch.7).

Whereas Chapter 8 contains a few concluding regulations, the first chapter includes some important general provisions. Article 1 defines the law's basic concepts. Article 2 refers to the list of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors that are subject to control in the Russian Federation. The list was enacted by the government together with the new drug law and includes all the substances listed by the international conventions to which Russia is party, as well as a few other medical drugs, which have psychoactive effects (MVDE, 1999b: 34). Article 3 subordinates the federal law to the rules of international treaties. In fact, the Russian Federation is party to all major international drug control treaties, i.e. the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, as amended by the 1972 Protocol, the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971, and the Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988.

[2] The law is published in *Vedomosti Federalnego Sobranija Rossijskoj Federacji*, 1998, Nr.2, Pos. 144. Many thanks are due to Valeri Zveriev from MSF-Holland for providing an English translation of the law.

Chapter 1 also defines the key principles of the state policy in the field of circulation of drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors. As stated by Article 4, these should be the following:

- state monopoly on all the activities connected with the circulation of drugs and psychotropic substances
- licensing of all activities connected with the circulation of drugs and psychotropic substances
- priority of preventive measures concerning drug abuse and drug-related crime
- involvement of NGOs and the general population in the fight against the spread of drug abuse
- development of treatment and rehabilitation institutions
- development of international co-operation.

Furthermore, Article 7 of Chapter 2 sets up a Governmental Commission on Drug Abuse and the Illegal Circulation of Drugs, which is headed by the Ministry of the Interior and is in charge of the implementation of the national drug control policy. The specific provisions concerning the fight against drug trafficking are then included in Chapter 6. In particular, its Article 41 lists the state agencies that are responsible for the fight against the illegal circulation of drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors. These are the Ministry of the Interior, the Prosecutor General's Office, the State Customs Committee, the Federal Border Guards, the Federal Security Service, as well as the Ministry of Health and other federal government agencies.

Additionally, the 89 subjects of the Russian Federation (i.e. the republics, autonomous territories, *krais*, *oblasts* and the cities of Moscow and St. Petersburg that signed a treaty on the delimitation of powers between the regions and the federal government in the spring of 1992) also have the right to pass their own programs to prevent and repress the illegal circulation of drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors (Lammich, 2000: 4-9).

2. Interagency and International Co-operation

Especially for the MVD, but to a lesser extent also for the other law enforcement bodies, counter-narcotic operations have become one of the most important activities in the 1990s. Even before the new federal drug law required it, Russian law enforcement agencies adopted several measures to make the fight against illegal drug trafficking more effective. In 1991 a

Drug Control Department (DCD) was set up within the Ministry of the Interior. Its expansion has been so rapid that several Russian experts consider it a major cause of the parallel increase of reported drug offences (Shushakov, 1998: 23; Dargan and Kalchev, 1998: 56). During the 1990s, in fact, the DCD staff more than tripled and reached 5,000 (MVD, 1999b: 28). In the following years, similar entities were created within other law enforcement agencies as well: in the State Customs Committee, the Federal Security Services, and the Federal Border Guards of the Russian Federation (*ibidem*: 29-30; see also Ponomarev, 1998 and Ivasenko, 1998).

The involvement of several agencies in the fight against illegal drug trafficking and lack of distinction in their responsibilities are criticised by several Russian scholars, according to whom the human, financial, and material resources of the Russian state are thus not optimally exploited. Indeed, some experts also point out that even the co-operation among different departments of the same agencies, in particular within the huge Ministry of the Interior, is often far from being smooth and effective (Vodko, 1998: 74; Pradedov, 1998: 299).

Interesting in this respect are the results of a survey carried out by the Research Institute of the Ministry of the Interior among Russian law enforcement officers working in counter-narcotic departments in 1997 (Dargan and Kalachev, 1998: 86 ff.). According to the interviewees, the scarce co-operation among the different law enforcement agencies is due to the following factors:

- the lack of an organisational structure that would foster the co-operation of the different agencies (54%)
- the traditional pride and unhealthy competition between the single agencies (34.5%)
- the lack of legislative differentiation of the competencies assigned to the single agencies (33.5%), and
- the overestimation of one's own potential by the single agencies (10.6%; on this point see also Lammich, 2000: 7-9).

To solve some of the above problems and enhance the co-operation among Russian law enforcement agencies, in May 1998 an Interagency Drug Control Centre was established, which was attached to the Russian Ministry of the Interior. In the centre, officers of the Militia, the Federal Security Service, the State Customs Committee, and the Federal Border Guards work together on a permanent basis. Branches of the centre were set up in

five regions of the Russian Federation: Moscow and St. Petersburg, as well as the regions of Krasnodar, Bryansk and Prymorye (MVD, 1999b: 30). With a technical assistance project, the UN Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (UNODCCP) provided software and the equipment for the establishment of a unified interagency database. The main tasks of the Interagency Drug Control Centre are described as follows:

- intelligence and organisational support of investigations targeting the most dangerous criminal groups that are involved in drug trafficking
- international information exchange with Interpol, the relevant international organisations and foreign law enforcement agencies
- co-ordination of the main law enforcement agencies (including both their headquarters and local branches) in the fight against drug trafficking
- planning, organisation, and implementation of large-scale counter-narcotic operations in co-operation with other Russian and foreign law enforcement agencies.

According to several interviewees, however, the work of the Interagency Centre is hampered by persisting rivalries among Russian law enforcement agencies. By Russian and foreign law enforcement officers alike, these were presented as at least so strong as those among the FBI, DEA and the state police forces in the USA, and those among the BKA, the Landeskriminalämter and the local police forces in Germany. As far as the Interagency Drug Control Centre is concerned, the FSB's attitude was described as the most uncooperative by many observers and was linked to the inclusion of the Interagency Centre within the MVD (Interviews A3, A7, B3, B6, and B7).

Since the fall of the Soviet Union, considerable efforts were made not only to strengthen the co-operation among the domestic counter-narcotic agencies, but also to intensify Russia's co-operation with international organisations and foreign countries on drug control matters.

Much has been achieved within the framework of the United Nations. Russia's representatives annually take part in the session of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs. Furthermore, co-operation has been strengthened with the UN Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (UNODCCP) and other specialised bodies of the UN system (UNESCO, UNDP, HONLEA). In July 1999 the UNODCCP opened a Regional Office for the Russian Federation and Belarus in Moscow. Additionally, in early

1999 the UN Secretariat and the Government of the Russian Federation signed an "Agreement on Immediate Technical Assistance on the Control and Prevention of Drugs and Related Organised Crime in the Russian Federation" (AD/RUS/98/D46), of which the present research project is part. Practical steps to fully implement this program are under way (MVD, 1999b: 40-41).

In May 1999, the Russian Federation became a member of the Council of Europe Co-operation Group to Combat Drug Abuse and the Illicit Trafficking in Drugs (the so-called Pompidou Group). Moreover, as a result of the inclusion in the Council of Europe, the Russian Federation became a party to the 1995 Agreement on Illicit Trafficking by Sea implementing Article 17 of the 1988 UN Convention against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances.

In 1990, the former USSR became a member of Interpol and the Russian Federation has furthered this membership. Within the Russian Ministry of the Interior there is an Interpol Secretariat that mediates contacts and exchanges of information between Interpol's headquarters in Lyon, Russian law enforcement agencies and the police forces of other Interpol's member states (Interview A5).

Bilateral and multilateral co-operation has also increased tremendously since the early 1990s. As of November 1999, more than 80 intergovernmental and interagency agreements with 57 states had been concluded, which fully or partially deal with drug-control co-operation. Working contracts were also established with a number of countries with which bilateral agreements had not been concluded. According to the MVD, the closest co-operation was established with those states that already had accumulated a certain experiences in drug control (UK, Germany, USA, Italy) (MVD, 199b: 39-40).

Multilateral co-operation, in particular, is being developed within the framework of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). In Kiev in 1992, the latter's members signed an Agreement of Co-operation among the Ministries of the Interior in the Fight Against Drug Trafficking, which was meant to ease the exchange of information and joint action of the CIS law enforcement agencies. In 1994, an Agreement of Co-operation and Mutual Assistance in Customs Matters was also signed by Russia and other CIS countries. Furthermore, in May 1996 the Council of the CIS Heads of States adopted an Interstate Program to Fight Organised Crime and Other Types of Dangerous Crimes on the Territory of the CIS states.

In January 1998, the Russian Federation signed the Memorandum of Understanding on Co-operation on Drug Control Matters between the former Soviet Central Asian republics and the UNODCCP. Moreover, action against drug trafficking was repeatedly considered at the meetings of the Council of Ministries of the Interior of the CIS and *ad hoc* measures to activate the co-operation among the police forces of these countries were adopted. To this aim and to promote the circulation of information among law enforcement officers of the CIS, the Ministries of the Interior also exchange legal and regulatory documents, methodological literature and statistics on a regular basis (MVD, 2000: 39-43).

Law enforcement agencies of the CIS countries also share a common database, which was set up within the Russian Ministry of the Interior and stores over 200 thousand records. Additionally, a central collection of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances was created at the Forensic Centre of the Russian MVD at the request of the CIS states.

At the request of the Ministries of the Interior of all the CIS states, the Russian MVD additionally provides training to CIS law enforcement officers working in drug control departments at its own All-Russian Institute of Advanced Training in Domodedovo. With the financial support of the UNODCCP, an International Training Centre is being set up at the above-mentioned MVD institute, to offer training courses to law enforcement officers of all CIS states on a regular basis (*ibidem*).

Furthermore, *ad hoc* agreements were concluded by Russia with some CIS countries. In 1995 the Russian Federal Border Guards concluded an agreement with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, to reinforce trilateral counter-narcotics co-operation on the border with Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iran. A customs union consisting of Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus was also established in 1995 (BINMLE, 1999, pt. 5: 19).

On the basis of the above agreements, since the early 1990s Russian law enforcement agencies carried out numerous counter-narcotic operations together with their counterparts in foreign countries. In the late 1990s, in particular, the former were involved in about 150 international drug controlled deliveries, which were conducted jointly with the law enforcement agencies of Germany, the UK, Israel, the USA, Rumania, Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and other states (MVD, 1999b: 42-43). In 1999, for example, the Russian State Customs Committee conducted 17 controlled deliveries of drugs and psychotropic substances (up from 12 in 1998) (SCC, 2000: 30; see also BINMLE, 2000, pt. 5: 19).

As a matter of fact, all the Western liaison officers who were interviewed during the current research declared themselves satisfied with the drug-related co-operation with Russian law enforcement agencies (Interviews B1, B2, B3, B4, B5, B6, and B7). Some of them stressed that in other fields, most notably in organised crime investigations, the co-operation with Russian partners still needs to be improved. As far as drug-related matters are concerned, however, they all stated that the co-operation was fruitful and frictionless. In particular, several liaison officers pointed out that, despite rumours concerning the spread of corruption among Russian law enforcement officers, no joint operation ever went bust because of leakage of information in Russia. As one of them put it, "no matter how spread corruption may be among low-ranking police officers, neither my colleagues nor I ever had such problems with our direct Russian counterparts in the MVD, FSB, State Customs Committee and Federal Border Guards" (Interview B3).

The same satisfaction was also expressed by Russian officers. Some of them said they were surprised that they could work so well with the representatives of countries that were considered enemies only a decade before (Interviews A1, A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, and A7).

The co-operation with the law enforcement agencies of CIS states was less positively assessed. Although some high-ranking militia officers stated that there were no problems (Interview A3), most interviewees admitted that the co-operation with other CIS countries was far from proceeding smoothly and indeed worked only as long as it could rely on pre-existing personal contacts. Despite the numerous agreements underwritten by CIS countries in the 1990s, requests of assistance and information through official channels are allegedly answered only rarely and, if an answer does arrive, it usually comes when it is already too late (Interviews A3, A5, A7, and A9).

Especially in the case of Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan, the co-operation was unanimously described as very poor. In its latest drug report, the State Customs Committee even officially criticised the latter country. Allegedly, when the Russian customs requested the assistance of their Kyrgyz counterparts to set up a controlled delivery of heroin from Kyrgyzstan to the USA through Russia, "the law enforcement bodies of Kyrgyzstan took a passive approach to the problem" (SCC, 2000: 17).

The Kiew Agreement of 1992 states that money and other assets recovered in operations jointly conducted by the law enforcement agencies of

several CIS states should be divided equally among all the states and agencies involved in the operation. The same provision is repeated in Art. 229 of the Russian customs law. Despite that, however, many Russian law enforcement officers complain that the Southern CIS states usually show no interest in organising joint controlled deliveries of narcotic drugs. Allegedly, as soon as the latter have intelligence information about a drug transhipment, they seize the drug lot, in order to get praise and, eventually the financial support from the international community (Interviews A7 and A8).

Within the CIS countries the only major success of drug control cooperation was considered by many observers the so-called 'Channel' operation, which is co-ordinated by the Interagency Drug Control Centre and which is ongoing since 1998. The operation has a preventive nature and consists of systematic controls on the border between Russia and one or more CIS states, which usually last a few days. Such border controls were so far conducted by Russian law enforcement agencies at the borders with Belarus, Ukraine, and Kazakhstan together with their respective foreign counterparts. Especially on Russia's southern borders, dozens of seizures were jointly carried out, totalling several tons of drugs (MVD, 1999b: 31; SCC, 2000: 13; and Interview A3).

3. Drug Users: The Main Target of Counter-Narcotic Operations

As noted already in the previous chapters, the efforts of Russian law enforcement agencies are bearing some fruits. Both the number of seizures and the amounts of seized drugs increased tremendously during the 1990s (see Graph III.1). Reflecting the higher efficiency and the larger resources employed by law enforcement agencies in this field, even the number of reported drug offences grew spectacularly from 16,255 in 1990 to 216,364 in 1999 (see Graph II.1).

Ever since the early 1990s most of the drug-related penal proceedings have been initiated in Russia according to Art. 228. As shown by Table VI.1, the crimes reported pursuant to Art. 228 on average represent 93.7 percent of all the drug offences registered between 1990 and 1999. Indeed, their percentage increased during the 1990s: in 1990 the offences *ex* Art. 228 represented 83.9 percent of the total; by 1999 their percent was 95 percent.

Table VI.1: Drug offences reported in the Russian Federation, in total and according to Art. 228 ~ 1990-1999

	Drug offences (total)	*Offences ex Art. 228*	***Percent of offences ex Art. 228 on the total of drug offences***
1990	16,255	13,646	83.9 %
1991	18,630	17,036	91.4 %
1992	29,805	27,115	91.0 %
1993	53,152	49,249	92.7 %
1994	74,798	70,420	94.1 %
1995	79,819	72,457	90.8 %
1996	96,645	89,803	92.9 %
1997	185,832	175,053	94.2 %
1998	190,127	180,682	95.0 %
1999	216,364	205,606	95.0 %
1990-99	**961,427**	**901,067**	**93.7 %**

Source: elaboration of data of the MVD, 2000.

This happened although the reports for the other drug offences increased as well, sometimes consistently during the 1990s. The only exception is the crime of stealing and extortion of drugs (Art. 229), which merely recorded a modest increase (13 percent). A growing number of penal proceedings were instead initiated for all other drug offences. In particular, the number

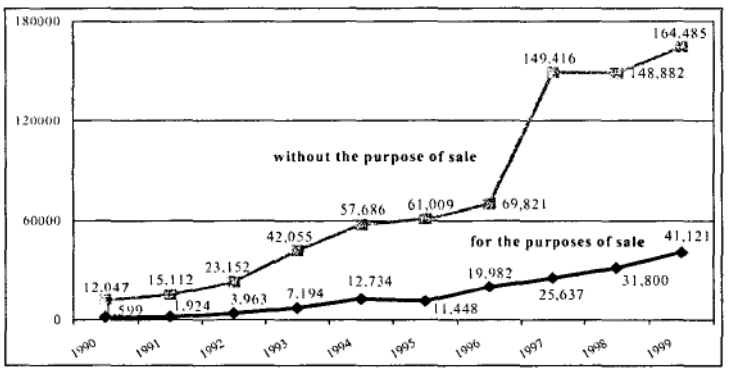
Table VI.2: Drug offences reported in the Russian Federation according to Articles 229, 230, 231, and 232 ~ 1990-1999

	Offences ex Art. 229	***Offences ex Art. 230***	***Offences ex Art. 231***	***Offences ex Art. 232***
1990	413	182	72	206
1991	433	187	76	181
1992	464	190	91	324
1993	760	338	343	499
1994	683	613	593	721
1995	754	648	666	750
1996	686	666	727	909
1997	399	771	2,432	933
1998	460	961	2,719	1,030
1999	468	817	3,630	1,033
1990-99	**5,520**	**5,373**	**11,349**	**6,586**

Source: elaboration of data of the MVD, 2000.

of reported offences for the illegal cultivation of plants containing narcotic principles (Art. 231) grew by 4,941 percent between 1990 and 1999. The offences concerning the organisation and maintenance of drug dens increased fivefold and the offences of instigation to illegal drug consumption grew 4.5 times. These increases, however, were not enough to offset the growth of offences pursuant to Art. 228.

Graph VI.1: Drug offences reported in the Russian Federation ex Art. 228, according to its first paragraph (without the purpose of sale) and to its second, third, and fourth paragraphs (for the purposes of sale) ~ 1990-1999



	Percent of offences *ex* Art. 228, par. 1, on total offences *ex* Art. 228 "without the purpose of sale"	Percent of offences *ex* Art. 228, par. 2, 3, and 4, on total offences *ex* Art. 228 "for the purposes of sale"
1990	88.3 %	11.7 %
1991	88.7 %	11.3 %
1992	85.4 %	14.6 %
1993	85.4 %	14.6 %
1994	81.9 %	18.1 %
1995	84.2 %	15.8 %
1996	77.7 %	22.3 %
1997	85.4 %	14.6 %
1998	82.4 %	17.6 %
1999	80.0 %	20.0 %
1990-1999	**82.5 %**	**17.5 %**

Source: elaboration of data of the MVD, 2000.

The positive picture emerging from these data is, however, at least partially tarnished by the data contained in Graph VI.1 and its accompanying table. Looking at the graph, it becomes clear that most of the recorded drug offences did not concern drug trafficking. During the 1990s, in fact, most drug-related penal proceedings were initiated according to the first paragraph of Art. 228: namely against drug users, who did not have the intention of selling the doses they were found with. On average, in fact, only 17.5 percent of all the penal proceedings initiated pursuant to Art. 228 at least suspected the purposes of sale in their defendants. Their percentage ranged between 11.3 percent in 1991 and 22.3 percent in 1996. In most cases (82.5 percent on average), however, no intention of selling drugs could be proved. The offences according to Art. 228, par. 2, 3, and 4, indeed grew at a faster rate than the offence *ex* Art. 228, par. 1. Between 1990 and 1999, the former grew more than 25 times and the latter 'only' 13. As a result, in 1999 the offences *ex* Art. 228 foreseeing the purposes of sale represented 20 percent of the total. Nevertheless, still 80 percent of the cases entailed no purposes of sale.

As a matter of fact, the offences pursuant to Art. 228, par. 1 (without the purposes of sale) represent not only the majority of offences *ex* Art. 228, but also the overwhelming majority of all the drug offences reported in Russia. As demonstrated by Table VI.3, in fact, the former accounted on average for 77.4 percent of all the reported drug offences and in 1999 they represented 76 percent.

Table VI.3: Percentage of offences according to Art.228, par. 1, on the total of the drug offences reported in the Russian Federation ~ 1990-1999

1990	74.1 %
1991	81.1 %
1992	77.7 %
1993	79.1 %
1994	77.1 %
1995	76.4 %
1996	72.2 %
1997	80.4 %
1998	78.3 %
1999	76.0 %
1990-1999	**77.4 %**

Source: elaboration of data of the MVD, 2000.

This conclusion is further strengthened by the fact that, as proves the analysis of judicial sentences, even most of the people sentenced according to Art. 228, par. 3 and 4 (i.e. for the purposes of sale) are drug users (see Chapter V). It is thus fair to conclude that most of the persons who are arrested and prosecuted yearly in Russia for drug offences are not dealers, but users. As Gilinsky and Zobnev sharply put it,

> "the police prefer to arrest drug users rather than drug distributors because it is easier to do so. For the same reason, they prefer to detain and transfer to the courts mostly cases of addiction to narcotics, not the distributors of narcotics" (Gilinsky and Zobnev, 1998: 120; see also Gilinsky, *et al.*, 2000: 62; Saukhat, 2000: 11).

The amounts set by the Standing Committee to establish the meaning of "large scale" are so low that many drug users end up being arrested and convicted because of the mere possession of limited quantities of drugs. This point is also made by the staff of the Research Institute of the Prosecutor General's Office. In their report for the present research, in fact, they state that

> "It must be admitted that in most cases the growth of drug offences is caused by the registration of drug users' offences. This practice existed even earlier and it goes on up to now. Nevertheless, the criminal prosecution of drug users does not solve a problem, but, indeed, produces a worsening of the general situation. The vacant places of convicted drug users are rapidly occupied by new people and drug dealers multiply their profits and proceeds. (...)
>
> When the shortcomings of the fight against drug trafficking are discussed, usually the imperfections of the existing criminal law are highlighted and recommendations for its amendment are made. However, as we see, the defaults of law enforcement activity in the fight against illegal drug trafficking were generated by defects and mistakes which were made at the stage of the implementation of the law" (RIPGO, 2000: 62-64).

Furthermore, as drug users themselves and other interviewees maintained, the targets of police repression are, above all, those users and, eventually, user-dealers who are in the weakest position: those who do not regularly pay for their *krisha* (roof, i.e. protection tax) to police officers or high-ranking members of the underworld. On the point, for example, the 26-year-old Andrej notes: "the militia has now strengthened the fight against drugs, but most of the arrestees are drug users and petty dealers" (Interview H6). Likewise, according to Anthone,

> "the law enforcement agencies detain either drug users or petty dealers, they make no effort to catch people involved on the upper levels of the drug distribution chain. For this reason, it is too early to say that the fight against drug trafficking goes on already" (Interview H7).

In her turn, even Vika has

> "the impression that the police 'close their eyes' on the retail and wholesale distribution of drugs. The corruption of law enforcement is widespread. In order 'to fulfil a target', sometimes they look for an addict, maybe put heroin on him, and then arrest him. It is nearly always possible to buy one's freedom. Indeed, they frequently put drugs on you, just to get the money" (Interview H11).[3]

The staff of both public drug-treatment centres and drug-related NGOs are concerned that the law enforcement focus on drug users and the repressive approach of the new drug law may discourage drug users and addicts from seeking treatment. As Ludmila Markoryan from Balakovo put it,

> "In my opinion, the new drug law does not solve the drug problem and may, on the contrary, worsen it, since it does not address the reasons of the spread of drugs, but only its consequences; it does not fight the drug business, drug trafficking and the drug dealers, but the drug users. As a result of this strategy, drug users go 'underground', trying to keep away as far as possible not only from law enforcement agencies, but also from medical help" (Markoryan, 2000).

4. More Prevention, Treatment, and Harm-Reduction

As noted above, among the key principles of the new federal drug law are the priority of preventive measures for drug abuse and the development of treatment and rehabilitation institutions. Furthermore, its Article 54 sets forth that "the state guarantees help to drug addicts, including examination, consulting, diagnostics, treatment, and social-medical rehabilitation". However, due to budget constraints this part of the federal law has been only partially implemented and narcologists, state drug-treatment providers and the staff of Russian and foreign drug-related NGOs and international organisations unanimously expressed the view that more should be done for drug use prevention, treatment and harm reduction (Interviews C1, C2, C3, C5, C9, D1, D2, D3, D5, D7, and G1; Markoryan, 2000; Rakitsky, 2000; Saukhat, 2000). The federal drug law should have been completed by delegated legislation and particularly by a law concerning "social and medical help for drug addicts" but, due to the lack of funding, these provisions have not been issued so far (Lammich, 2000: 14).

The state drug-treatment centres are in most cases unable to cope with the sudden expansion of drug use. Furthermore, they often do not have the

[3] On police abuses in Russia see also Human Rights Watch (1999). More generally, on the Russian police, the militia, see Shelley (1996).

financial, material and human resources to fulfil the tasks that are assigned them by the law. Drug users interviewed in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and Vladikavkaz refer that it is common practice to pay for services that should have been obtained gratis (Interviews D2, E6, H3; Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 35-36; Ciklauri, 2000: 13). Moreover, for fear of being reported to the police, many users do not willingly turn to state drug-treatment centres for help. As a result, in many cities state drug-treatment centres often operate below their restricted capacities. In Vladikavkaz, for example, the North Ossetian Narcological Centre has only 20 places and 30 places are reserved for drug addicts at the Psychiatry Department. According to Eliko Ciklauri,

> "the technical equipment of the state centres and the supply of medical drugs are described as very bad by the local Ministry of Health and the heads of the centres. The quality of treatment is decisively conditioned by these factors despite the high costs of treatment, which the user must pay themselves. Most drug addicts simply cannot afford to start long-term treatment. The consequence is that even the limited capacity of these centres is not employed. In January 2000, most of the 20 places for drug users were not occupied" (Ciklauri, 2000: 13; see also Ministry of Health-North Ossetia, 1998).

The shortcomings of state drug-treatment centres are only partially offset by the private ones. These are present in virtually all Russian cities and in some cities at least they even advertise in newspapers (*ibidem*: 14; see also Gilinsky *et al.*, 2000: 36; Interviews C2, D2, and D4). Nonetheless, they operate *contra legem*, because the new drug law clearly states, that the "medical treatment of drug addicts is done only in state and municipal health institutions" (Art. 55). Private centres are, above all, popular because they offer the guarantee of anonymous treatment. They represent, however, a viable alternative only for those users coming from rich families who can afford to pay up to US$ 200 a day.

According to many interviewees, the new drug law also heavily limits drug prevention activities (Interviews C2, C3, D2, D3, D4, D5, and E6). On the one hand, state institutions hardly have money to organise drug prevention and information campaigns directly. On the other hand, the law prevents NGOs and international organisations from doing this work themselves. In fact, its Article 46

> "forbids all forms of drug propaganda whatsoever: any activity, performed by citizens or organisations, that spread information about the production and use of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances, and their precursors and the places where these substances are sold. It is also forbidden to spread and distribute this information in computer networks, mass media and it is forbidden to spread or distribute books and leaflets with the above mentioned information".

Even harm-reduction interventions to inform drug users about the risks associated with drug use and teach them risk reduction techniques are consistently hampered by the above provisions. Thanks to the financial support of George Soros' Open Society Institute, and the training and technical assistance of Médecins sans Frontières, peer-driven intervention and needle exchange programs were started in the late 1990s in several Russian cities. Though these programs have the approval of the local city and regional administrations, many of their co-ordinators report interference by the police and resent working on the fringe of legality (see, for example, Sergeyev, 1999; Burrows *et al.*, 1999).

These interventions and needle exchange programs are, however, considered vital by many interviewees, including the head of the Moscow Office of UNAIDS, to reduce the spread of HIV infection among drug users (Interviews G1, C3, D1, D2, D3, D4, D5, D6, and D7; Sergeyev, 1999; Burrows *et al.*, 1999; Bijl *et al.*, 1999; Burrows *et al.*, 2000; Dehne *et al.*, 1999; UNAIDS, 1999).

Despite the scarcity of funds, many of the experts we interviewed believe that drug prevention, treatment, and harm reduction should be granted at least the same relevance and financial, human and material resources that are invested in the fight against drug trafficking.

Summary

The present study was carried out by the Max Planck Institute for Foreign and International Criminal Law (MPI) on behalf of the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (UNODCCP). It is part of a larger project of "Immediate Technical Assistance on the Control and Prevention of Drugs and Related Organised Crime in the Russian Federation", which was launched by the UNODCCP in early 1999.

To reconstruct the evolution of illegal drug consumption and trade in Russia, a research team was set up under the leadership of Dr. Letizia Paoli, which has been composed of the following researchers: Dr. Siegfried Lammich (MPI, Freiburg) and Dr. Eliko Ciklauri (Freiburg and Vladikavkaz, North Ossetia); the staff of the Research Institute of the Prosecutor General's Office (Moscow); Prof. Dr. Yacov Gilinsky, Yakov Kostukovsky, and Maya Rusakova (Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg branch); Prof. Dr. Ludmila Obidina (University of Nizhniy Novgorod); and Dr. Ludmila Maiorova (University of Krasnoyarsk). Smaller contributions were also provided by: Sergej Poliatikin from NAN (No to Alcoholism and Drugs, Moscow), Sergej Saukhat from Anti-AIDS South (Rostov-on-Don), Ludmila Markoryan and Gennadiy Rakitsky from the Balakovo and Khabarovsk sections of NAN, and Yelena Zavadskaya from the Vladivostok AIDS-Centre.

Ever since the study began in October 1999, the MPI research team applied a variety of research methods, drawing information from a plurality of primary and secondary sources. It carried out 90 in-depth interviews with key observers (law enforcement officials, drug-treatment providers, members of relevant NGOs, and journalists) in different parts of the Russian Federation and 30 in-depth interviews with drug users in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Additionally, it analysed 50 judicial sentences, as well as all the relevant statistics, the Russian and international secondary literature, and articles published on the topic in the Russian press.

Besides collecting nationwide data, field research work was conducted in several Russian cities and regions where the members of the research teams were settled: Moscow, St. Petersburg, Nizhniy Novgorod, Rostov-on-Don, Balakovo, the Republic of North Ossetia-Alanja, Krasnoyarsk, Khabarovsk, and Vladivostok.

The present study, which is the first to empirically analyse the expansion of drug trade in Russia, has confirmed the hypotheses which led the

UNODCCP to launch the project of immediate technical assistance. Russia is today a country in which a variety of illegal drugs are produced, transited to final markets in Western Europe, and are consumed by a growing number of young people. The former USSR did not participate significantly in the international narcotics markets as a consumer or supplier of illicit substances. This pattern of relative self-sufficiency, however, drastically changed during the 1990s, at the same time as Russian drug demand consistently expanded and diversified.

Though large drug quantities merely transit through Russian territory to reach final consumers in Western Europe, the domestic market absorbs today a growing and overwhelming portion of the illegal drugs that are produced, smuggled and sold in the country. The 1990s, in fact, registered a rapid growth of illegal drug use in Russia. Since 1990 the number of registered drug users increased almost 400 percent and in 1999 359,067 drug users were registered in state drug-treatment centres. According to most experts, however, the true number of drug users is eight to ten times that figure. The Russian Ministry of the Interior estimates that 2.5-3 million people regularly or occasionally use illegal drugs in the Russian Federation, representing 2.1 percent of the whole population.

In absolute values, this figure is not staggering. In the United States, just to make a comparison, in 1999 14.8 million Americans (5.4 percent of the population) reported using an illicit drug at least once during the 30 days prior to the interview. In Russia, as well as in most other countries, cannabis remains the most frequently used illegal drug. What is really staggering in contemporary Russia is the explosion of injecting drug use and, specifically, of heroin consumption. The latter substance became available in Moscow and other Russian cities in the second half of the 1990s and rapidly substituted the less powerful home-made opiates that were previously injected by Russian users. Today heroin attracts not only intravenous drug addicts, but also teenagers of all social backgrounds. Six percent of 15-16 year-olds interviewed in Moscow in 1999 admitted to having used heroin at least once in their lives. In none of the 21 other countries involved in the survey, did the lifetime prevalence rate exceed two percent. In the late 1990s, injecting use of heroin and other drugs has turned to be a formidable means of spreading HIV and AIDS.

Following the rapid increase of illegal drug use, the market itself has expanded in both its turnover and geographic extension, so much that illegal drugs of some kind are available even in the most remote parts of the

country. The drug supply, too, has diversified tremendously. In order to get their 'high' or forget their sorrows, drug users all over Russia are no longer obliged to rely on home-made products or derivatives of locally-grown plants. If they can afford it, they can easily buy the same illicit psychoactive drugs that can be found in any Western European or North American city and which are imported from countries as far away as Colombia, Afghanistan and Holland. As one of our interviewees, a drug consumer herself, put it, "over the past ten years drugs have become accessible to whomever wishes to buy them".

Particularly rapid has been the spread of heroin, as the rapid multiplication of heroin seizures in different parts of the country shows. In 1996 the MVD seized heroin in 14 Russian regions; in 1997 in 43; in 1998 in 67, and in 1999, heroin seizures were conducted in more than 70 different regions of the Russian Federation. Heroin largely comes from Afghanistan, which today accounts for 75 percent of the global opium production. It is largely smuggled into Russia through the former Soviet Central Asian republics and, above all, Tajikistan. In the latter country, weakened by civil war and economic recession, many people have no choice but to deal illegal drugs in order to survive. According to reliable estimates, 35 percent of Tajikistan's gross domestic product comes from drug trafficking.

Through Tajikistan and the other CIS states, heroin is also increasingly smuggled into Eastern and Western Europe along the old 'Silk Road'. The International Narcotics Control Board estimates that up to 65 percent of opiates intended for export from Afghanistan may pass through the porous Central Asian borders to Europe. In most cases, Russia is also transited by these heroin cargos. Furthermore, Russia is increasingly used to transfer large amounts of cannabis products, originating from Southern CIS countries and Afghanistan, into Western Europe.

Contrary to the forecasts of many foreign and Russian law enforcement officers, however, Russia has not become a major transit corridor for South American cocaine. Local drug markets in Western Europe keep on being supplied either directly from producing countries or through well-established entry points, *in primis* Spain and the Netherlands.

The expansion of the Russian drug consumption and trade during the 1990s entailed the emergence of a nationwide drug distribution system, which brings illicit drugs from producers to consumers, and the consolidation of the professional role of the drug dealer. As much as in Western Europe and the USA up to the mid-1970s, the latter role did not exist in

Russia up to the early 1990s. In Soviet times, drug users largely consumed psychoactive substances that were available in their region and often either harvested or produced the drugs themselves.

In most Russian cities a multi-level drug distribution system has developed and today users increasingly buy their drugs from the dealers, instead of cultivating or harvesting themselves. However, contrary to sensationalistic accounts, drug users' demands seem to be neither satisfied nor promoted by large, hierarchically-organised firms that monopolise local markets. It is understandable that professional and non-professional observers hypothesise the involvement of a powerful Mafia to explain the sudden expansion of illegal drug consumption and trade in Russia. Nonetheless, neither the fieldwork nor the analysis of judicial sentences provide any backing for such a hypothesis. The phenomenal growth of drug use can rather be attributed to the 'invisible hand' of the market. The local drug markets of Russian cities are today largely supplied by a myriad of dealers who tend to operate alone or in small groups and often consume illegal drug themselves. In many cases the latter do not even possess previous criminal expertise and deal with illegal drugs to make a living or to supplement the meagre income they obtain from licit activities. As a Moscow police officer put it,

> "there are no Colombian drug cartels here. There are instead many small groups that are made of people belonging to the same nationality or ethnic group. There is not one single river, but many streams that flow independently on one another".

The retail and wholesale levels of the local drug distribution systems are often occupied by dealers belonging to ethnic minorities, most notably members of the Roma community, Caucasians as well as Tajik and Afghan nationals. Nevertheless, although the members of some ethnic communities may be overproportionally represented in the drug distribution system of many Russian cities, they are far from occupying it all. Illegal drugs are today produced and sold also by many people who cannot be easily classified in a precise scheme, because they belong to the mainstream Russian population.

The large criminal organisations, that are presented as the dreadful 'Russian Mafia' by the domestic and foreign press, are at the moment apparently not interested in the drug business, though some of their younger affiliates may deal drugs. The extraordinary enrichment chances offered by the transition to a market economy explain, according to some interview-

ees, their lack of interest in drug trafficking. As a law enforcement officer put it, "they have such huge opportunities to make money in the so-called legal economy, that it makes no sense for them to deal drugs".

Despite the recent expansion and the increasing sophistication and professionalisation of drug suppliers, the threat of the illegal drug trade should hence not be overemphasised. Rather, this *contra legem* activity should be matter-of-factly assessed within the larger context of Russia's economic and organised crime. Illegal drug trade, in fact, still represents a relatively small part of the booming Russian illegal and semi-legal economy and it has not yet become the primary source of revenue for the galaxy of Russian organised crime. Though drug trafficking certainly has huge potential for growth, the largest fortunes in Russia are still collected in the wide 'grey area', where the distinctions between the legal and illegal economy are blurred.

Since the fall of the Soviet Union the Russian state authorities have reacted with great determination to the expansion of illegal drug trade in their country. Several important steps have been taken at both the domestic and international level to hamper the growth of such trade. Several measures have also been enacted to tackle the phenomenal increase of illegal drug use and abuse. However, due to budget constraints, only some of the latter provisions have been fully enacted. According to several, both Russian and foreign, observers, the current drug policy in Russia is still too much focused on supply reduction, whereas more funds should be invested on the demand side, for drug prevention, treatment and harm reduction.

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Note on Interview Codes

All interviews with Russian and foreign law enforcement officers, public drug treatment providers, staff of drug-related NGOs, scholars as well as drug users themselves are kept anonymous and are referred to with a code (for example A1 or D5).

The letter of the code refers to the specific background of the interviewee. In particular, A stays for Russian law enforcement officials; B for foreign law enforcement officers (including liaison officers interviewed in Moscow as well as several others interviewed abroad); C refers to Russian narcologists and state drug treatment providers; D to the staff of Russian and foreign drug-related NGOs; E to Russian and foreign academic scholars; F to Russian and foreign journalists; G to the representatives of international organisations and H to drug users.

Finally, to distinguish interviews with people of the same category, a progressive number has been added according to the interview's date and/or its transcription's arrival at the Max Planck Institute.

APPENDIX

MAX PLANCK INSTITUTE
FOR FOREIGN AND INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL LAW

QUESTIONNAIRE ON DRUGS, ORGANIZED CRIME, DRUG POLICES AND LAW ENFORCEMENT

At the beginning of the meeting, the interviewer will briefly describe the research project, mentioning that it is financed by the United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention in Vienna and that it is coordinated by the Max Planck Institute in Freiburg. S/he will then explain the interviewee the main goal of the project: to get a reliable picture of drug markets and organized crime in Russia by interviewing privileged observers in five Russian cities, examining police and judicial investigations as well as analyzing official statistics and the scientific literature.

To such an aim, either before, during or after the conversation the interviewer will ask the interviewee to provide statistics, official reports, judicial documents, grey literature, scientific publications or any other kind of data that might be useful to describe drug markets and organized crime in that specific local context. S/he will also ask the interviewee to put him/her in contact with other privileged observers who could provide competent and reliable information about drug markets and organized crime in that area.

The interviewer will also make clear that all information will be kept strictly confidential and its source will not be revealed to anybody expect the MPI project coordinators.

All interviews need to be recorded. Only if the interviewee denies his/her authorization, the interviewer will write down his/her answers, using additional sheets.

N.B. The questionnaire is composed of seven sections. Not all the questions will be asked to all interviewees. The latter have been divided in three groups:

Group I: ***representatives of public and private drug treatment centres (that is including non-government drug-help associations)***

Group II: ***law enforcement officials: police, prosecutors, and judges***

Group III: ***politicians and journalists***

At the beginning of each section, it is made clear for which group the questions of the section are thought for. For example, the questions of section B concerning "Drug Treatment" will be asked only to representatives of drug treatment centres. On the contrary, the questions of sections C "Drug Use" will be asked to the interviewees of all three groups.

A. PERSONAL DATA *Groups: I, II & III*

A.1. **Name initials (or fictitious name to preserve privacy):** .....

A.2. **Age** (approx.)**:** .....

(Lines 1-2 should be filled by the interviewer without asking the interviewee.)

A.3. **Position:** .....

A.4. **Institution:** .....

A.5. **Previous professional experience:** .....

.....

.....

.....

B. DRUG TREATMENT *Group: only I*

(The following questions need to be adapted depending on whether the interviewee works in a public or in a private drug treatment centre)

B.1. **How many drug users currently receive counseling or some other form of assistance in the centre you work at?** .....

.....

.....

B.2. **What is their first drug of choice? (i.e. how many heroin, cocaine, cannabis users are registered?)** .....

.....

.....

B.3. **How many are polidrug users?** .....

.....

B.4. **Which substances do polidrug users consume?** .....

.....

B.5. **How many of your drug using clients are HIV-positive?** .....

.....

B.6. **How many of your drug using clients are infected by Hepatitis B or C?** .....

.....

B.7. **Please explain how drug users came in contact with your centre? Did they come on their own? Does your centre actively try to contact drug users? Were the latter referred to your centre by law enforcement or other state agencies?** .....

.....

B.8. **If a considerable number of drug users were referred to your centre by law enforcement agencies, please describe the referring procedures:** .....

.....

.....

B.9. **Have these procedures changed over the last fifteen years and, particularly, after the fall of the Soviet Union?**

❒ yes ❒ no

B.10. **If yes, please describe the changes?** .....

.....

.....

B.11. **In addition to drug users, who are the other clients of your centre? Please explain the reasons why your clients contacted you and provide information about the following issues:**

- **the overall number of clients**
- **their age**
- **sex**
- **education**
- **social status**
- **ethnic origin**
- **type of assistance requests, etc.:** .....

.....

.....

B.12. **Please describe the changes that have affected the drug using clients' population of your centre over the last fifteen years and, especially after the fall of the Soviet Union, focusing on the following issues:**

- **number of drug using clients vis-à-vis non drug-using clients**
- **drugs used/abused**
- **age**
- **sex**
- **education**
- **social status of clients**
- **type of assistance requests, etc.:** .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

B.13. **Please synthesize the main goals of the centre you work at, eventually highlighting the gap between the official goals and the everyday reality:** .....

.....

.....

.....

B.14. **How many people work at your centre?** .....

B.15. **Which are their specialization? (Ex: physicians, psychologists, social workers sociologists, etc.)** .....

.....

.....

B.16. **How is your centre organized? How many departments are there? Which are their functions?** .....

.....

.....

B.17. **How many employees of your centre are today responsible for drug treatment services?** .....

B.18. **How many employees had the same task ten years ago?** .....

B.19. **Which is today the budget of your centre?** .....

B.20. **Which percent of the centre's budget is devoted to drug treatment services?**

.....

B.21. **Which percent of the centre's budget was ten years ago devoted to drug treatment services?** .....

B.22. **Has the centre's budget increased or decreased over the last ten years?** .....

.....

B.23. **How has your centre adjusted to the increase of drug using clients over the last ten years, if there has been any?** .....

.....

.....

B.24. **What kind of services does your centre provide drug users?** .....

.....

.....

B.25. **What kind of detoxification services can your centre provide? Does it offer residential treatment?** .....

.....

B.26. **How many clients of your centre have entered a detoxification program over the last ten years? How many have received residential treatment? Please provide yearly data or at least data referring to short time periods:** .....

.....

B.27. **Who runs and finances the detoxification programs?** .....

.....

.....

B.28. **Does your centre provide any harm reduction service? (Ex.: needle exchange, methadone or heroin substitution, outreach, low threshold services, etc.)**

❒ yes ❒ no

B.29. **If yes, which harm reduction services are provided?** .....

B.30. **Since when?** .....

B.31. **Are these harm reduction services at least partially supported by NGOs?** .....

❒ yes ❒ no

B.32. **If yes, by which NGOs?** .....

B.33. **What is the procedure new drug using clients have to go through?** .....

.....

.....

B.34. **Are they usually free to interrupt the contact or are they somehow obliged to go through the whole detoxification program?** .....

.....

B.35. **Is your centre the only institution that provides drug treatment services in your city? Which are the other ones?** .....

.....

B.36. **And in your region?** .....

B.37. **If there are other drug treatment institutions, please describe them briefly, specifying whether they are public or private, how long they exist, which services they provide, and give information about their clients, highlighting eventual differences vis-à-vis the clients of your centre:** .....

.....

B.38. **Please describe and assess the cooperation between public drug treatment centres and NGOs working in the drug field:** .....

.....

.....

B.39. **Is there a specialized drug treatment centre for imprisoned drug users?** .....

.....

B.40. **How many prisoners of your city and regional prisons are drug users?** .....

.....

B.41. **What kind of drug treatment services are provided to drug users in prison?** .

.....

B.42. **By whom?** .....

.....

C. DRUG USE *Groups: I, II & III*

C.1. **How do you assess the drug problem in your city and region?** .....

.....

.....

.....

C.2. **How would you rank the drug problem in your city and region vis-à-vis other problems? Drugs are**

- ❒ the most serious problem affecting my city/region
- ❒ one of the first five problems
- ❒ one of the first ten problems
- ❒ one of the first twenty problems
- ❒ one of the first fifty problems
- ❒ do not represent an important problem in my city/region
- ❒ I do not know
- ❒ others: .....

C.3. **Is drug consumption widespread in your city/region?**

- ❒ very widespread
- ❒ widespread
- ❒ limited
- ❒ non-existent
- ❒ I do not know

Comments: .....

.....

.....

C.4. **Which drugs are most frequently consumed?**

(The interviewer should ask the interviewee to rank the different drugs.)

- ❒ heroin
- ❒ poppy straw
- ❒ cocaine
- ❒ wind
- ❒ ecstasy
- ❒ cannabis
- ❒ psychotropic drugs
- ❒ LSD
- ❒ others: .....
- ❒ I do not know

C.5. **Please describe the typical user of the above-mentioned drugs, specifying age, sex, social and economic status, education and ethnic origin of users:**

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

C.6. **How many drug users do you personally know? What kind of drugs do they use?** .....

.....

.....

C.7. **Can you estimate the number of users of the above-mentioned drugs <u>in your city</u>?**

❒ yes ❒ no

C.8. **If yes, please provide data for each type of drug:** .....

.....

.....

C.9. **The estimates are based on:**

❒ surveys
❒ data from drug treatment services
❒ hearsay
❒ others: .....
❒ I do not know
❒ judicial statistics
❒ police estimates
❒ guesses

C.10. **Can you estimate the number of users of the above-mentioned drugs <u>in your region</u>?**

❒ yes ❒ no

C.11. **If yes, please provide data for each type of drug:** .....

.....

.....

C.12. **The estimates are based on:**

❒ surveys
❒ data from drug treatment services
❒ judicial statistics
❒ police estimates

❒ hearsay ❒ guesses
❒ others: .....
❒ I do not know

C.13. **Where do users meet to buy and consume drugs? (Ex: restaurants, pubs, discos, private apartments, open air, train or metro stations, etc.)** .....

.....

.....

C.14. **Is there an open drug scene (that is a public place where drug users regularly meet)?**

❒ yes ❒ no

C.15. **Please describe the relationships between users and dealers? Who looks for the other? How do they come in touch? Do they use mobile phones?** .....

.....

.....

C.16. **For each of the substances that you mentioned, what is the typical amount bought by users? What is the usual daily dose?** .....

.....

.....

C.17. **What are the street prices of the drugs?** .....

.....

.....

C.18. **Do you have any information about their purity?**

❒ yes ❒ no

C.19. **If yes, please provide the data and explain where they come from:** .....

.....

.....

C.20. **How are drugs consumed?** .....

.....

.....

C.21. **In the case of heroin and poppy straw, do users frequently share needles with other people? Out of 10 injecting users, how many of them regularly share needles?** .....

.....

.....

C.22. **Please describe the evolution of drug use over the last fifteen years. When did the consumption of the different drugs begin? In which social groups? What have been the main changes ever since? Have the prices and purity of drugs decreased or increased?** .....

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.....

C.23. **Has there been an increase in drug-related petty crime – that is crime committed by users in order to finance their consumption habits - over the last ten years?**

❒ yes ❒ no

C.24. **If there has been an increase, please describe it:** .....

.....

.....

C.25. **How would you quantify the increase?**

❒ 10-20 per cent
❒ 50 per cent
❒ 100 per cent
❒ 200 per cent
❒ 300 per cent
❒ more than 300 per cent
❒ other
❒ I do not know

D. DRUG DEALING AND TRAFFICKING *Groups: I, II & III*

(Drug treatment providers will not probably be able to answer all questions of this section, but it is still interesting to ask their opinion on drug dealing and trafficking, since they know drug users' experiences. Depending on the degree of knowledge the interviewee shows, it is up to the interviewer to adapt some of the following questions, eventually skipping some of them, if it is deemed appropriate.)

D.1. **Who sells drugs to users? Eventually drawing on police investigations and judicial cases, please describe the typical drug dealers of your city/region:** .....

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D.2. **Which drugs are produced in your city/region (Ex: poppy straw, ecstasy, amphetamines, cannabis)?** .....

.....

.....

D.3. **How?** .....

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.....

D.4. **Who is involved in the production process?** .....

.....

.....

D.5. **Do drug producers usually work alone or in small teams or are also large criminal organizations involved in the drug production process?** .....

.....

.....

.....

D.6. **Are drugs directly sold by producers to consumers or is there a stratified distribution system?**

❒ by producers to consumers ❒ stratified distribution system

D.7. **If there is a stratified distribution system, please describe it:** .....

.....

.....

.....

D.8. **Can you estimate the turnover and profits made by the producers and/or distributors of these illegal drugs?** .....

.....

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.....

D.9. **Please describe the main changes in the production and distribution of these drugs over the last fifteen years:** .....

.....

.....

.....

D.10. **Which drugs are imported in your city/region from outside?** .....

.....

D.11. **Where do they come from?** .....

.....

D.12. **Who imports them into your city/region?** .....

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.....

D.13. **How?** .....

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.....

D.14. **In which amounts?** .....

.....

D.15. **What happens after the drugs enter your city/region?** .....

.....

.....

D.16. **Do you have any information about the price and purity of drugs at the wholesale level?**

❒ yes ❒ no

D.17. **If yes, please provide the data and explain where they come from, eventually referring to specific investigations and judicial cases:** .....

.....

.....

.....

D.18. **Can you estimate the turnover and profits made by the traffickers of these illegal drugs?** .....

.....

.....

D.19. **Please describe the main changes in the traffic and distribution of these drugs over the last fifteen years:** .....

.....

.....

.....

D.20. **Is your city/region also a transit point for drugs en route to other Russian cities or foreign markets?**

❒ yes ❒ no

D.21. **Which kind of illegal drugs transit through your city/region? Where do they come from and where do they go to? How are drugs smuggled? Are they sent abroad? Where?** .....

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.....

D.22. **Please describe the main changes in this type of long-range drug trafficking over the last fifteen years, pointing out when and how it started:** .....

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.....

D.23. **Please provide data about the drug seizures that have taken place over the last ten years in your city/region, describing where the largest seizures took**

place, who were the carriers, and how the drugs were hidden and/or smuggled: .....

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.....

.....

D.24. **Are members of ethnic minorities more than proportionally involved in drug production and trafficking?**

❒ yes ❒ no

D.25. **If yes, which minorities?** .....

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.....

D.26. **How are the dealers organized? (Ex: blood families, clan, small groups of friends, large criminal organizations, etc.)** .....

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D.27. **Are these actors usually specialized in the production and trafficking of a single drug or are they capable of providing different substances at the same time and other illegal commodities as well?** .....

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D.28. **Do you have any information about laundering and investment of drug proceeds? Are the latter laundered and invested locally? To what extent does drug money go back to production areas or is transferred in Western countries?** .....

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.....

D.29. **Have there been investigations concerning laundering of drug proceeds in your regions over the last ten years?**

❒ yes ❒ no

D.30. **How many penal proceedings were opened?** .....

D.31. **How many people were involved?** .....

D.32. **Please describe the major money laundering cases:** .....

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.....

D.33. **How did the money laundering investigations end? Was there a sentence? Of which kind?** .....

.....

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D.34. **Have there been police corruption to introduce and distribute drugs in your city/region over the last ten years?**

❒ yes ❒ no

D.35. **Please describe the major drug-related corruption cases:** .....

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.....

D.36. **In your opinion, how often do drug dealers try to corrupt law enforcement officials? Out of one hundred officials, how many are corrupted by drug dealers? What do the latter offer to the former?** .....

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.....

D.37. **To what extent do drug traffickers enjoy protection from politicians?** .....

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D.38. **Out of one hundred, how many politicians are, in your opinion, corrupted by drug traffickers?** .....

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D.39. **How do drug traffickers reward politicians and state officials for their services?** .....

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D.40. **Are the connections between drug traffickers and politicians notorious or are they kept secret?** .....

.....

.....

D.41. **Have there been investigations on these matters over the last ten years? How many?** .....

.....

.....

D.42. **How many people were involved?** .....

D.43. **How did the investigations end? Was there a sentence? Of which kind?** .....

.....

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D.44. **How are drug traffickers considered by the local people? Are they considered legitimate entrepreneurs or are they stigmatized? Do people know who deals with drugs?** .....

.....

.....

E. DRUG POLICIES *Groups: I, II & III*

E.1. **Please describe the overall drug policy in your city/region, pointing at its weaknesses and strengths and synthesizing its evolution over the last ten years:** .....

.....

.....

.....

E.2. **Have there been drug prevention and information campaigns over the last ten years in your city and region?**

❒ yes ❒ no

E.3. **If yes, please describe them briefly and explain who has run and financed them:** .....

.....

.....

.....

E.4. **Are you satisfied with what is currently done to prevent and fight the rise of drug consumption and drug trafficking in your city and region? Please explain why:** .....

.....

.....

E.5. **What kind of relationship exists between drug treatment centre and law enforcement institutions in your city/region?** .....

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.....

E.6. **How has this relationship changed over the last ten years?** .....

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.....

E.7. **How do you assess the cooperation between drug treatment providers and law enforcement institutions in your city/region?** .....

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E.8. **To what an extent and how are the city and regional administrations involved in the prevention and fight of the drug problem?** .....

.....

.....

E.9. **What could be done to improve the current drug policy at the city and regional level? Please list the five measures that, according to you, are most needed:** .....

.....

.....

E.10. **Please describe the overall drug policy at the national level, pointing at its weaknesses and strengths and synthesizing its evolution over the last ten years:** .....

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E.11. **What do you think about the new drug law, which entered into force in December 1997? Which are its major strengths and weaknesses?** .....

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E.12. **Are you satisfied with what is currently done to prevent and fight the rise of drug consumption and drug trafficking at the national level? Please explain why:** .....

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E.13. **What could be done to improve the current national drug policy? Please list the five measures that, according to you, are most needed:** .....

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F. ORGANIZED CRIME *Groups: II & III*

F.1. **How do you define organized crime?** .....

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F.2. **How many criminal groups are active in your city/region?** .....

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F.3. **What is their average size?** .....

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F.4. **What is their average period of operation?** .....

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F.5. **What is the usual composition of organized crime groups? Do they tend to be ethnically homogenous?** .....

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F.6. **Do members of specific ethnic minorities tend to be more than proportionally involved in organized crime groups?**

❒ yes ❒ no

F.7. **If yes, which minorities?** .....

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F.8. **Are there criminal groups that have internal ranks, institutionalized affiliation procedures and a system of norms?**

❒ yes ❒ no

F.9. **If there are, please describe them:** .....

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.....

F.10. **Are the *vory v zakone* present in your region?**

❒ yes ❒ no

F.11. **If there are, please describe their organization, legal and illegal activities and their status in the underworld:** .....

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F.12. **Please describe the most powerful and lasting organized crime groups that are active in your region:** .....

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F.13. **Please describe the evolution of organized crime over the last twenty years:**

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F.14. **What are today the main illegal activities of organized crime actors? (Ex.: extortion prostitution, gambling, arms trade, smuggling of legal and illegal goods, illegal production of alcohol, violent crime, etc)** .....

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F.15. **What is the relevance of drug trafficking *vis-à-vis* other types of criminal activities?** .....

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F.16. **Is the practice of extortion widespread? Out of one hundred entrepreneurs, how many do, in your opinion, pay a "protection" tax to extortion gangs?** .....

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F.17. **How often do extortion gangs use private security firms as a cover? How many private security firms are, in your opinion, controlled by organized crime actors?** .....

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F.18. **How many private security firms are today active in your city/region?** .....

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F.19. **Have there been investigations about private security firms run by organized crime?** .....

.....

F.20. **Do criminal groups try to control specific areas of the city and/or the region?**

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F.21. **Have there been violent fights over the last ten years among criminal groups?**

❒ yes ❒ no

F.22. **If there have been, please describe them:** .....

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F.23. **Where do organized crime actors get their arms from? Please describe the functioning of the illegal arm market:** .....

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F.24. **Do organized crime groups resort to non-violent means to solve their disputes?** .....

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F.25. **What is the influence of organized crime actors on the legal economy? Which percentage of the legal economy is, in your opinion, controlled by organized crime?** .....

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.....

F.26. **To what an extent have organized crime actors conditioned the privatization process of state companies?** .....

.....

.....

F.27. **Please describe the legal assets of organized crime actors, making reference, if you can, to specific police and judicial inquiries:** .....

.....

.....

F.28. **Do you have any information about laundering and investment of organized crime proceeds? Are the latter laundered and invested locally? To what extent is organized crime money transferred in Western countries?** .....

.....

.....

.....

F.29. **Have there been investigations concerning laundering of organized crime proceeds in your regions over the last ten years?**

❒ yes ❒ no

F.30. **How many?** .....

F.31. **How many people were involved?** .....

F.32. **How did the investigations end? Was there a sentence? Of which kind?** .....

.....

.....

F.33. **Please describe the major investigations:** .....

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F.34. **Please provide data, if you can, about the seizure and confiscation of organized crime proceeds in your city/region over the last ten years, describing the most relevant cases:** .....

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.....

F.35. **How strong is the influence of organized crime on state institutions (police, judiciary, civil administration, military, state companies, etc.)?** .....

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F.36. **In your opinion, out of one hundred how many politicians and state officials are corrupted by organized crime actors in your city/region?** .....

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F.37. **How extensive is the problem of corruption at the national level? Out of one hundred, how many politicians and state officials are corrupted by organized crime actors at the national level?** .....

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F.38. **What are the services organized crime actors most frequently ask politicians and state officials?** .....

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.....

F.39. **How do organized crime actors reward politicians and state officials for their services?** .....

.....

.....

F.40. **Are the connections between organized crime actors, on the one hand, and politicians and state officials, on the other hand, notorious or are they kept secret?** .....

.....

.....

F.41. **Have there been investigations on these matters over the last ten years?**

❒ yes ❒ no

F.42. **How many?** .....

F.43. **How many people were involved?** .....

F.44. **How did the investigations end? Was there a sentence? Of which kind?** .....

.....

.....

F.45. **Please describe the major investigations:** .....

.....

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F.46. **How are organized crime actors considered by local people? Are they regarded as legitimate entrepreneurs or are they stigmatized?** .....

.....

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G. THE FIGHT AGAINST ORGANIZED CRIME *Groups: II & III*

(The following questions need to be slighty adapted to the interviewees. Police officials will be asked to speak about the organization and action of police offices. Prosecutors and judges will be asked to describe the organization and functioning of judicial offices. Politicians and journalists will be asked to assess the functioning of both sections of law enforcement and in this latter case, depending on the interviewee's knowledge, the interviewer may skip questions about the organization of law enforcement offices.)

G.1. **Do your city/regional police and/or judicial offices have a specialized unit for the fight against organized crime?**

❒ yes ❒ no

G.2. **How is it organized? How many people work in such a unit?** .....

.....

.....

G.3. **When was is created?** .....

G.4. **What are the tasks of the organized crime unit?** .....

G.5. **Is there also a drug unit?**

❒ yes ❒ no

G.6. **How is it organized? How many people work in such a unit?** .....

.....

.....

G.7. **When was is created?** .....

G.8. **What are the tasks of the drug unit?** .....

.....

.....

G.9. **All in all, how many people work at your city/region police and judicial offices?** .....

G.10. **Please describe the city and regional organization of the law enforcement system:** .....

.....

.....

G.11. **How do you assess the preparation and competence of the law enforcement agencies of your city/region in the fight against organized crime?** .....

.....

.....

G.12. **How were local law enforcement officials trained to face the criminal challenges of post-Soviet society? Did they attend special training courses?** ....

.....

.....

G.13. **If these courses were organized, who ran them? Where did they take place? How long did they last? Which were their subjects and their goals?** .....

.....

.....

G.14. **Do you think that the local law enforcement agencies of your city/region have enough financial and material means to fight effectively organized crime?** .....

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.....

G.15. **Could you give us a rough idea of the annual budget of the law enforcement institution of your city/region?** .....

.....

.....

G.16. **Which percentage is allocated to the fight against organized crime?** .....

G.17. **All in all, how do you judge the local law enforcement action against organized crime? Is it, in your opinion, effective?** .....

.....

.....

G.18. **What should be done to make it more effective? Please list the five measures that, according to you, are most needed:** .....

.....

.....

G.19. **Which means and procedures are, according to you, most effective in the fight against organized crime and drug trafficking?** .....

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.....

G.20. **Are you satisfied with the means and procedures that the current Russian legislation grants law enforcement institutions to fight against organized crime?**

- ❒ fully satisfied
- ❒ rather satisfied
- ❒ not completely satisfied
- ❒ unsatisfied
- ❒ I do not know
- ❒ others, please specify: .....

.....

G.21. **How often in the last three years (1997, 1998, 1999) did your office resort to wiretappings in order to enhance organized crime and drug investigations?** ..

.....

.....

G.22. **How often in the last three years (1997, 1998, 1999) did your office resort to undercover investigators in order to enhance organized crime and drug investigations?** .....

.....

.....

G.23. **How often in the three years (1997, 1998, 1999) did your office resort to drug controlled deliveries in order to enhance organized crime and drug investigations?** .....

.....

.....

G.24. **What kind of protection can your office ensure witnesses and, particularly, former member of criminal gangs who cooperate with law enforcement agencies?** .....

.....

.....

G.25. **How should the current penal legislation be amended in order to make the fight against organized crime more effective? Please list the five measures that, according to you, are most needed:** .....

.....

.....

.....

G.26. **Do you think that the current penal legislation against organized crime can be misused and thus come to endanger citizens' rights?** .....

.....

.....

G.27. **How do you judge the national law enforcement action against organized crime? Is it, in your opinion, effective?** .....

.....

.....

G.28. **Which measures should be taken to make it more effective? Please list the five measures that, according to you, are most needed:** .....

.....

.....

.....

G.29. **How do you assess cooperation among law enforcement agencies of the CIS States? Is it, in your opinion, necessary? And effective?** .....

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.....

.....

G.30. **How often in the last three years (1997, 1998, 1999) did your office request information and/or technical assistance from the law enforcement agencies of other CIS States? Which was the result of these requests?** .....

.....

.....

G.31. **How often in the last three years (1997, 1998, 1999) was your office asked to provide information and/or technical assistance to the law enforcement agencies of other CIS States? Which was the result of these requests?** .....

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.....

G.32. **What should be done to make the cooperation among CIS States more effective? Please list the five measures that, according to you, are most needed:** .....

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.....

Our interview is finished. Do you have questions or would you like to make comments on something that has not been mentioned so far?

Thanks a lot for your readiness to answer our questions and help us in our research project.

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