

[Article – Parliament calls for better protection of cross-border and seasonal workers](#)



Following [a call by the European Council end of March](#), the [European Commission issued guidelines on 30 March](#) to follow a coordinated approach at EU level and to ensure that mobile workers, especially those critical in the fight against Covid-19, can reach their workplace. It provided a non-exhaustive list of critical workers such as health professionals, child and elderly care workers, scientists in health-related industries as well as workers in the food sector, for which a smooth and fast border-crossing, including proportionate health screening, should be guaranteed.

On 26 May, Parliament's [employment committee debated](#) reports of precarious working conditions of cross-border workers with the Croatian Presidency, the Commission and the European Labour Authority. On 18 June, ahead of the vote, MEPs [debated](#) the issue in plenary.

Next steps

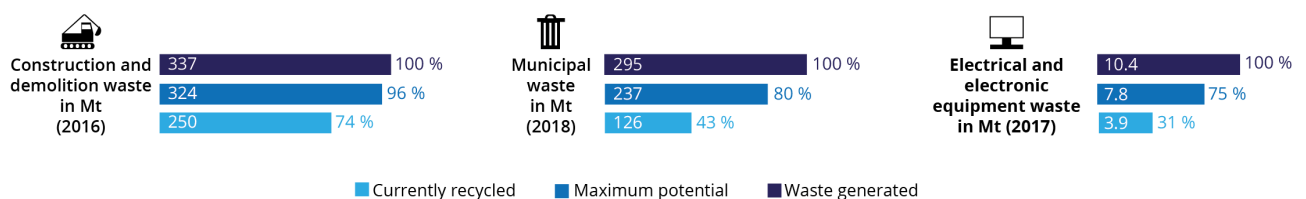
The Commission is expected to respond to the Parliament's call with new specific guidelines to protect cross-border and seasonal workers in the context of Covid-19.

Doubling recycling across Europe is feasible, for certain waste streams

Increased recycling rates are being hindered due to economic, technical and regulatory barriers. Low market prices for virgin resources, recycling capacity and the complexity of certain products are holding up increased recycling rates, according to the EEA briefing '[The case for increased recycling: estimating the potential for recycling in Europe](#)'. The briefing notes that the full implementation of measures supporting the recycling targets set under European Union legislation will help. Additionally, implementing new policy measures, some of which are included in the EU's 2020 circular economy action plan can also help increase recycling of waste materials.

Recycled amounts from municipal, construction and electronic waste have increased over past years. Landmark EU directives, such as the Waste Framework Directive (WFD) and the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) Directive, have fuelled the increase. These laws follow principles designed to achieve a gradual, but steady, increase in the level of recycling of a waste stream compared with the amount generated. For example, the existing municipal waste recycling target for 2035 aims to exploit much of the waste stream's recycling potential. In addition, the new circular economy policy framework also calls for keeping materials in the economy for as long as possible and their value as high as possible.

Potential for increasing separate collection for recycling and current (based on latest available data) generation and recycling for construction and demolition, municipal and electronic waste



Note: Data for construction and demolition waste are from the EU-28, Iceland and Norway (2016). Data for municipal waste are from the EU-28, Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Turkey (2018). Data for electronic waste are from the EU-28, Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway (2017).

Source: Eurostat, EEA.

The EEA briefing is based on a [technical study](#) commissioned by the EEA which looks more in-depth into what factors hinder wider recycling.

[COVID-19: New EMCDDA study highlights decline in stimulant drug use but some rises in the use of cannabis, alcohol and prescription medicines to combat anxiety and depression](#)

A decline in stimulant drug use but some rises in the consumption of cannabis and licit substances are among the findings presented today in a new EMCDDA report [The impact of COVID-19 on patterns of drug use and drug-related harms in Europe](#). The report describes how national confinement measures and disrupted street drug markets have reduced both the opportunities to use drugs within social environments as well as the availability of some substances. But it also suggests a rise in the use of alcohol and prescription medicines, in some groups, as a means of conquering anxiety and depression during lockdown.

The report is the second in a series of briefings resulting from an EMCDDA 'trendspotter' study, launched in April to explore the impact of COVID-19 on the drug situation and responses to it (¹). The findings released today stem from the second wave of the investigation, which focused on drug use patterns and drug-related harms during the first three months of the pandemic. The analysis draws on a range of sources, including: expert surveys, virtual consultations with professionals and NGOs and a recent 'European Web Survey on Drugs: COVID-19' (EWS-19), which received over 10 000 responses.

Survey responses from people who use drugs and evidence from national experts indicate that stimulants associated with the nightlife setting (mainly cocaine and MDMA) saw the sharpest reduction in use during this period. This is largely due to the closure of the night-time economy and orders to 'stay at home' (rather than to market factors). A few cases have been reported of physical socialising being replaced by 'streaming parties' – where people use drugs at home, listen to music and meet friends online. However, illegal raves are reported to have taken place in a number of countries.

For cannabis, the picture is mixed, with data suggesting that occasional users may have stopped or decreased their use during lockdown, while frequent users may have stocked up and consumed more. Shortages of heroin in some localities may have contributed to a decline in use of this drug and potentially resulted in an increase in demand for opioid substitution treatment as well as in the use of replacement substances. While the majority of respondents in the EWS-19 reported stable or reduced drug use, a quarter reported increased use, often due to boredom and anxiety.

Drinking alcohol alone, and in greater quantities, is reported by some respondents across user groups, as is the increased use of prescription medicines (e.g. benzodiazepines). Among high-risk drug users, motivations for

this include managing depression and withdrawal symptoms.

A survey of 15 hospital emergency lead clinicians indicated a rise in drug-related acute presentations due to mental health issues and violent harms but a reduction in drug-related hospital emergencies. An area where there is almost no evidence to date, is the level of COVID-19 infection and related health problems among people who use drugs.

The report states that: 'While undoubtedly changes in drug use patterns and new harms have emerged, with the easing of the lockdown measures and the return to a new social reality under COVID-19, it remains uncertain as to whether the identified changes will remain. It will take time and further investigation to ascertain the longer-term and lasting implications of the pandemic and resultant measures on drug-using populations.'

[EMCDDA Trendspotter briefing: impact of COVID-19 on patterns of drug use and drug-related harms in Europe](#)

EMCDDA, Lisbon, June 2020

Summary

Since the start of 2020, European countries have been experiencing an unprecedented public health threat with the emergence of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19). In order to investigate the effects and implications of this pandemic for people who use drugs in Europe, the EMCDDA instigated a mixed-method trendspotter study to investigate the current situation. This briefing provides a snapshot of the state of play with respect to the impact of COVID-19 on drug consumption patterns and drug-related harms during the early stages of the pandemic.

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Main subject:

[drug situation](#)

Recommendations adopted by CORLEAP in view of the Eastern Partnership leaders' video conference



☐☐ **CORLEAP recommendations** adopted in view of the Eastern Partnership leaders' video conference on 18 June 2020 reflect the main messages from various reports that CORLEAP has adopted since the last EaP summit. The message is based on a well-documented evaluation of the situation, carried out at the level of governance closest to citizens.

CORLEAP recommendations welcome the Joint Communication on Eastern Partnership policy beyond 2020, in particular its inclusion of the proposal to set up an Eastern Partnership School of Public Administration, which would meet specific needs identified by local and regional authorities. CORLEAP members agree that sustainable economic development requires good governance at all levels, and should be underpinned by a new impetus for decentralisation reforms and generate more funding for local and regional authorities. Furthermore, CORLEAP remains committed to consolidating resilience at local level, by showcasing the success and potential of territorial cooperation, and by explaining and highlighting the benefits of Eastern Partnership policy for citizens.