

# Flash Euro Barometer 401. Young people and drugs

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## **Abstract**

Drug use and drug-related problems continue to be a major concern for EU citizens, as well as being a significant public health and public safety issue. Around one quarter of the adult population is estimated to have used illicit drugs at some point in their lifetime, with cannabis the most commonly used substance. Drug experimentation often starts in the school years, and it is estimated that one in four 15-16 year-olds have used an illicit drug. Although progress has been made in recent years, drug overdose remains one of the major causes of avoidable mortality in young citizens. In recent years, the use of legal-highs currently legal substances that mimic the effect of illicit drugs has become increasingly popular, and the European Commission is working to strengthen the EU's ability to reduce their availability, as part of an overall drug control framework. This survey builds on the work of previous reports (Special Eurobarometer 172 in 20024, Flash Eurobarometer 158 in 20045, Flash Eurobarometer 233 in 20086, and Flash EB 330 in 20117) in exploring young peoples perceptions of and attitudes towards drugs, including:

- Self-reported use of cannabis and new substances that imitate the effects of illicitdrugs.
- Sources of information about drugs, including their effects and the associated risks.
- Perceived ease of availability of drugs.
- The perceived health risks associated with occasional or regular use of various drugs, including alcohol and tobacco.
- The appropriate legal status of a range of currently illegal drugs, as well as alcohol and tobacco.
- Opinions about the best ways for authorities to tackle drug problems.

Results are analysed at the overall EU28 level and (where sample sizes permit) at country level, and by a range of socio-demographic groups.

Where possible, comparisons are made with the results from 2011.

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