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FIGHTING DRUG TRAFFICKING IN THE NETHERLANDS

Drug trafficking is a global problem that has a significant impact on the society, economy and politics of many countries. The Netherlands, known for its liberal policy on certain drugs, has become one of the centres of discussion and research on this phenomenon. Studying the drug trade in the Netherlands is important for several reasons. Firstly, the country has a unique drug tolerance policy, including the legalization of marijuana sales in coffee shops, which makes it a topic of interest to scholars and policy makers in Europe. Secondly, drug trafficking affects society, including health, crime and the economy, which allows us to better understand the consequences of these policies and improve strategies to combat drug addiction. About 80 per cent of police resources are spent on drug-related crime. In the Netherlands and Belgium, street prices for cocaine have remained unchanged for years [1]. In addition, the Netherlands is a transit point for drugs, which makes it possible to analyze global trends and develop international measures to combat the problem.

The Netherlands is known for its approach to drug regulation, often referred to as a ‘tolerance policy’. According to this policy, the sale and use of marijuana in limited quantities is allowed in specially designated places, such as coffee shops. At the same time, tough measures are taken against hard drugs such as cocaine and heroin. This approach has become a subject of international interest and debate. It allows for the separation of soft drugs from hard drugs, potentially reducing the risk of soft drug users moving on to more dangerous substances. Starting in the 1970s and continuing in the 1980s and 1990s, the Netherlands pioneered the development and implementation of drug harm reduction services, although at the time these interventions did not yet have a name. The Dutch approach to the drug problem was marked by pragmatism and practicality, but was not the result of a carefully considered strategy. Rather, harm reduction concepts developed naturally, through bottom-up initiatives, as a response to the increasing harms associated with injecting drug use. Only over time, as the seriousness of the problem grew, did these initiatives gain political support [2, p. 2].

Since crime, in particular drug trafficking, in the Netherlands was concentrated in large cities (Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam, Utrecht),

the issue of reducing its level was primarily considered by the municipal authorities of Amsterdam [3, p. 217]. Drug trafficking in the Netherlands has several aspects of impact on society.

Firstly, the legalization of soft drugs has created a certain controlled market, which has helped to avoid the complete transition of drug sales to the shadow economy. However, the problem of illegal drug production and smuggling remains. The Netherlands is also an important transit point for drugs entering Europe from Latin America and Asia.

Secondly, the social consequences of the drug trade include an increase in drug-related crime. Despite the legalization of soft drugs, criminal gangs still dominate the supply of hard drugs and synthetic substances, leading to violence and social instability. The economic consequences are also clear: drug trafficking stimulates the development of the shadow economy and undermines legal businesses [4].

To minimize the damage caused by drug trafficking, the Netherlands is actively applying a range of measures, including tightening control over coffee shops, regularly reviewing the rules for their operation, limiting the number of doses sold and prohibiting access to minors, and introducing stricter licensing requirements. An important area is the fight against international drug trafficking, for which the country cooperates with law enforcement agencies of other countries and conducts regular raids at ports and borders, which helps to reduce drug trafficking. The Netherlands also supports rehabilitation programmes for drug users, focusing on harm reduction and rehabilitation rather than the exclusive criminalization of drug use. Educational and prevention programmes aimed at raising awareness among young people about the risks of drug use and promoting healthy lifestyles help to reduce the demand for illicit substances. In addition, the authorities actively engage the public in the fight against drug trafficking through social initiatives and the creation of safe local communities that support anti-drug campaigns [5, p. 89].

So, having analyzed all of the above, it can be argued that drug trafficking in the Netherlands is a complex and multifaceted problem that requires a comprehensive approach. Despite its liberal marijuana policy, the Netherlands, like other countries, faces problems related to drug trafficking. Studying drug trafficking in the Netherlands can help to understand which strategies to combat drug abuse are most effective. It is important to understand that the Netherlands is not only a consumer of drugs, but also a key player in the global drug transit network. Therefore, further study of drug trafficking in this country is of great importance for the development of effective international strategies to combat this problem.

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PREVENTIVE POLICE AND STATE MEASURES AS THE BASIS OF COMBATING CRIME

Ensuring security and preventing crime is one of the most important aspects of effective law enforcement in modern society. Particular attention is drawn to preventive police measures, which have become an integral part of the law enforcement system in many Western countries. Preventive measures are understood as various actions aimed at preventing crime before it occurs and at reducing the risk of future offenses. Preventive policing in Western countries focuses on preventing crime and maintaining public order without escalating violence. The key principles are transparency, respect for human rights and cooperation with the community. Here are the main approaches that can be distinguished:

Police patrolling: Frequent patrolling in areas where there is a possible crowding of people (parks, squares, city centers) allows to increase the feeling of security and contribute to the reduction of the crime rate. Patrol officers do not only detect crimes, but also provide assistance to citizens, which increases trust in the police.

Preventive measures to counter radicalization and extremism: Western countries implement special programs to counter radicalization among young people and persons prone to extremist actions. For example,