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XTC-production and trafficking in women for sexual exploitation:

Problems and approaches in the Netherlands

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Abstract

This paper addresses two types of organized crime that confront the Netherlands, and explores the multi-agency approaches the police and other governmental bodies have developed to tackle these problems. From the early 1990s to the mid-2000s, the Netherlands were a major source country for ecstasy. Under increasing pressure of the international community, and the United States in particular, Dutch authorities made considerable efforts to curb the problem. One approach was to view producers and traffickers of ecstasy as a macro network, and then to disrupt this network by launching criminal investigations against key persons and facilitators within the network. Reducing the import of PMK, an essential precursor chemical for the production of ecstasy, proved to be of particular importance. The second type of crime addressed in this paper is trafficking in women for sexual exploitation, primarily in the Amsterdam Red Light District. Prostitution is legal in the Netherlands, and the district provides a ready-made infrastructure for it. It consists of “windows” which prostitutes may rent, companies that rent out these windows, the owners of the premises who actually control those activities, “advisors” who take care of the necessary paperwork, and finally the pimps who bring in the women, usually from South-Eastern Europe. In 2007, Amsterdam launched project Emergo as a multi-agency approach to tackle serious and organized crime (e.g. exploitation, narcotic drugs, money laundering) in the Red Light District. In Emergo, the police, the public prosecution service, the municipality and the tax authorities exchange information freely, and use judicial, fiscal and administrative interventions jointly to rein in these problems.