

DRUG SITUATION IN MALTA

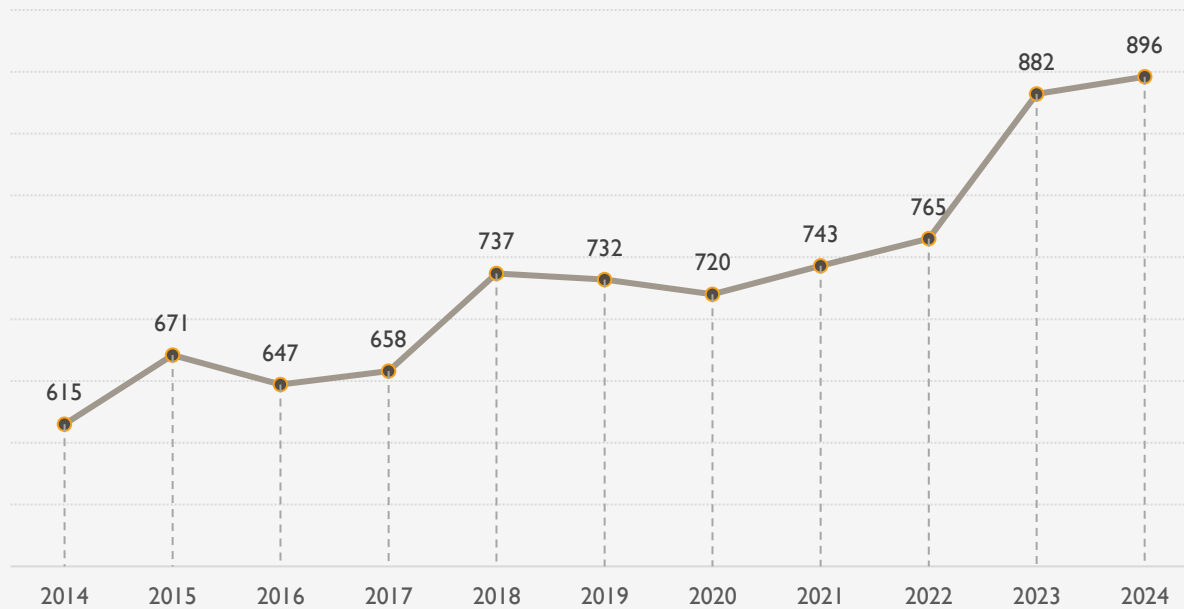
APRIL, 2025



Caritas
M A L T A

INCREASE IN TREATMENT DEMAND

Caritas Clients – Addiction Services 2014 - 2024



INCREASE IN TREATMENT DEMAND

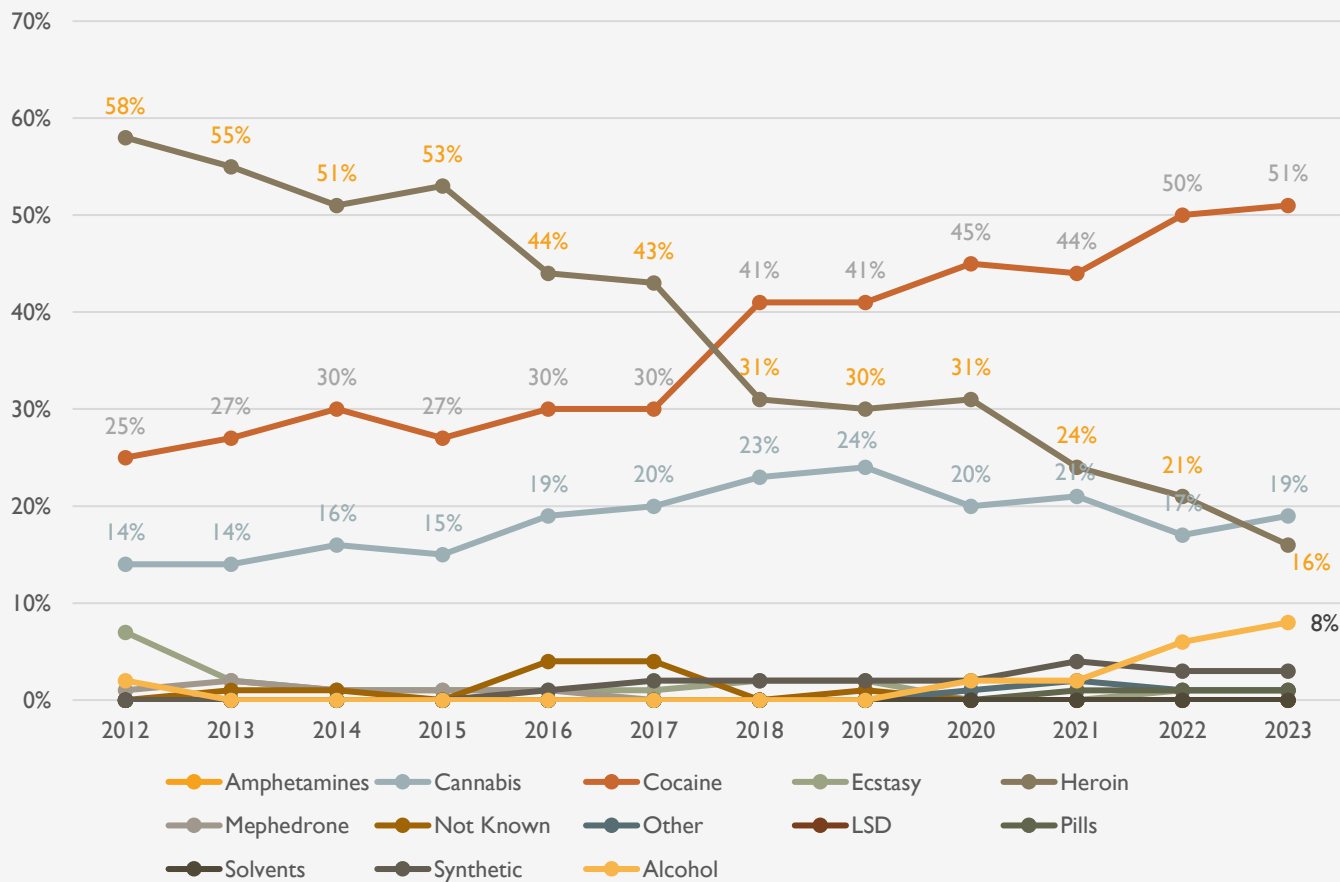
Table 6.2: Individuals in Treatment (2017-2023)

Year	First Treated individuals		Previously Treated individuals		Total individuals	
	N°	%	N°	%	N°	%
2017	245	13	1600	87	1845	100
2018	390	21	1508	79	1898	100
2019	347	18	1596	82	1943	100
2020	497	25	1487	75	1984	100
2021	411	20	1579	80	1990	100
2022	469	24	1458	76	1927	100
2023	521	23	1790	77	2311	100

INCREASE IN TREATMENT DEMAND

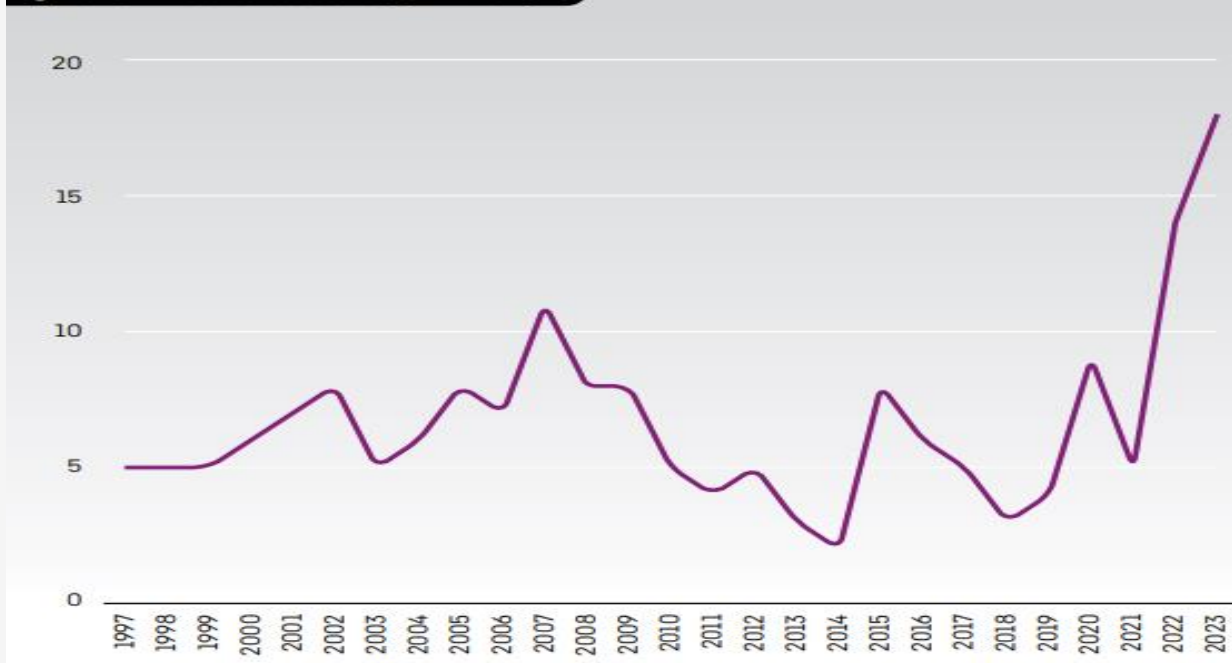
The 2024 National Drug Report shows **92% of treatment seekers in 2023 were Maltese nationals.**

PRIMARY DRUG TRENDS AMONG CARITAS CLIENTS



DRUG-RELATED DEATHS

Figure 4.3: Evolution of deaths (1997-2023)



Heroin: 5 / Cocaine: 13

+ an additional 10 potential fatalities under investigation

National Drug Report: The Drug Situation and Responses in Malta, 2024

COCAINE DEATH

'MY SISTER DIED AFTER TAKING A LINE OF COCAINE'

(BBC ONLINE 16TH JAN 2020)



DRUG-RELATED DEATHS

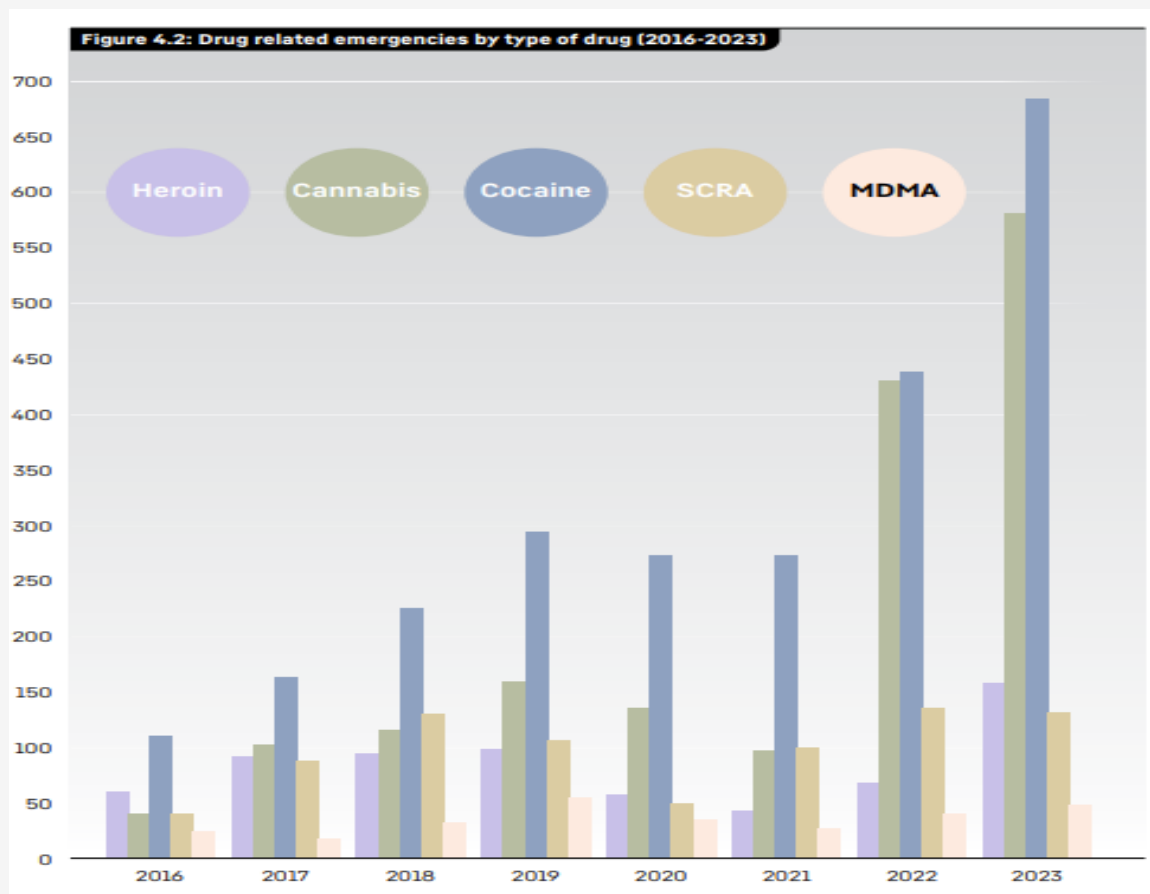


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National Drug Report: The Drug Situation and Responses in Malta, 2024

DRUG-RELATED EMERGENCY ADMISSIONS ON THE RISE



Cocaine-related emergencies increased by 56% from 2022 to 2023

Cannabis-related emergencies also reported a significant increase

COURT TRIBUNAL FOR SIMPLE POSSESSION

Fewer **arraignments** & **court referrals**

Concerns over **weak enforcement**

Possibly enabling **normalisation** of use

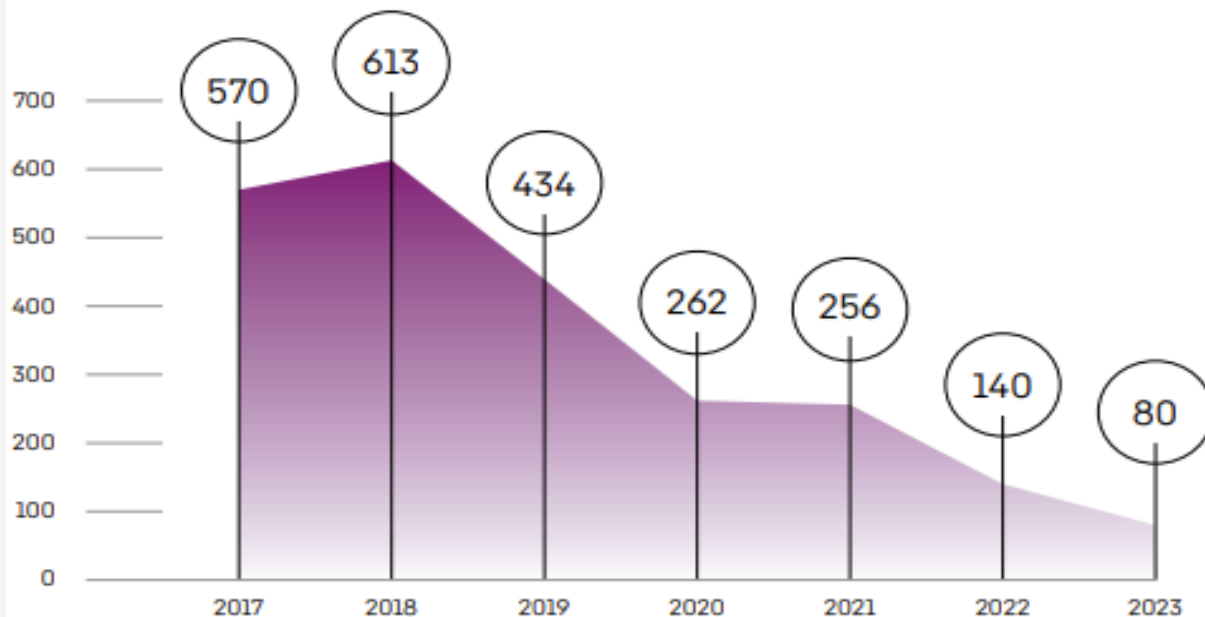
Table 2.1: Crosstabulation of tribunal cases (2017-2023)

Penali	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Paid	554	399	631	204	209	82	31
Tribunal Pending Payments	137	185	166	77	133	73	47
Cases Judged Not Guilty (Not Due)	2	13	16	4	2	4	3
Cases Pending Judgement	0	0	0	1	7	6	7
Total	693	597	813	286	351	165	88

National Drug Report: The Drug Situation and Responses in Malta, 2024

DRUG RELATED ARRAIGNMENTS

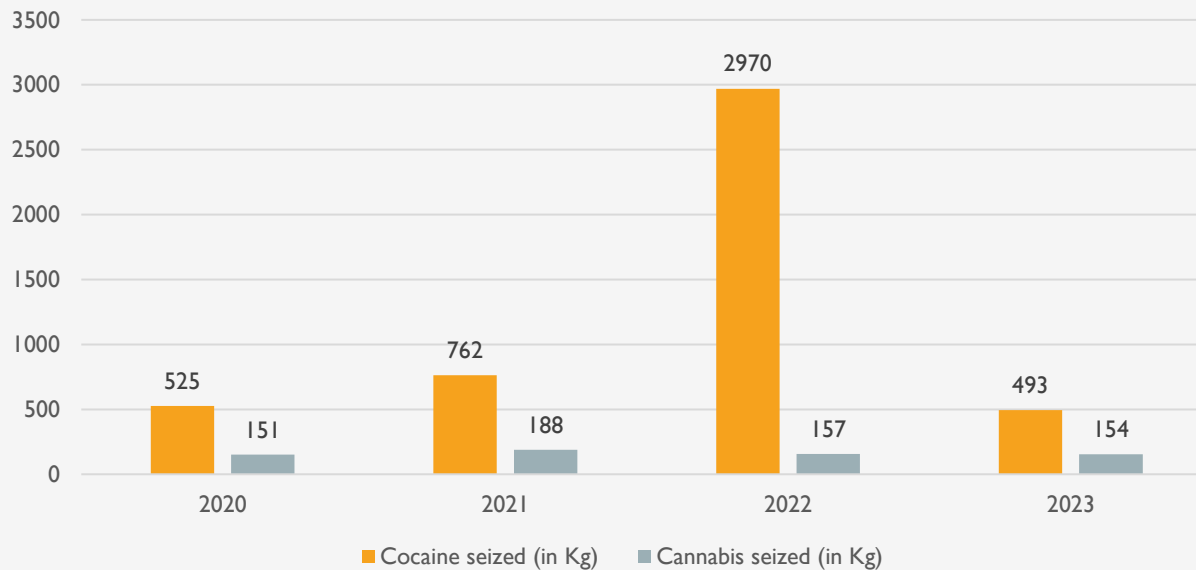
Figure 2.1: Total number of arraignments (2017-2023)



National Drug Report: The Drug Situation and Responses in Malta, 2024

SEIZURES - BLACK MARKET

Decriminalising personal possession reduced arraignments, but **steady cannabis seizures** and large postal imports suggest a nonetheless **active black market**.



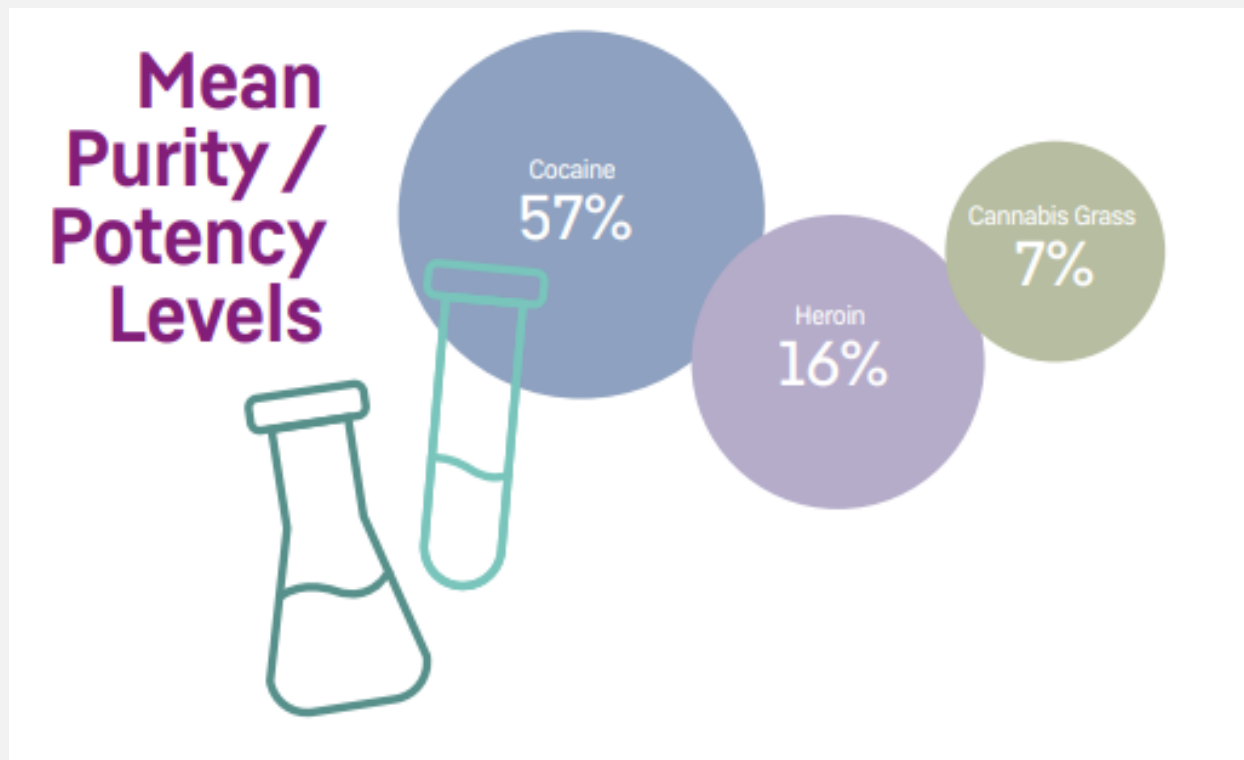
THE NORMALISATION OF DRUG- USE

A recent Times Talk episode by the Times of Malta shed light on the **growing visibility and casual use of cocaine** in Malta's nightlife, especially in **Valletta**.

Journalists observed signs of use in nearly every other bar, with individuals queuing for restrooms while openly **handling plastic bags** of white powder, some even **snorting it in plain sight**.

This reflects not only the persistence of the **black market** but also the increasing **normalisation of cocaine use alongside cannabis**.

DRUG POTENCY



DRUG POTENCY

The potency of drugs available on the local market has increased significantly.

- **Cocaine** purity has risen from 18% to between 20-30%, making it **stronger** and potentially **more addictive**.
- **Ecstasy** pills are now **more potent** than in previous years.
- **Cannabis** potency has increased, with some strains reaching **15% THC** content, often delivered through **postal services**.

NEW & DANGEROUS DRUGS

Molly, Pink cocaine / 2CB, Ketamine / Tusy, CC9.

CC9 linked to **acute hospital cases** in 2025.

TIMES MALTA 90 YEARS Latest **National** World Opinion Fact-check X2 Sport Motoring Business Comm

ANTE
Navigating
the Future of
Compliance
EX ANTE FIRST
FOR MALTA

Seven people hospitalised after taking 'dangerous' synthetic cannabis product

Doctors warn against CC9, a new semi-synthetic cannabinoid

National Cannabis Health

April 10, 2025 | Marc Galdes | 77

4 min read

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A GAME OF RUSSIAN ROULETTE

A major danger in today's drug market is that users often don't know what they're taking due to **adulteration**, raising the **risk of overdose** or **severe health complications**, especially with synthetic and high-potency drugs.

ACCESSIBILITY & LEGAL LOOPHOLES

Drug accessibility has drastically increased through online platforms. Despite a **2024 ban on HHC** and related cannabinoids, products such as CC9 **continue to appear in shops and online**, raising concerns after seven hospitalisations were linked to them in April 2025.

Caritas Malta remains concerned about **mislabeled cannabis edibles** sold online and in shops, marketed “for research purposes only”, or “not for human consumption - which **contain THC levels far above safe limits** and remain unregulated by health authorities.

MEDICINAL CANNABIS-BASED PRODUCTS

Findings from research done in **April 2023**:

- Availability of **oils** is limited on the islands | **Dried flowers** are mostly available
- **Pricing** (as at April 2023):
 - Aphria 22/1 (5 grams) - €60
 - Aurora 22/1 (10 grams) - €120
 - Bediol (5 grams) - €60
 - Bedrocan (5 grams) - €65
 - Cannabis 1A 18/1 (10 grams) - €70
 - Carbasi Verde 18.6/1 (5 grams) - €57
 - Carbasi Verde 18.6/1 (15 grams) €150
 - Pedanios 20/1 (10 grams) - €164.95
 - Pedanios 22/1 (10 grams) - €164.95
- The cheapest price is of **€70 for 10 grams i.e. €7/gram** (Cannabis 1A - 18% THC).

CALL FOR ACTION: II RECOMMENDATIONS

To decelerate and revert the Normalisation of Substance Use, enhance supply and demand reduction strategies while making our communities safer and healthier

CARITAS PROPOSALS DEMAND REDUCTION – PRIMARY PREVENTION & RESEARCH

1. Nationwide media awareness campaigns with a special focus on cannabis and cocaine with full facts and risks associated with use:

- TV; Radio; Social Media
- Avoid commercials and campaigns that inform regarding cannabis legislation without mentioning associated risks of cannabis

2. Survery on Nationwide use. It does not appear that we have a baseline study on use of Cannabis pre and post the 2021 setting the Law for establishment of the Authority for the responsible use of cannabis.

Left Image – May Contain a Double message – “to share as long as you don’t drive”

Right Image – Unequivocal Message



CARITAS PROPOSALS SUPPLY REDUCTION -

3. Effective **enforcement of Cannabis Legislation** especially public consumption

1. Public Use Remains Rampant – “A Law that is not enforced is like no law”

4. Prohibiting the advertising of “Grow Shops” and “Low THC 0.2% products”. Prohibiting them from opening in the vicinity of school; youth hubs and sports centres.

5. Remove off the shelves and off online portals – low 0.2% THC products, HHC products and edibles with other synthetic substances that are wrongly labelled – not for human consumption or for “in-vitro” research purposes

CARITAS PROPOSALS SUPPLY REDUCTION -

6. Prohibit **home-growing** in households where there are children residing to ensure child safety
 7. **Register home-growers** with ARUC for greater visibility and accountability
 8. Regulate **seeds** and **THC limits in low THC edibles**
-

CARITAS PROPOSALS SUPPLY REDUCTION -

9. Mandatory drug-driving tests

1. the police are already equipped with Subsidiary Legislation 65.16, regarding Breath Tests Regulations, which provides a legal framework to test drivers under the influence of alcohol. Such legislation considers a refusal for breathalyser tests as an assumption of guilt. In the current scenario, any drug test for drivers can only be done with the consent of the individual involved, in which case a person who is under the influence of drugs and driving can refuse to give consent.
2. Introduce alcohol and drug testing in motor vehicle accidents that involve grievous bodily harm

10. Do Not allow Harm Reduction Social Clubs to have members consume cannabis on premises unless:

1. There is real enforcement of the prohibition of public consumption
2. Home-growing is abolished especially in the case where children reside in the household.

CARITAS PROPOSALS DEMAND REDUCTION - TREATMENT

11. Service Delivery Gap – A Low Threshold Residential Service for persons who are dependent on substances, homeless and show low readiness for residential rehabilitation

THANK YOU

