



Secretariat of the Government
Council for Addiction
Policy Coordination



Government Office
of the Czech Republic

Czech Addiction Policy and Its Coordination

Evidence-based Addiction Policy



THE CZECH ADDICTION POLICY IS
A COMPREHENSIVE AND COORDINATED
SET OF MEASURES AIMED AT REDUCING
THE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES
OF SUBSTANCE USE, GAMBLING AND OTHER
FORMS OF ADDICTIVE BEHAVIOUR.

The addiction policy is
implemented at two self-
contained, although intertwined
and complementary levels: the
central and regional (local). The
Czech Republic is also heavily
involved in the international
addiction policy.



Modern Addiction Policy in the Czech Republic

Addiction policy is defined as a comprehensive and coordinated set of preventive, educational, therapeutic, social, regulatory and control, as well as other measures, including law enforcement measures, adopted on international, national, regional and local levels.

Its purpose is to prevent negative consequences of addictive behaviour and reduce the harm it causes to both individuals and society as a whole, including its negative effects on public budgets, through a coordinated and evidence-based approach to enhance the well-being of the Czech population.

Modern Czech addiction policy is based on four key strategic areas, each of which plays an irreplaceable role of its own, interacts with and complements the others.

> **Prevention:** activities aimed at preventing the onset and development of addictive behaviour or delaying the first experience until a later age.

> **Risk and harm reduction:** activities that lead to reducing the adverse health, social, economic and other effects of the use of legal and illegal substances, gambling and other forms of addictive behaviour.

> **Treatment and social reintegration:** activities aimed at improving health, social circumstances and the overall quality of life, and promoting the recovery and social (re)integration of people with addictive behaviour.

> **Market regulation and supply reduction:** a set of legal and law enforcement measures designed to suppress or regulate the supply of different types of products with addictive potential, and regulation of markets in these products according to their level of risk and harmfulness.

The approach to implementing these measures should be balanced. In addition, measures in key areas cannot be effectively implemented without certain conditions being met. Therefore, addiction policy is underpinned by the following supporting areas: a) coordination and collaboration; b) funding; c) monitoring, information, research, evaluation and d) international commitments, good practice, experience, and international cooperation.

Integrated Addiction Policy

Integrated addiction policy refers to a policy covering all areas of addictive behaviour. The policy reflects the overlaps and interaction of different types of addictive behaviour, whether they result from the use of licit substances (such as alcohol and tobacco), illicit substances, gambling, or the use of digital technologies. It also considers the specific features and the degree of progress in dealing with the relevant issues in different areas of concern, and the way they project into other related policies. An integrated approach takes account of the fact that the

substances or activities involved in the development of addictive behaviour may vary in their legal status.

Since 2014, the Czech addiction policy has been extended to include the issues of alcohol and gambling; since 2016, it has included tobacco and nicotine; and since 2019, it has included digital addictions and psychoactive medicines. This marked a major change towards coordinated national measures to prevent and respond to the negative consequences of addictive behaviour.



Coordination of Addiction Policy in the Czech Republic

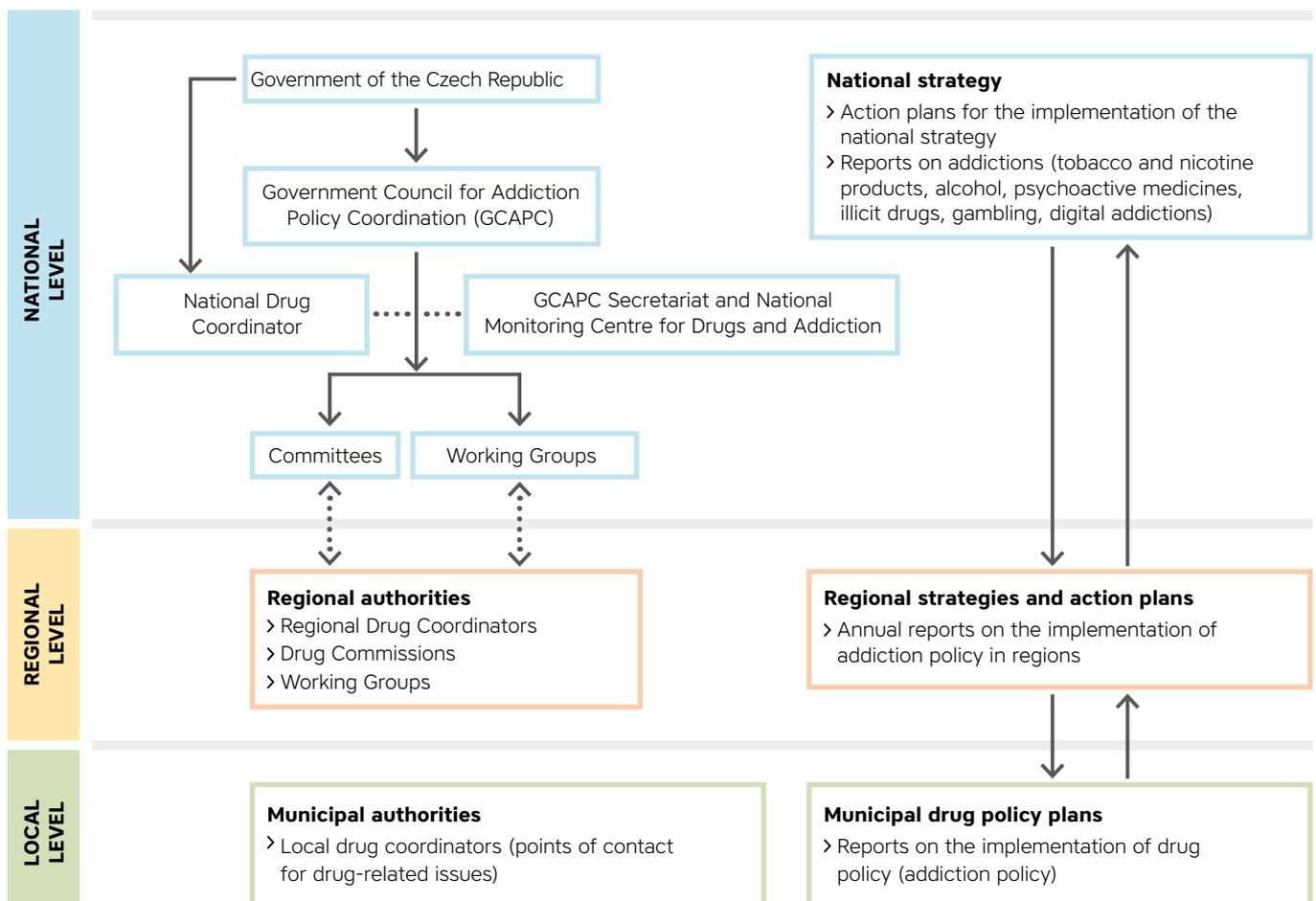
The addiction policy is implemented and coordinated at both the national and regional (local) levels, using horizontal and vertical coordination tools.

The development and implementation of the Czech addiction policy is the responsibility of the Government, using the following structures to coordinate relevant activities:

- > the **Government Council for Addiction Policy Coordination (GCAPC)** is the principal coordination and advisory governmental body for addiction policy issues;
- > the **National Drug Coordinator** is appointed by the government and submits proposals for addiction policy solutions to government members;
- > the **GCAPC Secretariat** provides administrative support for the GCAPC activities and is headed by the director of the Drug Policy Department of the Government Office of the Czech Republic;

- > the **GCAPC committees and working groups**, whose activities are coordinated by the Council's Secretariat;
- > the **national strategy**, action plans for the implementation of the national strategy, and analytical situation reports;
- > the **network of regional and local drug coordinators** who, within the scope of regional and municipal authority, facilitate the implementation of addiction policy at the national, regional, and local levels.

At the regional and local levels, coordination tools similar to those available at the national level are used. They include the authority of the regional and local drug coordinators, commissions and working groups, regional and local addiction policy strategies and action plans, and annual reports assessing the implementation of addiction policy at regional and local levels.





National Monitoring
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and Addiction



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National Websites:

<https://vlada.gov.cz>

- > website of the Government Council for Addiction Policy Coordination (GCAPC) as part of the website of the Government of the Czech Republic
- > information about the addiction policy, the GCAPC Secretariat, coordination, and addiction services
- > strategies, action plans, working groups and committees

<https://dotace-protidrogovapolitika.cz>

- > website dedicated to the 'Drug Policy' subsidy proceedings managed by the Government Office of the Czech Republic (non-investment subsidies provided from the national budget to fund addiction services and the implementation of specific projects related to addiction policy)

<https://www.drogy-info.cz>

- > website of the National Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Addiction (the National Focal Point)
- > national information system in addictions
- > information about the addiction situation in the Czech Republic intended for both the general public and the professional community
- > situation reports on addictions, other professional publications, including the Zaostrěno (Focused) bulletin
- > surveys, studies and research activities
- > Early Warning System on New Drugs in the Czech Republic
- > the Map of Aid
- > media communication

<https://www.koureni-zabiji.cz>

- > national website to support smoking cessation
- > information about the risks of smoking, advice and tips concerning smoking cessation
- > professional help contacts, National Quitline: +420 800 35 00 00

<https://www.hazardni-hrani.cz>

- > national website to reduce the risks of gambling
- > information about gambling in the Czech Republic, advice to people who are at risk of gambling addiction and people close to them
- > professional help contacts, National Quitline: +420 800 35 00 00

<https://www.alkohol-skodi.cz>

- > national website to support the reduction of alcohol consumption
- > information about alcohol in the Czech Republic, advice to people who are at risk of alcohol addiction and people close to them
- > professional help contacts, National Quitline: +420 800 35 00 00



The Czech addiction policy

- > sets achievable and realistic goals;
- > is based on latest evidence available in the field of addiction;
- > integrates the topics of licit and illicit substance use, gambling, and other types of addictive behaviour;
- > is based on the areas of prevention, risk and harm reduction, treatment and social reintegration, and effective market regulation and supply reduction;
- > is well balanced in its application of prevention and treatment measures on the one hand and supply reduction measures on the other;
- > is underpinned by a coordinated interagency and interdisciplinary approach to substance use, gambling and other types of addictive behaviour.

The objective of the Czech addiction policy is to protect individuals and society from the health and social risks associated with substance use, gambling, and other types of addictive behaviour, as well as to protect individuals and society against the consequences of crime associated with the supply and use of addictive substances, gambling, and other types of addictive behaviour.



Historical context

A modern Czech addiction policy (formerly drug policy) began to take shape in the 1990s, following the fall of the communist regime, in the period of social changes associated with the democratisation of society, the opening of borders, and the reduction of governmental control.



1990

The Government of the Czechoslovak Federative Republic established the Federal Commission for Narcotics in response to widespread concern among professionals about the rise in the level of illicit drug use. Having no significant practical impact, however, this federal commission was dissolved at the end of 1992.



1993–1997

The National Drug Commission (comprising ministers and chaired by the Prime Minister) was established and the first formal Drug Policy Concept and Programme was adopted. The concept was explicit in embracing a 'balanced approach' in an effort to pursue a course reflecting pragmatic European experience. The focus was on the development of basic coordination mechanisms at both the national and regional levels, the introduction of a system featuring district drug commissions and coordinators, and the development of primary prevention and a system for the monitoring of drug-related data.



1998–2000

The second Government Drug Policy Concept and Programme was introduced. It can be characterised by its ambition to respond to the growing demand by gradually extending the network of services to include missing prevention, treatment, and social rehabilitation programmes, and to establish a 'minimum network of services'. At the same time, it aimed to develop systemic tools for assessing the quality and effectiveness of the interventions implemented. For the first time, alternatives to the (criminal) prosecution of people who use drugs and prison-based programmes were brought up among the priorities. During this period, the paradigm of the perception of drugs as an immediate social threat began shifting towards a more realistic notion of drugs as a phenomenon which poses health and social risks.





2001–2004

A National Drug Policy Strategy for a four-year period was developed. While primarily addressing illicit drugs, it expanded its scope, at least on paper, to include alcohol and tobacco use, especially in the area of prevention and supply reduction. However, this strand of the policy had no major effect in practice. The harm reduction strategy became one of the four pillars of government drug policy of that period. A particular focus was placed on improving the quality and effectiveness of prevention and treatment programmes and widening the range of services. It was the first time that illicit drug use and the measures taken, including their practical effect, had been comprehensively monitored, analysed and described.

In 2002, the National Drug Commission changed its name to become the Government Council for Drug Policy Coordination (GCDPC), and the National Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (NMC) was established within the GCDPC Secretariat.



2005–2009

A short-term action plan (for 2–3 years) was introduced as a new tool to facilitate the implementation of the National Drug Strategy. A major step in this period included the introduction of a certification system of professional competence for secondary and tertiary drug prevention services (in 2005) and drug primary prevention programmes (in 2006). Another significant step was the adoption of a law on measures for protection from harm caused by tobacco products, alcohol, and other addictive substances (Act No. 379/2005 Coll.), which codified certain policies and principles that had always been incorporated in all the previous national drug strategies but without appropriate legislative grounding.

In 2007, the GCDPC was enlarged to include members representing professional associations, non-governmental sector, and regions. This step formalised the partnership principle between public administration and civil society which has been essential for the addiction policy in the long term.



2010–2018

The national strategy has become a fundamental, long-term (for nine years) conceptual document. Specific activities were laid down in relevant action plans. In 2014, the government endorsed the concept of an 'integrated drug policy', which allows the issues of licit drugs and gambling also to be incorporated into the existing drug policy. In this respect, the strategy was revised twice, reflecting this new integrated approach, and separate action plans dedicated to all these areas were drawn up. The very first report on gambling in the Czech Republic and its consequences was produced. The GCDPC mandate was expanded to cover coordination of all types of addictive substances and gambling. The NMC changed its name to become the National Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Addiction.



2019–2027

For the first time, the nine-year national strategy's title reflected a broader understanding of addiction issues, with a particular focus on prevention and harm reduction. Following its approval, the GCDPC was enlarged in 2020 to include members representing patient organisations. The adoption of the strategy led to a further expansion of the strategy's scope to include psychoactive medicines and digital addictions. In this respect, the GCDPC changed its name to become Government Council for Addiction Policy Coordination (GCAPC) in 2022, formally replacing the term 'drug policy' with 'addiction policy'. Separate action plans, previously dedicated to each addiction policy area, were consolidated into a unified action plan for addiction policy. Following the developments in the regulation and research, cannabis and cannabinoids became a special topic of the strategy.



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Government Council for Addiction Policy Coordination

On the national level, the addiction policy is coordinated by the **Government Council for Addiction Policy Coordination (GCAPC)**.

Its mission is to develop and maintain an integrated and comprehensive national strategy and action plans, and to coordinate the activities of all the stakeholders involved in their implementation at international, national, regional and local levels.

Composition of the Council

Since 2024, the GCAPC has had a total of 25 members.

Chair: Prime Minister of the Czech Republic

Executive Vice-Chair: National Drug Coordinator (NDC) or the Director of the GCAPC Secretariat (if the NDC position is vacant or the NDC is absent for an extended period).

Secretary: Director of the GCAPC Secretariat

Members:

- > Ministers of Health, Finance, Labour and Social Affairs, Justice, the Interior, Agriculture, Defence, Education, Youth and Sports, Industry and Trade, Foreign Affairs, Local Development, Legislation and for Human Rights (or a government commissioner);
- > Police President;
- > Representatives of the Association of Regions of the Czech Republic and the Union of Towns and Municipalities of the Czech Republic;
- > A patient organisations representative;
- > Professional community representatives:
 - > Society for Addictive Diseases of J. E. Purkyně Czech Medical Association;
 - > the Czech Association of Addictologists;
 - > the Association of Social Service Providers of the Czech Republic;
 - > the Association of Addiction Service Providers;
 - > an expert appointed by the Chair of the Council.

Council Secretariat

The GCAPC Secretariat provides administrative support to the Council and is in charge of day-to-day coordination of the addiction policy. Also referred to as the Drug Policy Department, it is an organisational unit of the Government Office of the Czech Republic. The Secretariat is responsible for the development of strategic addiction policy documents and the continuous coordination of addiction policy, as well

as for funding of addiction policy programmes through subsidies. In addition, it manages the system of certification of the professional competency for addiction services and coordinates the international activities of the Czech Republic in relation to addiction policy.

The Secretariat also provides organisational support for the operation of the **committees** and **working groups of the GCAPC**.

GCAPC Committees

> Committee of Departmental and Institutional Representatives

This committee gathers representatives of ministries and institutions involved in addiction policy, as well as professional community, regional and local governments and patient organisations. It provides meeting ground for mutual collaboration in the field of addiction policy.

> Committee of Regional Representatives

Members are regional drug coordinators, representatives of the Union of Towns and Municipalities, and the GCAPC Secretariat. The committee was established in order to coordinate and harmonise addiction policy at the national, regional, and local levels.

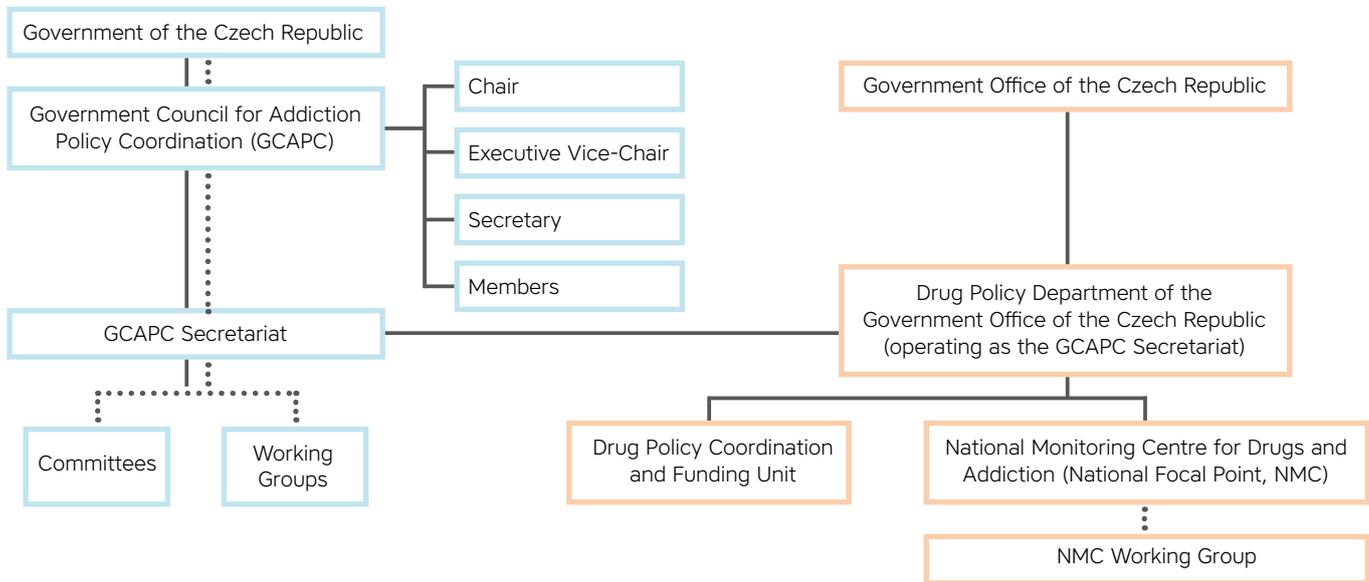
> Committee for the Certification and Quality of Addiction Services (Certification Committee)

The committee discusses proposals to grant, decline or suspend certification of professional competency as a guarantee of the quality of addiction services. The members are representatives of relevant ministries, as well as professional community, regional drug coordinators, and patient organisations.

> Advisory Board for Data Collection in Addictions

The board was established to address the issues of monitoring of the situation in addictions. One of its major tasks is to ensure that rigorous scientific methods are used to prepare addiction-related reports.





> Advisory Committee for the Assessment of Psychoactive Substances

The committee assesses psychoactive substances and proposes their inclusion on the list of scheduled psychoactive, psychomodulatory or illicit/controlled substances.

Council Working Groups

> Addictology Forum

An open platform where addiction professionals meet on a regular basis and exchange experiences, good practices and up-to-date information, as well coordinate joint activities, including the conception and development of the field.

> Working groups of the Committee of Departmental and Institutional Representatives and the Advisory Board for Data Collection in Addictions

Ad hoc groups focus on specific areas of addiction policy, such as alcohol, tobacco, psychoactive medicines, illicit drugs, gambling and digital addictions.

Addiction Services

The network of addiction services addresses the entire spectrum of issues associated with addictive behaviour. It consists of health, social and educational services embedded in different fields and departmental frameworks.

The GCAPC Secretariat evaluates the availability of addiction services and proposes measures for its improvement, coordinates the quality assurance system and co-finances the provision and development of the network of services through the subsidy programme.

Certification of the professional competency of addiction services refers to assessment of their compliance with the professional criteria for providing care set by Standards of Professional Competency for Addiction Services. The certification process and the responsibilities of all actors are described in detail in the Certification Rules.

The Government Office of the Czech Republic's drug policy **subsidy procedure** primarily focuses on co-financing, maintaining and developing the basic network of addiction services. The Subsidy Committee is the advisory body to the director of the GCAPC Secretariat, and it reviews applications for funds and proposes the amount of subsidies provided.

International Cooperation

The GCAPC Secretariat is actively involved in a number of international activities and initiatives and coordinates the fulfilment of tasks and obligations arising from international treaties and from the membership of the Czech Republic in international organisations, including:

- > the Horizontal Working Party on Drugs (HDG) of the Council of the European Union;
- > the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND);
- > the Council of Europe's International Group for Cooperation on Drugs and Addiction (Pompidou Group);
- > the EU Drugs Agency (EUDA) and
- > coordinating collaboration in relation to the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC).

National Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Addiction

The National Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Addiction (NMC) provides reliable evidence-based information on addiction-related issues in the Czech Republic.

The NMC is a part of the Secretariat of the Government Council for Addiction Policy Coordination (Drug Policy Department of the Government Office of the Czech Republic).

Activities of the NMC

- > collection, analysis, interpretation, and dissemination of data on addictions in the Czech Republic;
- > monitoring of interventions, policies and strategies in the field of prevention, harm reduction, treatment, social reintegration and law enforcement;
- > coordination of the national information system in addictions;
- > coordination of the Early Warning System on New Drugs in the Czech Republic;
- > dissemination of information through:
 - > thematic reports and Summary Report on Addictions in the Czech Republic;
 - > bulletin Zaostrěno ('Focused');
 - > publications in four editions;
- > national websites <https://www.drogy-info.cz>, <https://www.koureni-zabiji.cz>, <https://www.hazardni-hrani.cz>, <https://www.alkohol-skodi.cz>
- > social media profiles <https://www.facebook.com/drogyinfo> <https://www.facebook.com/vyzkumdrogyinfo>

Information System in Addictions

The Information System in Addictions (ISA) is a comprehensive system for collecting, processing, reporting and disseminating addiction-related information. Previously known as the Drug Information System, it historically focused primarily on the area of illicit drugs. National Action Plan on Information System in Addictions (NAPISA) is a practical tool designed to plan and coordinate activities carried out by Czech institutions and organisations working in the field of addictions. The development and implementation of the information system is a part of the European Union Drugs Agency's (EUDA) recommendations.

Early Warning System on New Drugs in the Czech Republic

- > The Early Warning System (EWS) is based on Regulation (EU) 2023/1322 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2023 on the EUDA.
- > It is a tool for collection, assessment and exchange of information on new psychoactive substances at

Timeline of Monitoring Development in the Czech Republic



the European and national levels, emphasising the serious health and other consequences associated with their use.

- Information is also collected on the serious health risks related to use of non-traditional and other substances, with unusual adulterants and high potency.
- At the European level, EWS is coordinated by the EUDA, in cooperation with Europol. In the Czech Republic, the EWS is coordinated by the NMC.
- Information is obtained from various sources, including law enforcement agencies, health systems, drugs and medicines evaluation and regulatory authorities, toxicology laboratories, addiction services, and research institutions.
- EWS working group collects data, assesses risks, and drafts proposals to Advisory Committee for the Assessment of Psychoactive Substances for scheduling new substances based on their level of risk.
- In case of serious consequences, the NMC proposes and coordinates appropriate measures, such as informing addiction services, publishing expert reports or issuing warnings.

Publications of the National Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Addiction

Situation reports in addictions – up-to-date situation and trends in the thematic areas monitored within the information system in addictions:

- *Report on Tobacco and Nicotine Products in the Czech Republic,*
- *Report on Alcohol in the Czech Republic,*
- *Report on Problematic Use of Psychoactive Medicines in the Czech Republic,*
- *Report on Illicit Drugs in the Czech Republic,*
- *Report on Gambling in the Czech Republic,* and
- *Report on Digital Addictions in the Czech Republic.*

Summary Report on Addictions – complex overview of the addiction-related situation in the Czech Republic that summarizes up-to-date situation and trends in specific areas and across topics.

Zaostřeno ('Focused') – periodically issued bulletin (until 2014 published as 'Focused on Drugs' / Zaostřeno na drogy).

Monographs – expert publications providing a comprehensive review of a specific topic or phenomenon.

Guidelines – specialised, comprehensive publications focused on providing guidance for practical application.

Research Reports – expert publications presenting results of research studies.

Coordination – expert publications dealing mainly with addiction policy coordination.

- The list of issued publications and their full-texts, including the Zaostřeno bulletin, can be downloaded from <https://www.drogy-info.cz>.

European Union Drugs Agency

European Union Drugs Agency (EUDA) is the NMC's main partner at the international level. The NMC cooperates with the EUDA in collecting, processing and disseminating information on addiction-related topics. Annually, the EUDA publishes the European Drug Report that provides the latest evidence, data and factual overview of drug use and its consequences in Europe. The Agency also publishes a wide range of other information outputs (<https://euda.europa.eu/>).

The national monitoring centres (national focal points, NFPs) in European countries form the European Union Drugs Agency (EUDA) information network on drugs and drug addiction (Reitox network) (https://www.euda.europa.eu/publications/brochures/reitox-faqs_en), ensuring a comprehensive and harmonised approach to reporting on drugs in Europe.

In 2025, the Czech NMC underwent the certification process by the EUDA that formally acknowledged the competence of the NMC for the data collection, analysis and distribution of information at the national level and meeting the criteria for the NFP set out in the EUDA regulation.

In July 2024, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) became the European Union Drugs Agency (EUDA) with a new broader mandate and a stronger role. The EUDA's mission is to strengthen the EU preparedness on drugs.



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