

MOAD0201

Tougher policy on French illegal drug users: what impact on risk reduction?

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1. BACKGROUND



In the 2000's, France's policy on illegal drug users became increasingly stringent. The National AIDS Council sought to assess the impact of this punitive policy on risk reduction policy targeting drug users.

- 1. BACKGROUND -

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2. METHODS

- Around 30 hearings with
 - representatives of the relevant authorities
 - associations
 - researchers
- Review of the literature mainly collected by the French Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (OFDT)



- 2. METHODS -

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3. FRAMEWORK

Law of 31 December 1970, regarding health measures to fight drug addiction and the repression of traffic and illicit use of toxic substances punishes:

TRAFFIC

up to
life imprisonment
and €7,6 million fine
(~\$9,27 million)

USE

up to
one year in prison
and €3,000 fine
(~\$3,660)

and offers alternatives...

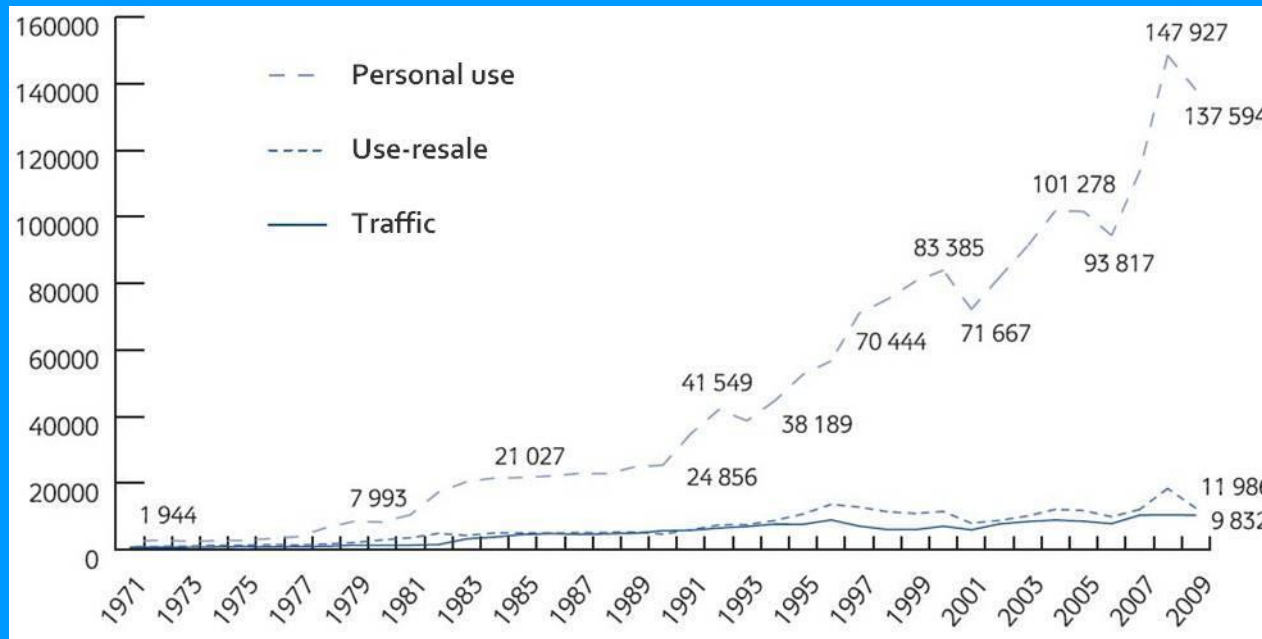
This law has not been amended since

- 3. LEGAL FRAMEWORK -

Tougher policy on French illegal drug users: what impact on risk reduction?

4. IMPACT

- Progression of arrests linked to drug law offenses



Sources : Ministry of Interior, OFDT

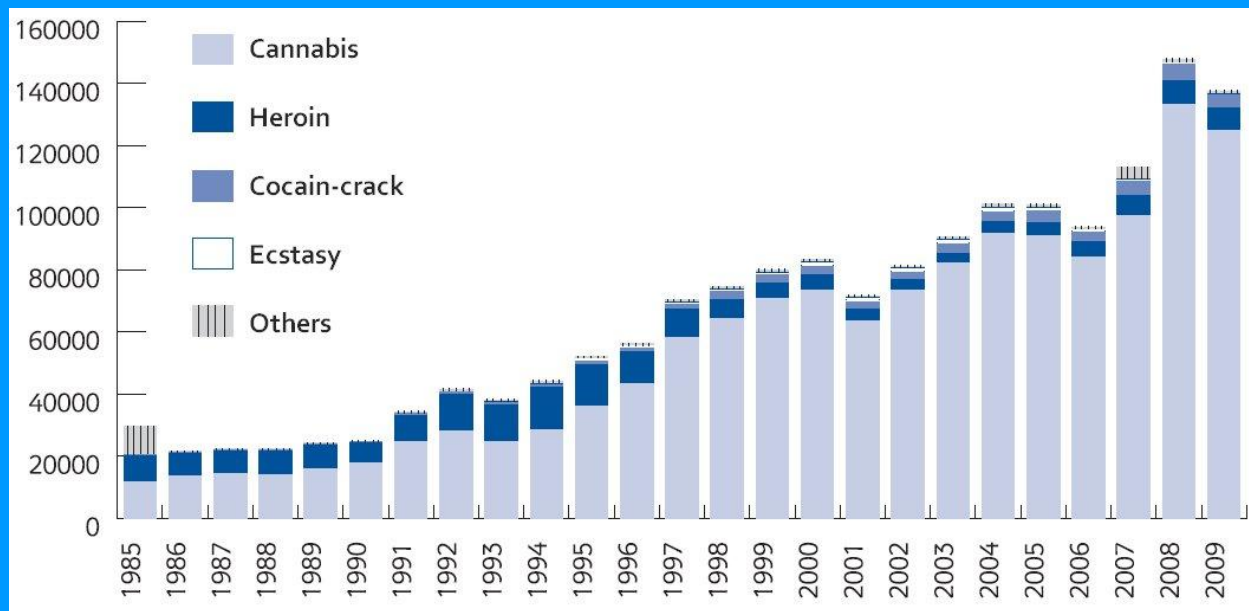
The number of arrests linked to drug law offenses has increased by a multiple of 60 since 1970. From 2001 to 2007, it increased by 106%

- 4. IMPACT -

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4. IMPACT

- Progression of arrests linked to personal use of narcotics, per product (1985-2009)

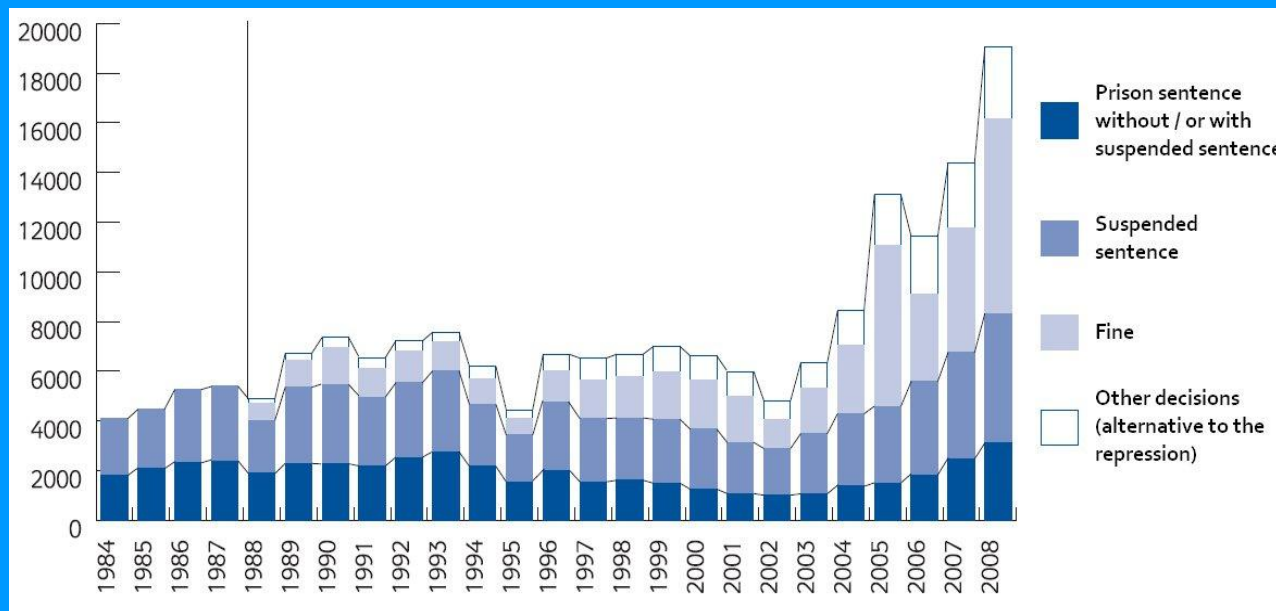


Sources : Ministry of Interior, OFDT.

Cannabis accounted for 40% of arrests linked to personal use of narcotics in 1985, 65% in 1994 and 90% in 2009

4. IMPACT

- Progression of judicial sentences linked to illegal use (1984-2008)



Sources : Ministry of Interior, OFDT

The number of sentences laid down for drug law offences **doubled** between 2002 and 2008, and those for simple use have been **multiplied fourfold** in the past 20 years

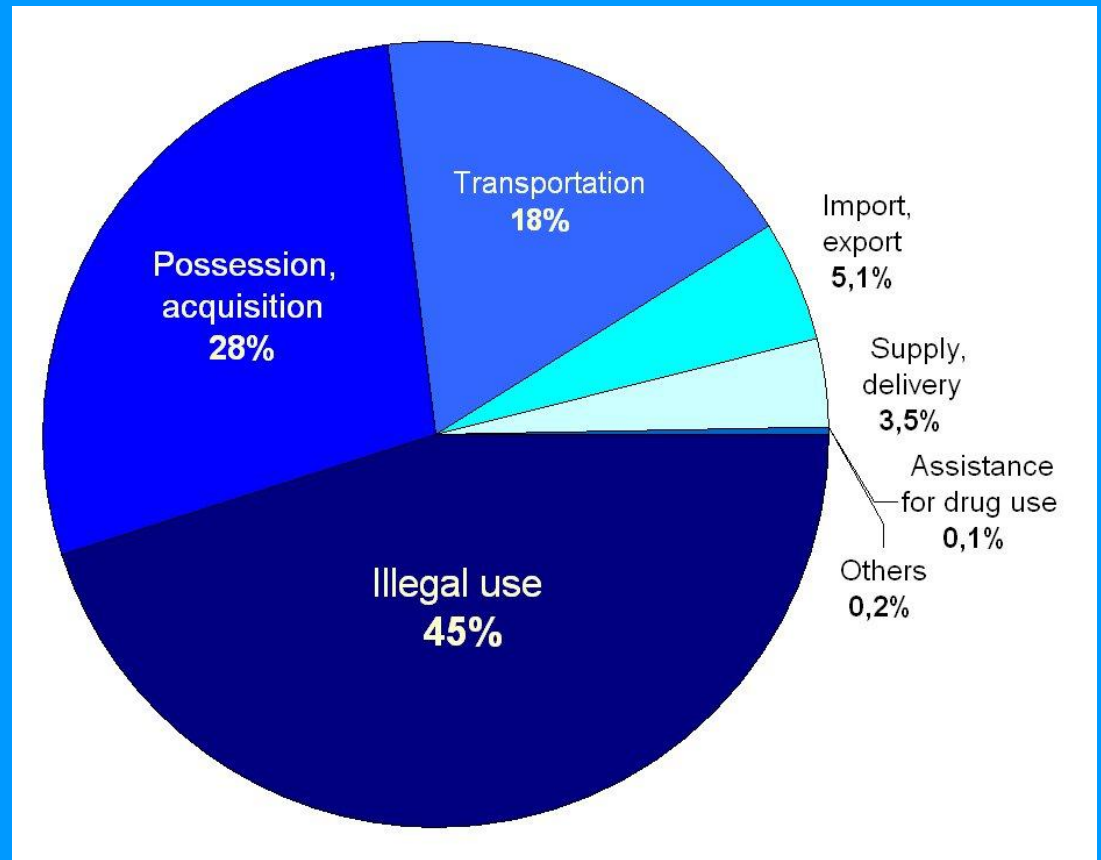
- 4. IMPACT -

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4. IMPACT

- Progression of judicial sentences linked to illegal use (2008)

The proportion of sentences linked to personal use has **increased significantly over the last decade**, from 27,8% to 44,7% of sentences in 2008



Sources : Ministry of Justice, OFDT

- 4. IMPACT -

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4. IMPACT

The cost of this punitive policy, estimated at €590 million (\$723 million) in 1995, is now much higher, given the conjoined effects of :

- an increase in arrests
- an increase in sentences for drug law offences
- a decrease in reduced sentences
- an increase in legal proceedings against personal drug users

The cost of the network of CAARUD bodies, which specifically target users of illicit drugs users was €31 million (\$38 million) in 2009...

- 4. IMPACT -

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4. IMPACT

Mixed results of risk reduction tools



Based on information, access to sterile injection material and the deployment of OST, risk reduction strategies have been amplified since 1987 and explain to a large extent the slower progression of the epidemic of HIV infection among drug users

This observation may however be offset by a number of less optimistic elements...

HIV

HCV

HIV + HCV

- 4. IMPACT -

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4. IMPACT

Despite the requirements, the risk reduction programs have not been extended and authorities have forbidden several groundbreaking programs:

- **opioid substitution therapy** remains insufficiently diversified (see medicalized heroin) and there is significant misuse
- **drug consumption rooms** have not been authorized
- detainees do not benefit from the full range of risk reduction mechanisms, in particular syringe exchange programs

- 4. IMPACT -

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5. CONCLUSIONS

The punitive policy on drug users

- has been made a top policy and budget priority, with risk reduction policy relegated to second place
- has hindered the development of risk reduction program
- is likely to reinforce the clandestinity of drug practices
- has not led to a significant increase in the price of narcotics, nor to a fall in drug consumption

The Council recommends an evaluation of policies on illicit drugs and a reformulation of the law on narcotics



MEMORANDUM EQUIVALENT
TO OPINION

20/01/2011

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PUBLIC POLICY

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IMPACT OF ILLICIT DRUG POLICIES
ON RISK REDUCTION FOR INFECTIOUS DISEASES

ADOPTED BY THE NATIONAL AIDS COUNCIL ON 20 JANUARY 2011

**Support Drug Policy
Based On Science,
Not Ideology.**

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Thank you for your attention