



European Monitoring Centre
for Drugs and Drug Addiction

Women and drugs in the EU: main indicators, current trends, existing gaps

Linda Montanari, Eleni Kalamara, Sharon Arpa

Sofia, 19-20 June

COPOLAD II ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Women and drugs policy



Structure of the presentation

- **Background**
- **Gender differences in drug use and drug related problems in Europe**
- **Gender specific needs and responses**
- **Challenges**



EMCDDA data sources on gender

- **Key epidemiological indicators on:**
 - drug use in the general population (adults and students)
 - treatment demand
 - drug related health consequences (Infectious diseases and mortality)
- **Quantitative data on:**
 - emergency presentations
 - prison
- **Country reports (workbooks) on drug use and responses**
- **EMCDDA's publications and literature**

Data refer to:

- **28 EU Member States + Norway and Turkey,
(unless differently specified)**

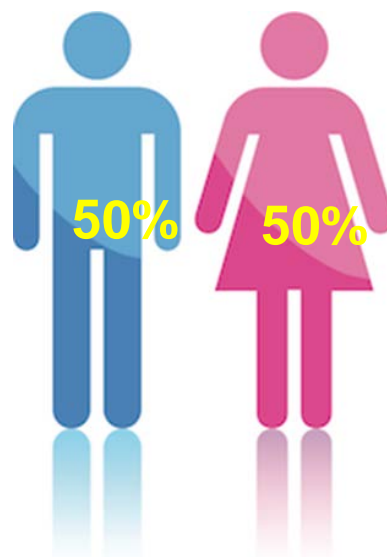
- **2016 or most recent year available**

<http://www.emcdda.europa.eu>₃



Gender distribution in the general population in 2016

Population in EU-28 + Norway and Turkey	Women	Men	Total
All ages	303 831 331	292 764 528	596 595 859
15-64 years	194 454 881	195 617 265	390 072 146
15-19	16 509 082	17 545 431	34 054 513



Some figures on women and drugs in EU-28, Norway and Turkey in 2016

More than 36 millions women have tried any illicit drug at least once in life
(Men= 56 mls)

More than 100 000 women have entered drug treatment
(Men= 378 000)



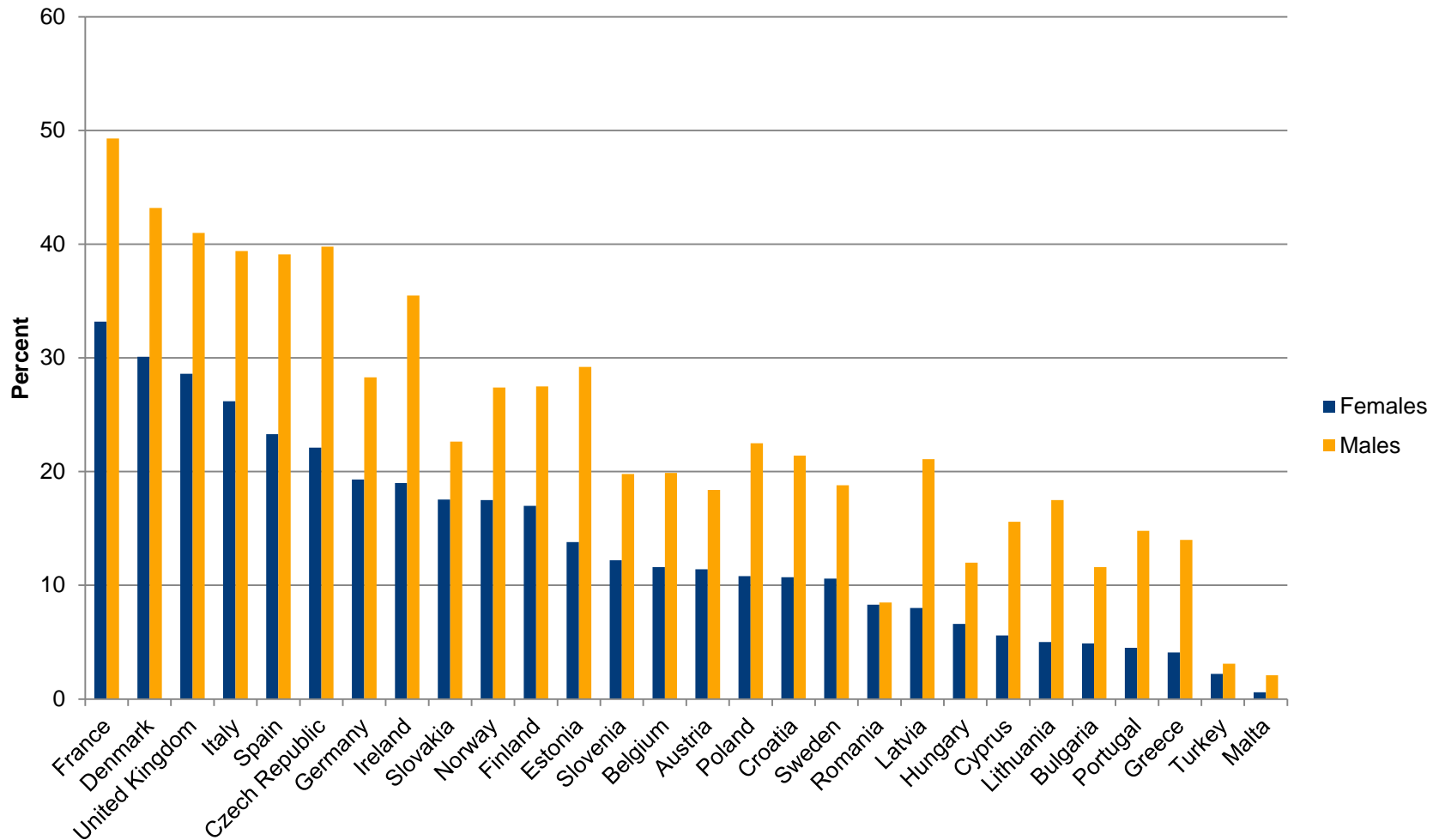
211 HIV notifications
(Men= 832)

- 34 millions have tried cannabis (M= 53 mls)
- 5 millions cocaine (M=11 mls)
- 4 millions amphetamines (M=8 mls)
- 4 millions MDMA (M= 10 mls)

1907 women have died directly because of drugs DRD
(Men= 7231)



Lifetime prevalence in the adult population 15-64 for any illicit drugs by country in 2015

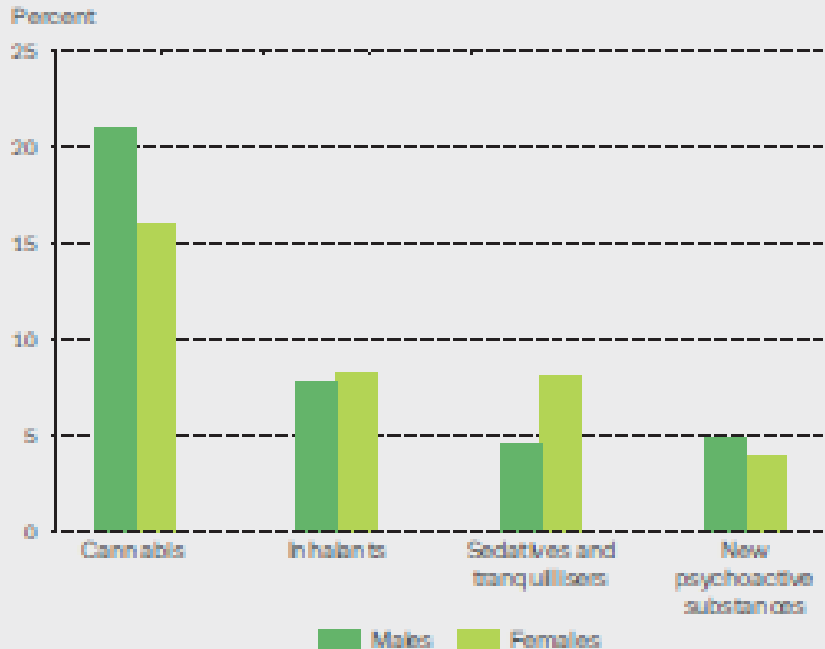


Data source: EMCDDA Statistical Bulletin, 2016



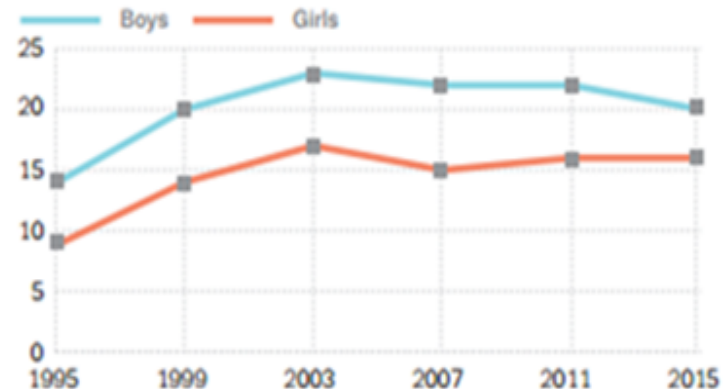
Lifetime prevalence for any illicit drugs in young students 15-16 in 23 EU countries in 2015

Lifetime use of substances among 15- to 16- year-old European school students, by gender



NB: Based on data for the 23 EU Member States and Norway that participated in the 2015 round of ESPAD.

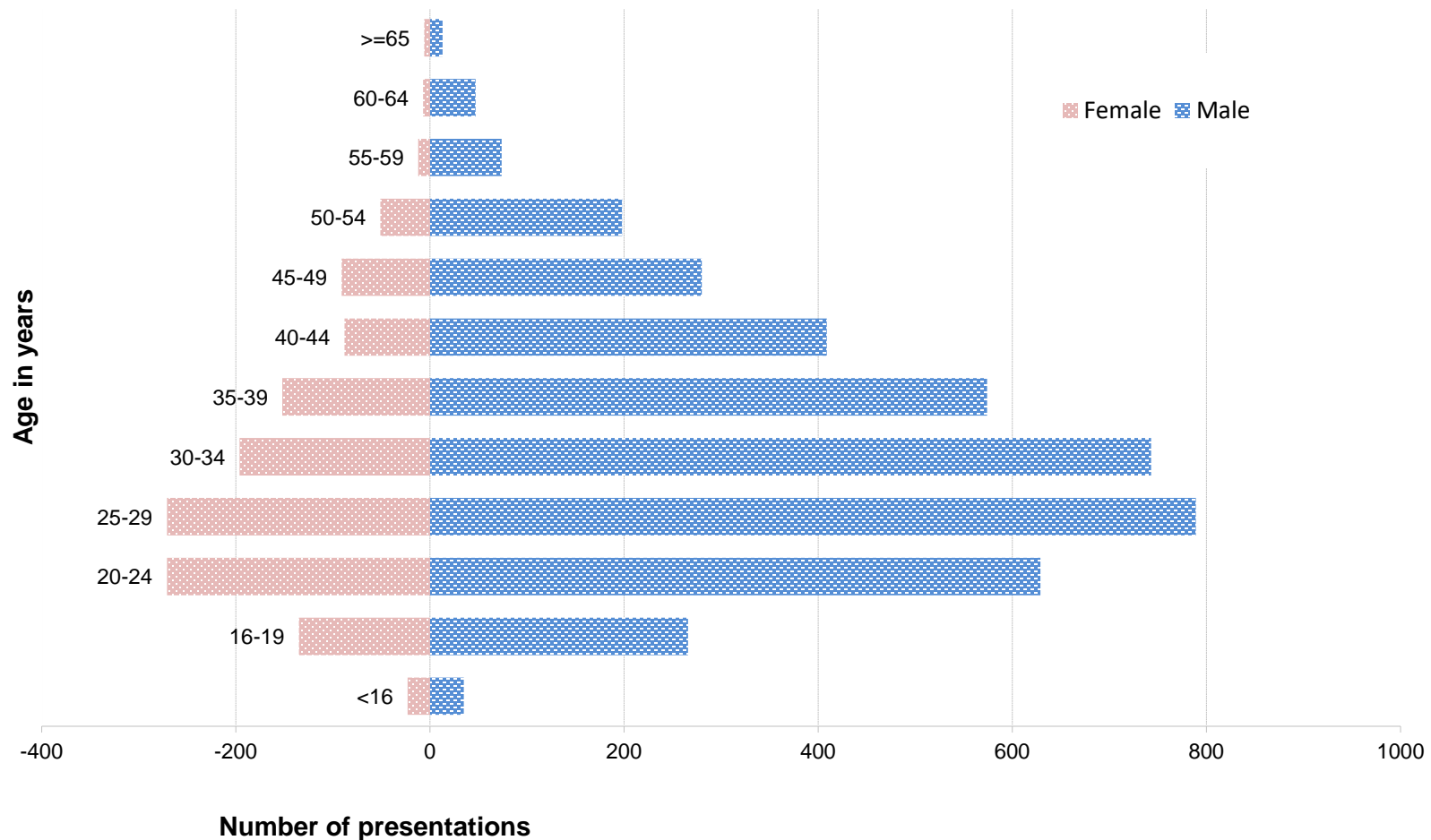
Figure 2. Illicit drug use: Lifetime prevalence among 15-16 year old students



Source: 2018 EDR; ESPAD 2015 (Kraus et al., 2016)

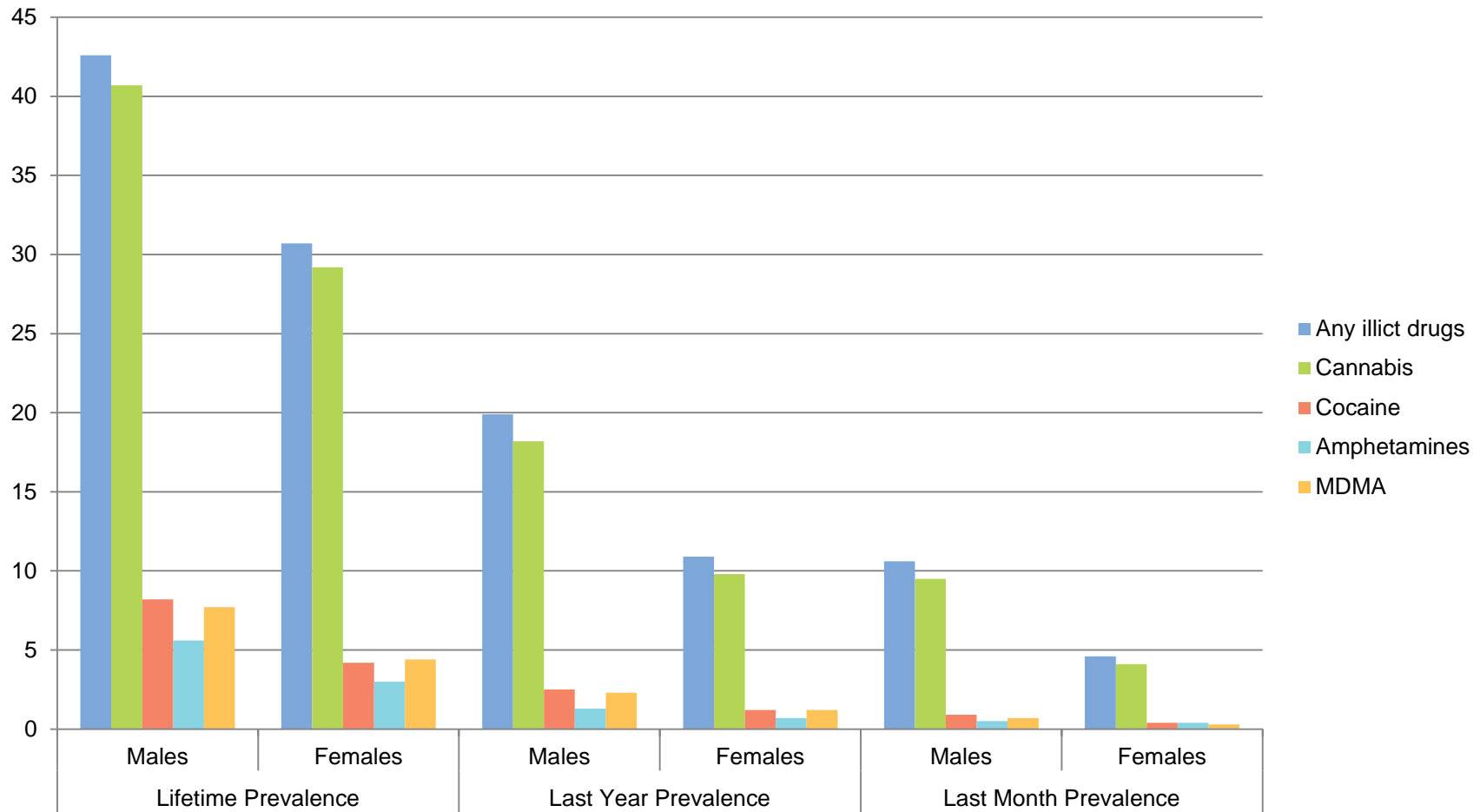


Presentations to Euro-Den sentinel emergency departments in 10 European countries* (n.5529, 75% males)



Source: EURODEN Project - 16 sentinel centres data 2014

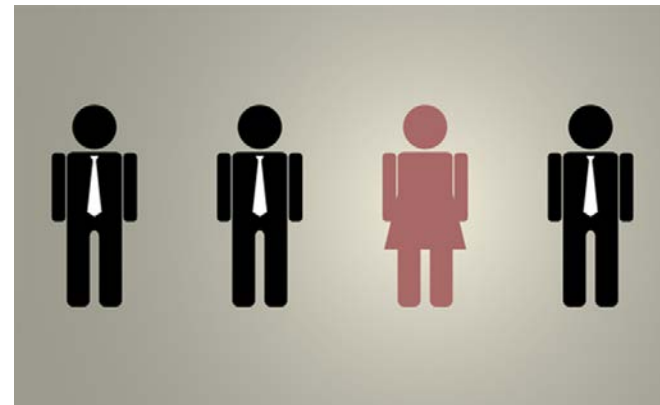
Prevalence of drug use in adult males and female 15-34 years for some drugs



Source: 2018 Statistical Bulletin, Most recent surveys - <http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/edr2018>)

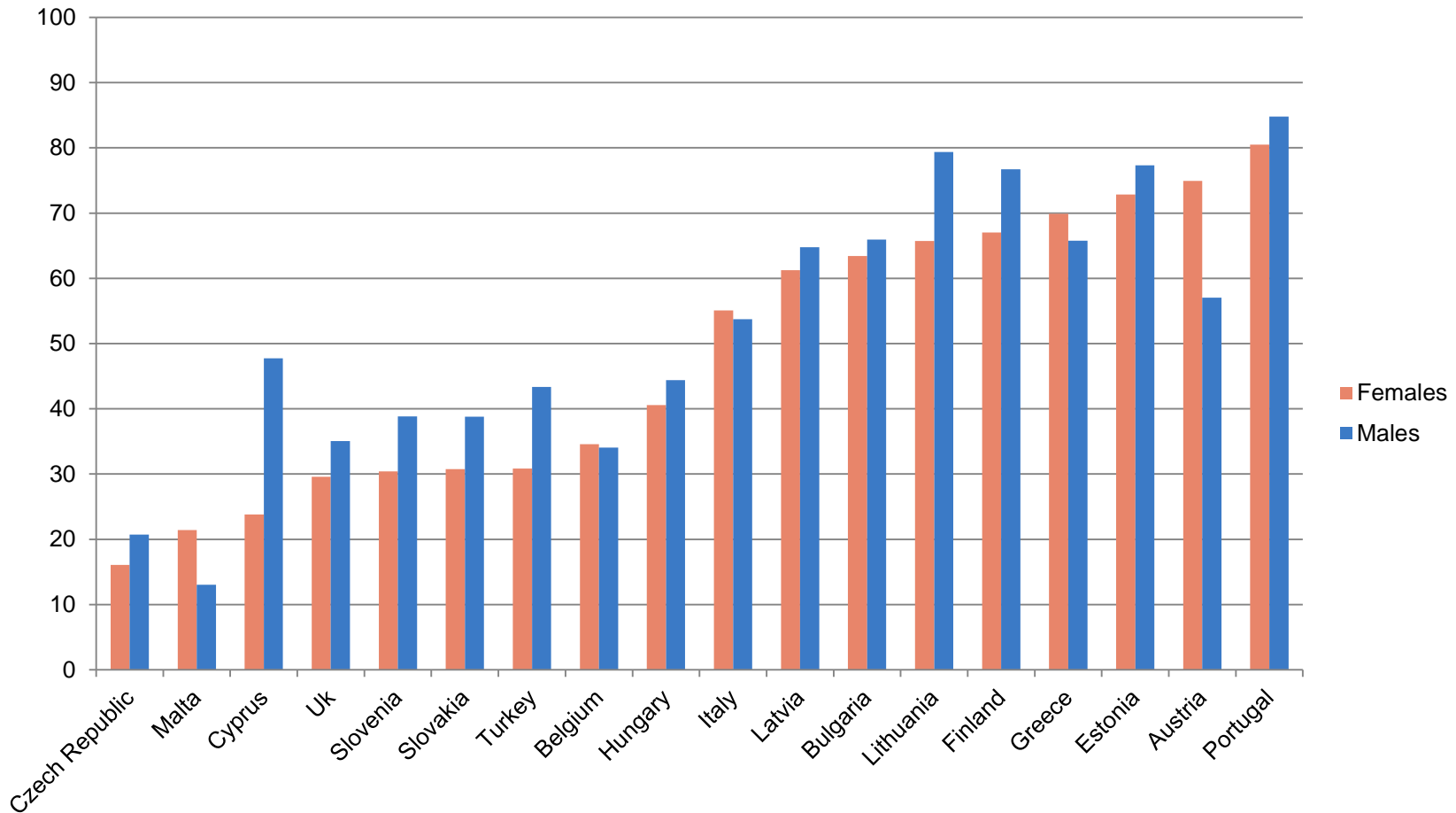
Male to female ratios by drug among treatment entrants in 2016 in EU + Norway

Drugs	Male to Female Ratios
Cocaine	6.1
Cannabis	5.3
Opioids	4.0
Amphetamines	2.7
Hypnotics and sedatives	2.1



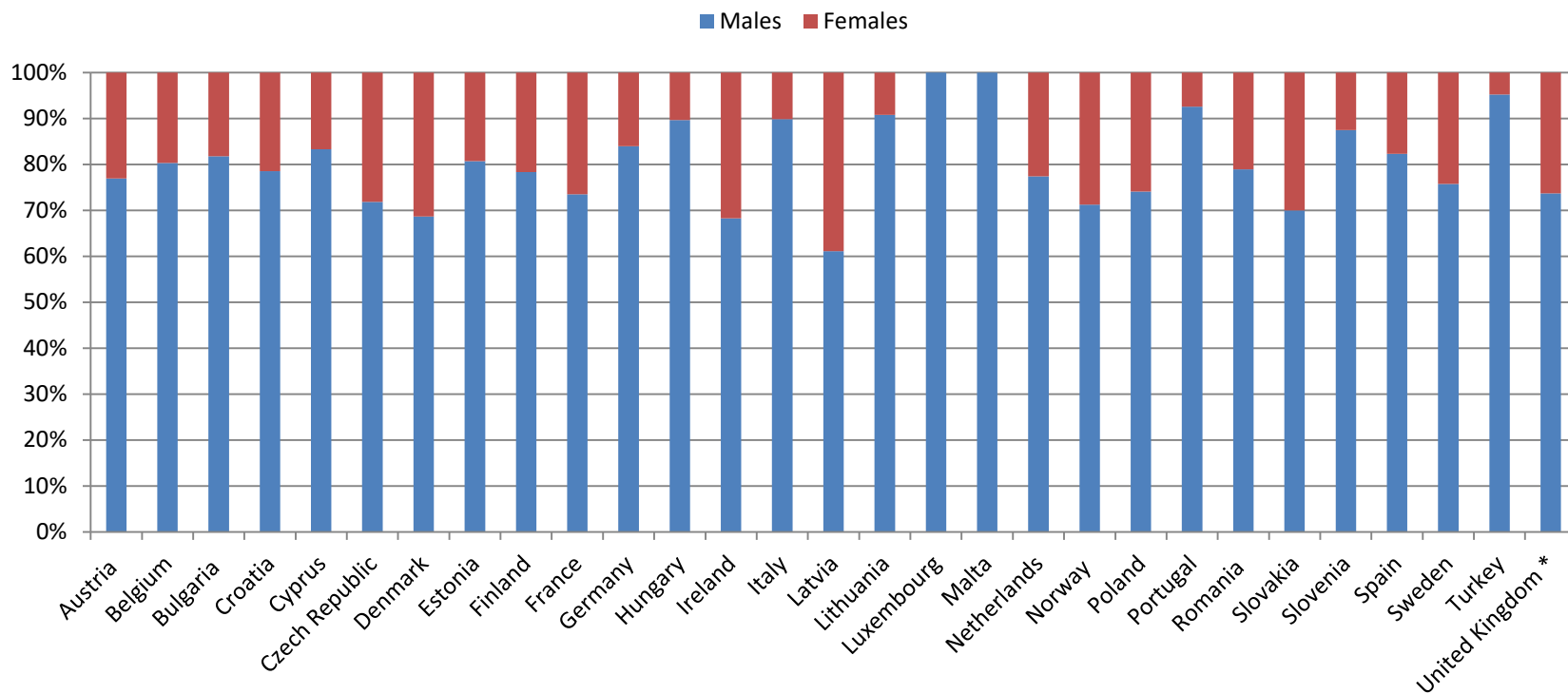
26% women

HCV prevalence (%) among PWID males and females in 2013/2014 studies



Proportion of males and females among DRD

- Around 9138 overdose deaths reported in Europe in 2016
- Around 1 907 women (21%) – Large variations across countries also in the age bands
- 9* million VS 48 * millions males



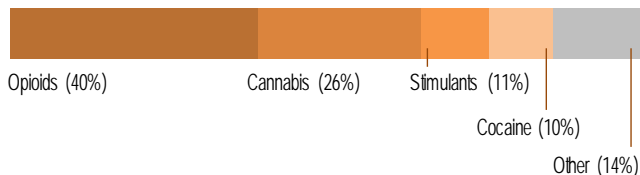
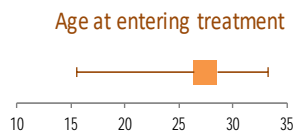
Source: 2018 EMCDDA – EDR 2018 (<http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/edr2018>)



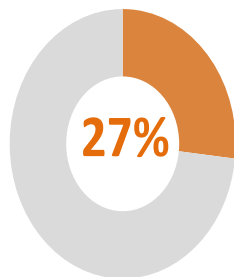
Profile of women entering drug treatment in 28 EU + Norway in 2016

PROFILE OF WOMEN ENTERING TREATMENT

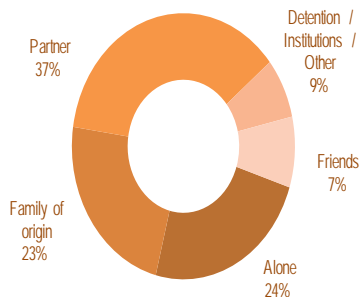
Entered treatment
102 000



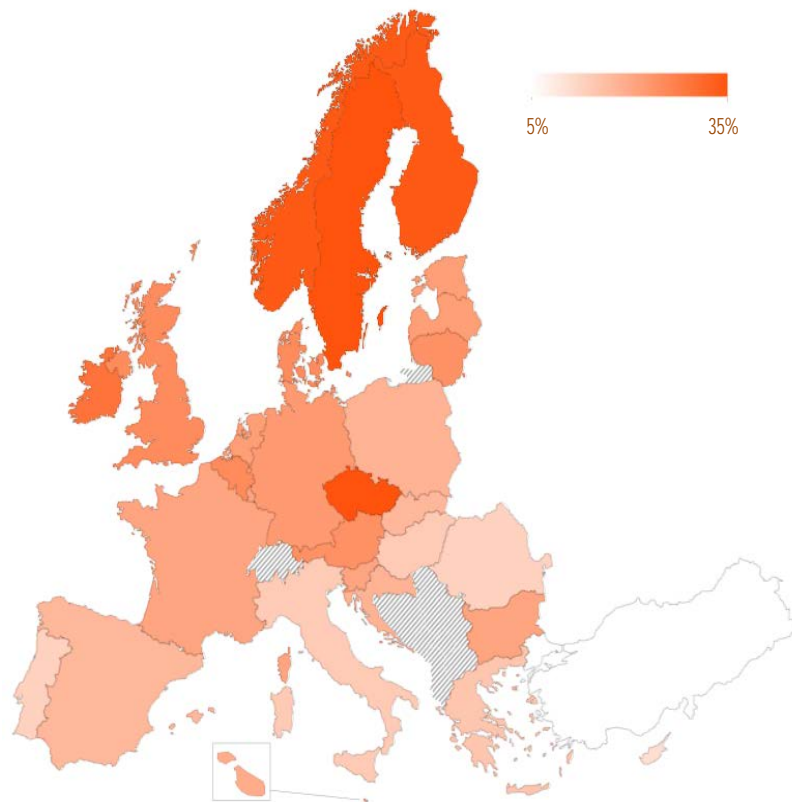
Living with children



Living with whom



Percentage of women entering treatment



Sub-groups of women: often overlapping

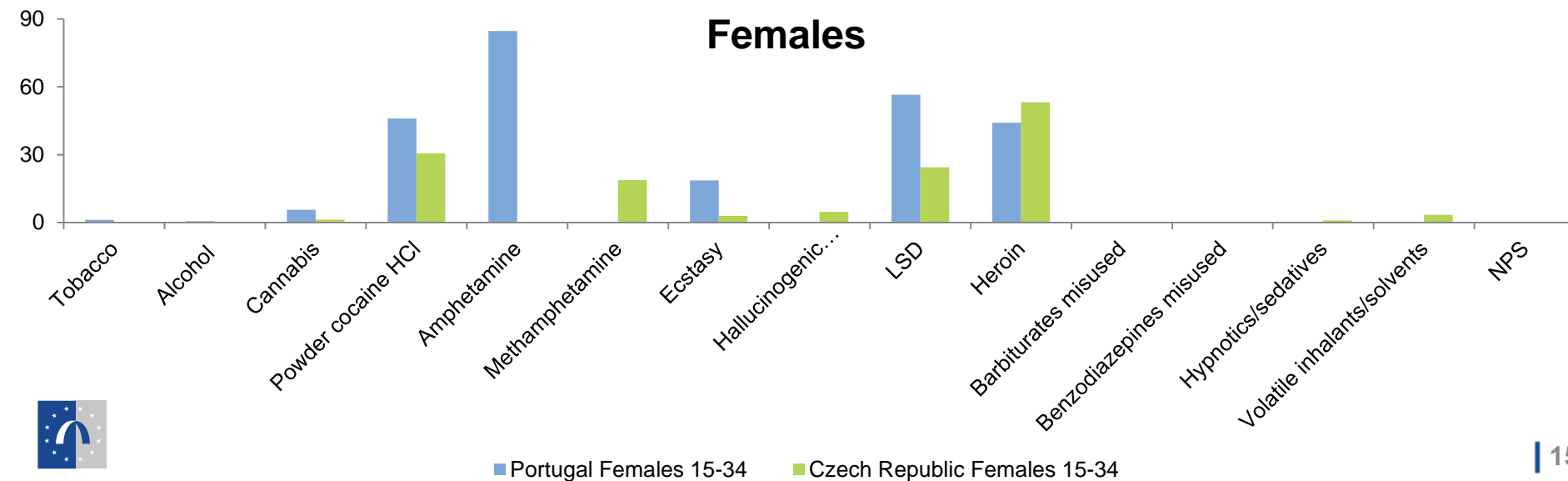
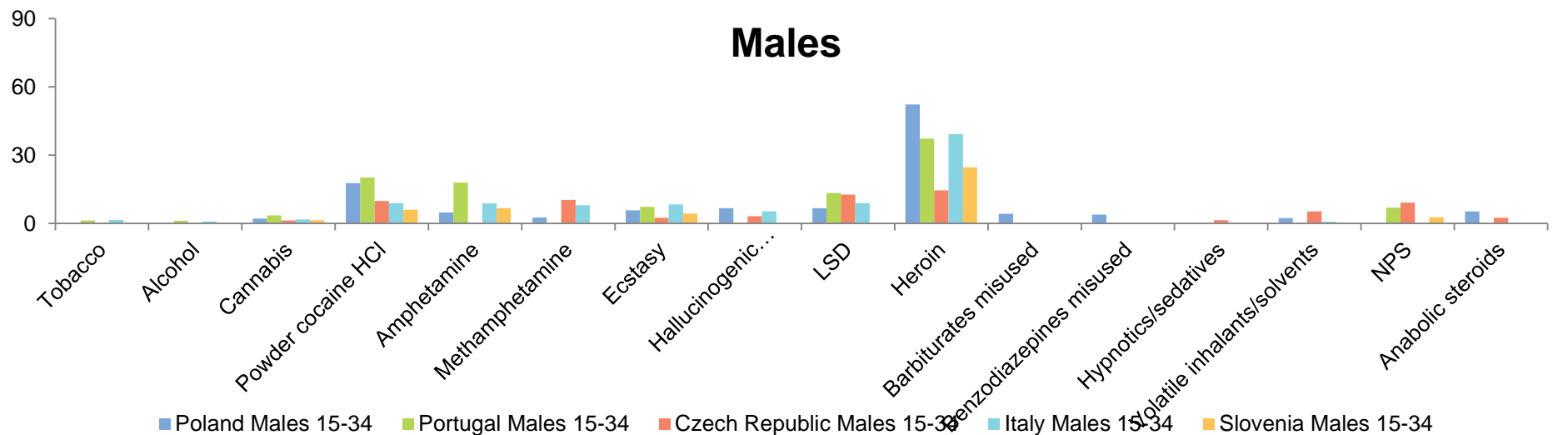
- **Pregnant and parenting women**
- ***Women in prison***
- **Women involved in sex-work**
- **Women who experienced trauma, violence**
- **Psychiatric comorbidity**
- **Women from ethnic minorities**



Women in prison

LTP among prisoners/
/LTP General Population
(Value: 10 indicates 10-fold excess)

Source: Pilot Project on EQDP - <http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/activities/prison>



Key issues and response needs

- **Stigma**
 - perceived as contravening social rules
 - implications for treatment access
- **Socio-economic burden**
 - Lower employment and pay
- **Social support**
 - More likely to come from parents using substances and have substance using partner
- **Drug using partners**
 - Drug use initiation
 - Infectious diseases
 - Central the relationship
- **Children**
 - 30% live with them



Source EMCDDA 2017, Arpa S. Background paper on women and drug user, Health and Social responses to drug problems, EMCDDA, 2017

Recommended responses for women who use drugs

- **gender-responsive incorporating women's needs in all aspects of their design and delivery**

- **delivered in environments that are welcoming, non-judgmental, supporting and physically and emotionally safe**

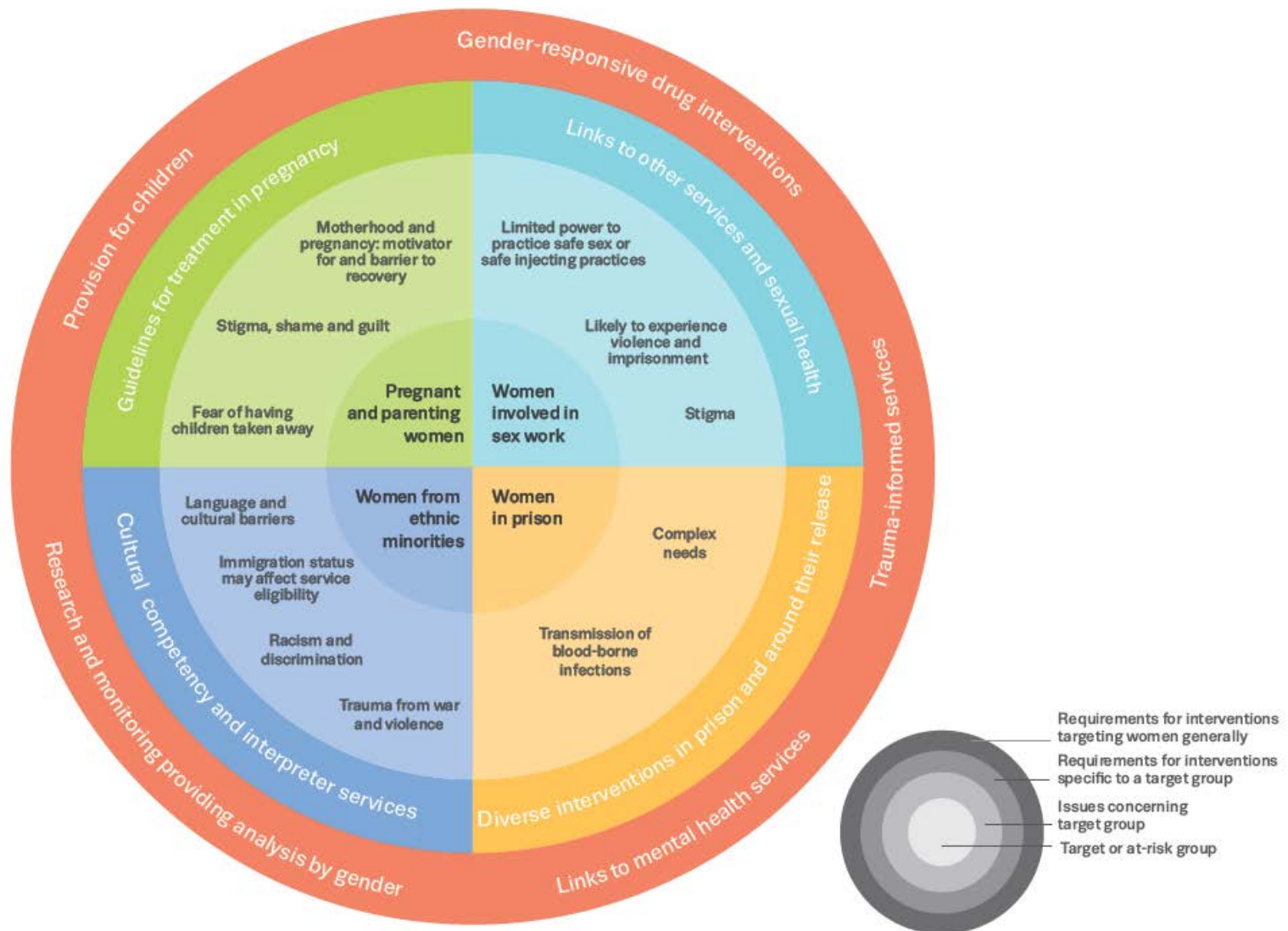
- **holistic and comprehensive in order to address the multiple issues that women face**

- **promote healthy connections to children, family members, significant others and the community**

address socio-economic conditions



Services provision for specific groups of women with drugs problems



Conclusions and challenges

- Genders differ in patterns of drug use- gender gap seems to be narrowing
- Key issues specific to women (e.g. stigma, violence, treatment access)
- Services should be:
 - gender-responsive
 - trauma-informed
 - coordinated with other health and social services
- Increase drug using women participation in planning/policies development
- Considers gender in all aspects of service design




Implications for monitoring and research

- Still little is known about women and drug use (pathways into drug addiction, vulnerability factors, etc.)
- Few European comparable data on women and drug use
- Data collection often do not consider gender perspective
- Include gender breakdowns in routine statistics
- Reduce knowledge gaps by research that addresses gender issues, looking at specific areas related to the women key issues



Women Drug Professionals

- **Background:**
 - Shed light on role, issues and challenges of women professionals
- **Objective**
 - Investigate issues, challenges, risks, strengths
- **Focus**
 - clinical and managerial work
- **Target**
 - women working in the drug field
- **Participants:**
 - EIGE, Pompidou Group Council of Europe, UNICRI, Catholic University (Milano-IT), Research company (Torino-IT), NGO (Malta), Anti-drug department (IT), EMCDDA
- **Next steps**
 -  on-line survey on main issues of women working in the

From Women's Voices...2009

“Briefly, my stepfather attempted with me.

I told it to mum but of course she didn't believe me. And our relationship started to get worse.

I was 16 when I found myself on the street”

Female Injecting drug user, Hungary

Source: 2009: Women's voices - <http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/thematic-papers/womens-voices>)



Resources

Extended Reitox network meeting
24 November 2015

WOMEN AND DRUGS

- ? Are women more vulnerable to the consequences of drug use? Why?
- ? Is the gender gap in drug use narrowing?
- ? Do women with drug related problems have access to treatment and if so, what are the implications for monitoring?
- ? Pregnancy and the substitution treatment debate: what is new for women using drugs?

- ▶ More than 40 heads of national drug observatories and key experts
- ▶ From European countries and beyond
- ▶ Will discuss women and drugs

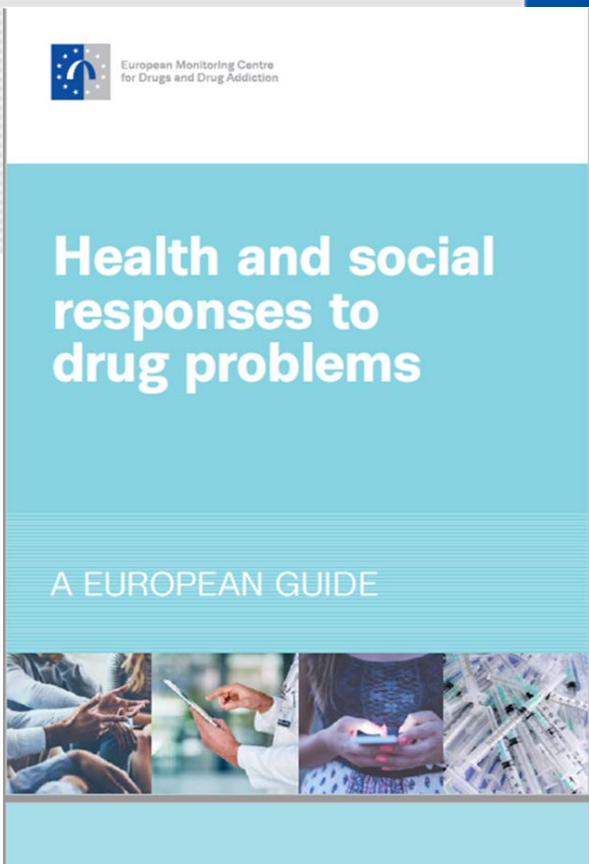
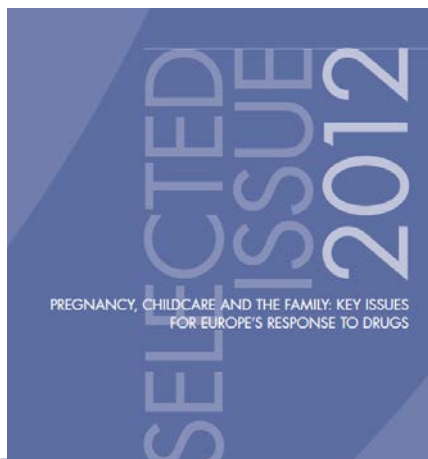


Put your questions to the experts using social media and the hashtag: #WomenAndDrugs



Selected issue 2

A gender perspective on drug use and responding to drug problems



Differences in patterns
of drug use between
women and men

Acknowledgements

Federica Mathis

Liesbeth Vandam

Cecile Martel





European Monitoring Centre
for Drugs and Drug Addiction

Thank you for your attention

Linda.Montanari@emcdda.europa.eu

| emcdda.europa.eu

 twitter.com/emcdda

 facebook.com/emcdda

 youtube.com/emcddatube

 flickr.com/photos/emcdda