

The Consumption of Drugs in Romanian Schools and its Effects over the Health and Development of the Individual

Cristian Dan

*“Dimitrie Cantemir” Christian University of Bucharest, Faculty of Juridical and Administrative Sciences – Law,
Bucharest, Romania, danrcristian@gmail.com*

ABSTRACT: The consumption of drugs has remained a long term issue of a significant importance, due to the fact that the substances which accelerate the production of endorphins at the neocortex level present an extended effect or even a definitive one in regards of the cognitive-emotional capacity of the consumer. This kind of practice is not absent in Romania, the number of persons taking in these type of elements showing a significant growth in the last 20 years. The current paperwork will largely focus on analyzing the factors which bring contribution to the distribution and consumption of drugs, especially in schools, and how they affect the social, cultural, cognitive and psychological evolution of the normal person. In the same manner, the article will bring into attention the current legislation of Romania in accordance with this subject, the methods used for prevention and tackling with the phenomenon of illegal substances and the support brought by the dispositions applied at the European Union level. At the end, a series of conclusions will have the main goals of correlating the Romanian legislation with the European one and to shed light upon the methods offered by the educational system in order to stop the accelerated spread of this vice between the students and the sanctions applied.

KEYWORDS: drugs, legislation, psychology, tackling, European Union, sanctions, school, trafficking

The rising danger of the phenomenon and the psychological effects over the youth’s development

In the context of accelerated globalization, especially in the current century, the consumption and distribution of drugs in various ways, be they ethnobotanics, substances taken by injection or normal pills, has become a major problem on a multinational level which humanity has to deal with.

The origin of the drugs cannot be accurately pinpointed in history however we know that it dates as far back as the period of Homo sapiens. In other words, our first know ancestor gifted by faith with rational thinking, curiosity for the world around him, the fear for the unknown and the desire to understand the objective and purpose of existence manifested such habits (Buzatu 2012, 27).

During the journey of evolution, mankind, with the help of innovation and perseverance, has brought to reality more complex and diverse ways for manufacturing and distributing drugs, also the same can be said for the circumstances in which the substances are placed into the body, from the mystical rituals to modern day medical treatments (Zlate 2000, 206).

Nowadays different organizations fight in order to prevent and overcome this issue either for their home countries or for others. The institutions of different states qualified with handling such tasks work together in order to create more efficient ways of controlling the eliminating this issue.

The consumption of drugs represents a general threat of international interest, because these chemicals can affect the central nervous system in a destructive and permanent manner, from the central neocortex being deprived of the ability to discern to cranial trauma and the distortion of clear perception over reality and the surrounding environment (Mook 2009, 76).

In Romania the practice of consuming and distributing drugs showed a systematic growth at the end of 1990 when the Romanian citizens, freed from the communist restrictions and with all the country borders being opened became a target for several illegal activities.

From the moment when our democracy started until today, Romania became a full-fledged state of consumption for positive or negative products and services. In this manner, the freedom provided to the ordinary person became a base upon which the construction of illegal networks matured. In accordance with the continuously up rise of the drug trafficking, the number of people addicted has skyrocketed, especially with teenagers and youngsters. Generally, the young ones become prey in this scenario due to the fact that they are still in the period in which their rationality is being formed, therefore making them perfect targets for the dealers.

Groups with young members are the perfect environment for starting a chain of victims, because these persons will do several activities, some of them illegal, just for the fun of it, without knowing the potential risks and consequences.

Based on the body's resistance to external factors, the consumer can become dependent even from the first dose. This can prove to be very harmful for the physical and psychological growth of the future adult. Also, due to the need to take in more and more chemicals, they may resort to theft, violence or other criminal behavior in order to acquire money so that they may satisfy their urgency to experience the same sensation over and over.

Out of all the scenarios in which a young person can transform into a drug consumer, the most dangerous one is within the school walls. During the educational period, the future workforce is composed from persons around the same age, socialization being inevitable. In this way, groups are formed, love and friendship is brought to life and trust is endlessly present, making it a perfect spreading environment if a toxic habit is entered.

In recent years, an increased number of drug dealers has been recorded within the teenage community for reasons such as rapidly gaining amounts of money on the expense of someone else's health or the desire to impress others with their way of life, comparing themselves with different key figures from the world of high class cartels.

A random teenager can become a victim to this trend by means of gradual intake, the supplier providing the first few doses for free in order to prove the quality of the product and the sensations one can experiment. Next the provider asks for more and more money with each sale (Macovei, Gălătescu, and Vasilescu 2006, 37).

The final product can be in the shape of a regular cigar, a pounder in an alcoholic drink or as a pill. It is important to mention that a victim can later on become a dealer himself, thus the network spreading.

Despite the fact that in the beginning the young citizen can experiment the increase in endorphins by unnatural means at a low price, when he realizes that he requires more amounts of money, due to the price rising, it will result in him resorting to different immoral or illegal actions to satisfy the unchained desire. For example, he can sell some of his personal belongings or another's, he could start begging for money in public spaces from random people, he can start gambling for the chance of a big and easy win or he can add to the drug network (Blume 2011, 56).

For the consumers represented by the women, the consequences could be even worse, prostitution being a huge possible outcome.

To sum it up, the consumption and distribution of illegal substances, done separately or together, contribute to a deficitary evolution on a personal and social level. One's future can be literally compromised either by permanent cognitive damage or by entering the world of criminal acts.

The Romanian legislation for prevention and fighting against the drug trafficking

In Romania all the citizens benefit from the right of private property, as well of the freedom to sell their own goods, these goods have no restrictions in the economic circuit when it comes to who can acquire them at a certain moment. However, there are certain categories of products which are prohibited by the legal norms in regards of their presence on the market and can only be obtained, possessed or sold under the conditions specified by the legal dispositions. Drugs are

products which take part in the type of categories mentioned earlier, alongside weapons, munitions and cult related objects (Trușcă P., and Trușcă A. 2016, 112).

This restrictive, but not completely banned, circulation of drugs exists because there is a wide range of psychoactive substances used in the preparation of certain medical treatments, such as pain relief, strong anesthetics and many other which used under medical guidance can lead to the salvation of incalculable human lives.

Non-compliance with this drug regime can attract several criminal sanctions, the Criminal Code of Romania enforcing this idea by stating that the production, possession or any other action concerning the illegal distribution of products or substances of any nature with a high degree of toxicity, which have a harmful effect on the organism or on the human psyche, or the behavior of the addressee is punishable by imprisonment from 2 to 7 years alongside the prohibition of a number of rights (New Criminal Code. New Criminal Procedural Code, 2014, The Special Part, Title VII, Chapter V, Article 359).

A delicate issue is the trafficking of drugs and substances with psycho-active effect in primary schools, because the children are at an age that allows them not to be held responsible directly for their illegal activities. In this case, the parents or legal guardian of the child are sanctioned. This makes the punishment irrelevant to the minor child and with no correction applied to his/her behavior. However, the number of consumers and distributors represented by young primary school students in their educational institutions is relatively low due to the action taken by the law enforcement agencies and local police officers, who ensure the proper conduct of social relations within and around these institutions.

The same cannot be said for high school students with the age between 14 and 20, because in their situation the national law states that the criminal liability is set at half of the penalty limit for the violation of any legal rules in force at a distinct moment (Păiușescu 2016, 222).

This form of liability makes it easier to raise awareness of the danger posed by the practice of illicit acts, to adopt a positive approach in regards to the regulations and to follow the guidance of the institutions responsible for ensuring the rule of law. Even so, from year to year, the number of those who consume or distribute psychoactive substances among students in high schools is increasing, although the state uses different methods of prevention and it permanently adapts its laws to combat this issue.

Methods of prevention and fighting illicit drug trafficking

The Romanian state makes available to the general public a variety of institutions that act in order to protect the physical, mental and social integrity of its citizens. These institutions, which are part of the state's restraint force machine, use various and complex methods to enforce and ensure compliance with the national law and morality.

One of these institutions is represented by the National Anti-Drug Agency, whose main purpose of activity is to prevent and combat drug use and trafficking at a national level.

This institution was established in 2003 as a necessity in the critical situation in which Romania was, by this we are referring to the increasing number of cases of drug addiction and trafficking, which, at that time, was a worrying aspect among students in high school and post-high school institutions.

Since its establishment up until now, this entity through which the Romanian state fights against drug use and distribution, has been remarkably successful; identifying and neutralizing significant networks involved with trafficking of substances with psycho-active effect.

Another effective way to solve this problem can be exemplified by the civic initiative of various non-governmental organizations that promote, in schools and in other institutions activities attended by students, projects and programs designed to divert them from adopting a toxic way of life and misconduct from a legal, moral and medical point of view, by presenting the real cases and harmful effects that drugs have on all aspects of human internal, external and social life.

However, the most effective and important method of preventing illicit behaviors is the action of education and support for the correct and harmonious development of young people's behaviors, carried out by teachers in the educational institutions of the Romanian state.

Conclusions

The consumption and trafficking of psychoactive substances is a matter of international importance.

In the aspect of prevention and control, many countries are actively involved through the various methods, means and institutions at their disposal.

One of the most harmful factors represented by the consumption of these substances is the behavioral change that leads to actions that endanger the safety and integrity of the consumer and other people in his vicinity, in addition to the potential future development of brain and physiological diseases in the body of the victims.

Most often the groups or individuals dealing with the distribution of illegal substances are students, especially high school students at an age when the need for assertion is strongly felt regardless if they possess or not the financial means to procure such substances.

Although in Romania, the criminal law provides more or less drastic sanctions for minors involved in this phenomenon and they can be held liable to a certain extent, the number of drug users and distributors among them is still increasing.

Both the Romanian state and various private organizations in this country have effective methods in dealing with this problem, obtaining from each year remarkable results.

The most important and effective method for preventing and solving illicit activities remains the education provided by the teachers from the educational institutions and by parents or guardians within the family.

References

- Blume, W.A. 2011. *Drug use and addiction. Practical evaluation and treatment guide*. Iași: Polirom Publishing House.
- Buzatu, N.E. 2012. *Illicit drug trafficking and consumption. Multidisciplinary aspects*. Bucharest: Universul Juridic Publishing House.
- Macovei, R.A., Gălătescu E.T.E., and Vasilescu L.C.C. *Elements of drug toxicology, Medical, Psychosocial and Legal aspects*. Bucharest: Focus Publishing House.
- Mook, D. 2009. *Classical experiments in psychology*. Bucharest: TREI Publishing House.
- New Criminal Code. New Criminal Procedural Code*. 2020. Bucharest: Hamangiu Publishing House.
- Păiușescu, A. 2016. *Elements of the general theory of law and state*. Bucharest: DIO Publishing House.
- Trușcă, P., and Trușcă A. 2016. *Civil Law. General Part*. Bucharest: Universul Juridic Publishing House.
- Zlate, M. 2000. *Introduction to psychology*. Iași: Polirom Publishing House.