

Binge drinking drops, drug use levels off in Europe: report

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European teens cut back on binge drinking and showed no increase in illegal drug use in recent years, while cigarettes remained as popular as in 2007, an EU agency said Thursday.

The Lisbon-based European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and [Drug Addiction](#), which surveyed drug use in 36 nations, found [illicit drug use](#) among 15- and 16-year-old students was at about 18 percent when it collected data last year, almost unchanged since 2007.

The stabilisation is significant because it comes after a near doubling of [illegal drug use](#) to about 20 percent between 1995 and 2003.

Most students who said they had tried an illicit drug had used cannabis, the survey found.

The EU agency also found binge drinking -- or "heavy episodic drinking" -- to have dipped in 11 countries, compared to an eight percent increase between 1995 and 2007.

The survey, which has been conducted every four years since 1995 and interviewed 100,000 students, found more than three-quarters of school students had consumed alcohol in the past 12 months and 57 percent in the last 30 days, a continuation of small decreases first seen in 2003.

Girls were slightly more likely than boys to have cut back on [binge drinking](#).

But "disappointingly," the survey noted, the overall trend in cigarette smoking remained unchanged from its 2007 level of 28 percent.

That figure had dropped from 35 percent in 1999.

Monaco and Portugal, meanwhile, reported large increases of 13 and 10 percentage points respectively.

The enduring allure of cigarettes among teens comes after many European nations introduced strict smoking restrictions.

France, Spain and Britain, for instance, have since 2007 introduced smoking bans in bars, restaurants and elsewhere.

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