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**PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON SUPPLY REDUCTION POLICIES,**

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**Abstract**

The aim of this paper is threefold. First, increase international awareness about the importance of estimating public expenditure on supply reduction initiatives. Second, stress the importance of harmonizing definitions and increasing availability, comparability and reliability of data as well as methods for sound estimates. Third, contribute to developing sound estimation practices to obtain accurate, complete and reliable drug policy evaluations.

Supply reduction is an approach used for addressing the illicit drug phenomena. It comprises the whole system of laws, regulatory measures, courses of action and funding priorities intended to reduce the availability of illegal drugs. The EU Drugs Strategy set the dissemination of evaluation results and methods as a priority. Providing sound methods to estimates drug-related public expenditure are an important step in this direction. Such estimates aim to calculate the amount of resources spent on implementing targeted interventions and may reveal the extent to which policy intentions are reflected in relevant budgets.

Despite stated intentions, however, in this field estimates are sparse. Most of the available apply no commonly agreed definitions or agreed methodologies and have a national focus. Only a limited number of internationally comparable datasets exist. Together, these factors have constituted effective barriers to much needed developments to public expenditure estimates and by that also to drug policy evaluations.

This paper will take the first step towards a systematic analysis. It will examine a set of recent and representative attempts to estimate public expenditure on supply reduction policies. Consequently, it will propose a common set of definitions aiming to establish a common basis for understanding such complex subject matter and to facilitate comparability in three main dimensions: time, policy and countries. Although the study is mainly focused to supply reduction expenditures, it reports the balance of expenditures between demand and supply reduction initiatives for a number of European countries, when data are available. To facilitate and promote future empirical expenditure studies, relevant data sources and methodologies applied in empirical estimations will be listed and discussed. Finally, some conclusions and recommendations will be offered.