



Introduction

“Long live the Cannabis of Cakran.” This is the large lettered graffiti in the walls of University in Rome that gives praise to the high quality cannabis. Both users and anti-narcotics specialist agree on the high quality and special characteristics of the cannabis produced in this area. Hashish “Made in Albania” is already certified by the main international narcotic networks. According to the International Narcotics Control Strategy Report - 2005, “the high quality Albanian hashish is exchanged for heroine”¹

The cultivation² of *cannabis sativa*, was officially acknowledged as a phenomenon in Albania in 1993, a year that marks the registration of the first cases of the cultivation of this plant. In the absence of any obstacle, the cultivation spread quickly to other areas with a higher and better quality production. In the villages of the south of the country cannabis plants grew higher than the roofs of the houses. In spite of the efforts made, the phenomenon of narcotic plant cultivation is present and is characterized by specific features in several districts of our country. The methods and forms used in fighting this activity have not produced the required results.

Cannabis and its sub-products are the most widely used narcotics today in the world. Out of an estimated total 185 million narcotics user in the world in 2004, 150 million³ or 81% are users of cannabis or its sub products. This is the most widely used narcotic substance in the European Union today. After Morocco, Albania, Pakistan and Afghanistan are very important routes of transportation for cannabis into the countries of Western Europe. Albania has become an important source for this type of narcotic for the Italian and Greek market in particular.⁴

Albanian cannabis was originally cultivated as a product destined “for export.” The criminal groups involved in trafficking it became well integrated in the European market contributing to the creation of a very negative image for Albania and the Albanians. This negative image can have a negative effect on national security and may create serious problems in Albania’s path toward Euro-Atlantic integration. This makes

¹ - International Narcotics Control Strategy Report - 2005. Released by the Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs. March 2005

² - With the term "cultivation" we mean all the activity invested to produce plants containing narcotic or psychotropic substance, or of plants that may be used for the extraction of narcotic or psychotropic substances- definition provided by article 2 of law no. 8750, dated 26.3.2001 “For the Prevention and Fight against Trafficking of Narcotic and Psychotropic Substances.”

³ - UN Report on Drugs, year 2004

⁴ - Europol-2004-European Union Organized Crime Report - December 2004, f. 13.

the intensification of the fight against cannabis even more necessary and transforms it into a political issue.

Among the main reasons why for years the required results in the fight against cannabis have been missing are the absence of an "anti-cannabis" strategy, lack of serious attention and poor coordination between the structures charged by law to fight this phenomena and the absence of involvement of the community in this effort.

The purpose of this study is that by analyzing the dynamics, methods, forms, the factors that contributed to the spread of the cultivation of narcotic plants, and consequences it entails for the community and the affect on national security, present the required strategy for the prevention of the cultivation of narcotic plants and the fight against this phenomenon, introducing it not just as a task for the police only, but for all the community and civil society in general.

The Author