

PEOPLE . PLACES

## DRUG IMPACT

3 x 30' (GER)

**Drugs are as different as their users.**

While the meritocracy relies on fast drugs such as cocaine to keep them awake and increase their self-esteem, there is a boom in the "loser drug" heroin, not only in remote and dependent places in the USA. And then there are the calls for a legalization of drugs like cannabis, which is used by many as medicine. In this series we get to the bottom of these drugs and their side effects.

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### **1. Heroin High**

The US opioid crisis is one of the worst in the nation's history. Throughout the country, almost every 15 minutes a person dies from opioid abuse. Cheap heroin from Mexico has long since replaced morphine-based painkillers and has caused a dramatic number of deaths due to its unpredictable ingredients. The city of Huntington in West Virginia is considered the epicenter of the heroin epidemic. Every tenth person here is said to be dependent on opiates. Heroin overdoses occur daily. Modern therapy facilities are rare and not up to date. For a decade, the US government has been fighting the opioid epidemic - whether with biblical promises of salvation or threats of violence - unsuccessfully.

### **2. Cocaine Kick**

Euphoria, alertness, performance. The effect of cocaine fits perfectly into a society that should not be tired. In Zurich, 1.6 kilograms of coke are now snuffed - per day. This is proven by current wastewater samples. This makes Zurich the city with the second largest cocaine usership in Europe, only topped by Barcelona. The white powder has long since penetrated all social classes. The cocaine mafia has long been part of the economy thanks to successful money laundering. In Europe alone, cocaine accounts for 5.7 billion euros a year. How dangerous is "snow"? And would it make sense to legalise cocaine in order to combat the drug mafia?

### **3. Cannabis - Frenzy and Medicine**

The USA before the big Cannabis frenzy and the state of Colorado rising as a pioneer. The legalization of cannabis for medical purposes as well as for consumption appears to be unstoppable. The industry is booming and might become the next billion-dollar market. The Dutch model with coffee shops, where Marijuana and hash can be sold and consumed, is soon 40 years old. The proportion of cannabis users is nevertheless not higher than the European average. In Germany, only critically ill patients with a special permit are allowed to use cannabis. The few cannabis drugs on the market are extremely expensive and are usually not covered by insurance. In desperation, some patients resort to the illegal cultivation of cannabis.