

German Cannabis Imports Soar to 34.6 Tons Amid Shifting Cultivation Landscape

Germany has broken its own record for cannabis imports, underscoring the growing demand for medical marijuana in Europe's largest federally regulated market. According to the latest data from the Federal Institute for Drugs and Medical Devices (BfArM), Germany imported a staggering 31,398 kilograms (34.6 tons) of cannabis products in 2023. This marks a significant 26.2% increase compared to the 24,876 kilograms imported in the previous year.

A Trend of Growth

The surge in imports follows a consistent pattern of growth over recent years:

24,876 kilograms (27.4 tons) in 2022, up 19.8% over 2021.

20,771 kilograms (22.9 tons) in 2021, a 77% surge over the previous year.

11,746 kilograms (12.8 tons) in 2020, 46% more than in 2019.

8,057 kilograms (8.9 tons) in 2019, an 80% increase from 2018's total cannabis imports.

While some of these imports are reexported to other European Union countries annually, the data reflects an industry experiencing rapid growth.

The End of the Quota System

The surge in imports can be attributed, in part, to the now-defunct cultivation quota system in Germany. Initially implemented in 2019, this system restricted medical cannabis cultivation to only three companies for commercial purposes. Together, these cultivators were permitted to produce a mere 10,400 kilograms of cannabis over four years. Consequently, the demand for medical cannabis exceeded domestic production, necessitating imports from abroad.

A Shift in Regulations

Germany's recent cannabis law abolished the quota system, allowing companies to apply for permits to grow medical marijuana through the Cannabis Agency. This change offers more flexibility for cultivation, potentially reducing the reliance on imports. However, it remains to be seen how quickly domestic cultivation can ramp up to meet demand.

Global Implications

Germany's position as one of the largest importers of medical cannabis has significant implications for the global marijuana market. As countries like Canada restrict commercial imports, exporters increasingly turn to

markets like Germany, Australia, Brazil, and Israel to find buyers.

Future Prospects

While Germany's new regulations open doors for domestic cultivation, significant imports are likely to continue in the near term. Constantin von der Groeben, managing director of German company Demecan, anticipates substantial growth in domestic cultivation but acknowledges that it may take several years to meet demand without imports.

Canada: The Leading Supplier

Canada remains Germany's primary cannabis supplier, accounting for roughly 50% of the country's imports in 2023. Portugal and the Netherlands follow as distant second and third suppliers, respectively.

As Germany navigates its evolving cannabis landscape, the industry is poised for continued growth, both domestically and internationally.

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