

# Romania – A Tranzit Territory for the Traffic of Narcotics

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## Abstract

*The illicit traffic of narcotics is the main activity carried out by organized crime groups. One of the most outstanding problems of the political life and of the public preoccupations – not only in Romania but all over the world – is the problem of narcotics that became the main worrisome fright to which multiple answers are expected because of its complex aspects; in as far as the human existence is concerned. The narcotics generated by criminality – through its social, economic, medical, cultural and political consequences - causes considerable prejudices to the interests of the State and society, to many private persons, jeopardizing the life and the health of the citizens and negatively and harmfully influence the people's behavior and conscience, reaching abnormal pathological states and, ultimately, death.*

**Keywords:** Romania, traffic, illicit, narcotics, route

## I. GENERAL ASPECTS

### 1.1 Introduction

On the globe, Romania is situated in the Northern hemisphere, between latitudes 45° North and longitudes 25° East. In Europe Romania is situated in the South-Eastern part of Central Europe between latitudes 43° 37' 07" North and longitudes 20° 15' 44" East, extending approximately 480 km North to South and 640 km East to West. Located halfway between the Equator and the North Pole, Romania is the 12<sup>th</sup> largest country in Europe. Roughly the size of Oregon, Romania is the second largest country in the area, after Poland. Romania's surface is 238,391 km<sup>2</sup>, to which we add 23,700 km<sup>2</sup> of the Black Sea platform.

The country shares borders with Hungary to the North-West, Serbia to the South-West, Bulgaria to the South, the Black Sea to the South-East, Ukraine to the East and to the North and the Republic of Moldavia to the East.

Romania's frontiers extend on 3,150 km, of which 1,876 km became in 2007 the boundaries of the European Union with Serbia, Moldavia and Ukraine, while with the Black Sea the border extends on an area of 194 km on the continental platform - 245 shore km.

Also, Romania has a population of over 21,680,974 of which 89% are Romanians, 7% Hungarians, 2% Gypsies, with small minorities of Albanians, Bulgarians, Croats, Czechs, Greeks, Israeli, Germans, Slovaks, Poles, Turks, Russians, Tartars and Americans.

Romania's present territory is also called the carpathian-danubian-pontic area as Romania over lapses a European territorial system, outlined by the shape of Romanian Carpathians'

circle and adjacent regions imposed and subordinated by the Carpathians, being bordered in the south by the Danube, and in the east by the Black Sea.

Romania's relief is not only diverse, but also harmonious. The landscape is arranged in three major areas, well-differentiated: the highest point is represented by the Carpathian Mountains, the middle area by the Subcarpathian Mountains, by hills and plateaus, and the lowest area by the plains, the rivers and Delta. The main feature of Romanian relief is its amphitheatre arrangement. Mountains lie like an arch in the centre, covering 31% of the surface, the hills and plateaus covering 36% and the plains stretch to approx. 33% in the south and west. The network of rivers has radial shape, 98% of rivers spring from the Carpathians and flow directly into the Danube through other rivers. The Danube, which is the second longest river in Europe – 2, 860 km, of which 1, 075 km on the Romanian territory, flows into the Black Sea through three branches - Chile, Sulina and St. George, forming a delta.

Throughout history, different parts of today Romania's territory were in or under the administration of Dacia, the Roman Empire, the Ottoman Empire, the Russian Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire.

Under Article 3 of the Constitution, Romania's territory has a common administrative organization, divided in cities and counties. Romania has 41 counties plus the capital city of Bucharest, which has a similar status as the other counties. A county has, in average, an area of 5, 800 square kilometres and a population of 500,000 inhabitants.

The capital - Bucharest is the most important and most populated city in Romania, being the political, administrative and economic centre of the country. Other major cities are: Cluj-Napoca, Iasi, Constantza, Timisoara, Craiova, Galati, Brasov, Ploiesti, Braila, Oradea, Bacau, Pitesti, Arad and Sibiu.

## **1.2 Public network infrastructure in Romania**

By its geographical location, Romania is an area of intersection of several main transportation, linking the north with the south of Europe and the east with the west. On the other hand, the transportation network in Romania ensures the connection between the community transport network and the transportation network of the non-neighbouring states in Eastern Europe and Asia.

Romania has a network of infrastructures - roads, railways, waterways, canals, sea and river ports, airports, airways, which ensure the connection of all localities to the national and international transportation systems.

Public network infrastructure in Romania includes:

- Public road network<sup>1</sup> provides motorized access in most localities in the country, the network density is 0.64 km/kmp, the length of network is 73,435 km (excluding streets) of which 14,685 km (20%) are national roads (4,672 km of European roads out of which 113 km are highway) and 58,750 km are county and communal roads. National roads constitute the majority network of the country, holding about 70% of the road traffic.

- Public railway network<sup>2</sup> covers practically the whole country, with a density of 46.1 km/1000 square kilometres of the operating lines, liaising with all neighbouring countries'

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.mt.ro/nou/articol.php?id=retea\\_transport](http://www.mt.ro/nou/articol.php?id=retea_transport), Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure.

<sup>2</sup> [http://www.mt.ro/nou/articol.php?id=romania\\_placa%20turnanta](http://www.mt.ro/nou/articol.php?id=romania_placa%20turnanta), Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure.

railway networks: network length is 10,981 km of which 2965 km (27.0%) double track, 3,942 km (35.9%) electrified line, the network is served in the territory by 1,051 railway stations and halts.

- Waterway network<sup>3</sup> lies entirely in the south and south-eastern of Romania with a density of 6.5 kilometres/1000 kmp: network's length is 1,779 km, of which 1,075 km navigable International Danube; 524 km navigable branches of the Danube and 91 km artificial inland: channel Danube-Black Sea and Navodari-White Gate; in the network of inland waterways and the Black Sea are integrated 35 ports including 3 seaports, 6 river-sea ports and 26 river ports.

Through its position as a Black Sea harbour and terminus of the link with the North Sea, the harbour of Constanta is the main hub of traffic in the Black Sea basin. By using Constanta Harbor, navigable route between the Suez Channel, the Eastern Mediterranean Sea and Central Europe is shortened by approx. 300 km. However, the systems RO-RO and ferryboat developed in Constanta harbour create the connection between the European and the Middle East, the Caucasus and the Caspian area with great potential routes of energy and freight traffic. However, in order to increase the attractiveness of sea and river harbour and near the border crossing points have been set free zones (currently operate free zones like : South Constanta, Sulina, Galati, Braila, Giurgiu, Curtici-Arad) that provide to foreign investors of all their specific features<sup>4</sup>.

- Air network (Boroi *et al.*, 2001) consists of airspace of Romania in defining routes, depending on traffic flows in Europe coordinated by EUROCONTROL.

Romanian airspace and airways respectively are used both for over flight by ensuring service control and air traffic control and for taking off and landing on Romanian airports, these being connected with airports around the world. The airports in Romania consist of 17 airports, of which 4 are open to domestic and international passenger traffic and cargo and 13 are specific to particular local interest. International Airport Bucharest-Otopeni is Romania's main airport which carries 75% of international passenger and freight traffic of our country.

- The integration of Romanian infrastructure in the European transport network aims to promote the interconnection and interoperability of the existing networks by focusing on some "specific infrastructure arteries" located on the route of the 10 pan-European transport corridors crossing geographical areas of several countries and linking its main economic and social centres. Romania is crossed by corridors IV (Berlin/Nuremberg - Prague - Budapest - Arad - Bucharest - Constanta - Istanbul - Thessaloniki), VII (Danube, with Sulina arm and the Danube - Black Sea channel) and IX (Helsinki - St Petersburg - Moscova - Pskov - Kiev - Ljubasevka - Chisinau - Bucharest - Dimitrograd - Alexandroupolis (Ştefan, 2006).

## **II. ILLICIT DRUG TRAFFICKING**

Until recently in Romania it was considered that the drug phenomenon was not known before, and drugs were something known only by the decadent West, this idea being induced by the communist propaganda (Răşcanu, R., 2008). Before 1990, illicit drug use in Romania was looking exceptionally, in the few recorded cases consumers were foreigners, mostly sailors (Ţical, G., 2005). Another exceptional case was the Romanian citizens who emigrated before

<sup>3</sup> [http://www.mt.ro/nou/articol.php?id=retea\\_transport](http://www.mt.ro/nou/articol.php?id=retea_transport), Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure.

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.mt.ro/nou/articol.php?id=integrare\\_europeana](http://www.mt.ro/nou/articol.php?id=integrare_europeana), Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure.

1989 and had such activities in other states, then returned to Romania to organize their narcotraffic business. Although there was a very strict border control and the foreigners who were entering the country were carefully observed and thus there had been detected 187 cases of drug trafficking (Stancu, 2008).

It is very important that besides the state border we have an effective system of supervision and control as much as possible to limit the access of drugs in Romania. This requires taking measures to prevent and combat illegal crossings through border and international collaboration and participation of all relevant institutions in the field. Their role is to provide knowledge of production sites, transport routes, landing areas and persons, to succeed, if not stopping, at least limiting the phenomenon.

The activities and illicit drug trafficking involve many people who do not respect national borders of a country or the geographical ones especially since the two activities represent a transboundary nature.

Drug trafficking is the main activity carried out by organized crime groups. A particularly and serious problem is the fact that countries where drugs come from are not under EU control and sometimes not even under government's control, less the synthetic drugs - Europe being the largest manufacturer in the world.

Individuals outside the law, being attracted by the fabulous incomes, have continually perfected the system of production, storage, transport and sale of drugs by creating vast networks operating at interstate and even intercontinental level.

Drug dealers have perfected their methods of sale, meaning that consumers are used as vendors, and minor for street drug trade, which in case of discovery, does not respond criminally and do not know details about network managers (DEX, 1998).

Romania's progress regarding drug trafficking was influenced by several factors such as geographic position within the European continent, the insufficient legal matter regarding drugs (especially in the first two post-totalitarian years), lack of a specialized police unit in fighting this kind of crime, lack of technical equipment, plus a host of social, political and economic factors.

Romania represents an increasingly interest of large networks trafficking in drugs, especially the hashish from Africa and South American cocaine trafficked to Western Europe.

Romania is included in the so-called Balkan route (Stancu, 2008) the trafficking of heroin from Turkey to Western markets through three versions of all of the existing five routes:

1. Turkey (Istanbul) - Romania (Constanta at the Black Sea - Bucharest - Carpathian area to the west - Arad) - Hungary - Slovakia - Czech Republic - Germany - the Netherlands;
2. Turkey - Bulgaria - Romania (Rousse Customs - Giurgiu - Bucharest - Carpathian area to the west - Arad) - Hungary - Austria - Germany – the Netherlands;
3. Turkey - Bulgaria - Romania - Ukraine - Poland - Germany.

The Strategic International Report regarding narcotics control (INCSR) states that "Romania is not a major source of illicit drugs, but serves as a transit country for narcotics, being dedicated to the North Balkan route, which is used to transport opiate derivatives - such as opium, morphine base and heroin - from Afghanistan to Central and Western Europe".

For land vehicles are used both freight and passenger. However, drugs, primarily heroin, are brought into the country through Constanta Harbour - on board of merchant ships - and on the border with Moldova, but are introduced also through the country's international airports.

Once arrived in Romania, drugs are directed either to the northwest, by Hungary or west through Serbia. Police estimated that 80% of drugs entering Romania reach Western Europe.

Romania is also a transit route in full development that goes in reverse, from the Western Europe and from the North to the East. A large amount of precursor chemicals cross Romania from Western Europe to Turkey.

## 2.1 Categories of drugs covered by drug trafficking

A significant proportion of drugs are known, but the technology advances resulting new synthetic substances. Clandestine laboratories constantly change their location that they cannot be detected, and the cost of manufacture of certain drugs are higher than others drugs. Some categories of drugs are often trafficked then others.

Explanatory Dictionary of Romanian language<sup>5</sup> defines a drug as "substances of plant, animal or mineral which can be used to the preparation medicine and the drug". According to art 1 of Law no. 143 of 26 of July 2000 on combating drug trafficking and licit drugs, *drugs* are herbs and narcotic or psychotropic substances or mixtures containing such herbs and substances listed in tables I - III of the Law. High-risk drugs are listed in Tables I and II of the law and risk drugs are listed in Table III of the Law. High-risk drugs are heroin, mescaline, morphine, amphetamine, cocaine, codeine, opium etc. phencyclidina; risk drugs are cannabis, cannabis resin, cannabis oil, diazepam, meprobamate etc.

In the following we present the main categories of drugs that are common in drug trafficking<sup>6</sup>.

Opium<sup>7</sup> (Bogdan, S., 2005) is obtained from poppy opium incision - *Papaver somniferum* (drug itself). It is an annual plant that produces white flowers, violet or purple with four petals. Opium is derived only from plants with white flowers.

Opium is the latex obtained by cutting the capsules, which hardens and becomes brown in contact with air. After harvest is gathered into lumps or blocks, and after drying becomes brittle, with soft interior. It has bitter taste and odor of ammonia. It is also collected by chemical extraction of poppy. The main constituents of opium are morphine, noscapine, papaverine, codeine, and narceina tebaina and derivatives: morphine, heroin, and laudanum, paregoric, codeine and synthetic opioids. Afghanistan is the main region of producing opium in the world (Roibu and Mircea, 1997). In our country it is grown in the Moldavia Plain, Transylvania Plain and Timiș Plateau.

Opium can be ingested as a decoction, and the prepared one by a pipe smoking. Other forms are: prepared opium, medicinal opium and Drossos (yeast opium).

Morphine (Stancu, E., 2008) is the principal derivative of opium. It is under the shape of tablets or cubes, has a bitter taste and is soluble in humidity. Morphine is commonly used in medicine to relieve postoperative pain, those caused by burns or fractures, and the last phase of incurable diseases. The forms of tablets are: white, beige or brown, suppositories and ampoules. On illicit market is sold in packets.

<sup>5</sup> For more details-see *Drugg dictionary* – [www.ana.gov.ro](http://www.ana.gov.ro).

<sup>6</sup> *Les substances Psychotropes*, in World Rapports, Interpol, Lyon, France, 1999.

<sup>7</sup> For more details-see *Drugs Dictionary* – [www.ana.gov.ro](http://www.ana.gov.ro).



Heroin (Bogdan, S., 2005) is obtained by synthesis of morphine or directly from *Papaver somniferum* capsules. In their natural state, heroin is a greenish brown powder which becomes white by dilution. It has bitter taste, is soluble in water and alcohol. World Health Organization has banned the use of heroin in therapy since it was found that has more addictive than morphine. It is manufactured in clandestine laboratories in the Golden Triangle, Mexico and Western Europe (France, Italy) using acetic anhydride from which is receiving the bitter taste and odor of vinegar. On the illicit market can be find two types: heroin no. 3 and no. 4

*Heroin no 3* - smoking heroin comes as granules or powder, with different colors of brown, gray to red. To mislead the judiciary, consumers mix it with lactose, powdered sugar, milk powder and other ingredients.

*Heroin no 4* - Heroin injection contains up to 98% diacetylmorphine hydrochloride and is presented as a fine mist. It is sold mixed with lactose, caffeine or other ingredients.

*Heroin psychedelic (or Special K32)* - is the latest drug, considered to have the greatest impact on young people, after LSD - 25 and Ecstasy.

Cannabis<sup>8</sup> is the generic name for products made from hemp plant culture used to produce marijuana. *Cannabis Sativa L.* is an annual plant that grows in warm or temperate climates, popularly called Indian hemp. It has a height of 1-3 m, leaves long, shiny and sticky, covered with hairs on top.

From *Cannabis sativa L.* is prepared: marijuana, ganja, hashish, hashish oil and sinsemilla.

By soaking the leaves, flowers and fruit of the plants after being dried, marijuana is obtained. In the illicit trafficking, marijuana has the form of cake or powder. Ganja contains the fluorescence and the strains of female plants. Hashish is obtained from the resin of leaves and plant fluorescence, pressed into cakes; liquid hashish is obtained in the laboratory by extraction from female plant with organic solvent. Hashish or oily liquid has a dark green color. From the unfertilized top of the female plant flower is obtained Sinsemilla.

Cocaine (Stancu, 2007) is the main alkaloid of coca leaves - *Coca Erythroxyton*, extracted through a chemical process. It is presented as a white crystalline powder, hence the name "snow" in slang. It is often combined with a white powder, boric acid or sodium bicarbonate. If is a powdery form is nasal snorting and if as a solution is intravenously injected.

The cocaine sold in the street as hydrochloride is treated with a base resulting the hydrochloric acid. The cocaine base is dissolved in a solvent (ether) and then the powder cocaine is crystallized. The crystals are crushed and placed in a special glass pipe. It produce, when smoking, greater euphoria than cocaine.

*Crack* (Ştefan, 2006) takes the form of crystals resulting in a mixture of cocaine hydrochloride with ammonia or sodium bicarbonate, which is heated. The name crack comes from the noise of sodium bicarbonate, when the substance is smoked. It is used by snorting, injecting, smoking, inhalation.

The most important tree products from coca: coca leaves, coca paste, cocaine base and crack are powerful stimulants of neuro-cerebral system.

<sup>8</sup> In the mid-80s appeared in the U.S. and later in Europe a drug that looks like, in terms of production, the synthetic drugs (English designer drugs) and called Crack (Rock). The name is derived from swish specific sound (English to crackle) noise of baking soda when the substance is smoked. Cheap production made to represent a real scene of the use of crack, especially in New York. Drug addiction crack soon arrived in Germany. In autumn 1986, police uncovered the first crack illegal lab in Koln. <http://www.ana.gov.ro/rom/crack.htm>.

Coca leaves remove feelings of hunger and fatigue, containing 0.5-1% cocaine. Coca paste is obtained by spraying the leaves are then soaked in lime or other alkaline substances plus kerosene, gasoline or other petroleum derivatives. After homogenization, the solution is filtered; sulfuric acid is added and mixed again until kerosene evaporates. Cocaine-base is obtained as the precipitate. Then, there is added sodium carbonate or ammonia solution, and then the precipitate is washed with kerosene and cooled, yielding coca paste.

L.S.D. - Lysergic acid diethylamide-dextrose (Cârjan, 1999) is part of hallucinogen drugs. It can be kept on adhesives flyers, stamps and capsules of various shapes and colors. The most common types of LSD are: Happy Faces Mini-Trips, Purple Haze, Sunshine Explosion and Comic-Trips.

Mescaline is the main alkaloid of cactus Peyotl extracted from the two disks that grow on top of the plant, which is chopped and left to dry, is presented as a white, crystalline or liquid form. It is consumed orally - smoked or injected intravenously.

Ecstasy<sup>9</sup> is one of the most dangerous hallucinogenic drugs, easy to fabricate. In the early '90s, Ecstasy appeared on the market either in capsules of different sizes, or in the form of round, flat tablet, embossed with various signs. Ecstasy tablets bearing names such as clover, bird, dollar, rabbit, camel, dolphin, Road Runner, Smiley, mushroom, Olympics, etc. crown<sup>10</sup> the pills have different colors. They are orally consumed as pills or inserted into the anus, aspirated or injected.

New types of plants and hallucinogenic substances which are not legally prohibited

In recent years there appeared in Romania new types of drugs that are nothing else but substances obtained from plants growing in different parts of the world or synthetic substances whose production is intended for a lawful purpose, being called substances or ethnobotanical plants. Unfortunately, there are more people interested in these new types of drugs thus replacing the so-called "conventional drugs" because they can buy them directly from the store. They are cheap and are sold with all kinds of offers, discounts, loyalty cards etc.

The following countries controlled drugs and other synthetic cannabinoids: Denmark, Germany, Estonia, France, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Austria, Poland, Romania, Sweden and the UK. In Poland JWH-018 and some other substances considered "Spice" are controlled. In Germany, trucks were controlled to detect JWH-018 fast and PS 47.49. In Austria, Estonia and France JWH-018, HU-210 and CP 47,497 are registered drugs, in addition, in Sweden and Lithuania JWH-073 is classified as a narcotic. Luxembourg seems to have adopted a similar approach on "hallucinogens synthetic cannabinoid consumers". Britain adopted the broad definition and is expected to introduce control measures for range of synthetic cannabinoid. Other countries also agree with control measures (Țone, 2009).

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<sup>9</sup> Street names reflecting usually symbols etched into the surface of tablets. Names are taken from German and do not necessarily correspond to names of streets in Romania <http://www.ana.gov.ro/rom/sintetice.htm>, website consulted on 22 of December 2008.

<sup>10</sup> EMCDDA - *Synthetic cannabinoids and 'Spice'*, 2009, <http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/drug-profiles/synthetic-cannabinoids>, website consulted on 12 of March 2011, text in English. See also *Drugs of Abuse*, 2011 Ed.: A DEA Resource Guide published by U.S. Department of Justice, Drug Enforcement Administration. Page 62.

Taking advantage of the fact that these plants and substances are considered illegal in Romania, some companies or individuals import them and sell them, especially through Internet, obtaining profits. Here are some products such as:

- Party Snuff Powder: Special Gold New Formula Party Snuff Powder, Magic Kristal Party Snuff Powder, Pure By Magic Party Snuff Powder, Frenzy, Crankd, Special gold 2011, Silver, Diamond Crystal, Nos, Blast;

- Herbal Smoke Blends: DJ, Bonzai Winter Boost, Maya, Bonzai Summer Boost, WWW, Boom, Remix, Ninja, Katana, Diesel, Monkees, OHg, M1, M6, Rasta.

Police and prosecutors from organized crime have found a "ethnobotanical route", namely: prohibited substances left China as "anticorrosion agents", "polymers", "acrylic acid" or "absorbent polymer" which reached the phantom companies in Spain and Scotland and finally to Romania in a shop in the capital. Then the illegal goods went to the shops across the country.

A report of the International Center for Drugs and Human Rights draws attention to the extent of the ethnobotanical use among teenagers in Romania. We are on the fourth place in the European Union consumption after UK, Germany and the Netherlands. The document also specifies that the budget for programs to prevent drug use, namely 4.5 million is the lowest in Europe. Legislation regarding shops dreams became more restrictive in recent years but, however, they continue their work.

## **2.2 Drug transportation**

It is done by various means, from body to cars, airplanes etc. There are used vehicles with false registration numbers or numbers of transit. Drugs are hidden in trucks with or without the knowledge of the service staff, usually with perishable foods to avoid being stopped for a long time to control. Also are transported by passenger cars that are not in police records.

Places to hide drugs are in means of transport and items of clothing or body.

Means of transport:

a) Automobiles. Specially arranged hiding places or they can hide in the ceiling, seat upholstery, lights, board, glove box, spare wheel etc.

Suspicious cars are usually tracked at the border, but the downers can recognize them after the general appearance of cars, luggage and especially after excitement or nervousness of passengers. Checks are based on the overall behavior of passengers and drivers and the arrangement of baggage and cargo that can provide clues that hide or conceal drugs for buses and trucks. Many times these vehicles are "accompanied" by disguise investigators.

b) Railway wagons offer many opportunities to hide: the toilets, departments or even external fittings of wagons.

c) In airplanes, in addition there may be many storage hiding places, with the complicity of the crew or the airport.

d) On ships: in cupboards, shelves, storage, iceboxes, propellers, etc. buoys.

The items of clothing or body:

- In the anatomical cavities of women and men;
- The articles of clothing: lapel jacket, epaulettes, inside tie, pockets, lining, belt buckles, and slit pants cuffs, hats, caps, shoes, false heels;
- Hiding in bags made secure on the abdomen, corsets, bras, prostheses, hair;



- Plates of cannabis can be modeled as inner soles and leather-covered sock;
- The household and personal: double bottom suitcases, bags, flower pots, paintings, books, toys, umbrellas, sticks, pens, pouch, lipsticks, sprays, paraffin or wax candles etc.;
- In food, beverages and tobacco: cans, salami, cheese, sausage, eggs, bread, fruit, chocolate mixed with drugs, sugar cubes soaked in LSD etc.

### Conclusions

Currently, no country can be considered safe from the phenomenon created by these substances and products. On the other hand, the drug is not, unfortunately, anymore a well-defined segment of the population, is also made easy, causing victims every day, mostly young people and minors.

Prompt response is required from the international community and governments of all states. Because the practical aspects of preparation or commission of the offenses of drug trafficking have increasingly diversified forms in which the possibilities of identifying and establishing guilt become more difficult, it has become mandatory the diversification of technical and scientific methods designed to increase the possibilities of investigation organs into the discovery, research, evidence and combating this phenomenon.

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