

Medicinal cannabis policies and practices around the world

Tania Ramírez

Map of countries in which medicinal cannabis is available

● Medicinal cannabis regulated

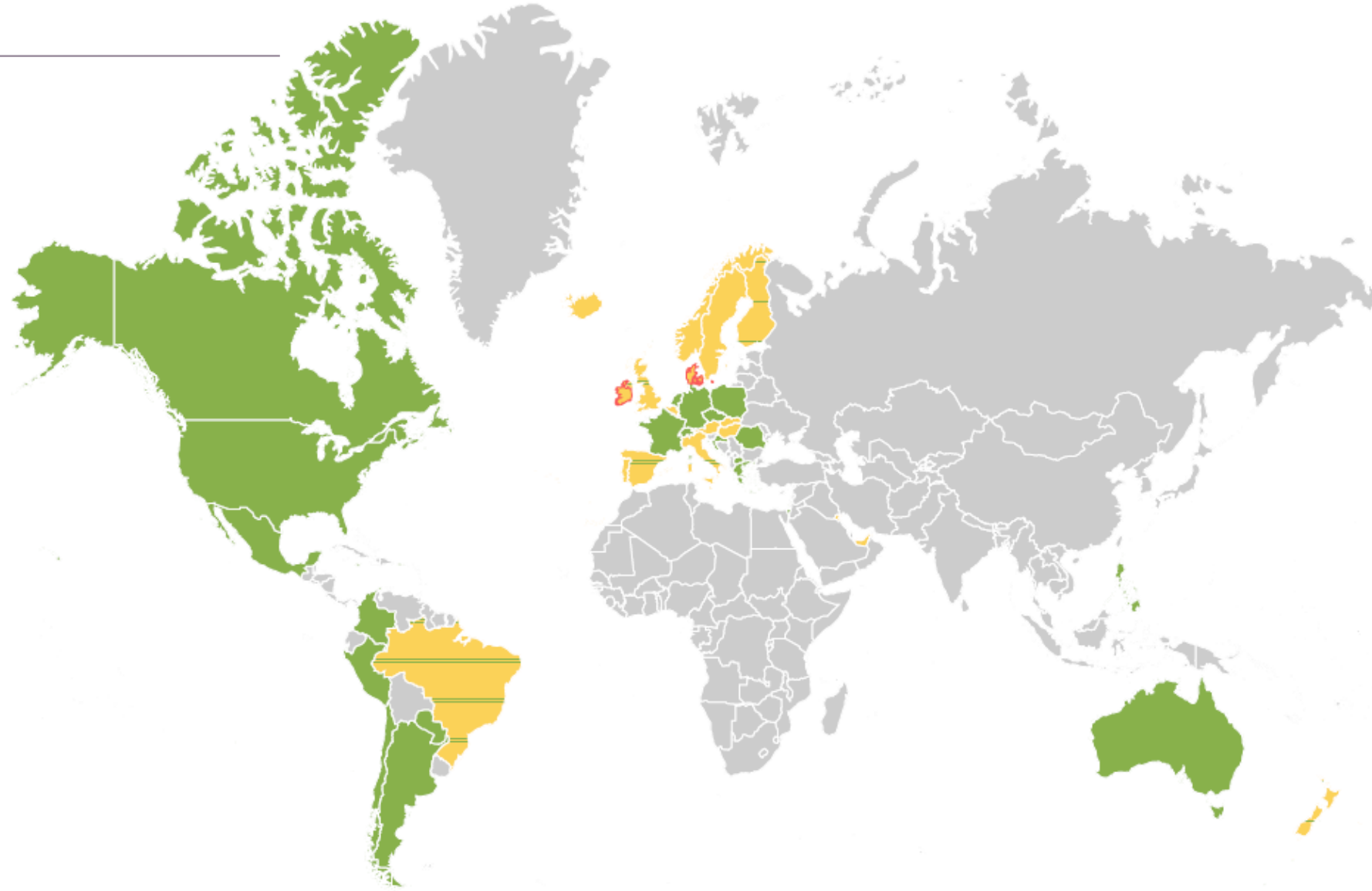
Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Croatia, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Macedonia, Mexico, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Puerto Rico, Romania, Spain, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States, Uruguay.

○ Pilot projects on medical cannabis

Denmark, Ireland.

● Nabiximols (Sativex) authorised

Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kuwait, Liechtenstein, Luxemburg, Malta, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Slovakia, Spain, Sweden, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom.



Medicinal cannabis around the world



Latin America and the Caribbean

Latin America is currently the world leader in the promotion and adoption of policies allowing access to cannabis for therapeutic uses.

Uruguay: first country in the world to completely legalize the cannabis market for medical and scientific purposes, as well as for industrial and recreational use.

Chilean, Colombia and Jamaica: medicinal and scientific use legalized, under prescription.

Argentina: patients are allowed to import their medication while the state initiates the local production for the domestic market.

Mexico: reforms to the General Health Law and the Criminal Code in 2017 now allow the use of cannabis for medical and scientific purposes.



North America

United States: 29 states currently have a legislation allowing medicinal cannabis.

- 14 states have legalised medicinal cannabis by referendum and 15 states have taken the legislative route.
- Regulatory regimes oscillate between those prioritising public health and those pursuing legitimate commercial ends .

Canada: there are about 44 licensed producers authorised by the Ministry of Health.

- Self-cultivation is allowed so long as it does not exceed six plants and use can be justified.

Medicinal cannabis around the world



Europe

Netherlands: legalized the medicinal use of cannabis in 2000, with a monopoly of all medicinal cannabis production and distribution. The Bureau for Medicinal Cannabis (BMC) was created.

Czech Republic: although the country legalized medical cannabis in 2013, there is no clear process for acquiring licenses to produce, sell or purchase products derived from cannabis.

Alemania: include medical cannabis in the basic range of medications that must be covered by both private insurers and public health services.

Ireland and Denmark: medicinal cannabis is limited to pilot projects.



Israel: The Middle Eastern exception

The country approved the medicinal use of cannabis in 1992

The Israeli Agency on Medical Cannabis (IMCA) issues several types of licenses for cultivation, extraction and packaging plants, and distribution.

The IMCA is also responsible for the authorization of special clinicians who are allowed to prescribe cannabis.

Israel became a centre for scientific research and development of cannabis varieties and industrial products

Medicinal cannabis around the world



Asia

Medicinal cannabis remains prohibited in [Japan](#), [Vietnam](#), [Pakistan](#), [Cambodia](#) and [Nepal](#).

[India](#): the law distinguishes two types of cannabis products: ganja and hashish.

- The country already has some legal provisions for the medicinal and scientific usage of the plant, but these provisions have yet to be implemented.

[Philippines](#): the law prohibits the use of cannabis in its raw form, and stipulates that patients need prior authorization from a doctor, and the treatment will be delivered in dedicated centres with a special license .

[Thailand](#): from 2017, hemp was decriminalized in 15 districts and six provinces of the northern region.



Oceania

[Australia](#): since 2016 the country has a new national body that can issue licences to growers and regulate medicinal cannabis crops.

- Medical practitioners may supply a medicinal cannabis product to a patient after notifying the relevant regulatory authority and obtaining prior permission.
- Some of the most profound changes have occurred at the state and territory level.

[New Zealand](#): introduced the Misuse of Drugs Amendment Bill in December 2017 with the goal of making medicinal cannabis available without criminal liability.