



## Global Drug Prevention Network Declaration

5<sup>th</sup> Global Conference on Drug Prevention  
Rome, September 2003

La dimensione culturale, etica e scientifica nella Prevenzione dall'Uso di Droghe

In the Eternal City of Rome we who are more than 500 delegates from 84 nations convening at this Global Conference, reaffirm our commitment to building and protecting the Common Good ('Res Publica'), by creating and cherishing drug-free communities throughout the world.

In addressing this complex matter, which is of vital importance to every nation, Conference has participated in a wide variety of presentations reflecting (inter alia) cultural, ethical, scientific, medical, social, political and spiritual dimensions of the subject. We

come from Western and Eastern Europe, North/Central and Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, the Middle East, Asia, Australasia, Canada, Scandinavia – and maybe more.

We represent many diverse faiths and beliefs, but we are united in our support of Core Principles:

### Core Principles:

- The pursuit of the 'Common Good' should define and guide the actions of Society.
- A 'Culture of Disapproval' of drug abuse\* should be nurtured in all Society.
- Society at large should honour 'Moral Imperatives' for responsible and constructive citizenship, striking a balance

between the rights of the Individual and those of Society.

- Proper, validated science should underlay and inform all strategy, policy and action.

Whilst we have pride in our past achievements, our focus is on the future – and our future lies with our children. For them, and for all society, we pledge to strive for an environment in which each and every person in our world has the best chance to fulfil their potential, in the best of all possible



health, and we pledge to create value in acknowledgement of the gift of life with which we have been blessed. We confirm the superiority of love, in relation to the education

and building of our society: a superiority which has become a social, political, cultural and spiritual commitment.

\*By 'drug abuse' we reaffirm we mean any use of illegal substances and any inappropriate use of legal substances.

Please visit the ECAD homesite at [www.ecad.net](http://www.ecad.net) ("Conference papers") and read the Network's Schedule of Initiatives !

## About Swedish Drug Policy

From speech by the Swedish Minister for Public Health and Social Services, Mr Morgan Johansson, at the 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Drug Prevention

"And now some words about Swedish drug policy. As some might know, we have a restrictive policy on illicit drugs. But it has not always been like that. In the 60's and the 70's, Sweden made an experiment with a more liberal policy, for instance by subscribing amphetamine to addicts. That was a disaster and the drug abuse increased considerably. So when I hear today that some advocate more liberal approach to the drugs problem, I say: We have been there. We have done that. And we have seen the results."

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## ★ ECAD CONFERENCE

### About organisers

The Global Prevention Network, the conference organiser, is a non-profit organisation comprised of organised networks of prevention organisations across the globe. These networks have joined together to promote drug prevention activities that are directed at the use and abuse of all psychoactive substances. The conference was aimed

- To increase the world's awareness of the scope and destructive power to civilised societies from the production, distribution and consumption of illegal drugs, and to increase the world's awareness of its capacity to overcome this problem.

- To persuade the nations of the world of the importance of vigorously supporting and implementing the United Nations' conventions on illegal drugs.

## ECAD project «Vilnius Against Drugs» 1999-2002

Final review



Queen Silvia of Sweden visiting a Lithuanian prison, September 2002

ECAD is now reviewing the outcome of the three-year project, «Vilnius Against Drugs», in Lithuania. Here is a preview of the results:

- ECAD had one member city in Lithuania in 1999 and now has 7 member cities.
- Co-operation between state institutions and public organisations, active in the field of anti-drug work, did, generally speaking, not exist in 1999. Distrust prevailed in relations between the police, medical treatment facilities and at that point weak organisations. Today there is a close co-operation which leads to common activities in different fields.
- There were no client organisations in Lithuania 1999. Today our Swedish partner organisation C.R.I.S. (Criminals' Return Into Society) has local offices in 4 cities and keeps strengthening its positions.
- The NA-movement, narcotics anonymous, did not exist 1999. Such groups are now being established throughout the country with approximately 800 participants/clients today.
- Treatment opportunities for drug addicts consisted of help from some experts in "narcology" and hospital beds. Treatment was based on prescribing the addicts legal drugs. Today there are about ten out-patient programs along with a handful of treatment centres. The majority of them have started and developed in the framework of ECAD project. More than 400 young drug addicts have got access to a treatment as a result of the ECAD project.

- Ten schools have arranged groups of "comrade support". These groups have first been established in Vilnius and Klaipeda and are now being spread across the country. Many of these schools report increased comfort, less mobbing while problems with drugs among their students decrease.
- Some prisons have dramatically changed. More convicts get access to drug-free treatment, more visitors from outside are allowed. Contacts between personnel and prisoners have improved. More convicts have got meaningful work tasks at their institutions. There is an increased media coverage of crime related political issues due to activities of C.R.I.S. and not least of all the visit of Queen Silvia of Sweden to Lithuania.

- ECAD partner organisations in Lithuania have grown stronger during these three years of co-operation. Some of them have become partner organisations themselves and support development co-operation in Belarus!

Development towards democracy and welfare speeds up in Lithuania. Certainly the process goes unevenly between urban/rural areas and different sectors. Even though class-distinctions grow, the majority still enjoys improving of standard of living. One can feel the nation's optimism and belief in the future. We are tremendously happy that we had the privilege of working in Lithuania during this time. Lithuania is a peaceful country which we have learned to love. A love that continues into the future...

## The Nordic and Baltic countries join forces

Ministers of the Nordic Council of Ministers (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) and the Baltic (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) countries have decided to make common cause in the fight against drug abuse. The joint strategy will be built on a restrictive and humane narcotics policy, based on the UN Conventions on Drugs. Through the so called Lund Declaration the countries renew their commitments to prevent drug abuse, fight drug-related crime and improve treatment and rehabilitation for drug addicts. The countries will co-operate on and support:

- Control measures on organised crime and drugs trafficking
- Development of sound treatment and rehabilitation initiatives, focusing on drug abuse
- Information and preventive work, particularly when aimed at children and youth
- Measures which will strengthen the contribution of NGOs involved in the prevention of drug abuse.

"It is our conviction that it is only through international co-operation that we may win the fight against drugs. By linking the Nordic and Baltic countries tighter together in teamwork our chances of success will increase," says Swedish Minister of Public Health and Social Affairs, Morgan Johansson

### ECAD NEWS

In a joint statement published the same day in Swedish daily Svenska Dagbladet (September 24, 2003) the five Nordic ministers declare their concern about the situation on illicit drugs and suggest various measures against the growing problems.

In the article the five government representatives say their countries will never accept the legalisation of cannabis, or the distribution of free heroin to addicts. They also agree that they will never accept open commerce in drugs and that international co-operation is vital when fighting drug trafficking.

## Youth anti-drug media campaign proved effective

Findings demonstrate groundbreaking evidence that campaign affects youth attitudes and beliefs about drugs - Washington, D.C.

The Partnership Attitude Tracking Study (PATS) released reports that the National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign (NYADMC) affects teen attitudes on drug use by making teens less likely to try or use drugs. PATS also reported that past-year marijuana use among youth (grades 6-12) dropped a statistically significant 9 percent between 2002 and 2003. Additionally, a study released September 5th by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) found that youth who heard or saw anti-drug messages outside of school actually used drugs less than youth who had not seen such messages.

The Partnership Attitude Tracking Study, conducted by RoperASW, concluded that a strong correlation was found between regular exposure to the ads and increased perceptions of risk associated with marijuana use that have been specifically highlighted by the marijuana aspect of the advertising campaign. They also reported that 49 percent of youth with high exposure to the marijuana ads said the ads made them less likely to try or use drugs versus 38 percent of youth who had little or no exposure to the ads.

The National Survey on Drug Use and Health, formerly the National Household Survey on Drug Abuse, sponsored by

SAMHSA, reported that in 2002 Americans aged 12 to 17 who had seen or heard drug prevention messages outside of school used drugs in the past month at a rate that was 15 percent less than youth who had not seen or heard these types of messages. They also reported that a vast majority of youth aged 12 to 17—over 80 percent—reported to have seen or heard drug prevention messages outside of school in the past year.

John Walters, Director of National Drug Control Policy, stated, "These findings confirm that the Media Campaign is working. Youth are getting the right message that drug use is a dangerous activity with deadly consequences. Our ads are contributing to a climate of disapproval of drug use that is so imperative to reducing the human, social, and financial costs of this deadly disease."

The award-winning National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign is the largest integrated social marketing program ever undertaken by the federal government. Besides the television, radio, and print advertisements, the NYADMC has created websites and publications detailing information about drugs and how communities can fight back. Over 35 million people have visited the Media Campaign Web-sites and more than four tons of material a month is shipped to parents, educators, and youth inquiring about facts regarding drugs.

facing an increasing drug prevalence which was recently published in a study - a fact that has created wide concern in general public. Thirdly concern was expressed because many details of the law particularly regarding regulations of cultivation and trade were kept secret.

Some parliamentarians in favour of legalisation argued that impairment of oneself should be tolerated. The president of the Swiss government vigorously defended the legalisation initiative, arguing that the new law would make the work of the police easier, because of a clear definition what is allowed and what is forbidden.

## About Swedish...

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"As a result we have since then developed a restrictive policy based on three core pillars: prevention, law enforcement and treatment. These elements are considered to be tightly interlinked. We cannot just focus on one or even two of them and if we are having bad results concerning prevention and treatment, we cannot compensate this by putting more efforts at law enforcement.

"Conversely, we cannot lower the guard on law enforcement just by saying that we are putting efforts on prevention.

"There must be a balance between these three pillars and we must take all measures jointly.

"We must reject drugs but not reject the drug abusers! Therefore we must strengthen our efforts on treatment and rehabilitation. We must fight drug related crime. Therefore we must strengthen our police organisation, our customs, our courts and our prosecutors - and also the European and international co-operation in this field".



## More drug abusers in Denmark

A study conducted by Denmark's Board of Public Health reveals that the amount of drug users in the country has increased noticeably in the last five years. The largest increase probably took place during the last years of the 1990's.

The figures reported are much higher than was expected. In the last five years numbers have risen by 25%, or 5000 people. Today there is an estimated number of 25,500 people that suffer from physical, psychological and/or social damage from their drug abuse.

Denmark's Minister of Public Health, Lars Lökke Rasmussen says the government is about to present a new series of measures targeting drug abuse. In a press release the Minister states:

"Even if the increase in numbers of drug addicts has almost halted in the last two years, there is still a great number which calls for the prioritising of the fight against narcotic drugs on a broad front."

## No to legalisation of cannabis in Swiss Parliament

The Swiss National Council (bigger chamber of Swiss parliament) turned down a debate about a revision of the Swiss narcotic law by 96 to 89 votes.

According to the proposition, consumption, possession and dealing for personal needs of cannabis should be legal. Use of drugs like heroin, cocaine and amphetamine type stimulants would be subject of an exemption of punishment.

Three reasons to turn down the debate about the revision might have played a role. Firstly the parliamentarians were reluctant to discuss this hot topic before next month's election and secondly Switzerland is still

# A haze of misinformation clouds issue of medical marijuana

By Andrea Barthwell

*Andrea Barthwell, a medical doctor, is a deputy director at the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy and a past president of the American Society of Addiction Medicine*

As a physician with more than 20 years of experience dealing with patients who are addicted to drugs, I am often asked my professional opinion about a contentious public health question: What is the medical basis for smoking marijuana? The answer needs some context.

Americans today have the world's safest, most effective system of medical practice, built on a process of scientific research, testing and oversight that is unequalled.

Before the passage of the Pure Food and Drug Act in 1907, Americans were exposed to a host of patient medicine "cure-alls", everything from vegetable "folk remedies" to dangerous mixtures with morphine. The major component of most "cures" was alcohol, which probably explained why people reported that they "felt better".

Needless to say, claimed benefits were erratic and irreproducible.

Marijuana, whatever its value, is intoxicating, and it's not surprising that sincere people will report relief of their symptoms when they smoke it. The important point is that there is a difference between feeling better and actually getting better. It is the job of modern medicine to establish this distinction.

The debate over drug use generates a great deal of media attention – including the focus on the administration's appeal this month to the U.S. Supreme Court against medical

marijuana – and frequent misinformation. Some will have read, for instance, that the medicinal value of smoking marijuana represents "mainstream medical opinion". It is time to set the record straight.

Simply put, there is no scientific evidence that qualifies smoked marijuana to be called medicine. Further, there is no support in the medical literature that marijuana, or indeed any medicine, should be smoked as the preferred form of administration. The harms to health are simply too great.

Marijuana advocates often cite the 1999 National Academy of Science's Institute of Medicine report as justifying the drug's medical use. But, in fact, the verdict of that report was "marijuana is not a modern medicine." The institute was particularly troubled by the notion that crude marijuana might be smoked by patients, which it termed "a harmful drug-delivery system."

These concerns are echoed by the Food and Drug Administration, the agency charged with approving all medicines. As the FDA recently noted; "While there are no proven benefits to [smoked] marijuana use, there are many short- and long-term risks associated with marijuana use."

Compounds in the marijuana plant do potentially have a medical value. For instance, a synthetic version of an ingredient in marijuana has been approved for treating nausea for chemotherapy patients, as well as for treatment of anorexia associated with weight loss in patients with AIDS.

Admittedly, these medications have limitations, including the relatively slow onset of relief. Researchers are exploring drug-delivery systems that allow rapid relief –

perhaps an oral inhalator like those used by asthma patients – as a response to patient needs.

But these medications are a far cry from burning the crude weed and gulping down the smoke. Every American is familiar with aspirin, and some know that it was first found in willow bark, from which the therapeutic agent acetylsalicylic acid was eventually synthesized. Surely no one today would chew willow bark, much less smoke a piece of tree, to cure a headache.

Medical science does not fear any compound, even those with a potential for abuse. If a substance has the proven capacity to serve a medical purpose, then it will be accepted. We have done so with substances as dangerous as opium, allowing the medical use of many of its derivatives, including morphine, Demerol and OxyContin. The key term is "proven capacity." Only if compounds from marijuana pass the same tests of research scrutiny that any other drug must undergo will they become part of the modern medical arsenal.

## ★ ECAD DISCUSSION

Our investment in medical science is at risk if we do not defend the proven process by which medicines are brought to the market. All drugs must undergo rigorous clinical trials before a drug can be released for public use.

The overarching charge to any physician is: "First, do no harm." That is the test smoked marijuana cannot pass.

*Our European societies have experimented and evaluated both tolerance and intolerance to illicit drug use and drug abuse. It is our reflection upon this which guides us towards non-use. This in regard to our **communities'** well being.*



**ECAD** is Europe's leading organisation promoting a drug free Europe and representing millions of European citizens. Drug dealing and drug abuse cause enormous problems in Europe. Nations and their citizens are affected by the consequences of drug abuse. ECAD member cities work to develop initiatives and efforts against drug abuse supporting the United Nations Conventions which oppose legalisation and promote policies to eradicate drug abuse worldwide. Has your city joined ECAD?

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