



ECAD conferences – From the South to the North



The ECAD 11th Mayors' Conference "Fighting against drugs - a family issue?" took place May 20-21, 2004. The Cypriot Municipality of Aglantzia hosted the conference. The next issue, in June, of the ECAD newsletter will be fully devoted to this event.

Texts of the addresses along with a photo gallery will soon become available on the ECAD website www.ecad.net.

From the south of Europe back to the north: ECAD members are invited to visit Scandinavia again. The ECAD Conference 2005 will be hosted by the municipality of Oslo, Norway. The theme *Narcotics industry and its victims* will be discussed. We will be exposing a cynical industry through pictures from its international activity and to discuss restrictive actions designed to combat it. We will also focus on victims of the narcotics industry and their situation through an open debate on various forms of care provision.

The municipality of Oslo has "officially" promised that during the conference days on May 26th-27th, 2005, the Norwegian weather will surprise the conference participants with the sun and spring time warmth!

We'll meet in Oslo!

Cyprus: new strategy

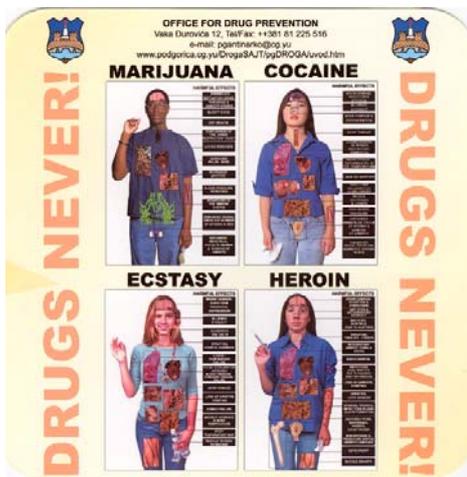
A strategic plan to combat the growing drug problem on the island has been approved by the government of Cyprus. Among the important measures there are collecting data and working closely with the EU, Cyprus Mail informs.

The strategy and action plans are aimed to reduce demand and supply and to maintain the National Drug Database (NDD), which was put into operation in March this year," Konstantina Akkelidou, Minister for Health, said to journalists.

"All information will be used to evaluate the scale of the drug problem on the island and to monitor the measures taken to combat it. This will help us to co-operate with the EU Drug monitoring centre in Portugal."

The NDD monitors data on indicators such as mortality, surveys on the general population, research in the education sector, use of drugs in schools, demand and treatment.

★ ECAD CONFERENCE



Third international conference "The Balkan Cities Against Drugs" -

Primary Prevention

26-27 June, 2004

Podgorica, Montenegro

The conference will be focusing on primary prevention:

The Balkan's capacity - we continue to build our network of Balkan cities against drugs (Burgas Declaration). Through discussions on various models of drug prevention and lectures on related issues we will lay basis for the "town to town" partnership in the Balkan region. We are welcoming the experiences in primary prevention that our colleagues from ECAD cities throughout Europe can share with us!

**Welcome to the conference in the
Mediterranean city of Podgorica!**

★ ECAD NEWS

Lithuania: Visagina is ready to join ECAD

More than a hundred and fifty participants attended a conference arranged by joined efforts of ECAD, C.R.I.S. and SMART in the Lithuanian city of Visagina in the end of April. Preventive programs that are being carried out by these organisations in the field of anti-drug work have been discussed.

As members of the EU we are now equal partners. This opens new opportunities for a long and close co-operation!

*Åke Setréus
ECAD project leader in Lithuania*

Conference information is available at the ECAD website www.ecad.net
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Schoolchildren Against AIDS – a national contest in Lithuania



This year winners, A.Giedraišio-Giedriaus gymnasium team from Jurbarkas, visiting the ECAD Head Office, May 2004

Lithuania has seen the lowest HIV prevalence of all Eastern European countries, where injecting drug use is the main mode of HIV transmission. This is mainly due to HIV prevention activities. Since the foundation of

the Lithuanian

AIDS Centre (LAC) in 1989, the country has witnessed more open discussions about HIV/AIDS, sexuality, gender issues and drug use. Since 1991, LAC has been implementing the governments national HIV prevention programme. One of its activities for young people is the project "School Children Against AIDS", a national competition for students 15-18 years old that started in 1999.

This project is focused on World AIDS Day and is based on the principle of interdisciplinary cooperation between event organisers and the Ministry of Education and Science, youth centres, public health specialists, journalists, volunteers, teachers, and students. The main goals are to inform young people in secondary schools about HIV/AIDS, involve them in prevention activities, make them aware of the consequences of high-risk behaviour, and stimulate them to form positive attitudes towards people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWHA).

The competition starts at the individual school level: teams of five students compete with other teams to show their knowledge about HIV/AIDS and their creative abilities. Performances take place in large halls, where up to 500 spectators can watch the contest.

In most schools, three to five teams prepare a presentation, design anti-AIDS promotion messages for clothes, take a knowledge test, and make a video-clip about HIV/AIDS. A jury rates the teams' performance on each of these tasks. Experience has shown that the judging committee works best when it includes people from different fields, for example, a doctor, a producer, a student, and a teacher. The winning team from each school moves on to the second round at the district level. District winners move on to the third round for each of the six zones in the country. The fourth and final round is at the national level and takes place around World AIDS Day (1 December). The whole programme of four rounds takes around three months.

Several incentives have been created for the participants and their teachers. The winning team is granted a one-week trip to Sweden (sponsored by ECAD along with UNDP in Lithuania), where team members visit HIV prevention programmes, share experiences and communicate with peers.

An evaluation survey in 2002 among 189 participants of the third round showed that 865 felt that their knowledge about HIV/AIDS had greatly increased; 94% said that they were more aware of the health consequences of unsafe sex and drug use. Moreover, 84% said they had become more tolerant towards PLWHA, 77% had improved their relationship with teachers and 86% with their parents. More

girls (62%) than boys filled out the questionnaires, reflecting the male/female participation ratio.

Another evaluation survey in 2003 with third-round participants (61% girls) showed that almost half of the students had participated in the competition more than once. This indicates that they find the initiative stimulating and interesting. Over 150 organisers (local authorities, youth centres, public health centres etc.) stated that the idea of the competition "is wonderful" and that the programme has proved to be a useful tool in the prevention of HIV/AIDS and drug use.

Since the start of "School children against AIDS", the project has reached many students and teachers with information on HIV/AIDS and drug use. Some of the lessons learned are:

- A competition combining knowledge tests and creative thinking is a useful tool to convey HIV/AIDS messages through young people themselves and it reaches many people. However, the form and tasks of the competition must be changed after 4-5 years in order to avoid repetition and lack of ideas.
- Multi-sector co-operation has proved to be successful. LAC generates ideas, youth centres organize the rounds of the competition, editors create scenarios, medical specialists and educators arrange knowledge tests, journalists inform society, young volunteers help to organize the event, etc. The participation of the Ministry of Education and Science ensures not only easy access to information, but also encourages the inclusion of the project in education and prevention strategies and school plans, and entitles teachers to draw more attention to HIV/AIDS and drug use.



First of all we would like to thank you for a wonderful time that we had in Stockholm. The trip was good, but we were feeling very sad because of leaving this beautiful country and all the friendly people that we have met. It was very interesting to visit ECAD and KRIS organizations, to get to know more about prevention and the jobs that you are doing. We saw that these organizations are very needful and it is great that we are members of the ECAD. Best wishes for Annette, Richard, Erica and for everybody that we have met.

Friends from Lithuania :)

The project has lived up to our expectations. Schools in almost all Lithuania districts (currently 50 out of 60) participate in the contest. Students, teachers and organisers regard the competition as interesting and stimulating. There is no data yet on the project's effectiveness in terms of reducing HIV prevalence among young people. However, a recent study by the European School Survey Project on alcohol and Drugs (ESPAD) showed that experimentation with illegal drugs among 15-16-year-olds in Lithuania has stabilised at about 15-16% over the last four years.

LAC is determined to continue this project. The video component of the competition has proved to be very good; in 2003/2004 the best video created by students was broadcasted by two TV channels in Lithuania. This element of the project will therefore be expanded.

By Saulius Caplinskas, LAC Director, ECAD Advisory Board member, Loreta Stoniene, Head of Educational Department, LAC

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ECAD partners

While carrying out project activities, ECAD co-operates with other NGOs and institutions in respective countries. This article will tell about input from a Swedish organisation SMART into ECAD work in Lithuania, Belarus and Russia.

In the Ignalina region of Lithuania, SMART works with drug prevention among school-children using a contract method. This method has been developed within the SMART organisation. (See a separate arti-

cle). The work is being carried out in co-operation with the Vilnius social services centre "Parama". The workers in this centre have been trained in the use of this method.

In March of this year ECAD invited SMART and their Lithuanian colleagues to visit Minsk, Belarus, in order to introduce the contract method and to find partners. First meetings with students and teachers in Minsk gymnasium No 2 and discussions with volunteers from a youth organisation "Next Stop New Life" have shown that SMART has a future in Belarus.

In Russia, several cities are successfully using the contract method as part of their prevention programs. Colleagues from three countries, Sweden, Lithuania and Russia, met in April of this year in Gothenburg to discuss their strategy for the next couple years.

In the city of Murmansk the contract method has been in use since 2001. It is con-



Student of the Minsk gymnasium No 2

ducted by a basketball club. "Team 818", as they call themselves, co-operates with a Basketball association from the Swedish region of Norbotten and a social service in the city of Boden. The Swedish government's International Development Co-operation Agency, SIDA, supports their activities financially.

The method has been put into practice in Kaliningrad and will soon be introduced in Veliky Novgorod.

Along with SMART, ECAD assists another Swedish organisation in its work in these countries - C.R.I.S., "Criminals' Return Into Society". C.R.I.S. and SMART supplement each other well focusing on secondary and primary prevention respectively. In June 2004, an agreement on co-operation for a three-year period will be completed between ECAD, SMART, C.R.I.S. and the municipality of Veliky Novgorod.

Netherlands to curb "drug tourism"

The Dutch government is working on an action plan to combat "cannabis tourism" from abroad and cannabis plantations in the Netherlands.

A trial will start soon in Maastricht, just across the border with both Germany and Belgium, where the sale of "soft" drugs to foreigners will be banned. If successful, the approach used there could be implemented nation-wide.

In a letter to the Parliament, three Dutch ministers signalled the government's intention to tighten the country's often-criticised cannabis policies.

"We want to end all aspects of drugs tourism, the fact that people come to the Netherlands to use "soft" drugs or to take them home," said Justice Ministry spokesman Wim Kok, Reuters informs.

★ COMMENTARY

The centre-right government wants to call an end to the hordes of foreigners, mainly youngsters, on the streets of cities like Amsterdam *prowling for a joint*.

The Interior Ministry will work with towns and cities on ways to better enforce existing laws against the use of cannabis, including minimum distances between the so-called coffee shops (cannabis cafes) and schools.

The Justice Ministry will attack drug tourism with international police co-operation and target large-scale hemp growing as well as the "criminal involvement" of so-called "grow-shops" where people can buy seeds to grow their own cannabis plants.

The Health Ministry, for its part, has ordered research into the possible risks of the high levels of THC, the active ingredient in cannabis. The results of this research and the findings of a second study into the possible link between cannabis use and psychiatric illness will be incorporated into future government policy on cannabis, Hooger-vorst said.

By Expatica News and Reuters

★ SHARP TURN

He said – Turn around.
She said – I already have.

About SMART

SMART works preventively using positive reinforcement and individual contracts with individual youths. The aim is to prevent and/or delay various sorts of drug debuts. The target group is school-children between 10 and 16 years of age. Different forms of benefits such as discounts and attractive activities are attached to a membership which is based upon a deliberate refusal from un-smart/negative behaviour by way of a contract.

The contract method originates in a sport movement. The concept has devel-

oped and is now used in 86 communities in Europe. It can be used by social services, police, schools, sport clubs and public organisations. The method wins from co-operation and the best examples are those where different social institutions collaborate within the frames of this prevention method.

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Malin Berglund, project co-ordinator

Drug opposition is taboo on a EU conference on drugs

The Netherlands and drug liberal organisations did not succeed during the recent EU International Conference where the Union's new strategy on drugs has been discussed. This even though no public organisations supporting the UN conventions on drugs and restrictive drug policies have been invited. "It is clear that the meeting was unbalanced, what I blame the organisers for", Ralf Löfsted, Councillor and the Swedish government's delegate said in a interview to Drugnews.

The two-day meeting in Dublin which was organised by the "previous" and new term EU Presidency countries, Ireland and the Netherlands, ended up in a confusion. The Netherlands tried without success to increase its influence in the work with a new strategy on drugs. The drug restrictive governments looked after that no resolution was taken.

Grainne Kenny, the president of the EURAD, the Europe's biggest non-governmental organisation against drugs,

was denied access to the conference even as an observer. At the same time, a legalising activist Joop Oomen from the drug liberal organisation ENCOD (European citizens for just and effective drug policies) could speak long without objection. The most disputed questions were in regard to views on "harm reduction" and whether the member state's national activities should be included in the common strategy. In other words, the discussion is about what approach against drugs will be accepted within the EU for the next 5 years: a restrictive one or the one that gives up the fight.

★ ECAD NEWS

There will be many negotiations back and forth but one thing is already clear: most parties are in agreement that the union is not ready to harmonise the drug policy of the member states.

By Drugnews

Violent crimes strongly linked to alcohol/drug abuse

People with serious drug and alcohol abuse problems are linked to about a quarter of all violent crimes but many could be avoided with better treatment, Swedish researchers say in a new report.

They found that 16 percent of crimes such as murder, robbery, assault and rape in Sweden between 1988-2000 were committed by people who had been discharged from hospital for alcohol misuse and 10 percent were associated with drug abusers.

"It is likely you will find the same sort of figures in Western Europe and North Amer-

ica," Seena Fazel, of the University of Oxford, said in an interview.

Fazel and Martin Grann, of the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, studied the country's national crime register and compared it with hospital discharges of people diagnosed with alcohol and drug misuse and psychoses. Few countries, apart from Scandinavian nations, have such detailed population-based registers which are needed to conduct such a study.

By Reuters

Cannabis butter from Latvia

The EU may have to keep a watchful eye on Latvian farmers who plan to market a hitherto unknown butter ... with a very special ingredient, APF writes.

Using centuries' old recipes to make the butter at home, Latvians use only soaked, roasted and milled cannabis seed, sometimes mixing it together with oil or butter. Now Lagzdins, the director of the Iecavnieks company, has ambitious plans from this tiny Latvian village Iecava, 44 km south of the capital Riga, to introduce this hitherto unknown product to the world. Narcologist Janis Strazdins explained that consumers will not have any drug-induced "experiences".

"Only seeds are used for cannabis butter. The narcotic substance Tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) is in the resin and blossoms only."

And although cannabis butter and the cannabis seeds used to make it are legal, Latvia's cannabis fields are under strict controls. Farmers have to get permission to grow cannabis and can only grow it in the open air. Strazdins added that with Latvia located on the 57th latitude, with short summers and cool and rainy springs and autumns, it was not possible to grow a narcotic variety of cannabis.

"However, we cannot exclude theoretically that prohibited hybrid from Holland with THC more than four percent could be brought in and sowed together with other seeds."

/AFP

★ COMPUTER AGE

*He said – What color is this green?
She said – Is this multiple choice?*

*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 **children's** 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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