



International Dimensions for European Drug Policy



*Conference at the European Parliament,
March 1-2, 2005, Brussels*

This ground-breaking event was held at the European Parliament in Brussels, Belgium for approximately 130 delegates from throughout the European community. The conference "International Dimensions for European Drug Policy" was organised by European Cities Against Drugs, Institute on Global Drug Policy, International Scientific and Medical Forum on Drug Abuse and supported by Drug Free America Foundation, Drug Prevention Network of the Americas. The conference was hosted by Mrs. Charlotte Cederschiöld, MEP from Sweden, Former Vice President of the European Parliament.

Experienced and forward-thinking policy experts explored the global impact of harm

reduction on drug policy. The agenda covered current topics such as needle exchange programs, harm reduction from a political standpoint, the Swiss/German experience with heroin programs and the US drug-related prison population, to name a few.

Keynote speakers included Herbert Schaepe, former Secretary General of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), Morgan Johansson, Minister of Public Health, Sweden, John Walters, Director of the US Office of National Drug Control Policy and other high-level international drug policy experts.

In the next issue of the ECAD newsletter we will give you a more detailed review of this event. In the meantime, please visit the www.ecad.net where conference-related information will soon be available.

ECAD Grants

ECAD member cities Riga, Latvia, and Gävle, Sweden, were the first ones to use the ECAD travel subsidy to carry out a study visit.

February 7-14, 2005, two social workers from the municipal drug prevention centre of Riga, Inita Eglite and Anna Auzina, visited the city of Gävle. During their study visit, the specialists from Riga have learned about the system of drug prevention in this Swedish municipality. Its main advantage, as Inita and Anna underscored in their report, rests upon a well functioning co-operation between different authorities, services and organisations working in the field of drug prevention, treatment and rehabilitation.



The Riga specialists found many common features in approaches in tackling the

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problem of illicit drug abuse in their own city and in Gävle. The «common thread» is particularly strong in regard to drug prevention in schools and at youth recreational centres. This Inita and Anna see as a good ground for future co-operation.

Read about conditions for receiving the ECAD subsidy for study visits between the ECAD members cities at www.ecad.net under "Grants"



FEI European Jumping Championship
San Patrignano July 21-24, 2005
First announcement!

ECAD & SAN PATRIGNANO: OVERCOMING OBSTACLES

For more information visit www.sanpatrignano2005.org

2004 Annual Report

from the International Narcotics Control Board, INCB, focuses on integration of supply and demand reduction strategies

Integrating demand and supply reduction strategies vital, says Board

Recommends Creation of National Drug Policy Coordination Mechanisms

“The integration of supply and demand reduction strategies: moving beyond a balanced approach” is the focus of the first chapter of the Annual Report of the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) released March 2, 2005.

“It is all too easy for Governments’ actions against the drug problem to focus on just one element of the problem, supply. While this may produce results, even dramatic results, in the short-term, with large seizures of illicit drugs, it does not and cannot have a long-term effect because new sources soon materialize to meet continuing demand. Unfortunately, there are no quick ways of reducing demand, which requires sustained preventative interventions. It is therefore essential that comprehensive strategies are developed, combining action on both supply and demand. Then and only then will there be permanent improvement in drug abuse problems.”

Hamid Ghodse, President of the Board

Approaches to tackling the drugs demand and supply situation have called for a balance between activities related to reducing the supply of and demand for drugs. While this approach has been fairly successful, in this year’s Report, INCB notes that both demand and supply reduction programmes yield limited results when working in isolation, and that moving beyond a simple balance is necessary when dealing with the issue.

“To make real progress in achieving the 10-year targets set by the United Nations General Assembly Special Session in 1998, it is imperative that national governments ensure that there is operational and policy level integration of demand and supply reduction efforts,” said Hamid Ghodse, President of the INCB. At the special session, Member States agreed to significantly reduce drug production, trafficking and abuse.

In a multi-level analysis of the relationship between demand and supply, the report points out that, “...as an addictive drug becomes more widely available, a larger number of vulnerable individuals will be exposed to it, the likelihood of experimentation will increase and the problems associated with drug abuse will become more prominent”.

A failure to understand the implications of the links between demand and supply of drugs can lead to epidemic-like situations. For instance, the crack cocaine epidemic in the United States of America in the 1980s, when a new and cheaper form of a traditional drug became widely available illustrates how supply can create demand.

World situation: Europe

Cannabis abuse has shown an upward trend in almost all countries in Europe over the past decade. However, the public debate over cannabis use is dominated more by its alleged potential benefits than by the associated risks. The upward trend in cannabis use seems related to the efforts by some to promote the notion that cannabis use is not harmful.

After three successive years of bumper harvests of opium poppy in

Afghanistan, heroin trafficking has regained some momentum in Europe. Whereas the abuse of heroin is stable or declining in most countries in Western Europe, it continues to increase in countries in Eastern Europe and in member States of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). According to official estimates, there are over one million heroin abusers in the Russian Federation; thus, that country has become the largest heroin market in Europe. The northern and southern branches of the Balkan route continue to supply up to 80 per cent of the heroin distributed in Europe.

Under the title “**Special topics**” the Board expresses its position in regard to, among other subjects, Misuse of the Internet (§ 170-184), Facilities where persons can abuse illicitly acquired drugs (§ 199), Consultation with the authorities of Afghanistan pursuant to article 14 of the 1961 Convention (§ 205-215), Policy of the Government of the Netherlands on cannabis (§ 216-221).

“Crucial and significant change in Dutch cannabis policy”

Dutch Government to Reduce Number of Coffee Shops; Recognizes Health and Social Problems Associated with Cannabis Abuse

In its Annual Report, the INCB welcomes the initiative taken by the Government of the Netherlands on its cannabis policy. In an inter-ministerial policy paper on cannabis, the Government acknowledged that “cannabis is not harmless”, neither for the abusers nor for the community. It stressed the importance of strengthening “measures against street dealing, drug tourism and cannabis cultivation and continue to reduce the number of coffee shops.”

The Dutch Government informed the Board of this crucial and significant change in their policy in August 2004, which brings it closer towards full compliance with the international drug control treaties with regard to cannabis.

The policy paper recognized that coffee shops are “not blameless” in the maintenance of the illicit drug trade and are inadequate in terms of suppressing drug-related crime. It also noted that coffee shops may discredit the drug policy of the Netherlands in general.

The fact that the Dutch Government has recognized the health and social problems associated with cannabis abuse and its cultivation and trafficking, will have a far-reaching impact on the whole region and beyond. The Board urges the Dutch Government to take further action to reduce the number of coffee shops which are contrary to the provisions of the international drug control treaties.

“In many cases, the alarming spread of HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases is associated with shockingly low levels of awareness about the basic facts of the disease and the methods of its transmission. Governments have to address such ignorance and find ways of limiting the spread of HIV. In doing so, they must ensure that current drug control policies do not perpetuate the vicious circle of drug abuse by injection and HIV/AIDS. Specifically, measures to prevent the spread of infectious diseases must not be seen as facilitating or even promoting drug abuse which is, after all, the root of the problem.”

Hamid Ghodse, President of the Board

USA: New Cohort of Parents Carry Lax Attitudes, Less Concern About Drug Risks Facing Kids

In its 17th annual tracking study of parents' attitudes toward drugs and teen drug use, the Partnership for a Drug-Free America today reports that the current generation of parents – the most drug-experienced group on record – sees less risk in a wide variety of illicit drugs, and are significantly less likely to be talking with their teens about drug abuse, when compared to moms and dads just a few years ago.

“While the vast majority of parents have left old habits behind, they’re carrying old attitudes and beliefs forward,” said Steve Pasierb, president & CEO of the Partnership. “If old habits die hard, the data suggest that lax attitudes about drugs die even harder.”

Released February 22, 2005 at a press briefing in New York, the 2004 Partnership Attitude Tracking Study (PATS) surveyed 1,205 parents across the country (margin of error 2.8 percent). Top-line findings of the nationally projectable study (Survey of parents in households with children under the age of 18) show:

- Today's parents see less risk in drugs like marijuana, cocaine and even inhalants, when compared to parents just a few years ago.
- The number of parents who report never talking with their child about drugs has doubled in the past six years, from 6 percent in 1998 to 12 percent in 2004.
- Just 51 percent of today's parents said they would be upset if their child experimented with marijuana.
- While most parents believe it's important that parents discuss drugs with their children, fewer than one in three teens (roughly 30 percent) say they've learned a lot about the risks of drugs at home.

Many of today's parents (those with pre-teens and teens) were high school students themselves during the late '70s and early '80s – a period when teen drug use reached its absolute high point (According to the Monitoring the Future study). In fact, when compared to high school seniors today, teen drug use rates were significantly higher in the late '70s and early '80s.

While few of today's parents use drugs

Sixty percent of high school seniors in 1979 had tried marijuana, according to the annual "Monitoring the Future" survey by the University of Michigan. In 2003, the percentage had fallen to 46 percent.

today (11 percent report smoking marijuana in the past year), 58 percent have tried marijuana at least once in their lives, according to the Partnership's study. Significant percentages report trying other illicit substances as well.

Despite their first-hand knowledge about the issue, the Partnership's study finds that today's parents significantly underestimate the presence of drugs in their teens' lives.

- Just one in five parents (21 percent) believes their teenager has friends who use marijuana. Yet 62 percent of teens report having friends who use the drug.
- Fewer than one in five parents (18 percent) believe their teen has smoked marijuana, yet many more (39 percent) already are experimenting with the drug.

This perceptual disconnect is even more pronounced when it comes to drugs that weren't around when today's parents were teenagers. Only one every 100 parents – one percent – believes their teen may have used MDMA, commonly referred to as Ecstasy. The reality is quite different: Some nine percent of all teens – 2.1 million teens in America – used Ecstasy for the first time last year, down from a peak of 12 percent in 2001.

The Partnership's tracking data underscore the powerful influence parents can have on teen decision-making about drugs. Teens who report learning a lot about the risks of drugs at home are up to half as likely to use drugs, according to the data.

MORE RESEARCH!

The Partnership for a Drug-Free America is a private, non-profit coalition of professionals from the communications industry. Best known for its national, drug-education advertising campaign, The Partnership exists to help kids and teens reject substance abuse by influencing attitudes through persuasive information. The Partnership's State/City Alliance Program supports The Partnership's mission at the local level. Visit the Partnership at www.drugfree.org

The ECAD Bulgarian network

In December 2004 the city of Bourgas, Bulgaria, organised a National round table “Strengthening of interaction between Bulgarian cities in the field of drug prevention”. The Bulgarian members of ECAD, partners of the Bourgas municipality from around the country, representatives of the Ministry of Youth and Sports along with OBS Foundation from Bonn, Germany, took part in the round table.

In the opening remarks, the mayor of Bourgas Mr. Ioan Kostadinov once again confirmed the engagement of his municipality to actively support efforts aimed at prevention, treatment and rehabilitation.

Discussions at the round table were focused on experience exchange in the field of drug prevention among young people. A review of what is being done in this regard in the municipality of Bourgas was presented by Dr Ivaylo Dimitrov, Director of the municipal consultative centre for risk prevention in school age. He brought participants' attention to a success of educational programs carried out by his centre, for instance, training in peer-to-peer method, courses for teachers, other administrative and medical staff along with communications effort through a weekly youth show.

ECAD NETWORK

The round table adopted a declaration as a base for establishing a network between Bulgarian municipalities “Balkan network for drug prevention” (BNDP). Dr Dimitrov was elected a Chairman of the network.

The participants of the round table in Bourgas welcome other Balkan cities to join their network!

For more information please contact Dr

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HE SAID SHE SAID

“Omnipresence”

He said – Postmodernism is dead.

She said – Yeah, that's why they called it post.

ECAD Advisory Board meeting

San Patrignano, Italy



Winter in San Patrignano...

The ECAD Advisory Board held its spring meeting on 3-5 February in San Patrignano, Italy.

San Patrignano, home to 1.800 former drug addicts, is the largest European community for the rehabilitation of drug addicts and is completely drug free.

Among the items on the agenda was ECAD's budget for 2005, which was agreed by the Board.

A proposal from Reykjavik for a drug prevention program for youth in Europe was discussed in depth. The outline of the project is that a selection of ECAD member cities shall conduct a four year program among

young people aged 15-16 to reduce the use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs. The program will be evidence based with a strong element of international comparison, and shall be scientifically evaluated. The final proposal will be presented at the Plenary session at the ECAD Mayors' conference in Oslo on May 27.

Furthermore the Advisory Board accepted the offer for ECAD to appear as co-promoter for the FEI European Jumping Championship, an international horse show in San Patrignano on 21-24 July. Under the heading "European Cities and San Patrignano: Overcoming Obstacles", ECAD's and San Patrignano's message against the use of any and all drugs throughout Europe will meet the expected 5000 spectators as well as the media coverage of the event.

For more information please contact the ECAD Stockholm office at ecad@ecad.net or call +46 8 508 29 362

Denmark: Many heroin addicts make their debut with hashish

The Danish Board of Public Health reports that since the country introduced 1996 a treatment guarantee for drug addicts in the age group 18-29, the number of young people in treatment have been steadily increasing. As for today, 6 of 1000 youngsters are in treatment. Of those who were in treatment between 1996 and 2003, 2608 reported can-

nabis as the main drug of abuse, 2655 reported heroin. The average debut age for hashish abusers is 14,8 years and for heroin abusers 19,4. Available information shows that many of heroin addicts started with hashish. It takes a heroin addict about five years from the first use of hashish until the debut with heroin.

*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 **countries'** 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?

Belgium: new rules on cannabis

New guidelines on cannabis came into force on February 1, 2005. A law on cannabis possession passed in May 2003 did not enter into force due to vagueness of some of its wording. For instance, the law said people should be prosecuted if they were guilty of a "problematic use" of the drug. The term "problematic use" has been declared by the Court of Arbitration as "vague".

New guidelines clarifies that anyone found with less than 3 g of cannabis or with a plant being kept to produce the drug for personal use should receive the lowest form of punishment - a verbal warning. The police will store the warning on computer and send all warnings issued to the magistrates' court on a monthly basis.

The police will have no right to confiscate the drug from users if it does not exceed 3 g. A person will only be dealt with more severely if he or she is using cannabis in a school or youth centre or nearby, or in a public place, or a prison.

By Expatica

Norway: Number of drug-related deaths increased 30% during 2004

223 persons were reported dead during 2004 as a consequence of drug abuse. A bigger percentage of death cases is explained by a widespread mixed use of heroin, amphetamines, methadone and benzodiazepines. The data is based upon reports from 22 of countries 27 police districts and relates to both acute poisoning (overdoses) and death cases that can be connected to the deceased person's drug abuse. The average age of the deceased people was 34 years for men and 36 years for women.

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