



ECAD-network: Norwegian Cities met in Bergen



Bergen has got the relay-race baton from Oslo to be a leading city within the Norwegian ECAD-network. This year *Medically Assisted Addiction Treatment* was chosen as a topic for ECAD Norwegian Cities` Annual Conference. One of the reasons for that was the Government Action Plan concerning medically assisted therapy for 2006-2008 presented recently.

The Subutex debate in Norway has been going on for a significantly longer period of time than it has in Sweden. Sweden, however, has a longer experience in methadone treatment. Between 1976 and 1984 methadone was forbidden in Norway, but then, after some time, AIDS epidemic broke out in the country.

"Treatment of drug addicts should become a municipal concern", emphasised Tryde Drevland, a Municipal Commissioner in the opening speech. *"The state, however, has to allot some money for the reforms the discussions focus on for the time being."*

According to the new directive, the government should enable some 7000 addicts to be treated with methadone. The state is about to contribute to their medical treatment as a whole (including urine samples etc.) with 533 mln Norwegian crowns,

though only 90 mln crowns will be allotted for rehabilitation. *"Drug problems cannot be solved by a medical treatment",* claimed Martin Blindheim, a representative from Social and Health Board, going through the implementation programme for Medically Assisted Addiction Treatment (*LAR* - in Norwegian). Despite this statement of his, he was positive to *LAR* growing and thus diminishing overdose as death cause for heroin addicts. One should be aware of overdose still being very common death cause for the group of people who take subutex and methadone. It is approximately 5 times higher than for ordinary people.

Hege Loftfjell from the Social Work Department came up with some promising news from the education department. The government is going to invest more money into higher education in the drug abuse field.

During the conference, also representatives of methadone treatment programme and the Addict Association accounted for their experiences. There was a total of 50 participants from 7 Norwegian cities at the conference, which ended with a common Resolution.

Hurtigrutten - next

Municipal Commissioner Drevland launched the idea for next year`s conference that to become an all-Scandinavian meeting, with participants from Denmark and Sweden. It will be arranged during a boat trip - a famous Norwegian cruise in the fjords, from Bergen to Ålesund (Norway) in September 2006.

ECAD Advisory Board held autumn conference

The City of Helsinki hosted ECAD autumn Advisory Board session on the 7-8 of October this year. The meeting agenda was exceptionally rich in future plans for the organisation and activity reports. The Board was so preoccupied with in-depth discussions that the time seemed almost too short.

The Advisory Board meeting preceding the Mayors` Conference in Oslo decided upon the launch of the *Youth in Europe* project. The Icelandic partner managed to find a sponsor for the project. The programme of the project was further elaborated in Helsinki, with some 15 cities committed to participate at this stage, five of them with financial support from the main sponsor (Belgrade, Istanbul, Sofia, St. Petersburg and Vilnius). As a result, ECAD, the city of Reykjavik and the sponsor will sign an agreement. The sponsor is ready to cover the costs for all research on the project provided by Reykjavik University and the University of Iceland as well as the evaluation of the results.

The activities of the Latvian and Russian ECAD branches for the first half of this year were accounted for respectively by Mr. Vilks and Mr. Zazulin.

The planning of the next annual Mayors` Conference was started, and the City of Vilnius, which is the capital of Lithuanian republic, has kindly offered to host the event. The Conference will take place on the 1-2 of June 2006, with the theme *"Combating Drugs - A World Challenge."*

ECAD Director Tomas Hallberg announced about big plan to organise an international arrangement against drugs. It is going to be one of the most spectacular events in the history of drug fighting. The details are not official yet, but the next issues of ECAD newsletter will bring you more information.

ECAD Advisory Board held autumn conference



From page 1

Except for the meeting in Helsinki City Hall, Advisory Board members were given the possibility to visit Kerava Juvenile prison.

This prison for criminal offenders with drugs and alcohol problems lies in the outskirts of Helsinki. Present members of the Board got acquainted with Kisko rehabilitation programme and visited a few sections for various kind of offenders on the prison territory.

In order to celebrate the continuous and effective activity of ECAD in Russia over the

last five years in particular, Russian parliamentarians from the Advisory Board invited all interested people to St. Petersburg in April 2006. A special conference to highlight the results of the Russian ECAD branch work will be held there, and English-speaking guests

will be provided with interpreting.

The City of Helsinki also offered a pleasant cultural programme to ECAD Advisory Board. The second day of the meeting ended with a visit to the Helsinki Opera House to enjoy Giacomo Puccini's *Manon Lescaut*.

ECAD thanks the City of Helsinki for its generous hospitality and hopes that the next Advisory Board meeting in Istanbul (February 2006), will be as pleasant and fruitful as it was this autumn.

Fitness fans taking drugs

Many regular visitors to fitness studios in Germany have been found to be addicted to 'hard' drugs such as marijuana, cocaine and ephedrine, according to a recent report in Focus magazine.

The findings of two studies were presented at the recent Congress of German Sports Medicine and Prevention in Hamburg and appear to indicate that many fitness fanatics not only take muscle strengthening medication but are also taking hard drugs, the magazine reports.

In one of the studies, 29.5 per cent of respondents admitted to taking substances on the list of banned substances of the World Anti-Doping Agency. More than twice as many men compared to women said they had experience with drug consumption - 35.2 per cent compared to

★ MORE RESEARCH!

17.6 per cent.

Another study by the University of Tuebingen found that 41.1 per cent of those active sports people questioned had some experience with hard drugs. The survey was conducted in 47 fitness studios in Germany.

By Expatica/German news

Latvia: drug abuse prevention and narcotics control

ECAD Office in Latvia launches a seminar series to be held in several Latvian cities in September and October this year.

Seminars will be devoted to the current analysis of anti-drug policy problems and drug abuse prevention. Until this time ECAD in Latvia pursued seminar sessions 4 times a year in Riga only. Thus not all interested specialists and professionals from elsewhere in the country were able to participate and engage in the anti-drug policymaking. Riga-seminar participants included mainly representatives from Riga-situated organisations, people from ECAD member cities in Latvia (Kuldiga, Bauska) and some other cities.

Seminar sessions organised in Latvian regions make it possible to attract more participants, to organise intense discussions, to exchange ideas more actively, to get to know local and regional problems in detail as well as their positive experiences.

Lecturing group at the seminars comprises highly competent specialists from



Riga Abuse Prevention Centre, Riga Stradina University and other entities.

Seminars will focus on the current drug situation in Latvia and in Europe, its development tendencies, as well as the escalation of addiction building processes.

The role and awareness of the state and local administrations in drug prevention and international experience acquisition are also

going to be subjects of discussions.

Seminar on "Anti-drug policy and drug abuse prevention strategy" took place in Kuldiga on the 14th of October. Medical workers, teachers, Orphan Courts' and Regional Courts' representatives took part in the seminar. Listeners learned about the state strategy of drug control and abuse prevention, emphasising the importance of competent local administration authorities.

In addition to that, some subjects concerning the particulars of the preventive work, the role of family in the context of drug abuse, the mechanism of drug dependency formation were covered in the discussions among the participants. They also received a certificate for this seminar course.

Andrejs Vilks,

*ECAD Regional Office director in Latvia
in Latvia*

2002/2003 Drug Prevalence Survey in Ireland and Northern Ireland: Cannabis Results

Last findings in Drug Use in Ireland and Northern Ireland (*First Results from the 2002/2003 Drug Prevalence Survey* (Bulletin 1)) showed that cannabis was the most commonly used illegal drug in both, Ireland and Northern Ireland.

This Bulletin (the third in a series) deals specifically with cannabis prevalence and use, providing detailed information on the age of first use, regularity of use, the type and method of cannabis used, obtaining cannabis, stopping use and attitudes to cannabis use in general.

In response to the finding that most people did not wish cannabis to be permitted for recreational use, Minister Noel Ahern TD commented:

"This finding reinforces the position of Government in relation to cannabis. I believe that cannabis is a complex substance and notwithstanding the fact that it is not as dangerous as some other drugs, it can have many damaging effects on the physical and mental health of the user, particularly the young and those who are heavy users of the drug."

The Minister added that this information will feed into the National Drug Awareness Campaign.

Key findings: Ireland

The lifetime prevalence rate for those aged

15 to 34 (24%) was more than double that for those aged 35 to 64 (11%).

Male respondents reported higher prevalence rates than females across all time periods.

The average age that respondents reported that they had first used cannabis was 18 years old (both males and females).

Almost a quarter (22%) of current users has used cannabis on a daily or almost daily basis.

Over a quarter (27%) of respondents who said that they had ever taken cannabis said that they had used it regularly. Of these, almost three in five (58%) said that they had stopped taking cannabis one in eight (12%) said that they had tried to stop and failed, whilst three in ten (30%) respondents said that they had never tried to stop.

Key findings: Northern Ireland

Prevalence rates were higher among younger respondents - the lifetime prevalence for those aged 15 to 34 (35%) was more than double that for those aged 35 to 64 (10%).

The average age that respondents reported that they had first used cannabis was 18 years (females- 19years). The average age of first regular use was also reported as 18 years old.

Almost a third (31%) of current users said

they used cannabis on a daily or almost daily basis.

Over a quarter (28%) of respondents who said that they had used it regularly. Of these, almost half (8485) said that they had stopped taking cannabis, one in five (20%) said that they had tried to stop and failed, whilst a third (33%) said that they had never tried to stop.

In terms of obtaining cannabis, the survey found that:

- 31% of respondents were given cannabis by a family member or friend;
- A further 27% of respondents said they had shared cannabis amongst a group of friends.

Commenting on this key finding, Dr. Des Corrigan, Chairperson of the National Advisory Committee on Drugs (NACD) said:

"This information contradicts the popular view of the dealer as someone completely unknown to the user and highlights how important it is for parents to know who their children are associating with, what they are doing and if they are being supervised. This bulletin is a useful resource in terms of contributing to the importance of understanding the family and social context within which people use drugs."

By www.nacd.ie/news

Complete Survey is available at www.nacd.ie/publications/prevalence_survey3.html

Drug policy in Italy

Drug legislation in Italy is based on the Act n.309 of 1990, which was marked with anti-liberalisation government shift - the coalition government of Christian Democrats and Socialists led by Mr. Bettino Craxi. This socialist leader himself promoted the change in Italian legislation. After his official visit in the United States he announced that it was the time for Italy to adopt the American zero tolerance approach to drugs.

With the Act n.309/1990, personal illicit drug consumption became a criminal offence to be punished by some escalating administrative and penal sanctions.

However, after the referendum in 1993 personal illicit drug use became decriminalised again, and drug abusers risked only administrative sanctions.

According to the present legislation, drugs are classified into Schedule I (heroin, cocaine, ecstasy, amphetamines) and Schedule

II (cannabis). Trafficking and dealing for Schedule I drugs are punished with incarceration (8 to 20 years), cannabis dealing is punished with jailing (2 to 6 years). Treatment alternatives to incarceration are admitted for jail sentences below 4 years.

Starting with Referendum in 1993 harm reduction policies (methadone, buprenorphine treatment) were taken and maintenance treatments were available in public drug treatment facilities. In April 2003 during the annual meeting of the UN Commission on Drugs in Vienna, Italian vice-premier Mr. Gianfranco Fini took the anti-liberalisation drug course for the country.

The Cabinet of Ministers approved a new Bill in March 2004 that claims to reinstate personal drug use as a criminal offence. Thus possessions of any amounts of drugs above definite thresholds (250 mlgr. of THC, 200 mlgr. of heroin etc.) will be considered drug

dealing and punished with jail sentences.

The core of the new Bill to be discussed by two Chambers of Parliament (Camera dei deputati and Senato) is to even out any difference between "hard" and "soft" drugs, and to transfer cannabis to Schedule I, among the most dangerous drugs.

Alternative treatments to incarceration will only be permitted in therapeutic communities. Beside that harm reduction programmes will be curtailed with many constraints for Methadone treatments.

The main idea of this new Bill runs: "No matter what the harm, all illegal drugs are to be considered equal".

However, the bill is unlikely to be approved before the next general elections in March 2006 due to the strong liberal opposition protests.

Source: www.fuoriluogo.it

SAMHSA 2004 Survey found more methamphetamine users meet abuse criteria

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) released at the end of September data showing that the prevalence of methamphetamine use in 2004 was similar to the number of users in the prior two years. But, the new 2004 National Survey in the US on Drug Use and Health also showed that the number of past month methamphetamine users who met criteria for illicit drug dependence or abuse in the past 12 months increased sharply.

In 2004, 1.4 million persons ages 12 or older (0.6 percent of the population) used methamphetamine in the past year and 600,000 (0.2 percent) used in the past month. These numbers are similar to numbers in 2002 and 2003.

However, the number of past month methamphetamine users who met criteria for illicit drug dependence or abuse in the past 12 months increased from 164,000 (27.5 percent of past month methamphetamine users in 2002 to 346,000 (59.3 percent) in 2004. Of these 130,000 (22.3 percent) had stimulants, primarily methamphetamine, as their primary substance of abuse in 2004.

"Methamphetamine is undeniably a uniquely destructive drug," SAMHSA Administrator Charles Curie said.

"While rates of use have remained relatively stable over the past few years, these new findings show that an increasing proportion of methamphetamine users are developing problems of drug abuse and de-

pendence and are in need of treatment."

The survey questions ask about both illicit methamphetamine, as well as prescription methamphetamine used non-medically. Dependence or abuse is defined using criteria specified in the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-IV)* used by psychiatrists for their diagnoses.



Picture: www.bbc.co.uk

Information on symptoms of dependence and abuse is collected for alcohol and a number of specific illicit drug categories, including stimulants, but not exclusively methamphetamine. Methamphetamine is the most frequently reported stimulant used.

The survey found that in 2004 there were an estimated 318,000 new initiates to methamphetamine use, defined as having used it for the first time in the 12 months prior to the survey. This is approximately the same number of new users in 2002 and 2003.

The data ranked 12 states in the West, including Nevada, Wyoming and Montana,

among states with the highest past year use of methamphetamine. Connecticut, New York and North Carolina were among the states with the lowest rates. The rate of use was higher in counties in small metropolitan areas and counties not in metropolitan areas than in counties in large metropolitan areas.

The National Survey on Drug Use and Health is an annual survey of close to 70,000 people. The survey collects information from residents of households, residents of non-institutionalized group quarters and civilians living on military bases.

U.S. Department of Health and Human services and SAMHSA's National Clearing House for Alcohol and Drug information warns about suspicious activities that could signal methamphetamine production or abuse:

- A large supply of pharmaceuticals or toxic chemicals such as cough-suppressants, anti-freeze, drain cleaner and fertilizers, bought very periodically;
- Peculiar smells similar to nail polish remover or cat urine;
- Irritability, mood swings, lack of sleep, aggressive behaviour, loss of appetite and petitious behaviour.

Sources: www.samhsa.gov/www.health.org
The report is available at:
www.oas.samhsa.gov.



ECAD 13-th Annual Mayors Conference
Vilnius, Lithuania
June 1-2, 2006
First Announcement!
COMBATING DRUGS – A WORLD CHALLENGE

★ **NEW MEMBER!**

**Wellcome,
Izberbash,
Dagestan!**

*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 **common politics**.*



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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