



UNODC: alert for European cocaine consumption

Washington, June 26 2006 (UNODC) - Cocaine consumption in Western Europe is reaching alarming levels while opium production in Afghanistan could rise again this year despite a welcome decline in 2005, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), Antonio Maria Costa, said.

UNODC's 2006 "World Drug Report" showed global opium production fell five percent in 2005 while cocaine production was broadly stable. Seizures of both drugs, especially cocaine, reached record highs. Consumption of cannabis, the most widely used illicit drug, continued to increase while the market for amphetamine-type stimulants stabilised. Africa is growing in importance for trans-shipments of cocaine and heroin to Europe.

Presenting the *World Drug Report* at the National Press Club in Washington, the UNODC Executive Director said trends in the global drugs market were moving in the right direction but governments needed to step up their efforts to reduce both supply and demand.

"Drug control is working and the world drug problem is being contained," he said.

"This is true whether we look over the long term or even just over the past few years. Humanity has entered the 21st century with much lower levels of drug cultivation and drug addiction than 100 years earlier. Even more importantly, in the past few years, worldwide efforts to reduce the threat posed by illicit drugs have halted a quarter-century-long rise in drug abuse that, if left unchecked, could have become a global pan-

demic."

Laos, which until the mid-1990s was the third largest illicit opium producer in the world, slashed opium cultivation by 72 percent last year and is on the verge of becoming opium-free.

"Laos has made spectacular progress which has not received the attention it deserves," Mr Costa said. However, the UNODC head highlighted three key weaknesses in the global drug control situation: heroin supply in Afghanistan, cocaine demand in Europe and cannabis supply/demand everywhere.

In Afghanistan, the world's largest opium producer, the area under opium poppy cultivation fell 21 per cent to 104,000 hectares in 2005, the first such decline since 2001. "Afghanistan's drug situation remains vulnerable to reversal because of mass poverty, lack of security and the fact that the authorities have inadequate control over its territory," Mr Costa warned. "This could happen as early as 2006 despite large-scale eradication of opium crops this spring."

Some encouraging trends were noted on the *coca/cocaine* market. Coca cultivation and cocaine production were broadly stable while seizures of cocaine rose to new highs. Global cocaine use declined slightly.

"Demand for cocaine is rising in western Europe to alarming levels," Mr Costa said. "I urge European Union governments not to ignore this peril. Too many professional, educated Europeans use cocaine, often denying their addiction, and ..."



Antonio Maria Costa,
UNODC executive director

World No Drugs Day 2006: Europe's commitment to fight drugs and help addicts

On the occasion of the UN's International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, Franco Frattini, Vice President of the European Commission responsible for Justice, Freedom and Security, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, Commissioner for External Relations and Markos Kyprianou, Commissioner for Health and Consumer protection stressed the European Commission's commitment to international efforts to fight against drugs, support third countries through common projects and address the health dimension of drugs addiction. In the EU, over 8000 people, mainly young men in their 20s and 30s, die of a drugs overdose each year. Estimates for the total number of drugs-related deaths are thought to be as much as three times higher due to under-reporting of deaths and deaths indirectly linked to drug use due to AIDS, violence, accidents and suicide.

The EU response to these worrying trends is to develop sensible and effective European responses to reduce both demand and supply, using all means at its disposal.

"The cornerstone of the EU's drugs strategy is a balanced approach between prevention, education and treatment

on the one hand, and the vigorous enforcement of laws against drugs production and trafficking on the other," said Vice President Frattini. "This balance between public health

and law enforcement reflects the balance between peoples' rights and public safety. Within our policy, close cooperation with partners of civil society is a key to success. My objective for the coming months is to bring civil society organisations more closely into the policy process at EU level."



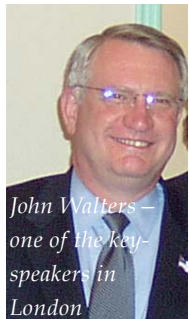
Mr. Franco Frattini

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In the light of the upcoming UNGASS in 2008

"The future drug policy" – was the title for London international conference in the beginning of August. Drug-Free America – the foundation that stood for the arrangement of the conference together with many other organizations while ECAD was one of the sponsors of the event – has



John Walters – one of the key-speakers in London

launched the upcoming UN drug Session *de facto*. INCB president Hamid Ghodse put himself a question about the fulfilment of the commitments made in 1998 by the nations of the world, and the results that were achieved during the past 10 years.

To say simply that many things have become better and some conditions deteriorated, would not be any satisfactory answer to this question, remarked Mr. Ghodse.

He wondered in fact, if the drug policy should be viewed in such a short perspective. It is not a widely known truth today

that only a hundred years ago opium production was 6 times bigger despite the fact that the number of human beings on earth comprised only one sixth of the present figure. Many of those who take part in the drug debate consider certain anti-drug measures a novelty, while these are actually more than hundred years old. When some countries and cities introduce injection rooms trying to be modern and innovative, they only copy the opium holes that were operating in China, for example, and were one of the reasons the nations of the worlds joined their forces to create the UN drug Conventions.

So, when will the Special Session of UN General Assembly start?

One of the proposals was to postpone the event a little, so that it would coincide with 100-years anniversary of the first international drug conference in Shanghai in 1909.

We have all the reasons in the world today to keep our history in mind, particularly when it comes to the fight against drugs.

Genes and drug abuse

A Norwegian study on the role of genes in illicit drug use in countries with low level of drug abuse shows extremely interesting results, according to the media agency Reuters. The chief of the study, Dr. Kenneth S. Kendler points out that earlier studies of this kind were conducted in countries with high level drug abuse, like Australia or USA. (Dr. Kendler works for the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond.)

A previous presumption in this field of studies was that in countries with low level of drug problems "social rather than genetics factors should prove to be most important. Our results do not support that hypothesis".

The results of the study conducted on 1 386 young Norwegian pairs of twins about their experience of using marijuana, stimulants, opiates, cocaine and psychedelics bear out that "individuals differ in their risk for drug abuse" and "that this difference is rather strongly influenced by genetic factors".

Another finding of this study gives evidence to the idea that identical twins are more inclined to both take illicit drugs and both get a diagnosis of psychoactive substance use disorder than fraternal twins.

The difference between fraternal and identical twins is that the latter share the same genes after the same egg split after fertilisation. Fraternal twins have their genes different from each other, just like the genes of regular non-twin siblings.

Dr. Kendler spoke about the study all in all in a press release: "In addition to prior findings, the results of this investigation indicate that genetic factors are likely to be important risk factors for psychoactive drug use and misuse in many parts of the world."

According to the "Psychological Medicine" journal, the conclusions of the study assume that genetic possibilities to inherit "drug abuse problems" range from 58 to 81%.

Source: Reuters.com



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SAMHSA: outpatient treatment - new publication package

A structured approach for treating adults who abuse or are dependent on methamphetamine or cocaine is outlined in the new publications package Matrix Intensive Outpatient Treatment for People with Stimulant Use Disorders (IOP) released today by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).

The Matrix IOP Model is a comprehensive package that provides substance abuse treatment professionals with a yearlong intensive outpatient model for clients and their families: 16 weeks of structured programming and 36 weeks of continuing care. Clients receive information, assistance in structuring a substance-free lifestyle, and support to achieve and maintain abstinence from drugs and alcohol. The program specifically focuses on clients who are dependent on methamphetamine and cocaine and their families. The Matrix IOP package includes:

- Counsellor's treatment manual;
- Counsellor's family education manual
- CD-Rom that accompanies the counsellor's family education manual
- Client's handbook
- Client's treatment companion

The Matrix IOP model familiarizes clients with 12-step programs and other support groups, teaches clients time management and scheduling skills and entails conducting regular drug and breath-alcohol testing. The approach followed in the treatment package was developed by the Matrix Institute in Los Angeles and adapted by SAMHSA's Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. The treatment approach presented in this publication is evidence-based and was tested and evaluated during the SAMHSA/CSAT-sponsored Methamphetamine Treatment Project. /Copies of the publication package are available free of charge at ncadi.samhsa.gov

 NEW ECAD MEMBER



ECAD welcomes
the City of
Petrozavodsk!

"Life Without Drugs" — ECAD youth project contest in Riga

One of the most progressive and significant tendencies of drug prevention nowadays is the involvement of youth in the prevention activities. ECAD representative office in Riga has organised competition "Life without drugs" for secondary school students for the second time this year. The main goal of the project contest was to involve the students in the brainstorming of anti-drug project ideas to stimulate their understanding of European and Latvian anti-narcotic policy, to help them obtain a firm conviction about the harm that drugs bring about.

One of the aims was also to motivate the young to search for some new solutions to improve drug abuse prevention more efficiently.

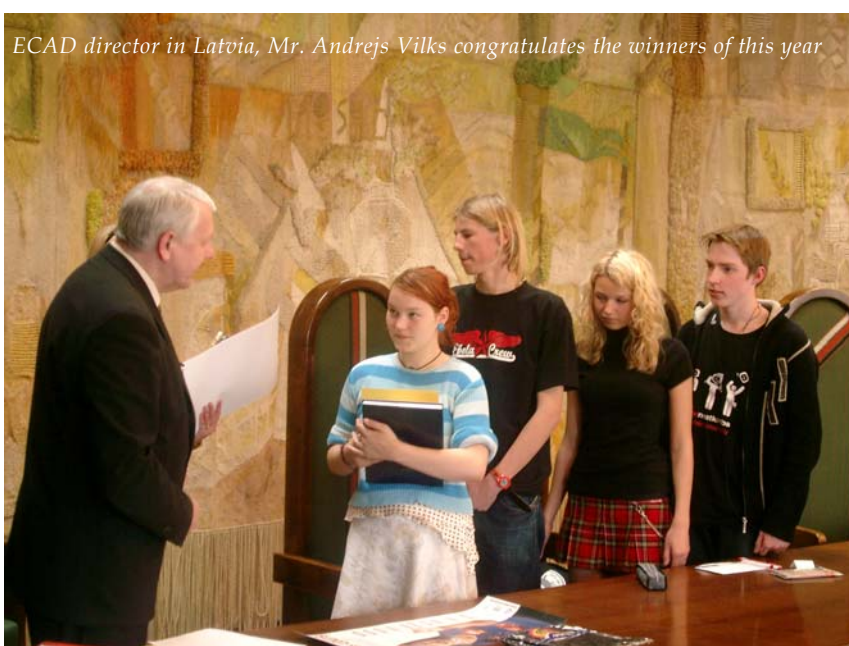
This year the project contest proceeded from January until May, the contestants went through three rounds.

The first round implicated preparing answers and suggestions to seven questions concerning the very essence of the anti-drug policy, ECAD working strategies and its prevention activities in Latvia. The suggestions to work

out, with regard to drug abuse prevention, had to be applicable on the local level, taking into account one certain region and school.

Answers and suggestions were analyzed and evaluated, giving the best idea initiators to get into the second round. There the contestants had to write a script for anti-drug video advertisement. Video clips were demonstrated at schools and those considered the most successful could pass on to participate in the full-time contest.

The jury consistent of qualified specialists from Riga Addiction Treatment Centre as well as the leaders of Riga anti-drug youth movement assessed the homework of every competing team, also their presentations, attractive tests, dumb shows and quizzes.



ECAD director in Latvia, Mr. Andrejs Vilks congratulates the winners of this year

The winners of this very intense competition became the students of Riga 4th Secondary School.

One of the obvious benefits of this contest was that former project winners, Zane Legzdina and Marina Schukina were actively involved organising and managing the contest.

The prize for the winners was a ferry trip to Stockholm. ECAD Office in Riga warmly thanks its cooperation partner - ferry line "Tallinnlink" and its crew in charge - for their help in organising the event.

Andrejs Vilks, ECAD Regional director in Riga

Alternative help to addicts

A new, 50% more successful drug and alcohol treatment programme was introduced at the Borders` hospital in the UK. Castle Craig Hospital set under the trial new complementary feature to the 12-step total abstinence programme - communication with horses, reports BBC News.

The treatment implies that patients learn how to communicate with horses

and is called equine-assisted psychotherapy. Drug addicts and alcoholics in their past, they perform simple tasks if they are capable of communicating with horses.

Hospital chairman, Peter McCann points out the success rate of the programme despite its high costs in the short run.

This innovative programme is also of help for the addicts to be aware of the necessity for the long-term treatment.

Source: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/south_of_scotland/5293408.stm

Cannabis decriminalization wreaking havoc in Britain

Sunday newspaper "News of the World" has recently revealed a sensational piece of news coming from a secret report by British Prime minister's own 10 Strategy Unit.

The report delivers confidential results of categorizing cannabis as a "soft" drug.

Cannabis decriminalization means this drug becoming a - "spring-board" to abusing dan-

gerous drugs such as crack-cocaine and heroin, according to the source. Tony Blair's Strategy Unit reports:

"...The vast majority of local drug dealers will use cannabis as an easy way of making money and increasing their client base".

General situation with hard drug abuse in the streets has deteriorated a lot. Drug dealers, as stated by own investigators of "The News of the World", who confirm the results of this confidential report; have been offering harder drugs to those in the streets who

bought cannabis from them. Significantly, the number of this "soft" drug users has increased by one fifth compared to the number of 1997 (it reached £ 3,5 million).

Yet the government maintains its drug policy course, enlightening the public about the dangers of cannabis and dissuading people from using it. Despite this reticent attitude the Strategy Unit states as follows:

"...Far more drugs are used now than in the past. The supply market is highly sophisticated and attempts to intervene have not resulted in sustainable disruption to the market at any level".

"News of the world" also points out that "260, 000 heroin addicts in Britain spend £ 4 billion a year and cause £16 billion of crime".

Source: http://reageramera.blogg.se/www.newsoftheworld.co.uk/story_pages/news/news3.shtml

★ MORE RESEARCH!

UNODC: alert for European cocaine consumption

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"...and drug abuse by celebrities is often presented uncritically by the media, leaving young people confused and vulnerable."

After years of increases in the 1990s, the market for *amphetamine-type stimulants* (ATS) is stabilizing, reflecting improved law enforcement and better precursor control. Some 25 million people used amphetamines at least once in 2004, while some 10 million used ecstasy. Total ATS production was estimated at 480 tons in 2004, which is lower than the peak in 2000.

The U.S. authorities again dismantled the largest number of illegal methamphetamine laboratories - over 17,000 in 2004, more than 90 percent of the global total. While abuse of methamphetamine remained stable or declined among secondary students over the last few years, treatment demand for methamphetamine abuse in the United States has grown dramatically.

Many countries have the drug problem they deserve

The 2006 *World Drug Report* devotes special attention to *cannabis*, the world's most abused illicit drug. Cannabis was used by an estimated 162 million people at least once in 2004, equivalent to some four per cent of the global population age 15-64, and consumption continued to increase.

The UNODC Executive Director warned that cannabis was now considerably more potent than a few decades ago and said it was a mistake to dismiss it as a "soft" and relatively harmless drug. Evidence that

cannabis use can cause serious mental illness is mounting.

"Today, the harmful characteristics of cannabis are no longer that different from those of other plant-based drugs such as cocaine and heroin," Mr Costa said. "National policies on cannabis vary and sometimes change from one year to the next," he added.

"With cannabis-related health damage increasing, it is fundamentally wrong for countries to make cannabis control dependent on which party is in government. Policy reversals leave young people confused as to just how dangerous cannabis is. The cannabis pandemic, like other challenges to public health, requires consensus, a consistent commitment across the political spectrum and by society at large."

"After so many years of drug control experience, we now know that a coherent, long-term strategy *can* reduce drug supply, demand and trafficking," Mr Costa concluded. "If this does not happen, it will be because some nations fail to take the drug issue sufficiently seriously and pursue inadequate policies. Many countries have the drug problem they deserve."

By: www.emcdda.eu.int

World No Drugs Day 2006

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"...International cooperation and shared responsibility are key principles of our policy", said Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner. "As major donors, we help countries outside the EU where drugs are cultivated to offer new routes out of poverty and strengthen their ability to provide alternatives to drug crops. We also help other third countries to improve their efforts to reduce drug use and limit the health and social harm from drug use".

EU assistance to third countries in the fight against drugs has almost doubled in the 3 last years. Projects implemented by the Member States and the European Commission in third countries amounted to over 500 millions in 2005, focussing on Afghanistan and Latin America, where support is given to alternative development projects to reduce coca production in the Andean region.

In the two first years of the present EU Public Health Programme, over 4.1 million Euro were spent directly on drugs related projects. Priority is given to projects dealing with harm reduction, joint prevention programmes and best practices in drug treatment and social reintegration.

Between 3 and 3.5 million people have tried cocaine last year and 1.5 million are classified as regular users. 12 million people take cannabis, of whom 3 million take it on a more or less daily basis.

Ecstasy, produced in Europe, is now the second most common drug after cannabis.

According to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), in some Member States up to 8 % of young people take it on a regular basis. Systematic and intensive mixing of drugs, often with alcohol and medicines is a growing problem and difficult to treat.

By: <http://ec.europa.eu/comm/external>

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