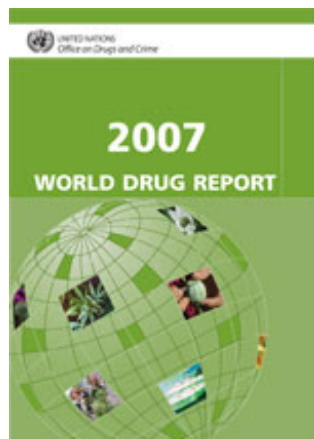




# UNODC: World Drug Report 2007



UN Drug agency reports "significant and positive changes" in world drug markets.

Countries urged to provide greater health care to drug addicts.

Vienna, UNODC (Press Release) - Whereas a few years ago the world appeared to be heading for an epidemic of drug abuse, growing evidence suggests that the problem is being brought under control, the Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime,

Antonio Maria Costa said.

"Recent data show that the run-away train of drug addiction has slowed down," he said in a statement marking the launch of UNODC's 2007 World Drug Report.

The Report shows global markets for illicit drugs remained largely stable in 2005-06. "For almost all drugs - cocaine, heroin, cannabis and amphetamines - there are signs of overall stability, whether we speak of production, trafficking or consumption," Mr Costa said.

**Coca cultivation** in the Andes continues to decline and global cocaine consumption has stabilised, although the reduction in the United States is offset by alarming increases in Europe.

The market for **amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS)** such as ecstasy has also been contained, with levels of production and abuse stable in many countries. For the first time in decades, global statistics do not show an increase in world production and consumption of cannabis. "The much greater number of pot smokers seeking treatment shows that the new strains of high-potency cannabis make people sick, not just high," the UNODC Executive Director said.

While there are growing signs that both the **supply of and demand for drugs** are broadly stable and greater efforts are being made to reduce the harm they cause, the situation could easily deteriorate again. "We cannot take our foot off the brake. Drug prevention and effective health care for addicts remain vital," Mr Costa said.

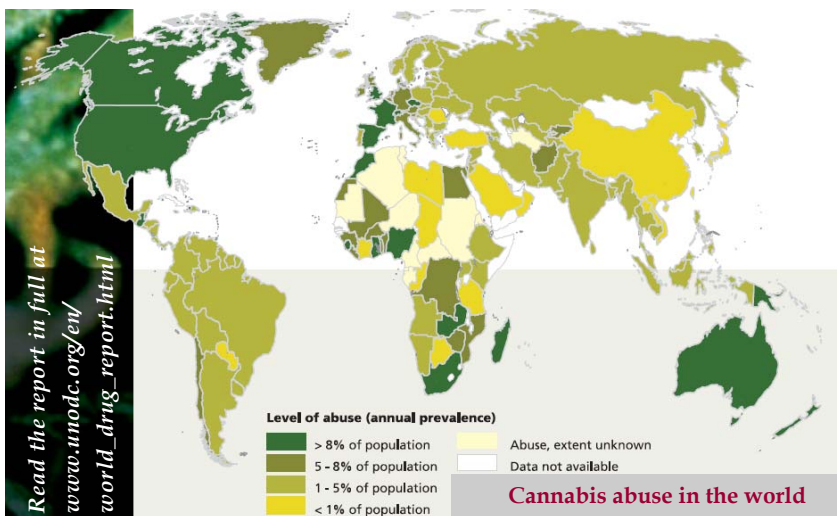
**Opium production** in Afghanistan remains a major problem: cultivation increased dramatically in 2006, offsetting remarkable successes in eliminating other sources of opium supply, especially in South-East Asia. "In Afghanistan opium is a security issue, more than a drug

issue," said the UN's drugs chief.

Globally, coordinated drug law enforcement has driven up the volumes of drug seizures. More than 45 percent of the cocaine produced in the world is now being intercepted (up from 24% in 1999) and more than a quarter of all heroin (against 15% in 1999).

Traffickers are seeking new routes, for example through Africa. "Africa is under attack, targeted by cocaine traffickers from the West (Colombia) and heroin smugglers in the East (Afgha-

*UN Executive Director urges the world to change the way it looks at the drugs problem and focus as much as on defending people's health as on destroying illicit crops and criminal networks.*



nistan)," Mr Costa said.

Seizing **cannabis and ATS** is proving difficult because of short supply routes. "Police should be on the look out for drug labs and indoor cannabis plantations, even in the middle of wealthy cities," Mr Costa warned.

If the drug problem is to be reduced in the longer term, there must be more preventive interventions and the problem must be treated at its source - the drug users. "The lives of at least one out of every 200 people in the world are ruled by drugs," Mr Costa said. Mr Costa urged the world to change the way it looks at the drugs problem and focus as much on defending people's health as on destroying illicit crops and criminal networks. This is a shared responsibility: internationally - between producing and consuming states; regionally - among neighbouring countries; and nationally - among all sectors of society.

# Cannabis reclassifying? 50 experts warn about health risks

Picture: <http://jinge.se>



**Cannabis and its most active sort called skunk has now been confirmed by over 50 world experts on drugs and mental health to put one's**

**health at risk and increase vulnerability to psychosis and schizophrenia.**

**British government has recently announced results of the survey that could set cannabis for reclassification and introduce harder penalties for the possession of the drug.**

**British newspaper Independent took the heed of this new course of the events:**

"Launching the three-month consultation, Jacqui Smith, the Home Secretary, said: "Government must remain responsive – alive to new evidence, feedback and trends."

Health ministry sources said that new medical evidence about the link between cannabis and mental illness, reported first in this newspaper, would form "a key part of the evidence" that the Government will consider.

It will also examine a new study published in *The Lancet* last week, which said that cannabis users increased their risk of suffering psychotic episodes by some 40 per cent. The findings by the team at Bristol and Cardiff Universities, led by Dr Stanley Zammit, said

Inquiries by the IoS have drawn warnings from a wide range of organisations, such as the Royal College of Psychiatrists, and specialists.

They include Professor Colin Drummond, addiction psychiatry and consultant psychiatrist at St George's Hospital, London, Professor Yasmin Hurd, from the department of psychiatry and pharmacology at New York's prestigious Mount Sinai School of Medicine, Dr Andrew Johns, consultant forensic psychiatrist, at the Maudsley Hospital in London, and Dr Raj Persaud, Gresham Professor for Public Understanding of Psychiatry.

that some 14 per cent of psychotic episodes among young people could be prevented if they avoided the drug.

The drug destroys lives by causing or precipitating psychosis in the vulnerable, argued Dr Persaud.

"Just a little cannabis, if you have the wrong genetic make-up, will precipitate psychosis," he argues. "Many in my experience commit suicide secondary to psychosis brought on by cannabis, so it is lethal."

*Reports of stabbings, murders and suicides caused by psychotic delusions after smoking cannabis have flooded the press in recent months.*

*Perhaps most worryingly, it is Britain's teenagers who are most at risk due to the drug's effects on the developing brain, warn leading experts.*

"Young people who otherwise would have been very unlikely to develop psychosis will, as a result of their early cannabis use, be affected by a life-long and severely disabling mental illness that will markedly narrow their life choices and quality of life," said Professor Drummond.

More than 22,000 people needed treatment for cannabis use in Britain last year. It was after publishing these figures that this newspaper revised its stance, abandoning all previous calls for legalisation of the drug. The decision has been praised by many, including Professor **Hamid Ghodse**, the director of the International Centre for Drug Policy, who said:

*"The risks of cannabis have been overlooked for many years no. I'm glad your paper is making the public aware of the dangers. Cannabis is not the harmless drug which many people may have believed."*

The main problem, according to medical authorities, is that it is impossible to predict with certainty people who might be vulnerable to psychosis and schizophrenia, aside from those with a family history of such problems.

**Professor Hurd said:** "Cannabis is a dangerous drug, in particular for the developing brain and for individuals with underlying psychiatric disorders."

**Dr Mike McPhillips**, the consultant psychiatrist runs the addiction unit at The Priory. He says that they are now seeing new patients on a monthly basis whose psychosis has been triggered by cannabis. "Ten years ago we'd hardly ever get a patient coming in for cannabis addiction but it is not uncommon now. The age at which people start taking the drug is a real concern. This drug is everywhere and very young children are experimenting with this as their first drug ..."

**Dr Linda Harris**, clinical director of the substance misuse unit at the Royal College of General Practitioners, said: "From a mental health perspective we do need to look at the reasons behind a society that's drifting towards depressing and anxiety – cannabis could be a factor in this."

The medical profession is not alone in worrying about the possible long-term damage to the country's estimated 2 million cannabis users. Teachers are concerned that the casual acceptance of cannabis will result in an epidemic of children having problems at school.



## STILL CONTROVERSIAL?

Anthony Seldon, the head of Wellington College, says the drug is "wrecking lives" and describes it as "pernicious". He is among those that think the decision to reclassify cannabis from a Class B to a Class C drug was a mistake and should be reviewed. "The message must be total prohibition," he said.

Nevertheless, despite the mounting evidence that cannabis use causes mental health problems – including *The Lancet's* publication last week – not everyone believes skunk poses long term health risks.

**Dame Ruth Runciman**, the chair of UK Drug Policy Centre who set in motion the downgrading of cannabis, disputes(...): "There is indubitably some skunk that is stronger about the place, but the evidence has been hugely exaggerated and does not support such an alarmist view... Cannabis as Class C is exactly where it should be."

Source: <http://reageramera.blogg.se>;  
By Jonathan Owen and Suzi Mesure  
for *Independent*, July 29, 2007

# International Day against Drug Abuse

As we mark International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, there is some grounds for optimism that the run-away train of drug addiction is being slowed down. The 2007 *World Drug Report* issued today by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) provides further evidence that the world drug problem is being controlled. For almost every kind of illicit drug – cocaine, heroin, cannabis and amphetamine-type stimulants – there are signs of overall stability, whether we speak of cultivation, production or abuse.



Some obvious problems remain, like opium in the South of Afghanistan – a cancer that threatens security and health and breeds corruption. Furthermore, progress made in some countries is being offset by negative trends elsewhere. It is also hard to be conclusive about the drug situation in some of the world's biggest and fastest growing countries because of a lack of data. Nevertheless, from a global perspective, the problem seems to be contained. In the past few years, the world drug situation has stabilized.

This does not mean that the drug problem has been solved or that we can become complacent. Drugs remain a deadly form of addiction, pose a real danger to security and health, and are ruining the lives of millions of people worldwide. There is still much work to be done.

Since we should not take our foot off the brake, I encourage you to use the occasion of this day to impress upon your governments, your family, friends and co-workers the need to continue to push back against drugs.

Further support is needed to reduce the vulnerability of farmers to the temptation of illicit incomes. Further improvements are needed in drug law enforcement – particularly through regional cooperation – to stop the drug producers and traffickers.

But even if the entire supply of drugs could be eliminated at the source and seized along trafficking routes, there would still be millions drug addicts looking for a way to satisfy their addiction. Therefore, the highest priorities in the fight against drugs should be prevention, helping people free themselves from drug dependence, and getting them back into society.

It is encouraging to see a growing realization that drug addiction is an illness that can be prevented and treated. More investment is needed. This is an investment in the health of our societies as much as treating HIV, diabetes or tuberculosis.

/By [www.unodc.org](http://www.unodc.org)

## Types of drugs under international control

UNODC and its campaign only focus on drugs subject to control, as specified in the three multilateral drug treaties that form the backbone of the international drug control system. These illicit drugs include amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS), coca/cocaine, cannabis, hallucinogens, opiates, and sedative hypnotics.

Nearly 200 million people are using these drugs worldwide. Cannabis -marihuana, hashish, THC- leads by far with 162 million users. ATS -amphetamine, methamphetamine, ecstasy, methcathinone - follow with 35 million users. Globally, an estimated 16 million people use opiates -opium, morphine, heroin, synthetic opiates- and some 13 million people use cocaine.

Cocaine use in Western Europe is of particular concern, where consumption is reaching alarming levels. Cannabis, which is grown and used all over the world, is changing. The drug's potency has increased in recent years, and there are indications that cannabis-related mental health risks may have been underestimated. Opiate use levels along the trafficking routes originating from Afghanistan, the world's top opium producer, are the highest anywhere. ATS use in Asia is also a problem.

/Source: [www.unodc.org](http://www.unodc.org)

The slogan of the UNODC anti-drugs campaign launched on 26 June, the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, was "Do drugs control your life? Your life. Your community. No place for drugs." The slogan will be used for three years and focus on different aspects of drug control: drug abuse in 2007, drug cultivation and production in 2008, and illicit drug trafficking in 2009.

With this campaign, UNODC aims to raise awareness of the major problem that illicit drugs represent to society. No individual, family or community is safe where illicit drugs take control. Drugs may control the body and mind of individual consumers, the drug crop and drug cartels may control farmers, illicit trafficking and crime may control communities.

The campaign's goal is to inspire people and mobilize support for drug control.

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## Skunk: the drug at the centre of the controversy

Cannabis is more potent than ever, with Britain producing increasing quantities of home-grown, hydroponic marijuana or skunk. This very strong, force-grown form of cannabis is known for its powerful smell – hence its name – and its enhanced effects on the mind of the user. It is often grown in nutrient-rich water under strong lights to produce far more tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) – the mind-altering compound that gets users high – than regular cannabis, making it many times stronger than conventional "grass" or resin. /Independent, 29-07-07

# Addicts abusing controversial injecting rooms



Injecting room in Oslo

Drug addicts using the controversial Kings Cross injecting room in Australia are taking advantage of the safe environment to test their tolerance to higher doses of heroin and other cocktails of dangerous illicit drugs. The claims were made during interviews with the peak body Drug Free Australia and were repeated in Parliament by Christian Democratic Party MLC Reverend Gordon Moyes during debate over a possible four-year extension of the injecting room.

Mr. Moyes told the Upper House the injecting room "has encouraged (users) . . . to try wilder mixes of drugs" after he read aloud a transcript of a recorded conversation between Drug Free Australia secretary Gary Christian and a former injecting room client.

During the interview, the man claimed there was widespread dangerous mixing of heroin and pills including

Benzodiazepene, Normasin, Oxycodone and Xanax.

Drug Free Australia had sought answers as to why the injecting room had "massive" numbers of heroin overdoses, measured between 36 and 42 times higher than normal rates of overdose in the community.

"In 2003 our expert committee analyzing injecting room data found that clients of the injecting room were recording a prior history of one overdose for every 4380 injections on average in their intake questionnaire," Mr. Christian said.

"But inside the injecting room, there was an extraordinary one overdose for every 106 injections, 42 times higher than the client's previous history."

The former injecting room client said the rife experimentation was done behind workers' backs.

Mr. Moyes told Parliament a second former client revealed users were using the safety of the room "to get the biggest rush they can, even if there is the risk of overdose". /By: Australian Daily Telegraph

## Dutch drug news

### CLOSE DOWN OF COFFEE SHOPS

The city of Rotterdam wants to close down 27 coffee shops in the neighbourhood of schools, there are now 63 coffee shops in total.

Mr. Ivo Opstelten, Mayor of the city of Rotterdam, wants a review of the old policy concerning coffee shops because there is an increase of cannabis usage at schools.

From 2009 on no coffee shops will be allowed within a radius of 200 meters of schools. The measure will not apply for primary schools, because there is no cannabis use there. The branch of cannabis entrepreneurs argues there is no scientific survey of a connection between drugs usage and the distance to schools.

## Italy: Drug-awareness among adults is high

A national poll run by *Osservatorio Droga* studied adult Italian population's knowledge of drugs, the data was collected in March 2007. Here come some heartening results:

Over 80% of Italians (those with children) stated that they discuss the dangers of using drugs "with their families". This willingness to face the problem is not uniformly true of the entire country, however, and it is not equally pervasive among all families.

They discuss the matter more in the North East and Central Italy, above all in big cities.

People talk more in families where parents

have a high school diploma or a university degree. In the north-western regions (Veneto, Emilia, Romagna) and in the South people tend to talk less about this issue.

The researchers underline that in families with parents over 45 years old, which therefore presumably have older children, the tendency is to discuss the problem more frequently, as compared to the families where parents are about 30 years old and presumably have very young children.

It is interesting to note that in segments of the population that tend to discuss drugs

and their effects more, we find a greater percentage of people who think they are very or quite well informed about the matter. Indeed, most requests for further information about the consequences of drug use come from the northwestern and central regions.

In northeastern regions and in the South we found a lower level of knowledge of the phenomenon, particularly in the lower echelons of the population who have lower educational qualifications and higher levels of unemployment.

Source: [www.osservatoriodroga.it](http://www.osservatoriodroga.it)



**ECAD** is Europe's leading organization promoting a drug free Europe and representing millions of European citizens.

ECAD member cities work to develop initiatives against drug abuse supporting the United Nations Conventions.

**Has your city joined ECAD?**

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