



WORLD FORUM  
AGAINST DRUGS

## World Forum Against Drugs

Stockholm 8-10 September 2008

STOCKHOLM '08

The first international conference gathering people from all over the world who work against narcotic drugs at grass root level - professionals and activists, NGO:s and decision makers, researchers and artists, entre-

preneurs, self-help groups and rehabilitation clinics, and others who want to reduce drug abuse and illegal drug trafficking.  
2007 the youngest person ever to be elected The Young Australian of the Year;  
• **Alejandro Vassilaqui**, Peru, executive director of CEDRO, Center of Information and Education for Drug Abuse Prevention in Peru

[www.wfad08.org](http://www.wfad08.org)

Information  
News  
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During three days you can attend plenary sessions, workshops, presentations and debates. Get updated on research, network and discuss important issues. NGO:s and other participants are also being given the opportunity to present their work in a global context. The international and Swedish movement of self-help groups will play a prominent part throughout the conference.

• **Christina Oguz**, Sweden, head of the UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime) in Kabul, Afghanistan

### The Conference is arranged by

- The Swedish temperance organization
- Swedish National Association for a Drug-free Society
- Swedish Council on Alcohol and Drugs
- Swedish Immigrants Against Drugs
- Criminals Return into Society
- The Swedish Good Templar Youth Organization
- The National Swedish Parents Anti-Narcotics Association
- European Cities Against Drugs
- The Educational Association of the Sobriety Movement
- The Contract Concept
- Hela Människan - Social work from a Christian Standpoint

### INVITED SPEAKERS, AMONGST OTHERS:

#### H. M. Queen of Sweden

- **Antonio Maria Costa**, Italy, Executive Director of the UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime);
- **Robert L. DuPont**, USA, psychiatrist, former Director General of National Institute of Drug Abuse in the USA and runs The Institute for Behaviour and Health Inc.;
- **Tania Major**, Australia, criminologist, working with indigenous youth and was in

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## The Haag Resolution to Attack UN Conventions

Reaction against the Dutch cannabis market is strong nationally as well as internationally. At the same time as there is a growing discontent with the ways cannabis is dealt with on national level, something close to desperation spreads among the advocates for legalisation and regulation of cannabis market.

The latter is highly relevant in light of coming UNGASS 2009 in Vienna.

” There is a shared responsibility to look for adaptations in the current system of international conventions that are an obstacle to further developments in national Dutch cannabis policies.”

The Haag Resolution from October 2007

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## ★ DISCUSSION

## Methadone Kills More Than Heroin

According to [www.independent.ie](http://www.independent.ie), the drug substitute methadone is leading to the deaths of more addicts than heroin.

” There are approximately 9,200 people on methadone maintenance programmes in Dublin city alone and only 23 residential detoxification beds are available in the entire country for those who want to get off drugs completely.”

Marie Byrne  
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# World Forum Against Drugs

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## MAIN OBJECTIVE

- To strengthen the popular resistance against drug abuse and illegal drug traffic, referring to UN Conventions on Narcotic Drugs (1961, 1977 and 1988) and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, article 33.

- To spread the information about how a restrictive legislation on drugs can prevent and reduce the abuse of narcotic drugs, referring to a resolution from the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Drugs (UNGASS) 1998, in practice signed by all states of the world.

- To counteract the resignation many parts of the world are facing when it comes to drug abuse and drug trafficking.



Photo [www.wfad08.org](http://www.wfad08.org)

- To initiate a global network that supports the UN Conventions on Narcotic Drugs. One of the tasks of the network will be to arrange World Forum Against Drugs in different parts of the World recurrently.

For decades Sweden has had a successful restrictive legislation on drugs with a broad public

support. The Swedish drug policy has throughout the years drawn international attention, recently in a report of the UNODC.

In comparison to many other countries the drug problems in Sweden are limited. This is one of the reasons why Stockholm, the capital of Sweden, will host the first conference of World Forum Against Drugs.

## Supervised injection rooms come with their own set of dilemmas

*An evaluation made by the Norwegian Institute for Alcohol and Drug Research (SIRUS) have found many weak points in the running of the public injecting room in Oslo. The preparations before the start of the pilot project were insufficient and the staff had to work under a big pressure.*

In December 2004, the Norwegian Parliament sanctioned the scheme for a public injecting room. Oslo City Council opened the facility, located in the centre of the city, already on February 1, 2005. SIRUS was asked to evaluate its work.

The evaluation does not express any opinion whether the scheme should become a permanent fixture. It focuses mainly on the difficulties the staff had to face during the test period. Authors criticise the fact that the project started without the necessary preparations. Personal training was inadequate and the premises were below the standards required in the regulations. After an initial period of enthusiasm, poor physical and psycho-social working conditions resulted in high levels of sick leave absence and resignations.

The clients were allowed to bring one heroin dose onto the premises. This was respected by the police. Impunity has had an unintended side effect however, in that possession of small quantities of heroin was decriminalised in the centre of Oslo.

The objectives of the scheme were among others to help heavy drug abusers to build a

sense of self-esteem (dignity), to facilitate contact between the social and health services and drug abusers, to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, and to reduce overdose rates.

There is no evidence that the scheme has caused a reduction in overdose rates. Contacts with health care, besides supervising an injection, have not increased either. Though, many clients were given practical advice on the best way of administering an injection.

Even if the evaluation points out the difficulty to operationalize the concept of dignity, the authors conclude that the injection room has had a positive effect on the dignity of the clients. This is, if for no other reason than by acknowledging the need to inject drugs in a risk free environment as possible.

The evaluation sheds the light on many dilemmas that come with the injecting rooms. Among other issues, the authors point out that by running an injection facility, the authorities may indirectly be seen as condoning drug use. A more practical question can be why the only drug clients may inject is heroin and why the trial only allows the drug to be injected and not smoked?

The staff may also face a dilemma since according to the Health Personnel Act they are obliged to notify responsible authorities if clients are pregnant or if clients have been driving while impaired by drugs/alcohol. This may cause the risk of alienating the client.

The UN has earlier criticized Norway for

the pilot project with public injecting room.

You can read the summary in English on [www.sirus.no/internett/narkotika/publication/397.html](http://www.sirus.no/internett/narkotika/publication/397.html)

### Briefly:

Cannabis is expected to be reclassified as a class B drug as part of Gordon Brown's drive to show Labour's softer line on some drug use is over, it was reported. He ordered a review by the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs. Whitehall sources have confirmed even if the advisory council's study does not give him full support, he is likely to instruct Jacqui Smith, the Home Secretary, to override the recommendation and go ahead with reclassification to class B. Miss Smith is not due to receive the report until March.

 **NEW MEMBER**



*ECAD welcomes  
Linköping, Sweden!*

*The city of 140,000  
inhabitants*

# The Dutch to Attack UN Conventions on Drugs: The Haag Resolution October 2007

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<Commentary> and "the plain text explanations" made by Torgny Peterson, Member of International Task force on Strategic Drug Policy, Member of The Swedish Narcotics Officers Association

On October 31, 2007 a number of politicians gathered in the Hague in order to express 'the urgent need to end the negative consequences' which, according to this group, the current cannabis policy leads to. The participants of the October meeting claim that 'many countries worldwide <though they did not name which countries> 'experienced similar negative effects related to their own cannabis policy.'

According to the participants, 'there is a shared responsibility to look for adaptations in the current system of international conventions that are an obstacle to further developments in national Dutch cannabis policies.'

The chosen strategy is to seek international support and then to attack the contents of the current UN Conventions on Drugs. There is nothing new in it. This strategy was tested in 2003 and failed thanks to understanding shown by experienced politicians and a petition initiated by the Hassela Nordic Network which resulted in about 1.3 million signatures from all the continents in support of the UN Conventions on Drugs.

Let's go back to the meeting in the Haag where the participants came to a conclusion that 'the Netherlands, in cooperation with other nations, should aim to revise the current framework of international law in order to achieve a more credible and effective alternative that is not just based on repression' ...

Based on the October discussions, the participants have drawn up a resolution which is expected to be discussed in the Dutch Parliament.

**The Resolution claims that** 'The current cannabis policy is based on an outdated international law framework created in the 1960s which is not appropriate to tackle contemporary problems resulting in a stagnation of the development of just and effective policies.'

- **Or in the plain text:** Current international agreements and ratified UN Conventions make legalisation and regulation of cannabis impossible which is not appreciated.

Further, that the current cannabis policy 'Is being implemented by a policy of tolerance on the basis of a justified lenient interpretation of the current international law framework and that this policy of tolerance is a practical solution but at the same time temporary response which on the long term will discredit the credibility of public authorities.'

- **Or in the plain text:** Since the authorities do not totally forbid the use of cannabis even if the law prescribes that, then it is better to recognise that this is the case and to regulate the practice.

The Resolution says that the current cannabis policy 'is inconsistent and difficult to explain to citizens because use and sale of small quantities are not prosecuted in practice while production and large scale distribution are still prosecuted; is also inconsistent with policies regarding substances with a similar health risk such as alcohol and tobacco.'

- **Or in the plain text:** Achieve better consistency through legalisation and regulation of trade and use. The opposite solution, namely to make all circulation of cannabis punishable is obviously not a choice for this group since their final goal does not aim at decreasing neither supply nor demand.

The Resolution calls the current cannabis policy 'ineffective in several aspects: despite positive facets such as the separation of markets between soft and hard drugs <which is a nonsense since there is no evidence that such separation of markets has really taken place despite or sooner owing to practice of so called coffee shops> and the limited involvement of criminals in the retail market <the same nonsense. According to the former Dutch Minister of Justice Piet Hein Donner, many of coffee shops owners have criminal past. This fact was manifested in two cities in 2005. In Amsterdam, 78 per cent of coffee shops owners had criminal records, according to one report, and in Venlo which is situated near the German border, as many as 83 per cent had criminal background>, other policy options such as legal possibilities to control the quality of cannabis (THC content and pollution) and other measures to reduce health risks are lacking in the current system, which is still facilitating significant illicit gains at the level of production and wholesale and is encouraging in-house cannabis growing.'

- **Or in the plain text:** Legalisation and regulation solve all problems. Verified cannabis-related harms are not mentioned, not with a single word.

The group expresses its discontent with the fact that 'attempts by the Dutch parliament and local authorities to address the inconsistencies in the current tolerance policy - such as proposing to tolerate production of cannabis for the supply of coffee shops - have been rejected by subsequent national governments on account of incompatibility with international agreements.'

As a highpoint of this "legalisation manifesto", the group expresses that 'there is a need for an international debate'. And what is the purpose with such a debate? As we learn, 'to explore the possibilities for an international framework that allows more room for manoeuvre by national governments to execute a consistent policy.'

- **Or in the plain text:** We would like to receive support in order to continue our coffee shop policy and also to legalise and regulate both supply and demand - support us, please!

And this is not all. We learn from the Resolution that 'more and more countries feel the need to reformulate their policies to achieve better protection of public health and combat organized crime.' By what means public health in these countries would be protected in a better way they do not say. The undersigned pass over in silence any negative consequences that cannabis may cause. To think that the organised crime would give up its profitable business and go over to growing carrots or other alternative crops is naive since there is nothing that would prevent such actors from being active within the frames of a legalised/regulated market, either on their own or through their dummies.

Ok then, what our ladies and gentlemen want the Dutch government to do? **Three things:**

'Start an international debate with other likeminded countries in order to work out a credible and effective alternative for the current policy on cannabis; 'Promote actively with those likeminded countries the formulation of proposals that can be presented in the context of the upcoming UNGASS evaluation; 'Provide for human and financial resources to implement these efforts.'

## Methadone kills more than heroin

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A report by the Dublin City Coroner has shown that of the 87 inquests heard in his court last year, pure heroin was found to have caused the deaths of 14 people and contributed to a further 12. However, methadone, the legal substitute used to treat those with a heroin addiction, was found to have caused the deaths of 12 people and contributed to a further 19 deaths.

The highly lucrative nature of the "methadone industry" acting as a barrier to the exploration of other therapeutic treatments for drug addiction has now been highlighted by Marie Byrne, Director of Aisling Group International. "Doctors get a payment for putting people on methadone programmes. There is huge money in the methadone industry," she says, referring to capitation fees, which are paid to doctors who participate in the Methadone Maintenance Scheme.

When contacted, the HSE did not wish to

comment in detail on the payments, saying only that "these payments could certainly not be considered commission or any form of financial incentive."

Methadone maintenance programmes appear to be the only option available through the Irish health services to heroin addicts wishing to break free of their addiction.

According to Mel MacGiobuain, coordinator of the North Inner City Local Drugs Taskforce, the period of time that a person is kept on methadone maintenance can vary. However, in his experience "there are a large amount of people on methadone for a considerable time, possibly eight to nine years in general."

Marie Byrne predicts that the adherence to methadone maintenance programmes will leave Ireland ill equipped to treat addictions to new drugs entering the market.

By [www.independent.ie](http://www.independent.ie)

## China: first anti-drug law comes into force on June 1<sup>st</sup>

Responding to the growing drug misuse problems, the law-makers in China have passed country's first anti-drug legislation which comes into force on June 1st, 2008. At present, drug crimes are considered under general criminal laws.

According to the new law,

- Owners of bars, discos, nightclubs and other entertainment facilities are obliged to inform the police about the occurrence of use of drugs;
- The police have the right to search for

drugs on people and in the luggage on bus and train stations and at the borders;

- The police are going to exchange information with other countries and improve cooperation while investigating drug-related crimes.

China has about 940,000 registered drug addicts, of which more than 740,000 were depended on heroin, the official People's Daily said on its Web site [www.people.com.cn](http://www.people.com.cn).

## Finland:

Guidelines Sought for Medical Use of Cannabis

New guidelines are to be drawn up for the medical use of cannabis. The Ministry of Social Affairs and Health wants to clarify legislation so that prescribing cannabis to sufferers of chronic pain would no longer be automatically illegal.

In Finland cannabis has been used for medicinal purposes only in isolated cases, partly because of complicated legal issues and the sensitivity of the subject. Just over a year ago the National Agency for Medicines granted its first special permission for medical cannabis for a man suffering from chronic pain stemming from a back injury.

## ★ DISCUSSION

The Agency had initially rejected the application for the use of medical cannabis prescribed by a Dutch doctor because its interpretation of the law was that prescribing cannabis was absolutely illegal in Finland. The patient appealed the case to his regional Administrative Court, which overturned the decision. The special permission, which was initially granted for one year, has now been extended for another year.

The court decision has forced the Ministry for Social Affairs and Health to clarify legislation. A few months from now changes are to be enacted to allow marijuana by prescription. Under the plan, even after the changes, medical cannabis prescriptions will require the permission of the National Agency for Medicines.

The prescription of cannabis remains a controversial issue.

*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 youngsters' well-being.*



**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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