



ECAD NEWSLETTER



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Drugs in the Culture of City Youth

15th ECAD MAYORS' CONFERENCE



15th ECAD Mayors' Conference was held in Warsaw, Poland, on 28-29 May. Near 300 delegates representing 19 countries and 59 cities and towns took part in this annual meeting of our organisation.

ECAD expresses sincere thanks to the city of Warsaw for hosting the 2008 Conference and for engaging in a great amount of preparatory work so that we were able to hear from a range of experienced and highly informed speakers. Each city puts its own stamp when hosting the annual Mayors' Conference and this year Warsaw set to make this an inspirational event.

It is clear that Warsaw has been engaged in comprehensive surveys on the attitudes of youth towards drugs. The surveys undertaken here in Warsaw and the statistics arising from such surveys will enable the public providers of services and the NGOs to design practical youth programmes which hopefully will respond in a positive way to

reducing numbers of young people who experiment with illicit drugs.

It is most encouraging to learn that there is a decrease in drug consumption among youth in Warsaw.

We in ECAD deeply appreciate the information we have learnt here in Warsaw. It is our wish to spread best practices among our member cities. I am appealing to our member cities to keep in contact with our Head office in Stockholm and to share with fellow cities the initiatives which you are engaged in so that we may all learn from one another.

The ECAD organisation has a huge resource in you - the committed well-informed people anxious to respond to the needs of fellow citizens who are excluded from mainstream society because of the injurious effects of drugs.

Jim Corr, ECAD Chairman

Editorial

ECAD Newsletter presents highlights of the addresses to the delegates of the 15th Mayors' Conference. Distinctive feature of this conference was that the discussions sprouted from a sociological research. The research was conducted by the hosting city for the needs of this conference and for the future use as a reference when forming city's drug policy. The full text of the research report, some addresses and presentations are available at www.ecad.net under "Conference papers". On our home site you will also find a photo gallery.

For this issue, we have also collected some inputs to the panel discussions which will shed the light on the main topics brought up by the experts.

” Dealing with the drug problems requires great commitment, energy and endurance on the part of all of us who wish to rid society of this running sore which is disfiguring the face of local communities all over Europe. Let us continue to fight the good fight. A famous Lord Mayor of Cork - Terence McSwiney - wrote 'Victory is won not by those who can inflict the most, but by those who can endure the most.' It is in that spirit - a spirit of confidence inspired by a clear vision that ECAD will move into its 16th year of service to people who need our help. “

Jim Corr



Note

Since the resignation of Tomas Hallberg in March, Åke Setréus has been the Acting Director. He will continue to act until August 11 when the newly appointed director - Jörgen Svidén - will take up his duties as Director of ECAD.

Press Conference

From left: Jim Corr, (ECAD Chairman), Åke Setréus, Przemysław Zielinski (Warsaw School of Technology), Barbara Fatyga and Włodzimierz



Paszynski took part in the press conference.

It was opened by discussion on the issue of 'moral panicking' which, as the expert panel described it, may characterise the way Polish media cover the subject. Polish media, it was said, exaggerate the scale of drug use among the young and underestimate the comprehension of risks connected to illicit drug use by the young citizens of Warsaw.

Professor **Barbara Fatyga** presented methodology and the main conclusions of the research. She pointed out for the assembled journalists that the 'atmosphere of panic' in regard to the topic 'youth and drugs' – which seems to dominate in Polish society – is to a certain extent created by Polish media themselves.

Vice President of the City of Warsaw, **Włodzimierz Paszynski**, commented the results of the survey from the city's point of view. He

emphasised that the decrease of drug use among the youth in Warsaw should be seen as a result of both

the activities undertaken by the city during the past years and a high quality of prevention efforts aimed at the young citizens. Another possible factor, according to the city authority, may reflect the general stabilisation of economical and social situation in Poland. "We moved to a point of certain 'normalisation', and will continue our work without panicking", said Włodzimierz Paszynski.

Åke Setréus, the Acting Director of ECAD, brought journalists' attention to another point of the conference agenda, namely the importance of cannabis abuse rehabilitation. He referred to a number of Swedish researches that show that cannabis abuse rehabilitation is effective and can be done anywhere. Rehabilitation methods are now being practised in different regions of Sweden, pointed out the ECAD Director, and hopefully will soon be widely available across Europe as well.

ECAD Plenary Session



Traditionally, the ECAD Plenary Session is held at the end of the first day of the Mayors' Conference. The Warsaw Conference followed the suit. Many delegates participated in the discussion on outlines of future ECAD Conferences. For example, several delegates pointed out the importance of Mayors' Forum – since the Mayors' Conference is the most important platform for information exchange and the supreme decision making agent in our international organisation. The ceremony of introduction of new members and signing of the Stockholm Resolution is also an element which the ECAD members wanted to see at each annual meeting. The delegates have also expressed their wish for a broader representation of international speakers and international topical subjects at the ECAD Conferences. This indicates the importance of finding a balance between local benefits for the hosting city and a wider perspective required by the ECAD conference for meeting high expectations of our international members.

Research

The Conference agenda focused on the research conducted by Warsaw University in cooperation with Warsaw School of



Technology.

The research was commissioned by the Warsaw municipality.

Main aims of the project include

- standardization of the styles of life featuring Warsaw youth;
- matching relevant styles of life with dangers of using psychoactive substances by youth;
- diagnosis of the competences featuring adults working with youth, making decisions and/or coming out with public statements on this issue and, most of all, organizing and conducting prevention activities among Warsaw youth.
- preparation of materials for discussions during the international ECAD conference which is devoted to socio-cultural grounds of prevention activities undertaken by various subjects among urban youth in Warsaw and other ECAD cities.

Authors of the Research

Barbara Fatyga and Przemysław Zieliński.

The full report may be obtained from the ECAD Head Office ecad@ecad.net or on www.ecad.net "Conference papers"

VISIT THE CONFERENCE WEB SITE ON WWW.ECAD.NET!

I Panel discussion On the Report on Warsaw Youth Research

Björg Månur Andresson, Oslo: “It is good that we have raised the issue of moral panicking in regard to youth and drugs. The atmosphere of panicking not only frightens people but also has long term consequences, namely forces communities to prioritise wrong issues.”

Georgi Zazulin, ECAD Russia: “This is a topical research. It is important for us in ECAD. We often refer to the UN Conventions on Drugs which form the basis of our work. But we should not forget the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child which obliges us to protect the children from illicit drugs. That is why this research is topical – it shows the weak points in our work. It shows where we can bridge the gaps between youth and those who work with young people.



“Some speakers have mentioned here at the conference that we should not be ideological in our work. I think that we should not be afraid of ideology, since there is no contradiction between ideology and scientific approach. Ideology stands for different values that researchers need to take into account and be aware of while undertaking research in social or political field. Ideology is a standpoint from where we conduct our everyday duties and make decisions. In our field, non-ideological ‘pure facts’ or, in other words, facts with no connection to any system of values, is nonsense.”

Włodzimierz Paszynski, Warsaw: “The meaning with this conference which is based upon a local research in Warsaw is to inspire this way of thinking and this kind of approach to drug issues in a municipality. The research will help us to design our policy. We think that all new initiatives should be based on reliable research – which should be deeper than statistics of what volumes of illicit drugs were confiscated.

“In order to design prevention programs for youth, we need to know what our target group looks like. To speak figuratively, we need to find out what the proper bait can be. If you go fishing, use the bait that fish likes, not the one the fisherman likes”.

Barbara Fatyga, Warsaw: “This was not an academic survey only; we worked closely with NGOs and other actors. Focus of the research was aimed at the importance of the rebuilding of relations in close neighbourhoods and relations within the families. Deconstruction of these relations lies in the basis of many today’s problems, as many other speakers have pointed out.

“We can say that in Polish families these bonds are still strong; civilisation here in Poland still differs in many ways from that in other European countries. What we need to rebuild, is the bonds between the youth and those who work with the youth.”

II Panel Discussion on The problem of Youth drug addiction seen by youths, practitioners dealing with the problem, researchers and journalists.

Tomas Lundqvist, Lund: “I think that the liberalisation movement should be attacked by its own arguments as being inhumane movement – because it takes away the brain.

“Nowadays, most individuals who start testing cannabis do it before the age of 18. Cannabinoids – psychoactive substances in cannabis that interfere in communication, finding solutions and other – create so called ‘teflon brain’: nothing can stick to this brain, it screens off. The brain is developing until the age of 22. Cannabis influences individual ability to focus - our cognitive strategy - at this early age. If you smoke 2-3 times a week, the brain activity decreases by 2/3.

Pelle Olsson, Stockholm: “The choice of policy matters a lot. Maybe we should think over the fact why there are no organisations called “Parents FOR drugs”?”

“We have heard about the moral panic created in Polish media about drugs. In Western countries the media is preaching quite the contrary, namely that drugs are not that dangerous, that their existence is something what we have to accept.

“I think that cannabis and relation to cannabis is a crucial topic for anti-drug policy in many European countries – in both Western and Eastern Europe.

★ DISCUSSION

Włodzimierz Paszynski: “Media in Poland uses drugs to attract attention, to get a grip over publicity. However, the topic of the discussion is not legalisation of drugs; we should not override the subject”.

Contribution of Mayor of Aglantzia (Cyprus) Andreas Petrou

A survey of the National Centre of Drug Monitoring and Information conducted in 2006 shows the following percentage of life-time use of illegal substances by youth:

	Males	Females
Cannabis:	10.6%	2.6%
Ecstasy:	2.8%	0.3%
Amphetamines:	1.4%	0.3%
Cocaine:	1.9%	0.4%
Heroin:	1.4%	0.4%
LSD:	1.6%	0.3%

A survey conducted in 2004 shows that about 4% of youngsters (age 18-21) used cannabis during the last year. The use of other drugs did not exceed 0.6%.

Cocaine was reported as the main drug abuse substance by 684-966 individuals which is 0.25 to 1.8 cases per thousand inhabitants aged 15-64.

The three year period 2004-2007 recorded 69 deaths caused either by overdose or problematic use.

In 2006, 560 drug users applied for treatment while in 2005 the number of applicants was 423.

Drug prevention in Warsaw: Some examples

Maria Tatarska, Foundation 'Prevention of Drug Addiction': Implementing prevention programmes:

"One of the most important pillars of our prevention programmes is based on peer to peer education. Programmes are carried out by young leaders, representatives of public movements, who promote healthy life-styles and thus reduce risky behaviours.

"It implies availability of assistance at popular places for the young, duty hours at discos etc. What these young people do depends on what they choose themselves.

"Organized leisure time activities are the necessary part of this work. Theatrical performances are very attractive for young people, as well as street performances, educational shops, where they can organize quizzes, edit newsletters and so on."

Mirosława Straburzynska, 'Addiction Treatment Centre': Treatment and harm reduction issue:

"Treatment is confined to organized care facilities. Since the 1970s, there was an understanding in the Polish society that illicit drugs represent a challenge for the country. NGOs set up public treatment facilities as a response to this challenge. However, these settings were not viewed as treatment since these organisations are not formally recognised as treatment organisations.

"Nowadays, many NGOs offer day-care treatment, including group- and family therapy, where the focus is set on becoming free from drugs.

"Harm reduction programmes are carried out mostly by NGOs, these are becoming more and more popular through street-

working and party-working; these programmes target young people and their families as well as those experimenting with drugs.

"Two organisations are responsible for needle-exchange programmes in Warsaw.

"Harm reduction philosophy can be summarised by "pragmatism". It means that we should diagnose our patient's expectations and treat only those who want help.

"The City of Warsaw listens to what we have to say; they also provide funding, which is based on work efficiency. The city officials are more aware of the drug problem now than before. We should have the opportunity to lobby for those programmes that work for us, and the city in turn should feel that we work for people's best."

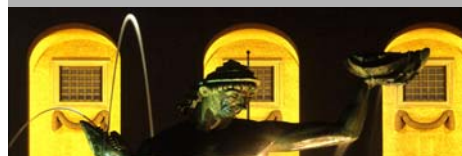
Katarzyna Sikorska, 'Social Care Association': post-rehabilitation

"Over 80% of clients, who use our programmes, are successful in their therapies. The programmes are carried out by 4 organisations which are part of our network. The philosophy of our work has changed; we can treat mental patients with medical help today.

"Our goal is to prepare individuals, who go through our programmes, for functioning in the society; we teach them how to live a normal life. We provide post-rehabilitation and teach the patients every-day basics, for instance, how to sign the employment or residence contract.

"We aim at reducing the effects of social exclusion after leaving the rehab-centres. The central objective is to decrease the risk of relapse."

Invitation to World Mayors' Conference



It is my honour and pleasure to invite you to the World Mayors' Conference in Gothenburg, February, 5th – 6th 2009. This will also be 16th ECAD Mayors' Conference.

The City of Gothenburg places great emphasis on international cooperation, not least when it comes to drug combat. Gothenburg has been an active member of ECAD since the start in 1994. The conference in 2009 will commemorate 100 years since the first world narcotics convention was discussed in Shanghai, China. The global drug trade does not recognize national borders. Therefore our fight against drugs cannot be successful without world-wide cooperation on all levels. In this work, the UN Conventions on Drugs have played, and will be playing, an immensely important role. Advocates for legalization of some presently illicit drugs do anything they can in order to put on the agenda of UNGASS 2009 amendments of these conventions.

One of the most important goals with The World Mayors' Conference and The ECAD 16th Mayors' Conference is therefore to manifest a broad and powerful support for the UN Conventions on Drugs and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (article 33). Delegates and prominent speakers from the UN and all over the world are expected. We would like to take the opportunity and to welcome you to the even in winter beautiful Gothenburg!

Josef Bengtson, Councillor

*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 **children's** 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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