



## Experts call new strategies on AIDS prevention ineffective



The XVIII International AIDS Conference July 18 - July 23 2010 coincides with a major push for expanded access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. With a global economic crisis threatening to undermine public investments, the conference will help keep HIV on the front burner, and is a chance for many

to demonstrate the importance of continued HIV investments to broader health and development goals.

The conference is organized by the International AIDS Society with the support of UNAIDS and its cosponsor organizations including the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) based in Vienna. (AIDS 2010 <http://www.aids2010.org>)

On Tuesday, July 20<sup>th</sup> 2010, internationally recognized anti-drug experts from every region of the world united to oppose a set of dangerous unproven global strategies recommended in the *Vienna Declaration*. The declaration is based on three false premises:

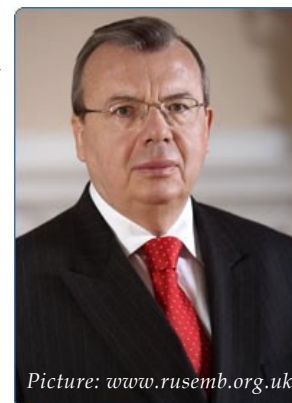
- 1) that the criminalization of illegal drug use fuels the HIV/AIDS epidemic,
- 2) that criminal justice and health promotion are conflicting approaches to drug policy, and
- 3) that the major costs of illegal drug use are those generated by the criminal justice system.

This document was released in anticipation of the AIDS Conference in Vienna and has been under scrutiny by several non-governmental organizations.

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## United Nations: New UNODC Director appointed

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon announced the appointment of Yuri Fedotov (Russian Federation) as the new Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).



Picture: [www.rusemb.org.uk](http://www.rusemb.org.uk)

He succeeds Antonio Maria Costa in that position and as Director-General of the United Nations Office at Vienna (UNOV).

The Secretary-General is grateful to Mr. Costa for the services he has rendered to the Organization and for his commitment in leading UNODC since 2002.

UNODC is a global leader in the fight against illicit drugs and international crime, mandated to assist Member States in their struggles against illicit drugs, crime and terrorism.

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Many of the experts who opposed the *Vienna Declaration* know from research and practical experience that the optimal way to truly beat addiction, prevent the spread of AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases, and prevent drug-related harm are effective strategies that target drug use and include prevention, education, treatment and law enforcement efforts and do not trade one for the other.

*"The best foundation for prevention is policy. We know from experience that a balanced and restrictive drug policy is effective in keeping drug use at low levels. Since drug utilization in itself is an important risk factor for being infected by HIV, it is good AIDS-prevention to preclude illicit drug use. We must always strive to protect young people from getting involved with illegal drugs,"*

says **Sven-Olov Carlsson**, *President of World Federation Against Drugs*.

**Calvina Fay**, *Executive Director of Drug Free America Foundation* says,

*"There is no 'reasonable evidence' that supports the strategies outlined in the Vienna Declaration. Further, we should reject ineffective harm reduction tactics that are not based on scientific evidence while accepting drug use and creating an illusion that drugs can be used safely or responsibly. Such ill-conceived schemes foster the misunderstanding that drug use itself is not harmful and increases addiction."*

The World Federation Against Drugs ([www.wfad.se](http://www.wfad.se)) is a multilateral community of non-governmental organizations and individuals. Founded in 2009, the aim of WFAD is to work for a drug-free world.

Drug Free America Foundation ([www.dfaf.org](http://www.dfaf.org)) is a national and international nonprofit organization dedicated to fighting drug use, drug addiction and drug trafficking and to promoting effective sound drug policies, education and prevention.

## Naphyrone or NRG 1: to be banned in the UK

**Naphyrone - often advertised as 'NRG1' - and its related compounds are to be banned and made Class B drugs, Minister for Crime Prevention James Brokenshire announced. This follows recommendations from the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs. UK's ACMD consider that the public health response to naphyrone, related compounds and other legal highs is a pressing issue.**

The control of **mephedrone** and other **cathinones** under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 appears to have precipitated a shift in the products now offered for sale on the internet. This includes products marketed as **naphyrone (NRG-1)**, but also a range of other compounds e.g. **NRG-2** and **MDAI** (purported to be 5,6-methylenedioxy-2-aminoindane).

From the limited samples analysed, from test purchasing, it appears that the market has changed the branding of products rather than changed the products themselves.

The ACMD have identified two concerns about this development. Firstly, the users of 'legal highs' may be at least partially motivated

by a desire to buy a legal psychoactive substance rather than an illegal one. However, test purchasing would suggest that in fact there is a considerable risk that they are inadvertently purchasing an illegal substance.

Secondly, and of considerable concern as mentioned above, is the potential for overdose: users who purchase a named product, when purchasing that product for a subsequent time, may receive a product of different composition to their first purchase. Differences in potency between the apparently identical branded products could give rise to risk of overdose or unexpected pharmacological effects.

This is particularly significant in the case of NRG-1: **whilst analyses suggest that NRG-1 is currently likely to contain varying mixtures of controlled substituted cathinones, if this changes to naphyrone (of much higher potency than substituted cathinones), the risk of overdose is much higher.**

Source: <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/media-centre/press-releases/naphyrone-class-b-drug>

## Attention : Digital Drugs

**I-dosing on "digital drugs" is becoming an alarming new trend amongst teens. Web sites are luring kids with free downloads of "digital drugs," which are audio files designed to induce drug-like effects.**

Videos of teenagers trying the digital drugs are all over YouTube. Web sites are luring kids with free downloads of "digital drugs," which are audio files designed to induce drug-like effects. The sites claim it is a safe and legal way to get high, but parents fear it could lead to illegal drug use. Videos of teenagers trying digital drugs are all over YouTube, leaving parents, educators and law enforcement officials with the *Oklahoma Bureau of Narcotics and Dangerous Drugs* concerned.

The digital drugs use binaural or two-toned technology to alter your brainwaves and mental state. Recently Mustang Public Schools sent out a letter warning parents about the new trend after several high school students reported having physiological effects after trying one of these digital downloads. Another concern the OBN has is that many of these I-dosing sites lure visitors to actual drug and drug paraphernalia sites.

/ Source: [www.newson6.com](http://www.newson6.com)

## Law but no order? Russian new national strategy on drugs discussed

On June 9, 2010 Russian president Dmitry Medvedev approved new National Anti-drug Strategy for 2010-2020. According to the state procedure, Russian government has proposed a range of toughening drug policy measures in terms of law amendments for the Parliament.

The changes concern legal responsibility for keeping illegal substances (even with no intention to sell it), administrative custody up to 15 days for using narcotic drugs without prescription and drugs will be regarded as an aggravating circumstance when a crime had been committed under drug intoxication.

*"A key factor to negative development of drug situation in Russian Federation is a massive opiate production in Afghanistan and transnational trafficking to Russia eventually. There is a record of locally grown drugs, being spread in a number of Russian regions, and also legal drug substances, containing narcotic components, for legal retail sales. Russian state drug policy has been negatively affected by the lack of national monitoring system over the developments in drug situation as a whole".* (Extract from the new Strategy)



It is hard to tell straight away which turn a drug situation in such an enormous country will take, notwithstanding, it is necessary to discuss the developments.

**George Zazulin, ECAD representative in Russia** (picture) has been invited by state radio channel "Svoboda" in St.Petersburg to comment on the new Strategy. Here are his main points.

"The document is very stiff and formalizing, where the contents play the second fiddle, but form takes the first,

and the objectives are not principal, but the direction and movement towards the objectives, definitely is.

However, it is necessary to give credit to the Strategy, which is unique since it declares Russia's right for its own drug policy trajectory. International drug policy is also a whole world in itself, and this world is comprised of various civilizations. We cannot claim that the values of one civilization should be accepted by another civilization *per*

*se*. Take methadone programmes or syringe exchange, for instance. Attitudes towards acceptance of drug abuse vary substantially in different civilizations.

WHO and UN structures have been pushing Russia towards accepting internationally acknowledged approach to these programmes, which they assert as the only one right. Well, now Russia has its own position on these issues, thanks to this Strategy, and I dare say it is a big progress.



Nonetheless, the effectiveness of this policy instrument is to be discussed further. I am not sure that this Strategy will diminish that principal drug threat the state has encountered, nor will it curb the number of addicts or the amount of drug related crime. The reason for this is that we do not use our own positive experience, which federal subjects, cities and municipal units have developed with such success and effort in many cases.

I hold it is pointless to introduce criminal charges for drug use with no administrative responsibility norms practiced. In other words, how can the state guarantee that criminal charges are applied, when administrative charges do not work? The law will only get clumsier. How can we intend to punish a teenager for what he/she has done if we haven't even tried to stop him/her verbally?

I think we should see to introducing administrative norms first, and these norms do function in some federal subjects already, but there is no federal order for procedures. And this is directly connected to human rights.

Our Swedish colleagues apply administrative charges effectively in regard to drug substances borne in blood/body of a suspect in 90% of the cases. This works impressively and a vast majority of suspects get charged on correct grounds.

One major problem for Russian drug policy today is the lack of prevention as a strategic priority. We face the consequences, we deal with drug abuse and plenty of money is being invested in treatment and rehabilitation, instead of shifting the gears to prevention. That we need to change and the way to go about it is to have a political resource, which is unfortunately still undefined".

## Maastricht may stop drug tourists

The city of Maastricht has been permitted to refuse serving foreign drug tourists in coffee shops. This advice was given by the Advocate General of the European Court of Justice. Within short the Court will decide on this matter.

A Maastricht coffee shop owner has recently accused the municipality because of the prohibition to sell so called "soft drugs" to people from abroad. Advocate General, whose advice is generally followed by the Court, points out that soft drugs don't come under the legislation of free trade traffic because they are forbidden in other countries. Moreover, this prohibition is required to stop the nuisance caused by drug tourists.

From Rotterdam, ECAD correspondents Jan Berlijn and Carla Maissan

## UN: new executive Director of UNODC appointed

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Mr. Fedotov brings a wealth of senior-level experience to his new function, being well-informed regarding issues on the UNODC agenda: rule of law; policy and trend analysis; prevention; treatment and reintegration; and alternative development.

Mr. Fedotov is a Merited Member of the Diplomatic Service, and has also been awarded the Order of Friendship and the Certificate of Appreciation by the President of the Russian Federation.

Source: <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs//2010/>





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*For more information please visit [www.ecad.net](http://www.ecad.net)*

## Drugs: A Culture of Irresponsibility

"... Considering the gravity of the situation, we must make choices" and ... establish clear priorities, such as supporting ... the most vulnerable and unprotected."

".. Serious economic and social situation demands... a culture of accountability..." "We cannot afford to waste public money."

*(Extracts from the speech given by the President of the Republic of Portugal by the end of 2009)*

Association for a Drug Free Portugal (APLD) welcomes this passionate appeal of the President and looks forward to adoption and implementation of a policy that makes each addict responsible of his/her acts, and that allows him/her to set up a project of Life anew.

As matter of fact, current government strategy dispenses drug addicts with any responsibilities for drug abuse.

Drug users are free, for example, from medical service fees in health centers of the country (they also do not pay for syringes, needles, tourniquets, etc.). The elderly, the poor and the chronically ill excluded from such state generosity, are not so lucky. The Portuguese state has opted for pushing thousands of people to alienation and even worse. This is almost a criminal policy.

The Republic cannot capitulate on drugs matters. The problem is serious and it deserves a consistent approach. "Harm reduction" cannot be an ideology and an end in itself. It is extremely disturbing to promote the correct use of drugs "safely" integrating consumption into the habit (about 70% of addicts scrutinized in the country are not in drug-free programs but in programs that, while called treatments, are actually "replacements" because these "treatments" substitute one

drug for another) that is being made possible by public institutions (such as the Institute for Drugs and Drug Addiction - IDT), who submits with the support (sic) from the State, countless numbers of addicts to a life of dependency.

Drugs are harmful to consumers and increase - directly or indirectly - public insecurity. Is it acceptable that a national coordinator of the fight against drugs and drug addiction says:

*"The message that demonization of drugs and that drugs kill is already outdated?"*

*(Source: Journal da Noticias October 9, 2007)*

This statement is not only irresponsible but is clearly against the universal right of any individual to have a life that is not marred by drugs and to be protected from illegal trade (as is clearly expressed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights).

Are the rights and interests of Portuguese addicts being respected by the policy that maintains an illusion of immediate political reward (even if it is has to distort results - see the recent, unfortunately heralded as false, "resounding success" of the Portuguese policy on drug abuse published in ECAD Newsletter this spring)?

And the State, will it accept the status quo by withdrawing every legitimate hope by integrating addict habits into a way of slavery? Does this kind of State represent its citizens? Does this State deserve to be considered an ethical institution?

*Manuel Pinto Coelho*

*President of the Association for a Drug Free Portugal (APLD)*



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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