

Over 1.3 million people worldwide stand against drugs



2003 Vienna Declaration Photo: UNODC

On April 14 in Vienna the weight of the world's backing of the UN Conventions on Drugs was proved through tangible means to the tune of 1.3 million signatures representative of 63 countries all voicing their support for a restrictive and humane policy on drugs.

'The 2003 Vienna Declaration' was initiated by the HNN International Centre in Sweden to provide an avenue for ordinary people to voice their support for the UN Conventions on Drugs and they came out to

make their mark in droves turning that avenue into a highway.

The 1.3 million signatories included 309 parliamentarians and 185 organisations all taking a stand against a small but well-funded and vocal group attempting to undermine the UN Conventions on Drugs.

The signatures were presented to Mr. Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and Ms Patricia Olamendi, chair of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs, in the presence of participating delegates in the plenary meeting room during the 46th Session of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs in Vienna.

The central message was clear and strong: 'No to drugs - Yes to the UN Conventions on Drugs' and specifically addressed support for the UN Conventions on Drugs and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, especially Article 33, which protects the world's children from illicit substances.

★ VIENNA DECLARATION

Address to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs

The signatures were presented to the Commission on Narcotic Drugs by HNN Deputy Director Malou Lindholm who stated:

Your Excellencies, Mrs. Olamendi, Executive Director Mr. Costa, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are honoured and proud to be here today, to hand over to the United Nations and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, 1.3 million signatures showing the worldwide support of the United Nations Conventions on Drugs and the UN Convention on the

Rights of the Child - especially article 33, stating:

"State Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislative, administrative, social and educational measures, to protect children from the illicit use of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances as defined in the relevant international treaties."

These young people, from various countries, represent the young generations and their future and they say NO to drugs.

See Page 2

Editorial

Volume 4 of the ECAD newsletter is devoted to the mid-term review of UNGASS that has been held in Vienna on April 8-17, 2003. Member states have now committed themselves to achieve measurable results by 2008 (see page 3).

The Vienna meeting gave us an opportunity to express our strong opposition against possible liberal reforms of the UN Conventions on Drugs. A liberalisation group has recruited some 200 members of Parliament from 27 countries to call for such liberal reform. We are pleased to say that the campaign, initiated by the HNN and actively supported by ECAD member cities for the existing UN Conventions, has resulted in 1.3 million signatures worldwide.

The signatures were presented in Vienna on April 14 by Malou Lindholm, HNN Deputy Director, and Ellinor Frisk, a 15 years old girl from Gotland, Sweden.

They also attended the ECAD 10th Anniversary Mayor's Conference that took place in Stockholm on May 15-17.

At this conference the delegates had the pleasure to listen to the speech that Malou and Ellinor had addressed to the United Nations in Vienna.

We have published their speech.

2003 Vienna Declaration remains open!

The 1.3 million signatories were gained since The 2003 Vienna Declaration's conception in November 2002.

The Vienna Declaration will remain open and continue to actively collect support against illicit drugs with a goal of 25 million signatories by 2008.

Address to the commission on Narcotic drugs

From Page 1

A majority of them have their own bitter experiences from use of illicit drugs but have managed to recover. One of them will address you in a few minutes.

For years, a small but vocal and well-financed group of individuals and organisations has been active, trying to undermine the UN Conventions on Drugs in order to facilitate easier access to drugs.

In order to achieve this they have launched and lobbied for the so-called harm reduction policy, which, in practice, implies that you give up the fight against drugs and drug addiction and accept them as an integral part of society.

Pro-drug advocates envisage that the harm reduction policy is the slippery slope that will pave the way for legalisation of drugs. If you would allow this to happen, it would consequently constitute a serious threat to the global co-operation against drugs and seriously undermine the UN Conventions on Drugs and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

A vast majority of the global population strongly oppose such ideas.

In November 2003, HNN International Centre in Sweden initiated a worldwide campaign, 'The 2003 Vienna Declaration', in support of the UN Conventions on Drugs and humane, restrictive drug policies.

Since November 2003, 1.3 million signatories, including youngsters, elderly people, parents, scientists, experts, organisations and 309 parliamentarians, have shown their support to The 2003 Vienna Declaration, and thousands of signatures keep coming in.

Together with the 1.3 million signatories we are convinced that you all feel and acknowledge the enormous worldwide support you have received, and will continue to receive, in your important work to fight drugs and drug addiction – be it in the United Nations or in your national parliaments.

We are also convinced that you feel the trust, confidence and responsibility for present and coming generations.

As an example of a most impressive involvement and support among ordinary people, I want to hand over 50.000 signatures from then City of Izhevsk in the Sovereign Republic of Udmurt, situated in the Western part of the Urals.

The signatures represent 10 per cent of the total number of the inhabitants in the city. The signatures were transported by courier and train for 30 hours to St. Petersburg in Russia and from there by air to Sweden. 30,000 signatures come from Italy. About 10 per cent of the total population of Iceland signed The 2003 Vienna Declaration. "The Lithuanian Parliament consents to the basic provisions of The 2003 Vienna Declaration and has called on non-governmental organisations and the public of Lithuania to support this Declaration" (From the official translation of a Resolution in the Parliament of Lithuania on March 18, 2003).

Thank you for your attention.

Malou was followed by 15-year-old Ellinor Frisk from Hassela Gotland in Sweden who gave these words:

My name is Ellinor Frisk, I am 15 years old and come from Sweden. The first time I used illicit drugs was when I was 13 years old. Cannabis was my first drug and after a while I added rohypnol and ecstasy amongst other drugs and used these drugs daily for one and a half years.

I ran away from home and slept outdoors, with friends or with people I met in the streets. Most of them used drugs.

My experience is that cannabis definitely is a big 'Gateway drug'.

My parents tried their best to stop me from using drugs but without success. 10 months ago I came to a treatment centre for youngsters and I have not taken anything since then. I have no longing for illicit drugs and have decided never to use them again.

In June I will finish comprehensive school with good grades thanks to the rehab centre. My wish is to become a lawyer working against crime and violence against women.

If I had not come to the rehab centre I am sure I would have continued to use drugs.

Some people and organisations want to amend or repeal the UN Conventions on Drugs to make legalisation possible. My opinion is that this would be a disaster with more drug addiction, more crime, more violence and more deaths.

To legalise drugs is like giving a knife to a mass murderer.

What some people call 'Harm Reduction' is just another word for helping drug addicts to a slow but surely coming death. It is to give up the fight against drugs.

The UN Conventions on Drugs is the most important tool to prevent young people from starting to use drugs and becoming addicted.

I therefore urge you, delegates and governments, to do all you can to live up to the UN Conventions on Drugs that you have signed.

Thank you.



Ellinor Frisk at the ECAD 10th Mayors' Conference



EUROPEAN CITIES AGAINST DRUGS
10th Anniversary Mayors' Conference

Conference information and documentation is available through the ECAD Stockholm office paulina.lonnroth@stadshuset.stockholm.se and our website www.ecad.net!

ECAD welcomes our new members!

Four Lithuanian cities signed the Stockholm Resolution at the 10th Mayors' conference, bringing the number of ECAD Member Cities to a total of 264!

Trakai, Kaunas, Alytus and Kretinga!

Welcome!

The Ministerial Meeting Vienna 2003

The Ministerial segment of the forty-sixth session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs marks the first five-year milestone for Member States to review their achievements and the commitments made at the twentieth special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem.

In June 1998, more than 150 States committed themselves to achieving significant and measurable results in the reduction of the illicit supply and demand for drugs by the year 2008. The special session, better known as the "Drug Summit", adopted three action oriented resolutions covering a Political Declaration, a Declaration on the guiding principles of Drug Demand Reduction and measures to enhance international cooperation to counter the world drug problem.

These international cooperation measures included two action plans against the illicit manufacture, trafficking and abuse of amphetamine-type stimulants (ATS) and their precursors as well as the eradication of illicit drug crops and alternative development. Other measures focused on promoting judicial cooperation, countering money laundering and the control of precursors.

By 2003, governments committed themselves to:

- Establish or strengthen national legislation and programmes giving effect to the action plan on ATS;
- Adopt national money laundering legislation and programmes if they have not yet done so;
- Strengthen judicial cooperation; and
- Set up new and enhanced drug demand reduction strategies in close collaboration with public health, social welfare and law enforcement authorities.

"We, the ministers and government representatives participating in the ministerial segment of the forty-six session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, held in Vienna on 16 and 17 April 2003, reaffirm our commitment to the outcome of the twentieth special session of the General Assembly, which made a significant contribution to a new general framework for international cooperation to address the growing drug problem, setting out specific goals and targets to be attained by all States by 2003 and 2008."
From: Joint Ministerial statement

By 2008, governments committed themselves to:

- Eliminate or reduce significantly the illicit manufacture, marketing and trafficking of psychotropic substances, including synthetic drugs, and the diversion of precursors;
- Achieve significant and measurable results in the field of demand reduction; and
- Eliminate or reduce significantly the illicit cultivation of the coca bush, the cannabis plant and the opium poppy.

The Ministerial segment of the Commission provides an opportunity for stock-taking and the identification of further action needed to meet the targets set for 2008.

"2003: Progress towards still distant goals"

From the Statement of Antonio Maria Costa, Executive Director

...In a brief report submitted to the attention of Ministers, UNODC has provided evidence of progress that a few years back would have been considered unattainable.

(i) There has been a *strong reduction of opium and coca cultivation* in Southeast Asia and the Andean countries. If sustained, especially in the Golden Triangle area, this tremendous achievement would close a 100-year chapter in the history of drug control. Opium output in Afghanistan is still increasing.

The government of President Karzai is strongly committed to eliminating the drug economy and we salute and support his efforts.

(ii) Statistics show *reduction in cocaine and heroin abuse* in some of the major markets in North America and Western Europe. This shows that when policy commitment is firm, results follow. However, new markets have emerged in Eastern Europe, Russia, in other CIS states and in China. Furthermore, from the European Union's eastern borders to the far Pacific, drug abuse by injection threatens to create a public health disaster of global proportions if HIV/AIDS and other blood-borne diseases spread from the small (but growing) circle of drug abusers to the general public. Cocaine and heroin abuse are also growing along the narco-trafficking routes in Central Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean where countries, already short of resources, are forced to fight unprecedented urban violence and the infestation of criminal money.

The most important conclusion, however, is that we need to accompany reduction of drug supply by equal reduction of drug demand. Otherwise, narco-prises will go up and the game never ends.

Antonio Maria Costa

(iii) ATS abuse is evolving into "Public Enemy Number 1" for two converging reasons. First, because synthetic drugs, are resistant to supply reduction methods successful for the organic drugs.

The second difficulty stems from the popular misconception that ATS are harmless. In effect, it does even more lethal damage to the brain than nicotine does to the lungs. All considered, we are facing new threats at both ends of the drug chain. (i) synthetic drugs are a new form of illicit drug production that may put an end to farmers toiling in narco-fields from the Andeans to the Golden Triangle. It is also (ii) a new form of addiction, driven by the evil mind of drug designers -- always eager to engineer, and cater to, new drug fashions. It has taken decades to develop an adequate policy for organic-based drugs. With determination, with proper communication and acting together, we shall tame this beast as well - though it will take time.

(iv) *Cannabis is the most widely produced, trafficked and consumed illicit drug.* The health damage cannabis produces is one problem. The other problem is the spreading mis-perception that cannabis is a soft narcotic, and therefore that compliance with international agreements should also be soft. At the moment, we see no evidence of any country intending to propose modification to, or renunciation of, existing drug conventions.

We welcome Gabriel Garcia Marquez to fight against legalisation of drugs!

Gabriel Garcia Marquez, winner of the 1982 Nobel Prize for Literature, strongly refutes the reports that he has called for the legalisation of drugs.

Garcia Marques, who was born in Colombia, is currently residing in Mexico. On Monday it was main news in Spanish language papers all over the world that the famous author had called for the legalisation of drugs, and that he believed such measures would end violence in Colombia.

Gabriel Garcia Marques response to the news was immediate. Through a video-taped message, sent to a group of intellectuals in Medellin in Colombia, the author clarified that he is against the legalisation of

drugs and drug consumption.

The writer expressed his regrets that journalists had misquoted him, and that they instead had attributed to him thoughts he didn't harbour and opinions he detested.

On the video tape the author also commented on the human tragedy in the situation of the two million displaced people living in Colombia. These people "...roam around their own territory in search for a place where they may survive," said Garcia Marquez, "...victims of a violence which is sustained by two of the most profitable businesses in this heartless world: the illegal trade in arms and drug trafficking."

4 Million Russian young people take drugs

Russian Education Minister Vladimir Filippov stated on May 19 that over 4 million Russian children and young people aged 11 to 24 abuse drugs; about 1 million of them are drug-dependent.

As compared to 1999, the number of drug-addicted teenagers and youths dropped by 33%, while the number of people committing crimes under the influence of drugs dropped by 41%, he said.

According to recent figures, apart from drugs, more and more children and young people get involved with alcohol and tobacco. 50% of people belonging to the 11-24 age group are smokers. Alcohol consumption rates keep growing too. According to statistics, 80% of young people drink alcoholic beverages, including beer.

Children and teenagers begin smoking and

drinking at an earlier age than they did 10 years ago. Nowadays, they taste their first cigarette at the age of 11.5, have their first alcoholic drink at 13, and get introduced to drugs at 14 (instead of the former figure of 17.5 years).

According to Filippov, children and young people spend about 2.5 billion US dollars on drugs every year. At the same time, the country spends an annual of 90 million dollars on anti-drug events, including measures to combat drug crimes, treatment and preventive measures.

The Chief Department for Combating Contraband of Russia's State Customs Committee estimates the potential profitability of the Russian drug market at 500%. "Given this advantage, the drug mafia will take any risk," Filippov emphasized.

Turkey continues fight against narcotics

Turkey has been given a good accounting in its fight to combat drug trafficking in the International Narcotics Control Strategy Report for 2002 issued by the U.S. Department of State.

The report is the department's annual summary of illicit drug-control and money-laundering activities in more than 140 countries

The report, considered a reference for international drug trafficking statistics, noted that although Turkey is a central point for heroin smuggling and processing, the country's security forces had dealt a severe blow to the narcotics trade.

Turkish security forces are reported to have seized 2.7 metric tons of heroin, 7.9 metric tons of morphine base, 6.8 metric tons of cannabis, 8,680,000 pills of Captagan, 99,000 Ecstasy tablets and 49,000 litres



ECAD NEWS

of the heroin precursor chemical, acetic anhydride, during the year 2002. A total of 9,652 people were taken into custody.

The report indicated that Turkey has come a long way from prior years in its battle against drug trafficking but that drug dealers continue to view Turkey as a base of operations.

According to the report, numerous tons of heroin are processed in Turkey every month and smuggled out of the country, but cultivation is not engaged in except for marijuana, which is produced for local consumption.

*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 **citizens'** well being.*