



ECAD NEWSLETTER

European Cities Against Drugs www.ecad.net



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New EU member needs support ECAD project in Lithuania



ECAD has, after an invitation from Sida (Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency), received 200,000 sek (approx. 22,000 Euro)

for drug preventive activities in the region of Ignalina, Lithuania.

Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant is going to be shut down in the near future. Due to this shutdown more than 9,000 people will lose their jobs. The closing of this Nuclear Power Plant is one of the demands for Lithuania to become a member of the EU.

C.R.I.S. (Criminals' Return Into Society), our partner organisation, and ECAD have received grants for two different projects. One grant concentrates on preventive activities in the field of illicit drug misuse and criminality, the other is aimed at women with social problems.

Another Swedish organisation, IOGT-NTO (a temperance movement) have also received financial support for activities in Ig-

nalina. ECAD and IOGT-NTO are planning to carry out joint programs in this region.

Our partners on the Lithuanian side are Dr Saulius Chaplinskas, director of the Lithuanian AIDS Centre and ECAD Advisory Board member, and Mindaugas Survilas, director of a local treatment centre for drug addicts.

As an introduction to these future programs, ECAD carried out a conference in Visagina (one of the three cities in Ignalina region) on April 25, 2003. Tomas Hallberg and Saulius Chaplinskas participated in the conference. City councils of these three cities are now considering the possibilities of joining the ECAD network of member cities.

A follow-up conference is planned for mid-July 2003. ECAD and our local partners expect about 150 participants to take part in the event. A series of seminars on illicit drugs and anti-drug policy will start this autumn. The aim of these seminars is to prepare participants to initiate and to guide an anti-drug network in Lithuanian schools.

Åke Setréus is the ECAD project leader for the Ignalina region.

Is Cannabis a Harmless Drug?

On March 7, 2003, the Swedish National Drug Policy Co-ordinator arranged an International Symposium on Cannabis. 70 scientists, parliamentarians and decision makers from 14 countries took part in the event. A report under the title "Is Cannabis a Harmless Drug? - connecting research to drug control policy" is now released. The idea behind the Symposium was to bring together prominent researchers from different fields and have them present their latest findings on the effects of cannabis use.



These presentations - touching on issues ranging from how cannabis affects the brain biologically, to the latest epidemiological research on cannabis dependence and prevalence of use - formed the basis for a discussion on how to bridge research and policy in the area of cannabis use. The main points from the presentations at the symposium are presented in this report.

The following researchers took part in the Symposium: Peter Allebeck, Göteborg University, Sweden; James C. Anthony, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, USA; Heather Ashton, University of Newcastle upon Tyne, UK; Steven R. Childers, Wake Forest University, North Carolina, USA; Paul Griffiths, EMCDDA, Lisbon, Portugal; Thomas Lundqvist, Lund University Hospital, Sweden.

★ ECAD CONFERENCE



ECAD 11th MAYORS' CONFERENCE CYPRUS, 19-21 MAY, 2004

The ECAD Eleventh Mayors' Conference will take place in Cyprus, May 19-21, 2004.

The Conference is hosted by the Municipality of Aglantzia.

Please mark these dates with a red pen in your calendar!

For more information please contact the ECAD Stockholm office at

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Welcome to the ECAD Mayors' Conference in Cyprus!

EMCDDA tries to mastermind European drug policy



Lisbon,
Portugal

By Hassela Nordic Network:

Since its launch in 1993, the EMCDDA (the Lisbon-based European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction) has tried to issue annual reports containing comparable data on drug use from the various European Union Member States. So far, they've failed miserably. The EMCDDA 1999 report is probably the worst example. It's a real bad piece of work, more reminding of a bad novel than anything having to do with science.

Since then, EMCDDA has more and more become a lobby group for harm reduction activities, and in its latest issue of 'Drugs in focus', EMCDDA shows its proper 'lobby face' suggesting that co-ordination is a key element of national and European drug policy.

However, in what direction should European drug policy be co-ordinated?

We certainly don't want any of the crap represented by the Dutch government's disastrous policy on so-called coffee shops or distribution of heroin instead of comprehensive measures to help drug addicts get off drugs.

Now the EMCDDA has taken upon themselves to tell EU policy-makers that

1. Further work is needed to define what co-ordination of drugs policy should entail.
2. The redrafting of the European Union's Constitution provides an opportunity to strengthen the common approach to combating drugs.
3. Enhanced co-ordination must be promoted and secured at European Union level among all Member States in the context of forthcoming enlargement.
4. Mechanisms for co-ordinating drugs policy vary considerably between countries and not all countries have appointed a national co-ordinator.
5. Co-ordination needs to encompass all aspects of national drugs policy, including healthcare, social issues, law enforcement and international collaboration.
6. Research into the effectiveness of present mechanisms for drugs co-ordination at both national and international levels is a prerequisite for improvement. The new EMCDDA Management Board Chairman, Marcel Reimen, who replaced fifth columnist Mike Trace says, "As we approach European enlargement, it is more critical than ever that we take a common approach to the drugs menace. Co-ordination of efforts both within and between countries is a vital component of an effective drugs policy."

Please observe how the EMCDDA people avoid to define the meaning of 'common approach' and 'co-ordination of efforts'. This is deliberate as it would be very difficult for some member countries to ac-

cept a 'common approach' aligning itself with e.g. the Dutch model.

EMCDDA is trying to exercise more power than it has or should have and you should watch out very carefully for material published by the EMCDDA, an organisation well-known for its lenient view on drugs and drug use.

Article 1 of the 'Council Regulation (EEC) No 302/93 of 8 February 1993 on the establishment of a European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction' states that 'The Centre's Objective is to provide.....the [European] Community and its Member States with objective, reliable and comparable information at a European level concerning drugs and drug addiction and their consequences. The statistical, documentary and technical information processed or produced is intended to help provide the Community and the Member States with an overall view of the drug and drug addiction situation when, in their respective areas of competence, they take measures or decide on action. The Centre may not take any measure, which in any way goes beyond the sphere of information and the processing thereof.'

Article 2 B. Improvement of data-comparison methods of the same Regulation states that [the Centre should] "ensure improved comparability, objectivity and reliability of data at European level by establishing indicators and common criteria of a non-binding nature..."

Article 7 Legal status states, "The Centre shall have legal personality. It shall enjoy, in each Member State, the most extensive legal status granted to legal persons under their laws; in particular, it may purchase or dispose of movable and immovable property and may institute legal proceedings."

The question is how long governments in the EU Member States are going to be prepared to continue to pay for EMCDDA's lobbying efforts.

EMCDDA has now been working since 1993 without being capable of establishing a system for objective, reliable and comparable information from the Member States. Any other company in the 'real' world would have been closed down after showing such inadequate competence. Not being able to provide the proper information, the EMCDDA has resorted to presentations of a mishmash of anecdotal 'evidence', scattered showers of incomparable statistics, and some amazing statements in so-called 'fact' boxes.

In 1999, the "legal personality" EMCDDA started its 1999 report with a legal notice which reads as follows:

"No responsibility, real or implied, is accepted by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drugs Addiction (EMCDDA), nor by any person or company acting on behalf of the EMCDDA, for the use that may be made of the information contained in this document. The contents do not in any way imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of the EMCDDA concerning the legal status of any country, territory, city or area or its authorities, including the delineation of its frontiers or boundaries.

Unless indicated otherwise, this publication, including any recommendations or statements of opinion, does not represent the policy of the EMCDDA, its partners, any EU Member State or any agency or institution of the European Union or European Communities."

Whose policy is represented today?

Conclusions - VI Inter-Parliamentarian Meeting on Drug Issues

The Sixth Inter-Parliamentarian Meeting on Drug Issues was held in Stockholm on 26 and 27 May 2003. Parliamentarians, senior officials and experts from 20 countries met to discuss the issue of young people and drug abuse and the policies and programmes that are needed to address effectively this problem of great concern for many people.

On the basis of the discussion, the hosts draw the following conclusions:

Drug abuse among youth

There is a shared concern about the increase in drug abuse amongst the young. Polydrug abuse is becoming more common, as is the combined abuse of alcohol and illicit drugs.

Differences between countries remain, but drug abuse seems to have become a global phenomenon. The growing popularity of synthetic drugs like amphetamines and ecstasy is a matter of particular concern. Many young people start to use drugs under the impression that it will give them more friends, more fun and more energy. The dark reality of drug abuse becomes clear all too late.

Developing countries, with often large very young populations, are especially at risk of worsening drug situations that will have an impact on their development possibilities.

Action must start at the grass roots level. The problem is not somebody else's, it is ours! To make this evident, information about the problem must be collected and disseminated at local level. The media has an important and positive contribution to make in this regard. At the same time, we are facing a global problem, which needs a common response. The international drug conventions form the basis for our action.

Vulnerability

A range of risk and protective factors are at play when we talk about drug abuse amongst children and young people. Amongst the most important protective factors is bonding between parents and children, schools and pupils, communities and youth. Absenteeism from school, early alcohol use and easy availability of drugs in the community are amongst the most important risk factors.

It is important that our policies focus on reducing the risk and increasing the protective factors. Caring parents, educational opportunities, and supportive environments protect young people from drug abuse and other risk behaviours. Legislation that supports this and provides for the involvement of young people in society must be enacted and implemented.

Recreational use of drugs

The incipient trend towards "normalization" of recreational drug abuse in some youth subcultures is a cause for grave concern. There is a tendency to attach symbolic values or "meanings" to particular drugs, sometimes to fill an existential vacuum. This risks creating a social atmosphere that is permissive towards the abuse of various drugs.

Young people need space and opportunities to live their lives to the fullest without resorting to these "chemical technologies of bliss". It is everybody's task to ensure that our societies allow this.

Prevention

Prevention works if it starts early, takes a comprehensive and long term approach, addresses the whole range of youth health and life issues, and makes youth equal partners in planning and implementing interventions.

Schools

Schools, with their almost universal reach, provide a good venue for preventing drug abuse. They should not only provide young people with the right information but also build their skills to make healthy choices and resist pressures to use drugs. Furthermore, the success of preventive education is enhanced by its integration into broader health and knowledge promotion.

Treatment

Young people have special needs; these must be taken into account when devising treatment programmes. The family must be involved and the community mobilized for their reintegration into normal life. Treatment needs focusing on drugs but also on all the psychosocial problems of adolescents. An extensive assessment of adolescents may help address better the process of matching a patient with the required treatment.

White House Drug Czar launches 25-cities initiative

John Walters, Director of National Drug Control Policy and President Bush's "Drug Czar," announced on June 6th the start of a new 25-Cities Initiative. To help achieve the President's goal of reducing drug use among all Americans by 10 percent in two years and 25 percent in five years, Director Walters will visit 25 cities across the United States. In most communities in America, the drug problem is being actively addressed by federal, state, and local agencies and programs, but too often these efforts do not work in concert with each other. This initiative will seek to co-ordinate and focus these efforts in achieving shared goals.

"The experience of this nation has taught us that when we push back against the problem of illegal drugs, the problem gets smaller,"
said Walters.

Many Americans are unaware of the significant progress that has been made recently in curbing drug use. In 2002, youth drug use dropped to its lowest levels in the past decade. This is largely because of the creativity and dedication of individuals at the local level. The White House is seeking to establish an on-going relationship with these cities to continue to identify and accomplish significant improvement in certain key measures of drug use in each city. By meeting with volunteers and developing teams of local citizens and officials to identify problems they can address and then setting up the mechanism to monitor results, the White House hopes to bolster cities' efforts to reduce substance abuse and addiction.



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The 25 cities that will be included in the initiative are: Atlanta, Baltimore, Boston, Chicago, Cincinnati, Cleveland, Dallas, Denver, Detroit, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami, Minneapolis, New York, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Phoenix, Portland, Sacramento, San Diego, San Francisco, Seattle, St. Louis, Tampa, and Washington, D.C.



GLOBAL 5th CONFERENCE ON DRUG PREVENTION

Confronting the World's Drug Problem: The Cultural, Ethical and Scientific Dimensions



The Global Drug Prevention Network and Associazione Casa Rosetta are honoured to invite you to the 5th Global conference on Drug Abuse Prevention to be held in Rome from September 22 to 26, 2003.

"The time has come to form new national and international coalitions and clearly affirm the value of life. We must say "no" to drugs. We must be against all sorts of legalisation plans or easy and hasty solutions. The problem of drugs cannot be solved with drugs. We must say "no" to the easy permissiveness. We should be able to encourage the value of life, to foster new existential projects, to find the right motivations so as to reach a new and better quality of life." from Invitation

The Conference has the following major goals and objectives:

- Increase the world's awareness of the scope and destructive power to civilised societies from the production, distribution and consumption of illegal drugs, and to increase the world's awareness of its capacity to overcome this evil.
- To discuss the ethical, moral, and scientific principles and practices that serve as the foundation for effective substance abuse prevention programs.
- To discuss the obstacles and solutions to effective drug demand reduction programs, laws, and policies such as legalisation, reduced regulations, and practices that enable illegal drug consumption.

- To persuade the nations of the world of the importance of vigorously supporting and implementing the United Nations' conventions on illegal drugs.

- Build on the body of knowledge, commitments, and relationships established at the Global Drug Prevention Conferences of Lima, Peru; Bangkok, Thailand; Palermo, Italy; and Penang, Malaysia.

- Expand and strengthen the Global Drug Prevention Network.

NB July 31, 2003 is closing date for registration!

For more information
www.casarosetta.org



Preynet is a European network of bodies promoting the use of telematics for the prevention of dependencies. The emphasis lies on illicit drugs, alcohol and smoking, but Preynet includes behaviours like compulsive gambling, gaming or use of the internet. "Telematic" is more than the internet. It stands for a range of existing or emerging electronic and computer-mediated communication technologies.

The 2nd Preynet Conference of Telematics in Addiction Prevention, Dublin, Ireland, 23-25 October 2003

Preynet initiates this international conference

- to disseminate the learning outcomes of current telematic projects,
- to provide a forum for sharing of ideas and experiences,
- to discuss the issues that are pertinent to best practice in the field of Telematics and Drug Prevention and
- to increase awareness of the benefits of Telematics for Drug Education and Prevention.

The conference attracts organisations and agencies or individuals involved in the area of Drug Education and Prevention, Health

Informatics, Research, Statutory and Voluntary Health Service Provision, and those with an interest in telematic advancements.

In our continued effort to stimulate transnational and multidisciplinary exchange & co-operation to enable professionals to exploit opportunities offered by new communication technologies, we would like to invite you to join us at this unique event and extend our warmest welcome to you on behalf of the organising committee Peer van der Kreeft, Preynet Network Director

For more information
www.preynet.net

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 **countries'** well being.



ECAD is Europe's leading organisation promoting a drug free Europe and representing millions of European citizens. Drug dealing and drug abuse cause enormous problems in Europe. Nations and their citizens are affected by the consequences of drug abuse. ECAD member cities work to develop initiatives and efforts against drug abuse supporting the United Nations Conventions which oppose legalisation and promote policies to eradicate drug abuse worldwide. Has your city joined ECAD?

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