



ECAD NEWSLETTER



EUROPEAN CITIES AGAINST DRUGS
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WORLD FORUM
AGAINST DRUGS



STOCKHOLM '08

Start of a Global Network Against Drugs

"No problem is so large that drugs will not make it larger!"



Signing of the Declaration, photo Marcus Haggström

The first ever World Forum Against Drugs was held in Stockholm, Sweden, from September 8th through the 10th. This global forum is the first of its kind at which NGOs, self-help groups, treatment centres, academics, municipal and regional authorities, politicians and other decision-makers, private individuals, the business community and others from around the world have got the opportunity to meet to express ideas and share experiences about how to work successfully against illicit drugs.

Eleven Swedish national organisations (including ECAD) and co-partners have taken the initiative to organise this forum. Their first goal was to reach out around the globe, especially the grass-roots NGOs that are working hard to reduce drug abuse and illicit drugs trafficking. As a result of their efforts, more than 80 countries from 5 continents were represented at the First World

Forum Against Drugs.

One of the explanations for this overwhelmingly positive response is the great need for an active community of people committed to effective drug abuse prevention.

Another important goal of the World Forum Against Drug was to send a message to the upcoming UNGASS (March 2009) on narcotic drugs that there is strong popular support from around the world for the UN Conventions on Narcotic Drugs.

As the participants of the Forum have expressed it, the central issue of drug policy today is whether the world accepts growing illegal drug use or the world continues to work to stop illegal drug use and trafficking. The Forum declared that 'the proper goal of drug prevention is to stop illegal drug use; not to tolerate it.'

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New Director about ECAD

"ECAD Newsletter" talks with the new ECAD Director Jörgen Svidén about his vision for ECAD.

„ Our goal is to strengthen ECAD as a knowledge-based organisation.”
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World Forum: Extracts

Sten Nordin, Mayor, Stockholm

By taking the initiative of forming "European cities against drugs" (ECAD), the City of Stockholm is participating actively in international narcotics politics. ECAD aims to unite major cities in a joint fight to stop the legalisation of narcotics. Stockholm is and will continue to be a strong voice in the fight against the use and legalisation of narcotics."

★ ECAD NEWS



Photo Marcus Haggström

Her Majesty the Queen of Sweden:

Unfortunately, drug abuse has become a global problem. In the past we could talk about producer countries and consumer countries. But the situation has changed. Now we have a universal problem and a challenge which demands joint solutions."

Guiding thread of knowledge

Interview with Jörgen Svidén, ECAD Director

“ECAD Newsletter” (EN): Jörgen, could you please tell us shortly what your background is.

Jörgen Svidén (JS): During the last five years I have worked at the Office of the Swedish National Drug Policy Coordinator, also known as “Mobilisation Against Drugs”. I am a lawyer and initially worked at the “Mobilisation” with legal issues. Then the area of my responsibilities widened and included even the supervision of the comprehensive drug policy programme in three Swedish cities, Stockholm, Gothenburg and Malmö.

During the time that I have worked at the “Mobilisation”, I learned in-depth how the anti-drug work is organised on the local and national levels. I am convinced that our organisation – ECAD – has a significant role to play. This role is not taken by any other organisation in Europe, EU or UN. ECAD emphasises the importance of cooperation between different agencies and collaborators in the anti-drug field.

A comprehensive drug policy resembles a car, if you will allow a metaphor. We may find world’s best manufacturers of brakes, steering wheels and start motors but if no one can put these parts together, there is not going to be a car. No matter how many successful local projects there might be, if no one binds them together in a overall system, the drug policy will not function optimal as a whole.

EN: Let us continue our talk about ECAD. Jörgen, what are the ECAD’s strongest sides, in your opinion?

JS: Our strength is in the number of members. To tackle drugs requires contributions at every level. We are 270 member cities today. Together we are strong. We can make a difference.

We know that when the society mobilises, the situation changes. When society does not mobilise, the situation also develops but in a different direction. Historically, Europe encountered its modern drugs problems only in the 60ies. Since then, a lot of research has been done. The drugs situation has been measured inside out many times over. Every time we see that the drug misuse trends go down, it is due to the mobilisation of the society, and vice versa. This is the message we should constantly remind ourselves of. By becoming a member in ECAD, a city takes a stance against drugs and shows its engagement in the drugs issue.

EN: What needs to be improved in ECAD’s work, in your opinion?

JS: Let me point out our strength again. There is an unbelievable amount of knowledge within the ECAD-family. Our weakness is then the fact that we have not been efficient in using this knowledge. ECAD needs to convey information, methods and experiences to the member cities in a more structured way. Our member cities should be contributors. It is not enough just to be a member and pay membership fees. By the way, not all cities pay their fees and this also needs to be changed.

EN: What concerns you in regard to the organisation’s future?

JS: If ECAD starts asking for more participation, there is a risk that not all cities can respond positively. In a short term we might become fewer cities though we would win in a long run by having more committed members. I believe that there are only a number of cities which would not sign under the ECAD’s appeal – a drug-free Europe.

I also consider it as a risk that ECAD would drive itself into a corner by getting into a discussion on methods. We are against illicit drugs but we are not against different methods to tackle drugs.

However, we will continue to be a strong voice in the debate in regard to encouraging cities to become committed

on drug issues. Unfortunately, there are many passive cities which do not do especially much in this area. We can also attach greater weight to efforts that really work.

I believe that ECAD needs to heighten itself to a knowledge-based organisation. Our work and activities need to be based on long and proven results. We do not need to always look for the latest findings in the field. There are many old methods which are highly efficient. The problem is how to spread knowledge about these methods.

EN: Jörgen, let us summarise what has been said.

JS: We are many and hopefully we will become more. Together we possess a great stock of knowledge and experience which we can share with each other and spread to our neighbours. Our goal is to strengthen ECAD as a knowledge-based organisation.



Jörgen Svidén, Director ECAD

Ireland tops EU survey on drug access

In the 'Young People and Drugs' survey conducted last May among 15- to 24-year-olds across the 27 EU member states, 24% of those surveyed in Ireland said it was 'very easy' to get cocaine and 26% to get ecstasy. This is the highest among the 27 countries surveyed and more than twice the average across the EU, which was 11% for cocaine and 12% for ecstasy. According to the survey, another 33% of young Irish people found it 'fairly easy' to get hold of cocaine, which means that overall 57% found cocaine easy to secure, well above the EU average of 33%. Another 35% found it 'fairly easy' to get hold of ecstasy. Access to cannabis is the easiest of all, with 45% of young Irish people saying it was 'very easy' and a further 32% saying it was 'fairly easy'. This is also above the EU average of 32% (very easy) and 31% (fairly easy).

Asked about effective ways to fight drugs, just 50% agreed that 'tough measures should be taken against drug dealers and traffickers', the second-lowest across the 27 countries surveyed and just ahead of the UK (48%). Instead, 42% of the Irish backed 'rehabilitation of drug users', the second-highest across the EU and well ahead of the EU average of 33%.

[/drugs.ie](http://drugs.ie)

World Forum:

From Page 1

The first World Forum Against Drugs ended in the closing session by launching a global, active and ongoing network of organisations united behind the UN Conventions on Narcotic Drugs. One of the tasks for this new global network will be to organise a series of future world conferences against drug use and trafficking. Sven-Olov Carlsson, representative of the Swedish umbrella organization 'NGOs against drugs', said at the closing session, "Human rights are incompatible with drug abuse. All individuals have the right to a life that is not harmed by drugs. Policy-makers need to defend and protect this right. The rights and interests of drug users are not served by supporting the continuation of drug abuse."

World Forum Against Drugs is a non-political movement; its only aim is to work for the vision of a drug free world, and to protect the human rights of drug prevention.

/Drugnews

DECLARATION of World Forum Against Drugs

"There can be no other goal than a Drug-free world"

September 10, 2008 the Declaration of World Forum Against Drugs was signed by eleven organisations and will be sent to UNGASS 2009. Continuously individuals and organisations are signing the declaration which supports and is guided by the UN Conventions on Narcotics (1961, 1971 and 1988), the UN Convention on The Rights of the Child and the resolution resulting from the 1998 UNGASS-meeting.

Read the declaration at www.wfad08.org



Robert L. DuPont, USA:

"Many delegates came to the meeting with a demoralized sense that the world had to accept the ever-growing problem of illegal drug use as an inescapable part of modern life. They left the meeting secure in the knowledge that they need not to surrender to illegal drug use. They left knowing that the rise in illegal drug use could be stopped by a highly motivated group of individuals, NGOs and government officials

who, while powerless alone, together were strong enough to turn back the tide of drug abuse." (Extract from the address)

Frans Koopmans, de Hoop, Netherlands:

"The Netherlands did never foresee the commercialisation of the selling of cannabis, how profitable this selling would be and how determining the economic motive would become for the developments in the cannabis market in later years." (Extract)

 NEW MEMBERS

WELCOME
ABERDEEN, SCOTLAND!



4-year Action Plan and European Alliance on Drugs

September 18, 2008 - the Commission adopted "An EU Drugs Action Plan for 2009-2012" which proposes wide-ranging measures to strengthen European cooperation to curb the adverse consequences of drug use and cut drug-related crime. These measures also include a European Alliance on Drugs to reduce the harm caused by drugs in our society. Through the European Alliance on Drugs, the Commission also calls on government bodies, public services and voluntary organisations to work in partnership.

"With up to 2 million problem drug users in the EU, it's high time to raise awareness of vulnerable groups, especially youth, on the risks of drug taking" stated Vice-President Jacques Barrot, Commissioner responsible for Justice, Freedom and Security, "The European Alliance on Drugs will mobilise Europe's citizens to play an active part in the fight against drugs, i.e. by informing and disseminating widely the successful initiatives achieved so far."

The Action Plan 2009-2012 builds on the existing approach of the EU Drugs Strategy 2005-2012 which set out a European model for drug policy based on a balanced approach to reduce both supply and demand for drugs. The five main priorities of the new Action Plan include reducing the demand for drugs and raising public awareness, mobilising European citizens, reducing the supply of drugs, improving international cooperation and facilitating a better understanding of the drug phenomenon.

Actions proposed include measures to improve the quality, availability and coverage of treatment and harm reduction programmes for drug users and the establishment of intelligence-led police and customs operations to counter large-scale organised crime groups both in the EU and on the drug trafficking routes from Afghanistan and Latin America.

The EU Drugs Action Plan 2009-2012 will be presented to the Council and is expected to be adopted before the end of the year.

What has European action on illicit drugs achieved so far?

The Action Plan 2009-2012 is based on an evaluation of the Action Plan 2005-2008 carried out by the Commission with the support of the Member States, the European Monitoring Centre on Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), Europol and European NGOs.

Achievements of the past years include a decrease in the number of drug-related deaths and in the spread of HIV through drug injecting. Overall Member States have implemented a broad range of responses to the drug problem, including prevention, treatment, harm reduction and rehabilitation and taken measures to reduce crimes such as drug trafficking and money laundering.

The evaluation confirms that, despite differences in approach, Member States are increasingly working closer together and that national drug policies are converging. At the international level, the EU has gained influence by operating as one body in UN drug fora and EU drug policy increasingly provides a model for countries worldwide.

Commentary: Swedish independent drug policy expert

www.reageramera.blogg.se encourages the readers of the EU Action Plan to observe the use of terms: the Alliance is created with the aim to reduce the harm caused by drugs and the supply of drugs - not primarily to decrease the demand for drugs.

Local alcohol- and drug prevention work demands time

Evaluation of prevention work in 6 experimental cities in Sweden

As a part of Sweden's national action plans to prevent alcohol and drug-related problems, the National Institute of Public Health initiated a development project with six municipalities. The aim of the project was to assist the municipalities in developing coordinated long-term prevention work using evidence-based methods. Six municipalities were chosen to take part in the project: Kalmar, Kramfors, Laholm, Lund, Solna and Umeå. Six other municipalities of similar size and geographical distribution were also selected to serve as a control. The work with the test municipalities began 1 January 2003.

The overarching question was whether development in the area of drugs and alcohol would differ between the test municipalities and the control municipalities.

In the qualitative part of the evaluation, the six test municipalities resulted in better organization and structure, and more persistence in the prevention work. In contrast, the work done in the control municipalities appears more fragmented and varies more over time.

The quantitative results, on the other hand, showed only minor differences in development between the test municipalities and control municipalities. In certain respects, however, a trend toward more restrictive attitudes was witnessed in the test municipalities, where the perception of risk also changed more.

When analysing the results, how the project was implemented was discussed. The conclusion here was that evidence regarding the impact at the societal level was lacking for most of the initiatives implemented. Problems were moreover seen in the imple-

mentation of certain initiatives, including that, in many cases, they reached only a limited number of people in the intended target groups. For some programs, no impact can be expected for several years yet. It was also concluded that many of the control municipalities implemented several preventive initiatives.

The test municipalities to a larger degree chose to work with initiatives that had limited potential to prevent alcohol and drug problems. This calls into question the direction of the project. There was, on the part of the steering committee, a reluctance to push their ideas regarding what programs the test municipalities should choose. Not until the final year of the project was the decision made that all the test municipalities should work with measures to restrict availability. If the direction had been firmer, a bigger difference may have been seen compared to the control municipalities.

Lessons for the future projects:

- Municipalities can be encouraged to develop drug and alcohol prevention initiatives.
- To have an impact on consumption levels and alcohol- and drug-related problems, however, more manifest direction toward effective prevention methods is needed.
- This process takes time: despite the favourable circumstances that prevailed in the test municipalities, it took 2-3 years for the concrete work to get under way.
- Gaining acceptance for these measures requires a broad and systemic approach to information and formation of public opinion in as many sectors of society as possible.

Positive outcomes of drug prevention

Poland used to find itself placed somewhere in the middle of the European scale in regard to drug misuse among young people. Five years ago, 14 per cent of 15-16-year-olds and 26 per cent of 17-18-year-olds used cannabis during the past 12 months. Concerning amphetamines (the problem drug number one) the statistics showed 3.5 per cent and 9.5 per cent respectively.

Since then some great work has been done in the field of prevention. This was revealed at the 15th ECAD Mayors' Conference that took place in Warsaw on May 28-29. Preventive measures gave clear positive results. Boguslaw Prajsner from the PBS DGA Research agency told the delegates that the drug misuse dropped in all categories between 2003 and 2007. In numbers it means that 11 per cent of the younger teenagers and 17.4 per cent of the older teens have used cannabis during the last 12 months in 2007. The misuse of amphetamines decreased to 2 per cent and 4.5 per cent respectively.

Representative of the Warsaw Metropolitan Police Andrzej Kulesza pointed out the role of his agency in the decrease of the illicit drugs consumption. The Police carry out extensive drug preventive work in form of school patrols. They have also launched a program the name of which conveys a clear message: "React. Inform. Don't tolerate". According to the Police, the number of drug-related crimes has also significantly decreased since last year, especially in the capital.

By Pelle Olsson, Swedish journalist and conference participant

*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 **societies'** 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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