

Controlled Substance Policy

This union notes:

1. The “War on drugs” costs the UK (annually) £10bn (*The Observer 20th September 2009*).
2. The estimated loss to crime is (annually) £15bn (*The Observer 20th September 2009*).
3. Criminals are currently making an estimated £6bn (*The Observer 20th September 2009*).
4. The drug policy thinktank “Transform” has calculated savings of up to £14bn a year if drugs were controlled and regulated.
5. Thousands of UK citizens are criminalised every year for using recreational substances.
6. The drugs trade is unregulated and there are no controls over quality, concentration of product or of pollutants within the trade of narcotics.
7. The current regimen in Portugal which decriminalised possession of all drugs in 2001.
8. The Portuguese system has seen a positive impact on recidivism, social reintegration and savings to government.
9. The Swiss people voted by referendum in 2008 to endorse a system to prescribe Heroin to addicts.
10. The Swiss have seen a decrease in crime, disease, death and fewer users of drugs.
11. Outside Africa, the greatest incidence of HIV/AIDS is amongst injecting drug users.

This union believes:

1. The war on drugs is unwinnable so long as prohibition and abstaining are the criteria that define a “win”.
2. That when law enforcement expenditure has risen, criminal profits have increased and drug use is increased. The “War” has been lost.
3. Every death caused by drug misadventure is tragic and mostly avoidable.
4. That needle exchange services reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS.
5. A decriminalised, regulated and licensed drugs trade would:
 - Reduce deaths through
 - Generate revenue for the exchequer
 - Reduce crime generated by addicts seeking money to secure a “fix”
 - Reduce drug use
6. There is a responsibility for all concerned parties to ensure accurate, accessible information is available to anyone considering using drugs.
7. There should be an end to the hypocrisy which leads to there being socially acceptable drugs (alcohol, nicotine) and those which aren’t.

This union resolves:

1. To commit to having a full, open and honest debate about drugs with as much of the membership as possible.
2. To involve the relevant agencies in our decisions.
3. To seek to influence decision makers to review and radically overhaul the way the country views and controls these substances.
4. To campaign to decriminalise the possession of substances for personal use.
5. To oppose any cuts to primary health services which would be prejudicial to the public health.

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