



Foundation for a Drug-Free Europe

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Session #3

Nexus between Illicit Drugs, Organized Crime and Terrorism,

Recommendation to OSCE States Members By Mr. Christian Mirre from Foundation for a Drug Free Europe

Hofburg / Vienna, 10-11 July 2017

Chairman, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen,

The non-profit NGO Foundation for a Drug Free Europe (FDPE established in Sweden-2004) is working with a *hundred* of European Say No To Drugs (SNTD) associations of volunteers and using the materials of the Foundation for a Drug Free World (www.drugfreeworld.org) with the purpose of preventing and stopping the debilitating use of drugs by educating the youth on their harmful effects. The last 2017 Reports from UNODC and EMCDDA again gave alarming data on increasing drug consumption in Europe with 7585 death by overdoses.

So, how to tackle the drug problem and efficiently protect the youth?

Based on grass-roots experiences and assessments made by our SNTD associations throughout Europe, there are great unsatisfied requests of *information* from the public, parents, teachers, police, social workers, military, security agents and even from the youth themselves on drugs, *what they are and what they do*. So our

SNTD groups using the booklets *The Truth About Drugs* educating on the 10 most used drugs, distribute them in the streets, bars, shops, get lectures done in the schools, associations, institutions, everywhere; they also use a DVD with educative ads and real testimonies to put on TVs, in cinemas, airport and railway station screens, waiting rooms, etc.; they organize also marathons, cyclo-runs, motor races, sports competitions, concerts, flashmobs, and more to inform and educate.

So, empowered with the right information the youth can now *take the right decision* and not be any longer the effects of the propaganda and the clever marketing made by groups having vested interests in drugs.

An analysis of the *drug problem* shows that until now the concern is more on *the consequences* than on the *causes*. One cause which could be easily addressed is the *ignorance*, the lack of information on *what the drugs are and their harmful effects* on the body, the mind and the personality.

The history has shown that *neither prohibition nor legalization nor decriminalization* are a solution; the alcohol and cannabis are a good example and they keep continuing directly or indirectly to kill people and youth. On the opposite an *innovative, comprehensive and sustainable prevention* approach based on straight factual information and on an appropriate *integrated education* on the harmful effects of drugs has shown to be effective. Three examples:

-In Italy, in 2010 following a huge prevention action in the streets, in the schools, in media, on TVs, with the materials *The Truth About Drugs*, a Senator announced a drop of 25 % of the drug consumption in the year;

-In Tamra, a city in the North of Israel, a distribution of thousands booklets *The Truth About Drugs* alternating with lectures done to 5000 students resulted in a drop of 70% of the drug consumption.

-In Colombia, preventive education on drugs caused in 2016 a 30% drop of drugs consumption.

If properly supported by the States, Civil Society can take a great load of the job to be done.

We are forced to repeat:

Prevention is better than cure,
Prevention does work when properly done.

Recommendations from FDFE

We urge the OSCE Member States to:

- 1) Reconsider the little *ratio of the budget allocated for prevention* of only 4% vs. 95 % to treatment and repression;
- 2) Refer to the three cornerstone drug control Conventions of 1961, 1971 (amended by the 1972 Protocol) and 1988; to the UNODC, CND, INCB and the EU Action Plan, to take *effective and practical prevention measures* to fight against illicit drugs and the connected organized crime and terrorism;
- 3) Provide the population with *factual data on the drugs effects* to counter the false data spread in the society by the drug pushers;
- 4) Implement the U.N. Convention on the Rights of the Child, article 33;
- 5) Implement *inclusive positive prevention education campaigns to:*
 - a) Raise the awareness of our youngsters and population on the harmful effects of drugs,
 - b) Empower the youth with the proper knowledge allowing them to take an informed decision for their life;
- 6) Recognize to the civil society, the NGOs and their volunteers the rights *to cooperate with the States, with the law enforcement and judicial personnel*, to address and counter the drug problem;
- 7) Be determined to *create a healthy and safe environment* protecting from the drugs the individuals, the families, the communities and the society as a whole.

***"The greatest enemy of knowledge is not ignorance,
it is the illusion of knowledge".***

(Stephen Hawking)

Thank you to the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship for organizing the sessions and to all of you for your attention.

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