



A HARM REDUCTION APPROACH TO DRUG POLICY

Adopted by FYEG General Assembly on 27 May 2017 in Madrid, Spain

In many European states, narcotics policy springs from the view that drugs should never be present in a society. Based on this ideology, the goal becomes a simplistic one: minimising the demand for narcotics. This is typically done by stigmatising drug users, believing that less people will use narcotics if you make them suffer for it.

This type of policy is neither morally defensible nor efficient. In for example Sweden, which is one of the most extreme countries practicing the war on narcotics, drug related deaths have been rising since 2006. They are currently the second highest among European states. Clearly the restrictive strategy has proven to be a failure.

The Federation of Young European Greens advocates a more scientific debate on drug policies. Our political platform calls for a legalisation of drugs in order to repeal the stigma, reduce the health risks and minimise drug-related crimes. We refuse however to remain passive in countries where this goal currently looks out of reach. We need solutions that save lives today.

Harm reduction is an alternative to a restrictive and morally laden narcotics policy. The term refers to a set of practical strategies aimed at reducing the negative consequences associated with drug use. This approach is often in conflict with the idea of a society free from drugs, as many harm reduction measures are accused of “normalising” drugs.

As greens, we realise that fighting the suffering that drug addicts endure is of greater importance than fighting the narcotics themselves. When handling the politics of narcotics, we always see the humans behind the numbers and ceaselessly fight for every person’s right to proper health care. It is not our intention to play down the dangers of narcotics. The money that is saved from the expensive persecution regime needs to go into financing broadly designed drug abuse prevention programmes for everyone and addiction consultation and withdrawal programmes for anyone needing them, which are currently funded inadequately or non-existing.

Several measures exist that are based on harm reduction. The most common one is the use of needle exchange-programs, where people who inject drugs get free access to clean syringes. This is an evidence based-approach to decrease the spread of infectious diseases such as HIV and hepatitis C, and prevent life threatening infections.



A more progressive step is the use of staffed injection rooms, which exist in for example Germany, Norway and Denmark. Injection rooms decrease and prevent overdoses while giving people with an addiction the dignity they deserve. They also establish a non-judgemental contact between the abusers and the health care system. A further reaching instrument is the controlled drug dispensing to people who are seriously addicted and have participated before in detoxification programmes but not succeeded. This measure is successfully applied eg. in Switzerland.

Based on the above, FYEG advocates:

1. that all European states practice a harm reduction approach to drug policy
2. that needle exchange-programs are made available in all European states
3. that staffed injection rooms are made available in places with a high density of drug consumption via injection within Europe.
4. that all European states encourage drug users to testing purity of their drugs and provide possibility to do it to avoid consumption of narcotics contaminated by other, unknown and potentially more dangerous substances
5. that drug addiction consultation, drug abuse prevention, and withdrawal programmes receive an adequate funding so that anyone in Europe has access to them for free.