

## IDPC ACTIVITIES IN 2007

The international debate surrounding the issues related to the production, trafficking and use of illegal drugs has always been politically sensitive. The United Nations oversees a global system of control over substances – such as Heroin, Cocaine and Cannabis – that prohibits their cultivation, distribution and use. This system has been in place for almost a century, but the level of illegal drug use in many parts of the world continues to rise. As an increasing number of countries and local authorities implement policies that to some extent acknowledge and tolerate drug use amongst their citizens, the global consensus in support of tough drug policies is being questioned, and the level of disagreement on the direction and content of drug policies is increasing within and between countries.

Policymakers are therefore often torn between their responsibility to maintain their commitment to the spirit of the United Nations Conventions on Drugs (signed and ratified by almost all member states over the last four decades), and the experience and practice on the ground in their own country. Furthermore, as the scale and diversity of drug markets and drug problems have become more complex, so have the numerous policy options. In this context, it is sometimes understandable that politicians and diplomats struggle to find a coherent policy in this important area of international relations. It is important, therefore, that the experience from practitioners and researchers in this field – that provides the evidence on which policy should be based – is collated and presented to policymakers in a way that positively supports them in making difficult decisions.

The International Drug Policy Consortium aims to promote objective and open debate on the effectiveness, direction and content of drug policies at national and international level, and supports evidence-based policies that are effective in reducing drug-related harm. Based on the findings of our research and written work, the Consortium engages with officials and politicians in national governments and international agencies – through correspondence, face-to-face meetings and involvement in conferences and seminars – to promote effective policies, thereby making the most up-to-date research and practice knowledge available to decision makers.

These efforts are also informed by the scientific findings of the International Society for the Study of Drug Policy (ISSDP), which is a group of independent leading academics analysing and assessing drug policies and practices.

Consortium members have produced many reports and briefing papers on the subject of international drug policies, from both a programme and policy perspective. These can be accessed from our website that is dedicated to this issue ([www.idpc.info](http://www.idpc.info)). In addition, the Consortium itself produces briefing papers and commentaries on the main international debates in this field – up until now such briefings have been published on:

- The 2006 United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs
- The 2006 World Drug Report
- The European Union Green Paper on Engagement with Civil Society
- The Annual Review of the European Union Drug Strategy and Action Plan

All our publications support the aim of increasing the quality of the policy debate, and in particular the quality of engagement between governments and civil society. They are distributed through an email network that reaches more than 10,000 policymakers, academics and practitioners in over 100 countries.

Our plans for 2007 are to continue our analysis and reporting on key policy issues, and strengthen our lines of communication with governments and international agencies, with a growing focus on the preparations for the 2008 United Nations review of progress in global drug policy. For further information on the current work or future plans of the Consortium, visit the website ([www.idpc.info](http://www.idpc.info)). If you wish to receive future email alerts regarding IDPC reports and news, simply send your email address to [mt@internationaldrugpolicy.net](mailto:mt@internationaldrugpolicy.net). IDPC membership, as at March 2007, comprises the following organisations and networks:

- AKZEPT, Germany
- Australian Drug Foundation (ADF), Australia
- The Beckley Foundation Drug Policy Programme (BFDPP), UK
- Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA), Canada
- Canadian Foundation for Drug Policy (CFDP), Canada
- Central and Eastern European Harm Reduction Network (CEEHRN), Central and Eastern Europe, and Central Asia
- Centro de Respuestas Educativas y Comunitarias A.C. (CRECE), Mexico
- Correlation Network, Europe
- Drug Policy Action Group (DPAG), Ireland
- Drug Policy Alliance (USA)
- Drugscope, UK
- European Network on Drugs and Infections Prevention in Prison (ENDIPP), Europe
- Forum Droghe, Italy
- Groupement Romand d'Etudes sur l'Alcoolisme et les Toxicomanies (GREAT), Switzerland
- Hungarian Civil Liberties Union (HCLU), Hungary
- Intercambios (Argentina)
- International Harm Reduction Development Program (IHRD)
- International Harm Reduction Association (IHRA)
- New Zealand Drug Foundation (NZDF), New Zealand
- Persepolis, Iran
- Release, UK
- South Eastern European Adriatic Addiction Treatment Network (SEEAN)
- The Federation of European Professionals Working in the Field of Drug Abuse (ERIT), Europe
- Transnational Institute Drugs & Democracy Programme (TNI), The Netherlands
- Turning Point, Australia
- Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), USA