

Recommendation 609 (1970)¹

Drug dependence

Parliamentary Assembly

I. Public health aspects

The Assembly,

1. Considering that the rapid increase in the abuse of drugs, particularly among youth, has become a major public health problem in Europe ;
2. Considering that in the last few years patterns of drug abuse have become more complex, and that further research into the many aspects of drug abuse is necessary,
3. Considers that due attention should be given to the prevention of drug abuse through educational and other means, and that persons dependent on drugs should be afforded adequate treatment and rehabilitation services without respect to their ability to pay for such services ;
4. Notes with appreciation the work of the World Health Organisation designed to encourage and assist the development of improved services in these areas and the further necessary research in the field of drug dependence ;
5. Welcomes the work on the public health and penal aspects of drug dependence undertaken in the framework of the Inter-governmental Work Programme of the Council of Europe ;
6. Considers that the prevention and treatment of drug dependence involve multiple problems that go beyond the competence of any single profession, and stressing the need for a multidisciplinary approach to the drug problem ;
7. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers :
 - 7.1. invite member governments :
 - a. to make every effort, with the help of mass media and other educational resources, to inform the general public and special groups within it on the problems associated with the self-administration of dependence-producing drugs ;
 - b. to establish consultative centres where persons can seek professional advice and assistance in their efforts to abstain from drug taking ;
 - c. to set up a sufficient number of adequately equipped treatment centres for persons who have become psychically or physically dependent on drugs as well as special services for the medical and social rehabilitation of former drug patients ;
 - d. to ensure better facilities for research on problems of dependence on drugs, permitting research workers of the various disciplines and persons dealing with drug-dependent persons to advance their knowledge on the causes, prevention and treatment of drug dependence ;

1. Assembly debate on 21 September 1970 (13th Sitting) (see [Docs. 2815](#) Docs. 2815 and [Doc. 2830](#), reports of the Committee on Social and Health Questions, and of the Legal Affairs Committee). Text adopted by the Assembly on 21 September 1970 (13th Sitting).



7.2. entrust one of the competent institutes in the Council of Europe member States with the task of collecting and disseminating information on developments in drug dependence, and also with promoting and co-ordinating multidisciplinary research on drug dependence in Europe, in co-operation with the European Public Health Committee of the Council of Europe.

II. Legal aspects

The Assembly,

8. Expressing grave anxiety at the increase in drug taking in Council of Europe member States, particularly among young people ;

9. Considering that legal provisions and measures to control the production, trade, distribution and consumption of drugs and to combat illegal forms of dealing in drugs must be improved and can be made effective only by concerted action at national and international level ;

10. Considering that drug taking gives rise to a wide range of difficult and delicate problems the solution of which cannot be sought only through legal measures, and that Council of Europe member States should increase considerably their budgetary appropriations to cope with these problems ;

11. Convinced that much more information and research are required regarding the various aspects of the drug problem and the long-term effects of drug taking on the individual and on society as a whole, in order to be able to decide precisely what legal and other measures are appropriate ;

12. Taking the view, nevertheless, that some action has to be taken without delay in view of the urgency of the matter,

13. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers :

13.1. formulate, on the basis of the Annex, part A, to this recommendation, proposals for urgent legal measures to be taken by member States ;

13.2. invite member States which have not yet done so to become parties to the Single International Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961, and support the efforts made by the United Nations to draw up a Protocol on Psychotropic Substances to that Convention ;

13.3. bring about a common approach of member States to the drug problem, and formulate a European policy on which concerted legal action and practice can be based, taking into account the suggestions contained in the Annex, part B, to this recommendation ;

13.4. consider the advisability of setting up a European Drug Committee within the framework of the Council of Europe, with a view to strengthening Western European cooperation and to contributing to the work of the International Narcotics Control Board of the United Nations, the International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol) and the World Health Organisation.

Appendix

Proposals for legal action

A. Measures at national level

1. Drug dependence should be treated as an illness rather than a crime. Ordinary penal sanctions, existing penal institutions and normal methods of post-penal treatment are not appropriate for drug dependents. Such persons need special treatment -which should where necessary be made compulsory -in order to have maximum opportunities for readaptation ; and there should be special services and institutions to deal with them. Governments should make great efforts in this field.
2. The unauthorised use of any drug² should be prohibited by law. A distinction should, however, be made between less harmful drugs and the more dangerous ones creating significant social problems ; this distinction should be reflected in the national legal provisions which should also make special provisions for offences committed by drug dependents in an effort to obtain drugs.
3. The greatest possible attention should be concentrated on all forms of unlawful professional or commercial forms of production, possession and distribution of drugs. Traffickers, pedlars and producers should be liable to the most severe penalties. Penal sanctions should include imprisonment, fines covering the profits of illegal activities, confiscation of objects used in connection with such activities, measures of supervision, travel restrictions and endorsements in travel documents.
4. Control and protection of pharmaceutical and medical stocks and the raw material of drugs as well as supervision of doctors' prescriptions must be strengthened, since it appears that important quantities of the drugs taken or obtained by dependents and dealers come from officially authorised stocks or sources. Severe penalties and professional restrictions should be imposed upon those who do not comply with drug regulations.
5. The drug problem calls for a multidisciplinary approach. Action by government departments must be co-ordinated, and there must be full co-operation between the enforcement authorities, the welfare agencies and the medical and pharmaceutical profession. The solution cannot be found through legal provisions or the criminal law alone.

Measures at international and European level

6. Traffic in drugs is an international problem and can be controlled efficiently only by international co-operation. Therefore the Single International Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961, should be adhered to and the work of the United Nations concerning the envisaged Protocol on Psychotropic Substances to that Convention fully supported by all Council of Europe member States.
7. European co-operation is required to supplement this international machinery wherever it is deficient or whenever European requirements call for particular action.
8. Council of Europe member States should make an effort to agree on a common approach to the drug question, and to arrive at a European policy and common understanding on which concerted legal measures and practice can be based. There should be a continuous exchange of information and experience on the use of drugs, drug patterns, addicts, traffic and traffickers, convictions, measures taken, new drugs developed, research, treatment and education programmes. Common research should be carried out on various aspects of the drug problem.
9. A European policy should lay down provisions concerning the availability, production, distribution and control of drugs, the suppression of drug misuse and drug trafficking, and the treatment of drug dependents. It should, among other things, be based on an additional list of drugs to be controlled in all member States, so as to supplement the lists of drugs contained in the Single International Convention on Narcotic Drugs and the envisaged Protocol on Psychotropic Substances.
10. It is desirable that member States should adopt a common attitude concerning co-operation between producer and consumer countries, with a view to a better control of the production and cultivation of the plants which produce natural drugs (in particular the Cannabis sativa and the Papaver sumniferum).

2. For the purpose of this document the term "drug" means any substance listed by the appropriate authorities as being liable to abuse such as to constitute a serious social and public health problem.

11. The distinction between less harmful and dangerous drugs and the methods to deal with them should be settled by common consent among member States. There is an urgent need for comprehensive studies on the effects a policy of restricted availability of cannabis would produce both on society and on the individual.

12. The control of commercial exchanges and of suspicious travellers from States between which considerable illegal traffic of drugs is taking place should be strengthened and co-ordinated. A drug which is prohibited and causing considerable problems in one country should not be manufactured or handled without sufficient control in another country. Extradition of drug pedlars should be made more general.