

REPORT OF ENCOD STEERING COMMITTEE*

2012 – 2013

Reports of Boaz Wachtel, Enrico Fletzer, Fredrick Polak, Janko Belin and
Joep Oomen

(Reports of Farid Ghehioueche, Hanka Gabrielova and Michalis Theorodorpoulos were not
received)



Boaz Wachtel, Israel

First allow me to comment on the proposed changes in the SC size as proposed by Joep:

Joep wants to limit the number of the SC to three and that a supporting advisory committee (or other name) group will execute all or some of the decisions made by the SC. It is wrong, in my view to change the SC number for the following reasons:

1. There will always be a problem of a quorum (three is not enough) and therefore one or two people will make the decisions if one is not available for a meeting. That is not how it is made in most NGO's. the reason is to maintain a diversity of opinions and not let one or two people take over the agenda without the balancing required from other SC members
2. Only SC members will have the power to decide while volunteers with no influence will be asked to do the work for the SC. Today SC members share the burden. So the entire proposal is bad for ENCOD. 5 SC members should be the minimum and 7 is better.

Activities during the past 12 months:

- Invited speaker to Cannafest Prague to speak about the Israeli Medical cannabis programs and lessons for other countries.
- Invited speaker for Americans for Safe Access in Washington DC. – see detailed report at the end of the letter. The only foreigner invited to a discussion in the American Congress on medical cannabis and PTSD
- Discussions with Anti- Drug Authority General Director in Israel about the introduction of Cannabis Social Clubs to Israel
- Working to expand the number of indications allowed for Israeli Patients
- Studying and issuing of Medical Cannabis imports to Israel and issuing recommendations to the authorities.
- Participating in Skype meetings with ENCOD's SC members

A view on "American for Safe Access" Conference, Washington D.C. (22-25 Feb.2013)

1. Over 280 attended the 4 day patient-centric conference. Lectures included issues of science, policy, activism, international models (Canada, Israel + Bedrocan from Holland)
2. The strength of ASA is in its numbers, organization and ability to work vis-à-vis different legislators on state and national levels. Each member pays a fee and ASA is fund raising as well beyond the membership fees. Patient groups are growing in strength and scope in

the USA. They form coalitions, for example with the 1.3 million strong Food Workers union, with LEAP, etc.

3. ASA made a press conference outside Capitol Hill steps and one congress man and some other politicians spoke. We (6 speakers) then presented inside congress meeting room to a few congressmen and staff our positions. I was the only foreigner invited to speak on Israel's national medical cannabis program. I especially emphasized the need to integrate patient education in each model and the need to address war related PTSD symptoms with smokes cannabis - supported by the great results from a pilot study we had here (in collaboration between the Ministry of Defense and M. of Health).
4. I proposed that ASA and ENCOD cooperate and form international collaboration between patients in countries where MC is available. Stephen Sherer agreed and we should talk about this and other forms of collaboration with ENCOD.
5. In addition – there was a talk of the need of patients to travel with their MC from country to country. It is possible to travel now with MC between some countries (with advance notice to the Embassy of the destination) but it's an issue that needs attention (similar to travel with Methadone)
6. Bedrocan is examined closely by the Canadian and Israeli governments as a possible source of supplies as a substitute to local growing, a threat that we are trying to address. Bedrocan is selling about 400 kg annually both to Dutch patients and to single EU patients in a few countries at an exuberant prices. There is an international run by pharmaceutical companies to develop various cannabinoids backed by patents. This is a welcome edition if it does not come on the account patients access to the raw flower at cheap prices. I made a comparative chart with the price of MC in various countries and the price of Sativax and MARinol – the approved medications is 10-20 more expensive then the raw cannabis.
7. There are 19 states (including the District of Columbia – Washington DC) that approved by referendum the use of cannabis for medicinal use. There is no harmonization between the rules and regulations governing the issue at the various states, and as a result, it's a patch work of various rules and regulations, depending on local politics and power balance within the relevant parties at any given state – for example some states limit the thc level in blood that patients can drive with, three states allow patients to grow etc.
8. If the Federal government would move on MC approval it would probably ask the states to follow – but this is an assumption.
9. The biggest issue is Federal interference with Medical Cannabis research. It is virtually impossible to obtain license to conduct MC research from the DEA , and if its provided, the Cannabis from NIDA (the designated "medical Cannabis Agency" in the USA) will provide shitty Cannabis grown at a University of Tennessee (that supplies the 7 or 8 remaining patients in the Federal Cannabis program that existed until Ronald Reagan shut it down).
10. Due to this federal objection (passive Aggressive) to MC research and no recognition of Cannabis's medical value, other countries are taking the lead in MC research (Israel, Spain, Italy?). The lack of official recognition is in contrast to the Federal government registering cannabinoids patents, monopolizing, for example "Cannabinoids as nuero-protective agent" etc...



Enrico Fletzer, Italy

I have been working for Encod throughout 2012-2013 at the regular translation and composition of the Encod bulletins for the Italian public and also reporting about the Italian situation in different occasions that go along with my activities as journalist and translator.

I attended at the CND 2013 both as Vienna correspondent of Radio Onda d'Urto of Milan and as Encod member .

The Encod group taking part in Vienna from March 2012, acted at the start of what we called in Italy the campaign Towards the End of the Prohibitionist World with a quite interesting presence of Italian activists in 2012 . Encod was quite active at the Conference and acted as a critical element at the official meetings and side events. The Italian delegation along with the US might be considered one of the bollwarks of the continuing of drug prohibition policies throughout the world.

In general I think that also thanks to the other Encod colleagues we had a positive approach to world drug police although I have to admit that it is sometimes difficult not to be passive in the UN building on one side and on the other to build a positive relationship with the local activists and with the Viennese public opinion but also with the anti-prohibitionist groups operating in Central Europe.

I would like to stress the importance of this relation that should be implemented as to our German and Eastern European partners. At last CND together with other Encod members we prepared also a series of open questions on the failure of the policies hitherto applied by the United Nations. We had very proficient encounters with the representatives of LEAP and with the Czech and Uruguayan delegation.

During October 2012 I was invited to organize a conference at the annual Cultiva, the Hemp fair of Vienna where I coordinated a panel discussion about Hemp Politics in Europe with Georg Wurth of the German Hanfverband, Hanka Gabrielova, of Encod-Prague and Peter Rausch from Austria.

I also worked with Professor Van Amsterdam in a conference at the University of Bologna on the ranking of harms caused by legal and illegal drugs and on the relation between research centres and central governments that tend to avoid evidence based policies even in the countries where they claim to follow scientific principles like UK and the Netherlands.

On 2013 my main engagement was the start of a network of possible Italian cannabis clubs to be based in central and northern Italy. I coordinated a meeting on the subject in Pisa at the social centre and other Italian locations and I was quite focused on the preparation of the debates on the same subjects around the Million Marijuana March of Rome where I organized a press conference in the Italian Parliament coordinated with the major left ecological group SEL, LEAP and Encod coordinator Joep Oomen and a series of debates in

the following days. Thanks to my activities the Italian participation in Encod has grown considerably with new collective members like ASCIA, the association of about 300 members for the acknowledgement of cannabis, TILT and Sel representatives, a group of young left wing activists and the possible joining of Gabrio of Torino, the most representative anti-prohibitionist social centre of Italy that will all participate at the General Assembly in Bermeo.

The Italian presence will be also a challenge for Encod and an occasion for a new start of our organizations. But of course my efforts might have been more effective, partially due to the notorious instability of the Italian actors that tend to hinder a productive cooperation of different local groups.



Fredrick Polak, the Netherlands

This is my last report as president of Encod, but I will be a candidate for the new Steering Committee.

During the past year, apart from the internal activities in the Steering Committee, my main activities for Encod were representing Encod at scientific symposia and political meetings, most important of which were the Civil Society Forum (CSF) of the European Commission in Brussels, and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) of the United Nations in Vienna.

Through the years, progress in these forums has been frustratingly slow. More recently however, a few things have been achieved: the CSF decided to select the Cannabis Social Clubs as subject for one of their thematic plenary meetings (before June 2012). This was the first public attention to this new form of market regulation at this level.

The most important development is that the issue of Drug Regulation is actually being studied and debated in national capitals and international forums these days.

Encod's influence in this is hard to quantify with certainty. However, there has been a distinct sequence of events.

In 2009, Encod chose as its motto for our international activities: "Regulation on the Agenda". At that time, Encod helped raise the issue of drug regulation as an alternative to prohibition in numerous symposia and conferences, making it a topic of discussion by students, scholars and activists. Regulation did not, however, reach the political agendas of countries and international organisations at the level where decisions were made.

At this moment, regulation of criminalized drugs is on the political agenda of the OAS, the Organisation of American States, and of CND 2014, in preparation of the UNGASS on drug policy that will take place in 2016.

Developments are accelerating in a number of UN member states, mostly Latin American, and this is not restricted to cannabis. At the same time, in the USA, complete legal regulation of cannabis has been accepted by popular vote in two USA states: Colorado and Washington.

Of course, we cannot claim that this is a direct consequence of Encod's choice for the slogan "Regulation on the Agenda". On the other hand, we can count on our friends and opponents to read Encod's website. The texts that we have been spreading in Bruxelles and Vienna also reach our friends in Latin America.

It should be studied how this process of influencing functions. So whatever the real influence was, I am convinced that Encod as a whole has been one of the agents that got this issue moving .

My conclusion is that Encod's international activities, both in Bruxelles and in Vienna, have been useful. It is important to note this. This has been a time-consuming and divisive

element in the SC for some time, but there remained a majority for continuing a strategy of a mixture of blunt positioning and 'diplomatic' manoeuvring at the UN and the EU.

Therefore, I regret that a simple administrative error caused our unintended departure from the CSF. This was not a deliberate move. Yet, in the present situation I hope that the first Authentic Civil Society Forum will be a success.

The only CSF meeting that I attended in the past year, before Encod's membership was discontinued, was with the *core group* of the CSF on 22 Oct. 2012. On 25 Sep 2012, a month before that meeting, I sent a mail to all members of the CSF, from which I select this quote, because it shows where we were at that moment:

More and more voices are heard in favour of a debate on drug regulation, or outright calls for legal regulation. In June last year, the Global Commission on Drug Policy published a report containing the demand for experiments. Since then a number of mostly Latin American presidents, not ex- but active presidents, declared that this debate should be conducted, and shortly before the meeting of the Organization of American States in Cartagena, Colombia, Guatemala president Molina went one step further by saying that the war on drugs has to end.

It is obvious that this development will not stop at this point. Just this week, the Organization of American States published its plan:

http://www.cicad.oas.org/Main/Template.asp?File=/main/aboutcicad/bio_es_cicad_eng.asp

I want to give one comment on that plan: the name of the project is CICAD, for "Inter American Drug Abuse Control Commission".

As a start to our debate, I want to state here already that I find the title for this project wrong and misplaced. As to drug abuse and addiction, there exist widely accepted ways of dealing with these problems, addiction to alcohol and cigarettes on one hand, and to heroin and the other criminalised drugs on the other hand, and the problem is not "how to control drug abuse", but how to regulate the drug markets, with the best result for public health. This title is most probably the result of the resistance to this plan from the USA and Canada, but I am confident that a large number of Latin American countries will make clear what the issue is for them.

In a report on that core group meeting, I wrote (on 31-10-2013) about another time-consuming issue that divided the SC, our wish to openly discuss within the CSF the selection of the member-organizations, their funding and their internal structure and functioning:

3. My demand for clarity on funding and on the internal structure of both existing and new members was met with general resistance from the other three NGO-representatives that were present. I must mention here that our ally, INPUDs representative Eliot Albers was not present that day.

To my demand for openness about funding, the reaction was: "Do you know exactly how your member organizations are funded?" And: "It seems ENCOD wants to be the only member of the CSF!" This seems like an admission that many groups receive government funding. (I save my comments on this for our skype meeting.)

During the debate I was challenged on Encod's internal functioning. This gave me the opportunity to tell them about the way we have regular Skype-chat-meetings, and that during those sessions serious differences of opinion are being laid out open and debated, and decisions can be made.

It seemed to me that this gave the others a strong impression of our internal democracy. The others did not give a similar picture of their inner workings.

After this year's CND, I did not send a report because very little of importance had happened, but I did send a message to the SC, which contained the one and only serious and positive news from the CND: *the UN has decided to devote UNGASS 2016 to the drug problem*. At first, that seemed very far away to me, but the thematic debate on drug policy needs preparation, of course. It was also decided that CND 2014 will contain a "high level segment" (probably ministerial) on the preparation for UNGASS 2016. For some reason this message was not distributed to Encod members. I copy a slightly edited version of it hereunder.

Report on CND 2013

The road to CND 2014 and UNGASS 2016

Because most of what happened at this year's CND was of minor importance, I think we better focus on the one issue that can become big:

After last year's call to start thinking seriously about alternative drug policies by the active presidents of three Latin American countries (I believe Colombia, Mexico and Guatemala, but I am not sure), the UN has decided that this debate will be held in 2016 at a UN General Assembly Special Session, UNGASS (Like in 1998, the start of the memorable slogan "A Drugfree World, We Can Do It".) For the first time since 1998, the UN will discuss drug policy.

The preparation for UNGASS 2016 will be a theme at CND 2014. Many organisations will try to be heard at CND 2014, and before, through national representations and the VNGOC, at meetings in Vienna between CNDs. Much will happen behind closed doors, but a final plan or proposal must be made public at the CND.

Our input can be through the VNGOC. We have a problem there, unfortunately. Whereas the European Commission pays all expenses for one person per organisation for every CSF meeting, both for plenary and core group meetings, the costs for NGOs to travel to Vienna in between the CND's meetings, are not covered by the UN. If we had the financial means, we could simply choose the best available person and let her/him go to Vienna as often as needed. But that is not the reality.

To influence the debate at CND 2014, Encod must not only spread its message there and then. We should start preparatory work now, drafting fact sheets and policy papers, and building alliances.

Frederik Polak
17 June 2013



Janko Belin, Slovenia

In year 2012 after GA in Antwerpen first disputes about conducting of CSC begins. After Maja Kohek, Jaka Bitenc and myself returned from GA it was clear that Jaka is determined to lead newly established SKSK by himself. No elections were held in SKSK and his selling merchandise oriented policies emerged in full.

Društvo AREAL on other site believe in open discussion and general and common policies inside our organization. On October 2012 and in February 2013 talks with representatives on Ministry of health had been conducted. On Friday 14th of June 2013 I also have a talk with secretary Jože Hren with GA ENCOD in BERMEO on my mind. We discussed real possibility of establishing The first club premises in September (where Cannabis will be able to smoke too) this year as legislation is now changed. Still we need to discuss matters with all involved parties, mainly with Police. I said to mr. Hren that I aspect that he will be an inter mediator (or person with "trust") to organize this talks later in year 2013.

On aspect of human rights issue we have early this year pretty tense situation as one of activists from Murska Sobota region (ART Center Goričko) Božidar Radišič was been arrested for growing three (or so) Cannabis plants. He went to hunger strike and some protests have been organized in order to support his campaign. Region around Murska Sobota is agricultural region and situation in this part of Slovenia is still tense. This is one of the main reasons that activists in Art Center Goričko had to hesitate with more detailed proposal about organizing this year's GA in Pomurje in Slovenia.

Društvo AREAL is still part of "tovarna ROG" which is big squat in center of Ljubljana. Our office is still at premises of KOOPERATIVA ROG. As an active member of Social Center ROG where several different organizations congregate during all year around we always promote self/organization and CSC conduct as ENCOD declare it. During year 2012/2013 several protests have been held and we were always present. Nowadays in Slovenia is pretty obvious that people need to organize themselves as austerity measures are taking place and the most vulnerable population in social terms is hit at most.

Društvo AREAL also organized even "How to establish CSC" held on Faculty for social work early in this year. Next day traveling party of ENCOD members heading to Praga visited ART Center Goričko where we talk about present and future policy from our field of activism. In Slovenia we have confused situation on field of drug policy and on CSC "field" as well. People interpret CSC's as they wish. Some of them promote their products (oil, etc.) as remedies for cancer openly on Internet. We are witnessed unfair gossips who is agent of pharmacy etc. in order to get supporters for their so called "Clubs". I think next year will be dynamic as well as several proposals how to regulate Cannabis legislation had been on table.



Joep Oomen, Belgium

Another year has passed in Encod. How did the SC manage? Did we strengthen Encods possibilities to obtain our objectives , established at last year's GA?

1. Concerning the lobby activities at UN and EU

Vienna: A delegation participated in the UN CND (Farid, Fredrick, Enrico and Frantisek). Apparently without any common preparation or coherent strategy. Apart from Enrico we did not receive any presentable report on their experiences.

Brussels: the SC used about half a year to agree on a common strategy. First a code of conduct was approved by the SC, then it was rejected by the chair, then we had to spend several meetings on this issue and when we finally reached an agreement in January we had lost our CSF membership altogether.

2. CANNABIS SOCIAL CLUBS

We produced flyers in several languages, organised and participated in promotion events in Slovenia, Czech Republic, Italy, France, Netherlands and Germany.

We got hundreds of mails/calls from people all over Europe wanting to start a CSC.

A mailing list and website for European CSC's was created with help of Near Dark Germany.

Individual members (EUSFAC / Trekt Uw Plant) are in contact with Spanish and Belgian universities in order to develop research projects.

3. OTHER ACTIVITIES

- Encod website redesign

Did not happen yet, but technical preparations are finished..

- Advocacy Letters

Two letters were sent in October on harm reduction in general and in prisons, a press release in relation with a medical cannabis conference in EP, a petition letter was sent to Slovenian authorities on Bozidar

- Bulletins

We reached nr. 100 in May!

Fredrick had offered to organise a writers group for the monthly Encod bulletin. This did not happen, so this and the editing work is still responsibility of secretariat

- Inventory of Encod members

IT expert (tribble/farid) would help to make inventory of encod members

Did not happen

- European Parliament Election Campaign, 2014

Max, Farid, Jan were expected to find out possibilities for ECI initiative, campaign around EP elections

Did not happen, finally Boaz produced a questionnaire in the april bulletin

- Coca Leaf Campaign

Events took place in September October, as well as communication around Bolivia's policy, campaign around Legal import of coca leaves to Europe continues

-Encod Action Fund

Was established, but until now only 1 project proposal was received, and rejected.

- Fundraising campaign (quite necessary!)

Did not start. Janko provided for a paypal button on the website