Institut

The current situation of cannabis patients in Austria – and what needs to be done

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58th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs Vienna, March 12, 2015

Cannabis has a long tradition in Austria

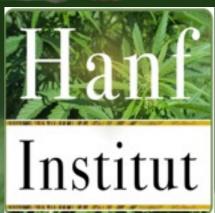
Empress Maria Theresia, who introduced mandatory public schooling in 1774, was prescribed a cannabis tincture against insomnia and "all other worries" by her personal physician Gerard van Swieten.

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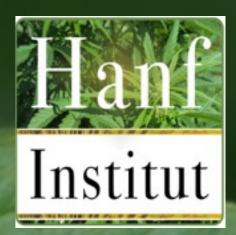


The pre-war model: Sold at the tobacconist

Nil cigarettes, produced by state owned Tabakregie, had a cannabis content of up to 10 percent until the 1920s







Status quo since 1962

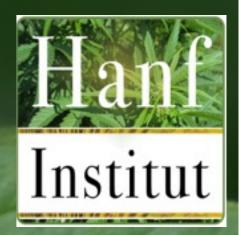








Cannabis has nevertheless become the 3rd most used drug of choice after alcohol and nicotine.



Key facts on Cannabis in Austria

- ➡ 500.000 occasional consumers
- 500.000 regular consumers (>2 units/week)
- More than 90 percent consume responsibly BMI, OBIG, Drogenbergene

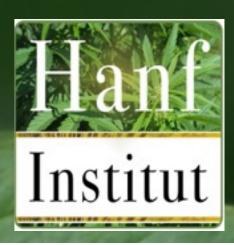
Source: Sucht- und Drogenkoordination Wien, BMI, OBIG, Drogenbericht 2013

S Consumption of cannabis is technically non-punishable, but possession, purchases and passing it on to others – even when only sharing a joint – are illegalized.
S Production of Cannabis for medical uses is legal for state-controlled entities, but the sale of the natural remedy itself is prohibited.
S Austria allows the sale of synthetic Cannabis pharmaceuticals such as Dronabinol (containing THC) and Sativex with a prescription from a licensed physician.
S While it is illegal to grow cannabis with the intent to produce the psychoactive cannabinoid THC, Austrians can purchase cannabis seeds and seedlings legally.

Sonly THC is prohibited, but none of the other hundreds of Cannabinoids.

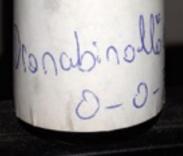


Based on data from Colorado, about 200,000 Austrians could qualify as cannabis patients



The situation for Cannabis patients







What they get...

Currently, patients can only get Dronabinol and Sativex with a prescription. There is a setback: Synthetic cannabinoids cost up to 20 times more than the same amount of THC from the underground market.

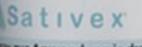
Costs can easily exceed € 1,000 per month.

Health insurance oftentimes does not cover these costs.

Would you spend €1,000 on a synthetic cannabis derivative or €100 on the real thing?

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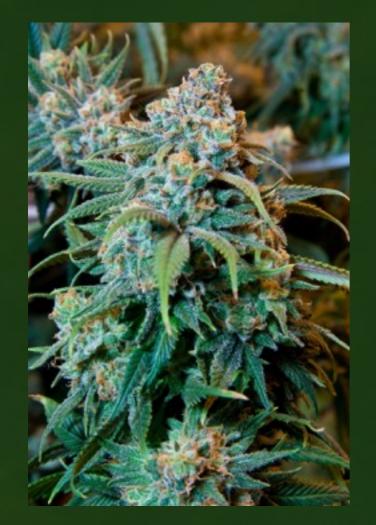
ng Deita-9-Tetrahydrocarnabi ng Carnabidiol

Sonay lentsprechend einen Solo Sata 9-lettahydrocannabinol und 23-9ado Sativa L. Dickentrakt. Im Othen binnen 42 Tagen verbruchtil

terdung in der Mundhöhle. Statung beachten er Zulassung: GW Pharma Ltd. 24 Mangofischerg Mundhöhler Statung SW Pharma Ltd. 24 Mundhöhler Statung in der Mundhöhle.



...and what they want:

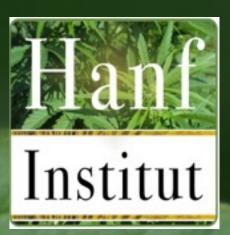


Patients unilaterally declare that they prefer natural cannabis or cannabis concentrates in comparison to synthetic cannabinoids





Zero deaths in 10,000 years make it the safest medicine



Priority for Patients

Short term

- Decriminalise possession
- Allow home-grows for patients (or a caregiver) with a doctor's recommendation

Medium term

 Permits for non-profit grow cooperatives (Cannabis Social Clubs)

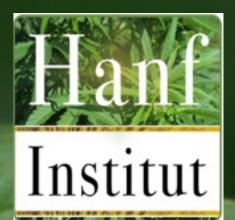


Long term Rewrite Austrian drug law according to

scientific evidence: Cannabis is a safe medicine



Every day on the path to legal access of natural cannabis is another day of pain and sickness for patients!



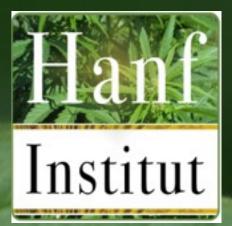
Benefits

LEGALISE - REGULATE - EDUCATE - MEDICATE

Patients want indeed therapy instead of punishment.
Self-growing guarantees best quality control.
Patients can grow their medicine of choice.
First step to decriminalise those first who need it most.
Allows more studies on effects.
Job creation in a rapidly growing industry.
Taxation for legalisation finds high support.



Cannabis is a nutritious plant. Let's treat it like one.



Brand new developments

Only last Friday, Austria's justice minister announced considerations to decriminalise small scale possession of cannabis and other substances.

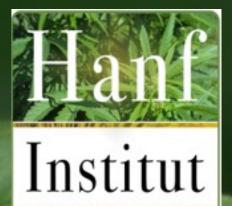
Details are not yet available.

All 6 parties in parliament have shifted their stance on a decriminalisation of medical cannabis and recreational cannabis to varying degrees since the legalisation in Colorado.

Online polls show 4 out 5 Austrians support legal cannabis, especially for medical reasons.



Full legalisation could improve Austria's budget to the tune of €500 million in the **1st year already.**



Citizen's Parliamentary Initiative to legalise Cannabis is 3rd most successful ever

So far, almost 30,000 Austrians have signed a citizen's initiative that aims for a complete legalisation of cannabis

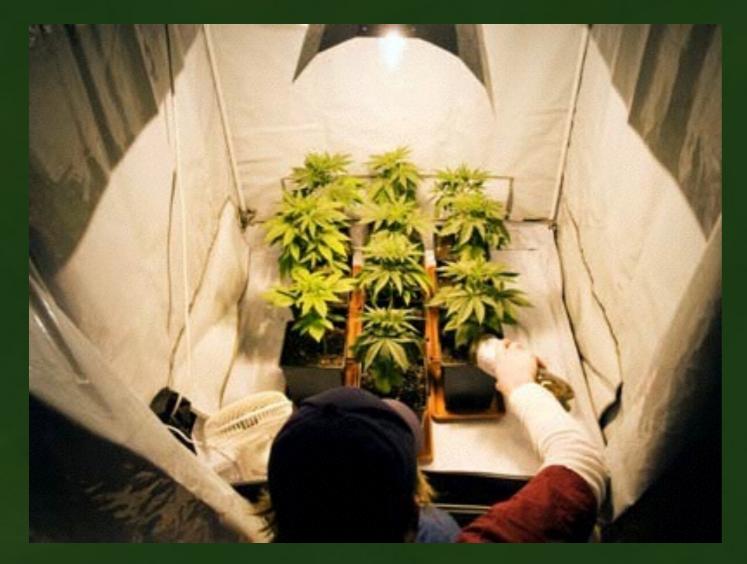
REPUBLIK ÖSTERREICH Parlament	
V PARLAM	ENT ERKLÄRT WER IST WER GEBÄUDE UND FÜHRUNGEN SERVICE
ndenz und	*Start * Parlament aktiv * Beteiligung der BürgerInnen * Nationalrat - XXV. GP * Bürgerinitiativen * 53/BI Herausnahme von Cannabis aus dem österreichischen Suchtmittelgesetz (53/BI)
wortungen	
nren und	Übersicht Parlamentarisches Verfahren Zustimmungserklärungen
erinnen genstände	Hier können Sie zustimmen In der XXV.GP haben bereits 29507 Personen eine Zustimmungserklärung abgegeben.
	10/03/15



Cannabis may become a topic in future elections and even drive voter participation among the young.



Until then...



 Cannabis patients growing their own supply are still under threat of a criminal conviction ++ Home-growing of Cannabis has reduced organised crime in the cannabis market that is now dominated by small scale gardeners (<20 plants) ++ Product quality has overall markedly improved



Medical cannabis is a most urgent issue. Help end the needless suffering of the weakest in society: the sick

