



Press release

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Sunny premiere of travelling cannabis policy exhibition at CND in Vienna

VIENNA – International delegates taking part in the annual Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) Vienna were welcomed by activists from seven countries and a unique exhibition on cannabis policy in France and the Netherlands on Thursday.

The exhibition, called “1976-2026 The French/Dutch Paradox in the Global Drug War”, centers around 50 years of Dutch cannabis tolerance policy and 50 years since a French appeal for decriminalization of cannabis by a group of prominent French citizens.

Activists from ENCOD, the European coalition for just and effective drug policies, and VOC, the Dutch union for the abolition of cannabis prohibition, handed out over 500 exhibition guides to delegates and other CND visitors. A big cage containing a live cannabis plant proved to be the most popular exhibit, with many people taking pictures and selfies with it.

On a colorful curved wall, the story of the two diverging policies is told. One of the paradoxes is the fact that despite having a very strict prohibition policy on cannabis, France is the European champion of cannabis consumption. The Dutch cannabis coffeeshops have not led to similar high consumption rates, while providing safe access for adult consumers and diminishing the “forbidden fruit effect” for young people.

A display case showed artefacts from half a century of French and Dutch cannabis culture and activism. Among the objects was an original copy of the French paper Liberation from June 18, 1976, containing the appeal for decriminalization, L’Appel du 18 Joint. Other highlights included one of the first Dutch guides for growing your own cannabis from 1987, and a Delft blue tile commemorating the start of the Dutch cannabis closed chain experiment in 2025.

The exhibition led to some lively discussions between activists, delegates and other visitors. Derrick Bergman, chairman of VOC: *“This is exactly what we had hoped for: stimulating debate and discussion about prohibition versus regulation of cannabis.”* ENCOD chairman Farid Ghehioeche: *“We’re proud of this exhibition, that will travel throughout Europe during the rest of the year. Our message is that prohibition is no solution. Regulation with respect for human rights is the way forward.”*

After Vienna, the exhibition will travel to Bilbao the 17 -19 April 2026 followed by Berlin, Paris, Brussels, Amsterdam, The Hague, Prague and Eindhoven. Exhibition website: www.frenchdutchparadox.org.

ENCOD website: www.encoded.org

VOC website: www.voc-nederland.org

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