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## **CANNABIS-REGULATE IT, TAX IT, LEGALIZE IT**

### Preface – Why We Need Reform

In recent years we are witnessing a change in policies and legislation regarding illegality of Cannabis around the world. In some countries governments and law enforcement forces have taken official or de-facto position regarding de-criminalization of personal consumption of Cannabis. In other countries such as Uruguay and Colorado, USA, 2013 has been the year for legislation, regulation and taxation of Cannabis. For the first time since the 1930s, when Cannabis criminalization and prohibition was introduced to the world, governments and parliaments around the world are taking action into changing the failed conventions and policies of the past. As the Global Commission on Drug Policy stated in its innovative report in 2011: "The global war on drugs has failed, with devastating consequences for individuals and societies around the world." Adding: "Fundamental reforms in national and global drug control policies are urgently needed."

As Young European Socialists (YES), we consider it our obligation to open the debate and strengthen new policies and solutions, based on our timeless - and the same time modern - set of values. We as YES stand up against criminalizing policies that take away so much from our resources, distort our economic system, damage public health, imprison people and ruin lives of families and communities. The current legislation in most of our countries has not proven to provide any solutions. Much worse: it only increased the involvement and power of organized crime that impact all of our lives. "Arresting and incarcerating in recent decades has filled prisons and destroyed lives and families without reducing the availability of illicit drugs or the power of criminal organizations." We believe that new approaches to Cannabis status will lead to better public health, and an equal society.

### Freedom

As we have no solid evidence that cannabis damages one's health more the tobacco, alcohol or industrialized food – we don't find any reason for the government to obtain it from the people. No evidence has shown that cannabis causes death or increased violence – on the contrary, it's used successfully for medical means. In the end it is about our individual freedom to control our lives and make our own choices. We intend to fulfill our promise of individual freedom by removing the ridiculous banning over cannabis.

### Organized Crime

The current illegal status of cannabis is creating a variety of problems. Ongoing policies of

criminalizing and restricting cannabis haven't solved any of the problems of organized crime. Quite the contrary: they have increased it. In the words of the commission report: "Vast expenditures on criminalization and repressive measures directed at producers, traffickers and consumers of illegal drugs have clearly failed to effectively curtail supply or consumption."

As YES we see great importance to tackle the issue of organized crime. As part of the ongoing struggle against it, we call to cut the linkage between cannabis and the criminality, denying from the Mafia the revenues from cannabis, liberating it from the hands of organized crime and use the law enforcement authorities resources to stop violent criminality – by legalizing cannabis. When the World Commission on Drug Policy recommend to "end the criminalization, marginalization and stigmatization of people who use drugs but who do no harm to others. Challenge rather than reinforce common misconceptions about drug markets, drug use and drug dependence", it specifically noted that: "This recommendation applies especially to cannabis."

### Economy, Resource and Taxation

"Drug control resources are better directed elsewhere." (Global commission on drug policy report) Cannabis has also become a fiscal concern, due to the fact it requires resources from the state for inefficient police forces, arrests and imprisonment - but also in the loss of tax revenues which are disappearing in the black market economy. Not to mention the loss of job and growth opportunities in the new economic field – the cannabis economy. This includes agriculture, research, logistics and technological implications.

Creating a new, heavily regulated market of cannabis would not only provide new jobs – but could also assist in taking measures against the disaster of the 2008 world economic crisis. Legislation and taxation of cannabis will create enormous tax revenues for the state. Together with the re-direction of current resources being spent on cannabis prohibition, legalization will help in the effort to more equal health, education and public welfare systems.

### Public health

Public health is endangered by lack of supervision and quality standards. Controlling the quality of the products that are consumed by the citizens will prevent health problems. Real, state funded solutions are needed for drugs addicts; free rehabilitation for all is one of them.

### Our Solutions

We adopt the recommendation of the World Commission on Drug Policy in its 2011 report: "Begin the transformation of the global drug prohibition regime. Replace drug policies and strategies driven by ideology and political convenience with fiscally responsible policies and

strategies grounded in science, health, security and human rights – and adopt appropriate criteria for their evaluation."

Therefore, we as YES stand for and call all member organization to adopt policies in the same spirit:

- Legalize Cannabis for medical and recreational use and repeal all previous legislation on the matter - all over the world.
- Introduce a sale tax on cannabis – resources will be dedicated to education, welfare and public health services.
- Strict regularity regime on cannabis. The state will be the only authority to provide licenses for cannabis growing and sale.
- The state will also regulate the quality, distribution and sale of cannabis.
- Revising all international conventions and agreements prohibiting or criminalizing cannabis.
- Strengthening prevention and rehabilitations programs for drugs abuses and addictions.
- Strengthening the role of the international community and institutions in the fight against organized crime and drugs cartels. The time for action is now.