

Tekst 10

DRUGS POLICY

An injection of reality

1 **N**o one, in this country or anywhere else in Europe, can be under any illusion about the harm inflicted on our societies by hard drugs. The effects are all too visible on the streets and estates of our major cities. And with supplies as plentiful as they have ever been, and the street price correspondingly low, it is not a problem that is going away. The debate, in so far as there is one, centres on what to do about it.

2 For years, the discussion in Britain has swung between advocates of more and less liberal policies. The measure of success should surely be how far new addiction can be discouraged and whether the number of drug-related deaths and crimes is being reduced. By any or all these standards, Britain's record is a disgrace.

3 We record more deaths from illegal drug use than any other European country, and have done for each of the past 10 years. An estimated 50 per cent of burglaries are believed to be drug-related, and possibly many more. The total cost of damage caused by drug addicts is put at more than 21bn pounds a year.

4 Worse, this government has seemed reluctant to learn from successful experiments conducted elsewhere. Ten days ago, the Rowntree Foundation published a report assessing the success of drug-consumption rooms. These provide a

more hygienic environment for drug users, reducing overdoses and encouraging addicts to seek help. The report recommended pilot projects in Britain, even though the Government, terrified of bad headlines in the conservative press, has ruled out similar proposals in the past.

5 Now, a widely respected medical journal, *The Lancet*, has published a study based on Switzerland, a country with relatively liberal policies on drugs. This found that prescribing methadone or other heroin-substitutes to addicts led to a decline in the number of new heroin users in Zurich, and sharply reduced the number of heroin-related deaths. It found the "medicalisation" of heroin dependence changed addiction from a rebellious act to an illness that requires treatment. The logical conclusion is that a more liberal approach, complementing needle-exchange programmes already in operation, could have a positive effect in Britain.

6 The Government's reluctance to learn from experience elsewhere, apparently for fear of public reaction, does not bode well. Yet the effect of the changes in our licensing laws¹⁾ shows that liberalisation can have a positive effect. With the licensing laws, the Government stuck to its guns. It is high time it extended the courage of its convictions to drugs policy as well.

The Independent

noot 1 licensing laws: laws which control the selling of alcoholic drinks

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- 1p 39 How does the writer characterise the subject of hard drugs in Britain in the first two paragraphs?
- A As an urgent issue that has not been tackled effectively at all.
 - B As a phenomenon that should be dealt with internationally.
 - C As a plague that has to be fought but will never be eliminated.
 - D As a problem that should be accepted because it is bound to last.
- 1p 40 How could paragraph 3 also begin?
- A Besides, we record...
 - B However, we record...
 - C Thus, we record...
- “this government ... elsewhere” (alinea 4, eerste zin)
- 1p 41 Welk motief heeft daarbij een rol gespeeld volgens alinea 4?
- 2p 42 Welke **twee** experimenten komen aan de orde in de alinea’s 4 en 5? Geef antwoord door voor het eerste experiment twee woorden uit de tekst te citeren, en citeer voor het tweede experiment twee woorden/twee delen van zinnen uit de tekst.
- 1p 43 Welke maatregel heeft de Britse regering volgens alinea 5 al genomen om de gezondheidsrisico’s voor drugsverslaafden te beperken? Antwoord door een deel van een zin uit de alinea te **citeren**.
- 1p 44 What is the main aim of the last paragraph?
- A To express pessimism about politicians’ willingness to legalise drugs use.
 - B To persuade the authorities to start regarding alcohol as a hard drug.
 - C To provide one more argument in support of relaxing the laws on drugs use.
 - D To stimulate readers to protest against the present drugs policies.