

Update on the NordAN Drug Policy Document (and some more)

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DRUG POLICY

NORDAN DRUG POLICY PLATFORM

The purpose of this platform is to establish a set of common views on drug policy, shared by all NordAN members, and to provide a foundation for NordAN's positions and activities. On this platform, "drugs" refers to illegal drugs and the non-medical use of controlled substances. The platform does not encompass all views and concerns of our members, but concentrates on issues that are of current concern.

NordAN's mission is to advance, in a balanced and evidence-based manner, pragmatic approaches to key aspects of drug policy. The approach is pragmatic and incremental, while remaining open to new ideas and research.

THE DRUG PROBLEM

The production, trafficking, and distribution of controlled substances, cause serious health and social problems, contribute to crime and exploitation, and undermine personal freedom and life opportunities, particularly for young people. The drug problem also undermines social cohesion and places a heavy burden on individuals, families, services, and society.

NORDAN'S VALUES

NordAN's core value is to reduce drug-related problems that enable people to live healthy lives. This includes drug-related problems (including alcohol), and the wider community, including families, and the wider community experiencing drug-related problems, and those affected.

INTERNATIONAL DRUG POLICY

COMPREHENSIVE, INTEGRATED AND BALANCED

A comprehensive drug policy aims to reduce the medical use of controlled substances, for instance through coordinated action across prevention, early intervention, harm reduction measures, and effective control measures. These measures are interconnected and should be implemented in a balanced and integrated manner.

Drug use is influenced by social and psychological factors. Policy should therefore include a social dimension and address the realities of today's drug markets, including the role of social media that can contribute to normalising drug use.

Preventive efforts should be directed towards vulnerable groups and people at risk. Nordic countries should complement their socioeconomic development complement their policies in affluent societies and in less resourced settings.

A comprehensive approach should aim to:

- prevent people from starting to use drugs
- prevent experimental use becoming regular
- provide early intervention against risky consumption
- ensure access to treatment
- support rehabilitation, recovery, and social reintegration
- reduce drug-related health and social harm

Harm reduction

Harm reduction has an important role in reducing adverse health consequences of drug use, including blood-borne infections and overdoses. Harm reduction and detoxification should be integrated within a comprehensive strategy that also ensures access to treatment, recovery support, and social reintegration. When harm reduction measures are implemented without clear pathways to treatment and recovery, the overall response risks becoming fragmented and less effective.

PREVENTION AND SOCIETY

Drug use and drug dependence can contribute to social exclusion, weaken social cohesion, and hinder development. Prevention efforts should address social vulnerabilities such as poverty and marginalisation, but they must also recognise that drug problems exist even in affluent societies. We cannot wait until all social problems are solved before we address illegal drugs and the harms they cause.

Prevention should therefore be multi-sectoral and sustainable, combining social and educational measures with targeted efforts to delay initiation, reduce experimental use, and prevent risky patterns from becoming entrenched.

Civil society organisations have a crucial role in prevention because they work close to communities and can address cultural, social, and psychosocial drivers of drug-related harm, while also strengthening protective factors such as meaningful activities, belonging, purpose, and self-esteem.

TREATMENT AND RECOVERY WORKS

Prevention-first and health-centred EU drug strategy

The NordAN General Assembly, meeting in Riga in November 2025,

recalls that drug-related health disruption, economic harm

notes that the current EU health-centred responses are insufficient, and that fundamental rights,

recognises that the prevalence of polydrug use, and

underlines that these issues involve those most vulnerable

stresses that health and social care



Strategic priority 2: Implement evidence-based prevention and risk awareness

The EU should actively engage in preventing and reducing drug use through the implementation and expansion of robust prevention and awareness raising activities across Member States, while scaling up evidence-based and effective health interventions.

2.1. Strengthen effective prevention activities

Evidence-based prevention should be central to the EU’s public health approach to reduce the risks of drug dependence and drug-related harm. Member States should therefore **step up universal prevention activities**. Early prevention programmes should build resilience, increase health literacy and promote life skills and healthy lifestyles. **Environmental prevention** activities to reduce individuals’ exposure to substance use and dependence should be implemented²⁸. To significantly strengthen the resilience of citizens, drug prevention activities must be integrated with interventions that address other critical health factors, such as tobacco use and harmful alcohol consumption, along with comprehensive health promotion initiatives.

Brussels, 4.12.2025
COM(2025) 743 final

Strategic priority 3: Enhance treatment, recovery and reintegration

MISSION 1
THE COUNCIL

Strategy

Member States should ensure that people who use drugs have access to health and social care by providing affordable treatment aligned with reintegration and social inclusion activities.

Strategic priority 7: Reduce individual drug-related harm

In a continuum of care with prevention and treatment, the EU and Member States will increase the availability of effective harm and risk reduction interventions to protect the people who use drugs from harm.

7.1. Increase the availability and coverage of evidence-based harm and risk reduction interventions

9th NordAN Drug Network Zoom meeting



Monday, June 15,
at 13:00-14.30 CEST



Speakers:



Oriol Esculies,

Association Proyecto Hombre - Barcelona
Forum on Drugs and Oviedo Declaration



Kati Laitila,

Finnish Red Cross - Training on drug-related
death prevention and first aid for people
who use substances



Peter Moilanen,

Drug Policy Centre in Sweden, NPC -
Drug policy situation in Europe



**Moilanen and Andersson: A myth that
the world is moving towards
legalization**

BETWEEN MEDICINE AND MARIJUANA
11.03.2026 - There are other paths in
drug policy than just harsh punishments
or legalization. Accurate reforms can
help people in addiction but at the same
time resist commercial interests, write
debaters.

In the Swedish drug debate, the claim is
often repeated that Sweden is extreme, while the rest of the world is moving towards
the legalization and decriminalization of drugs. It's a comfortable story for some, but it's
not true.

