



EU DRUG STRATEGY – A CRITICAL REVIEW

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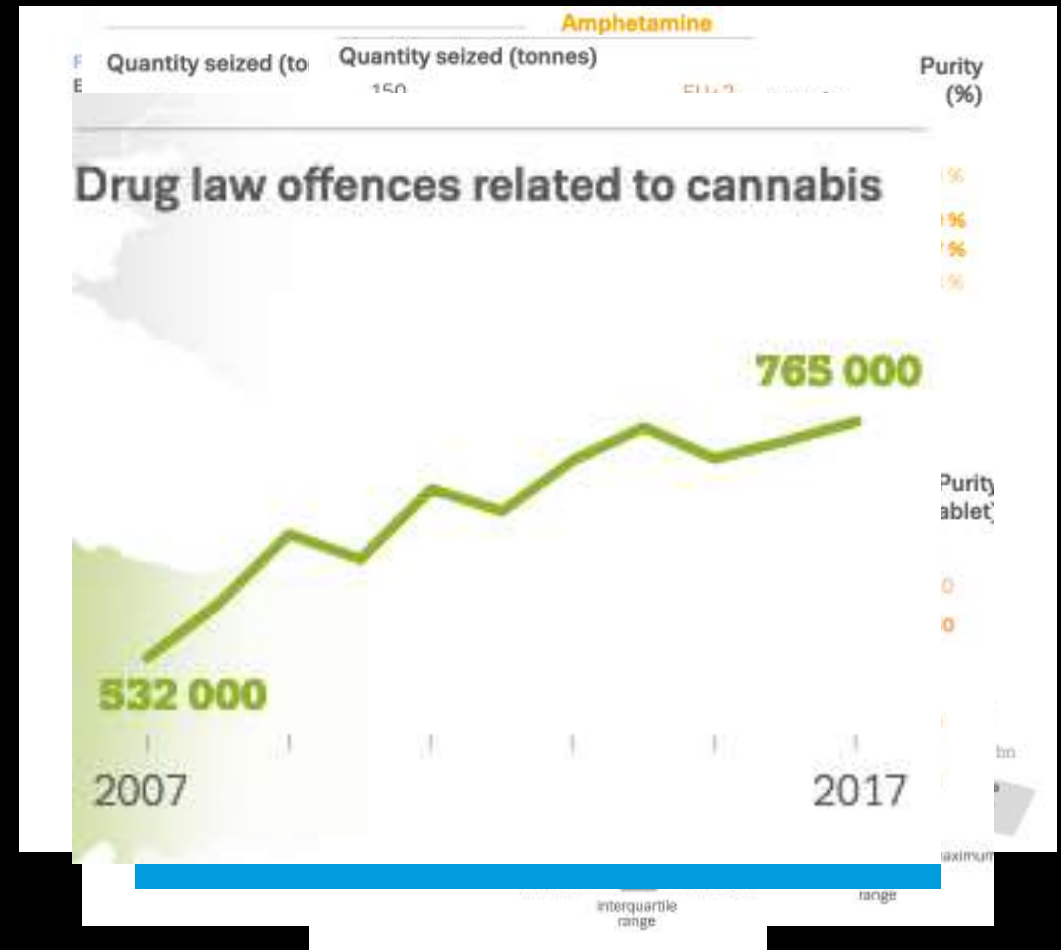
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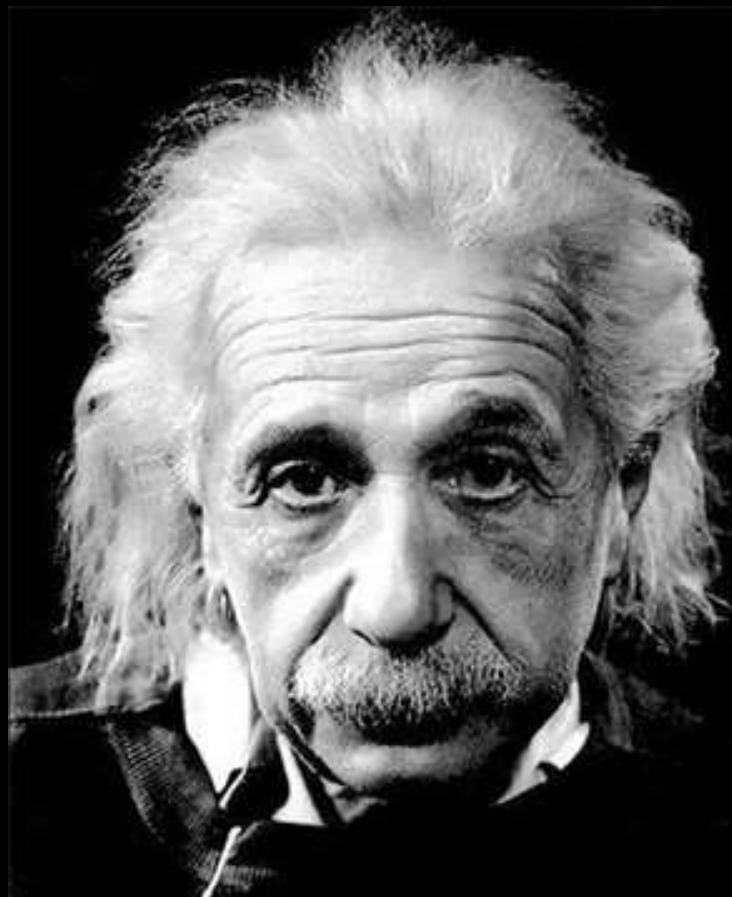
EU DRUG STRATEGY (2013-20) AND ACTION PLAN (2017-20): PROBLEMS

- Implementation
 - Serves as a blueprint for national drug strategies
 - No binding legal power
 - No accountability for member states – no consequences
 - No EU budget
- Evaluation
 - Process evaluation but not really impact evaluation
 - Lack of measurable indicators (especially supply reduction)
 - If there are, they are not used
- Preparation
 - Evaluation findings are not taken into consideration
 - Civil society involvement is not sufficient – lack of transparency

1. NO MEASURABLE REDUCTION IN DEMAND AND SUPPLY

- The illicit drug market is larger than ever
- Drugs prices are stable, accessibility is easier
- MDMA has returned – presursors are replaced
- Cocaine market is rising
- No supply reduction but supply replacement - NPS
- The market has diversified – deepweb markets new technologies
- And at what price? – huge increase in the criminalisation of young people



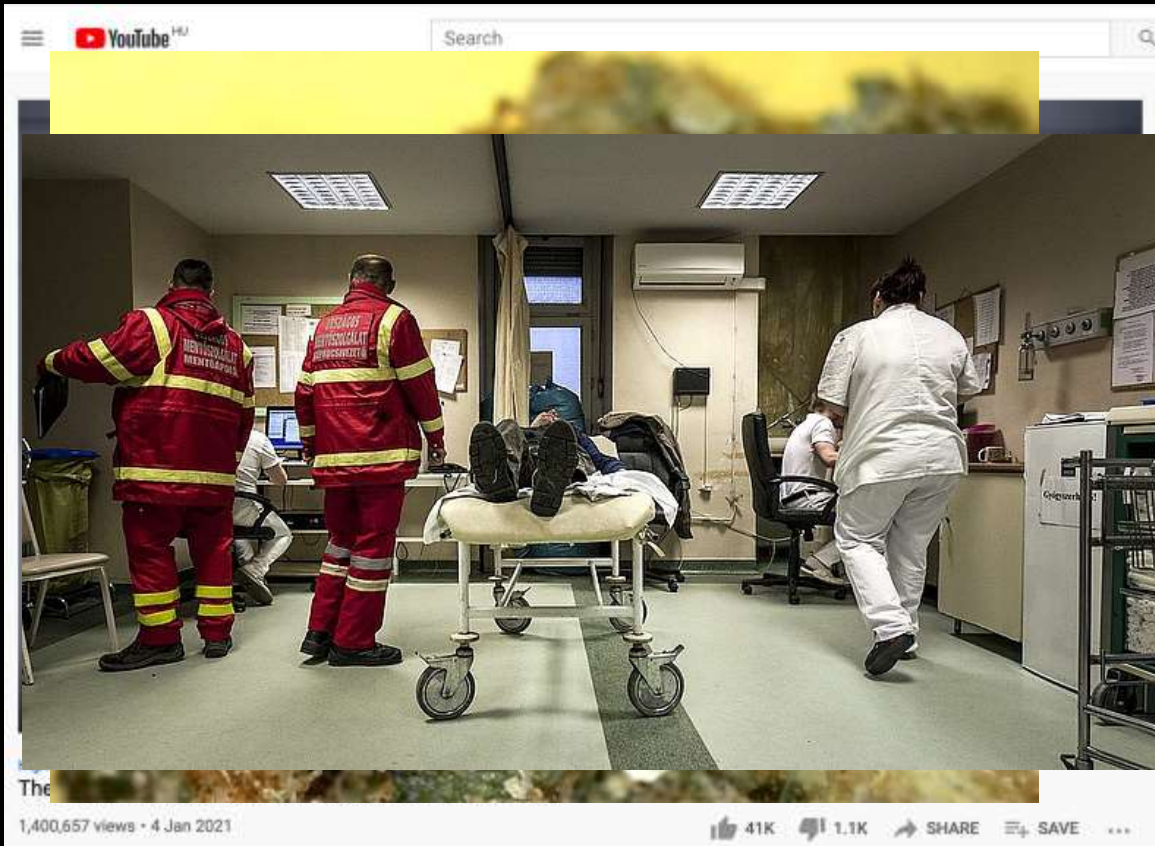


Insanity:

Doing the same
thing over and over
again and expecting
different results.

Albert Einstein

2. BLACK MARKET ENDANGERS OUR YOUTH

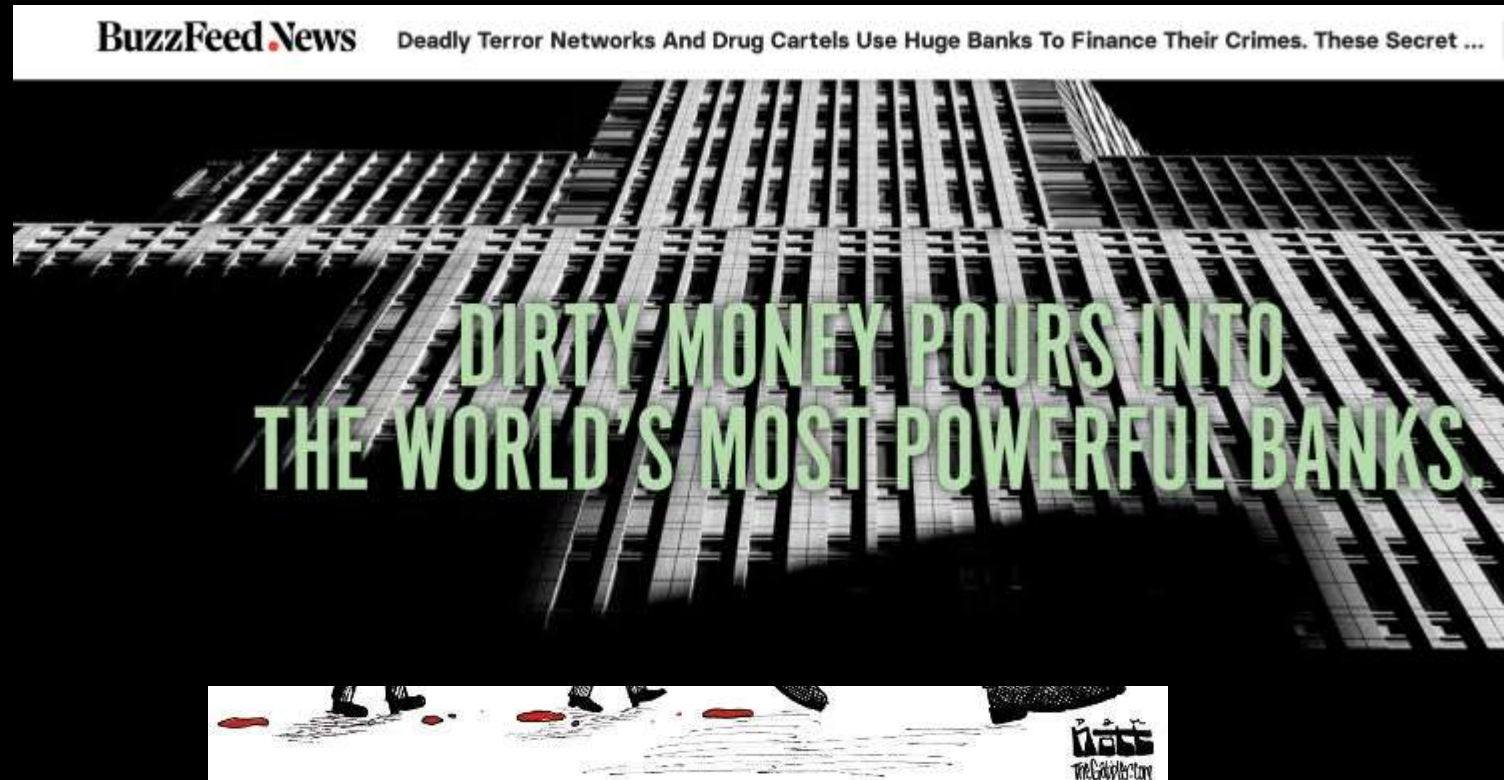


- Spanish study: 88% of cannabis contains human poo
- Quarz in cannabis: can lead to silicosis and severe lung damage
- VICE video: German dealer claims 90% of weed is contaminated with synthetic cannabinoids
- Synthetic cannabinoids: severe dependence, OD deaths

IS IT REALLY WORTH KEEPING THE CANNABIS MARKET UNREGULATED?

3. GOING AFTER THE BIG FISHES?

- Since 2018 at least 18 banks received prosecution agreements for money-laundering crimes
- At least 4 went on and committed the same crime and got fined again – no prosecution
- 2012: George Osborne, UK's chancellor of the exchequer: if the banks are closed the economy will suffer

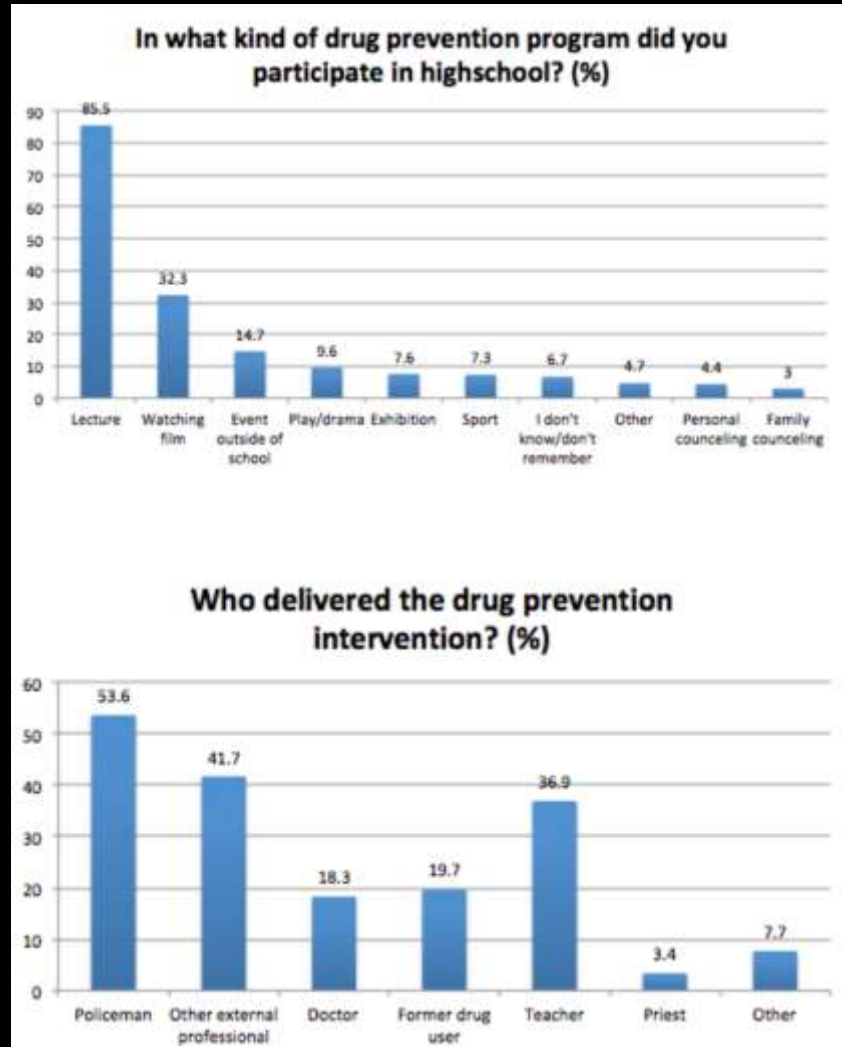


4. SCALING DOWN HARM REDUCTION SERVICES?

- Many MS are well below the WHO's target of 200 needles/IDU/year
- Several countries scaled down harm reduction: Hungary, Serbia, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Poland
- Funding is scarce – severe disruptions
- No innovation in harm reduction



5. QUALITY DRUG PREVENTION AND TREATMENT?



- Outdated approach: frontal lectures – no interactions
- Message: just say no
- Most drug prevention programs are run by the police
- No quality control in prevention and treatment

6. POVERTY, HOMELESSNESS AND RACISM

- Are we having a drug problem – or a poverty problem?
- The so called “problem drug users” are not the problem – but the inhumane conditions in which they live
- Ethnic minorities, migrants and other marginalised groups are excluded from health/social care
- Racial profiling exists in Europe too
- Roma people in the East: nobody addresses the problem



7. CANNABIS REGULATION: ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM



- City level initiatives to regulate cannabis
- Dutch government's initiative to grow legal cannabis
- Spain's cannabis social clubs
- Luxembourg: first country to legalise cannabis?
- Even North Macedonia is considering legal regulation

BUT HOW SHALL WE REGULATE THE MARKET?

TIME TO CHANGE THE PARADIGM

- “If all you have is a hammer everything will look like a nail.” – taking out drug policy from a security framework – to a social-health framework
- COVID – lesson learnt: the need for a strong common EU health policy
- We need to think outside the box: explore alternatives of current repressive drug policies
- Black-and-white fallacy of free market legalisation vs. total prohibition should be avoided: we have so many regulatory options between the two extremes
- Local level = innovation - Let cities, countries experiment!



THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!

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