

## **NO MORE EXCUSES**

**STATEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN COALITION FOR JUST AND EFFECTIVE DRUG POLICIES (ENCOD) TO THE 49<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL MEETING OF THE UN COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS, 13 – 17 MARCH, VIENNA**

**Brussels, 9 March 2006**

**Dear delegates,**

**We write to you as secretariat of ENCOD, a platform of 130 organisations of citizens from across Europe who are affected and/or deeply concerned by current drug policies. These citizens are drug consumers, their relatives, social workers, human rights activists, entrepreneurs, academic experts and former state employees. In short, the people you refer to usually when speaking of 'civil society'.**

**Our request to you is to start behaving responsibly and give up your prohibitionist approach to drugs. Precisely for reasons concerning public health and safety, drugs should be regulated by authorities, instead of controlled by criminal organizations. All evidence indicates that public health is promoted by pragmatic drug policies, most often not based on prohibitionist principles.**

**When the CND will meet in 2008, ten years after the UNGASS in 1998, the results of the worldwide efforts to eliminate or significantly reduce the cultivation of cannabis, coca and opium will have to be presented. There is no indication whatsoever that these efforts have been successful. It will be impossible to hide this fact from the public. Therefore, you will need to start listening to signals coming from outside this room that something has to change very soon in international drug legislation, so that the forced eradications, the executions, the imprisonments, the tortures and the criminalization of hundreds of millions of people can come to an end.**

**We welcome the initiative of the Bolivian government to propose the international depenalization of coca leaves and ask the European delegates in this meeting to support it. Apart from the fact that there exists overwhelming scientific evidence about the beneficial applications of the coca leaf, its current prohibition makes it impossible for traditional coca products to be commercialized worldwide. The international depenalization of coca would make a significant contribution to the perspectives for peaceful and sustainable development in the coca producing regions in South America.**

**We call on all courageous entrepreneurs to start importing coca products already now to the European Union. The case of coca should be judged by an independent judge and not the INCB bureaucracy. We welcome the decision of the latest Assembly of the Federation of Coca Growers in Chapare, Bolivia, to expel the US agencies that have been involved in the war on coca and to transform their offices into schools. We suggest that the responsible people of these agencies should be judged for their crimes against the civilian population.**

**We remind the delegates of the European Union at the UN meeting of their moral obligation to respect the recommendations of the European Parliament of December 2004, to change the fundamental course of European drug policies. According to a majority of elected representatives of the EU citizens, the focus in drug policy should shift towards a scientific and balanced approach instead of maintaining drug prohibition. More research into the beneficial applications of illicit plants as cannabis, coca and opium should be carried out, and concrete measures to involve civil society in the design of drug policies should be taken.**

**We also wish to remind the delegates about their own repeated statements that citizens should be involved in the dialogue about drug policies. This process should not only involve think-tanks and 'trusted' NGOs (such as the Hassela Nordic Network for example) but also the legitimate representatives of 200 million drug users and the people in their communities.**

**You have run out of excuses not to listen to the people who suffer the consequences of your decisions.**

**Drug prohibition has created an empire that should be dismantled stone by stone, in order to make way for effective drug policies that are aimed at harm reduction and health promotion, and for just and sustainable ways to organize global trade and political relationships, so the basic human rights of all citizens can be fulfilled.**

**Freedom to farm is to cultivate freedom.**

**On behalf of the European Coalition for Just and Effective Drug Policies,**

**Farid Ghehiouche, Marina Impallomeni, Christine Klüge, Virginia Montañes, Joep Oomen and Jan van der Tas**

**Steering Committee**