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Abstract:

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

“Legalization of Soft Drugs”

The Committee

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CDN) was founded in 1946 by the Economics and Social Council (ECOSOC), every 4 years this UN-body elects its 53 member states. Powers of the Commission are granted by drug control conventions, namely Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961), Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971), United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (1988), which empower the CDN to set directions and objectives, as well as control their implementation.

Examples of those would be setting regulatory measures and influencing drug control policies through their advisory channel towards other institutions and nations.

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs is a cornerstone of international drug policy making and its mandate authorizes it as a governing body of the UNODC, headquartered in Vienna. The meeting scheduled for March 2014 will focus on the level of progress made since setting a Political Declaration and Plan of Action on World Drug Problem in 2009. This session will serve as a preparation for the special session of the General Assembly on Drugs (UNGASS) in 2016.

The Topic

The question of global drug policy and reviewing it is seen as controversial, even though some countries have already questioned the efficiency of the current drug policy, along with the war on drugs and start advocating in favor of soft drugs' legalization. The three types of legalization experts talk about are as follows: legalization of production, sale and consumption. Apart from that we can also divide types of legalization: full, partial and drug decriminalization. Full legalization would call an end to a ban of certain drugs and narcotic substances enforced by the state. Partial legalization would make drugs available only under strictly outlines circumstances. Drug decriminalization means reduction of state control and penalties for drug use.

Lately a number of countries and states within the USA made proposals of legalizing certain types of narcotic substances (Uruguay, Norway, Portugal, the Netherlands, Czech Republic), which was widely discussed and condemned by the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) in charge of monitoring countries' compliance with the drug conventions.

Considering the fact that there are some significant divisions within the international community of how to continue with global drug policy, the debates and recommendations for a new approach might be rather contentious, ahead of the 2016 UN General Assembly Special Session on Drugs (UNGASS).