

Sweden

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1.

"Sweden has a restrictive policy on drugs (Proposition 2001/02:91. Nationell narkotikahandlingsplan); This was established already in 1968 when a drug policy bill was agreed upon in the Parliament, a year before a national Committee on the Treatment on Drug Abusers was ready to present its final report and recommendations on co-ordinating measures (SOU1969:52). A year before, 1967, an incident in a project with free prescriptions to drug abusers in Stockholm led to an intense debate in media and the closure of the project. This project was started in 1965. That was also the starting point for a project in the Central House of Detention in Stockholm, where Professor Nils Bejerot, by noting and counting fresh needle marks among new detainees wanted to demonstrate that the free prescription project would cause an increased prevalence of drug abuse in society. His views were much debated. Together with apprehensions of an escalating drug problem and in accordance with a restrictive alcohol policy the course was set."

Source:

Swedish National Institute of Public Health & Swedish Council for Information on Alcohol and Other Drugs, "National Report: Sweden 2002" (Lisboa, Portugal: European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, 2003), p. 9.

2.

"Between 1917 and 1955 Sweden had an alcohol rationing system, and even today embraces a comparatively restrictive alcohol policy. This tradition makes a restrictive drug policy a logical option."

Source:

Boekhout van Solinge, Tim, "Dutch Drug Policy in a European Context" (Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Center for Drug Studies, University of Amsterdam, 1999), pre-publication version of an article appearing in Journal of Drug Issues 29(3), 511-528, 1999, available on the web at <http://www.frw.uva.nl/cedro/lib/boekhout.dutch.html> last accessed March 19, 2001.

3.

According to the Sweden's 2002 national drug report to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, "During the 1990s there has been reduced funding in this field [drugs] and at the same time there has been an increase in the availability of drugs with a corresponding increase in lifetime prevalence of drug use among young people. However, the

annual school survey in grade 9 made during the spring showed a decrease in use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco. This decrease was the first in more than a decade. "There are indications that the number of problematic abusers has increased in this period and also that the social services are less informed about their whereabouts and conditions than they used to be. There are also fewer specialised agencies involved."

Source:

Swedish National Institute of Public Health & Swedish Council for Information on Alcohol and Other Drugs, "National Report: Sweden 2002" (Lisboa, Portugal: European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, 2003), p. 7.

4.

Swedish authorities report that drug use in Sweden is on the rise. The Swedish Council for Information on Alcohol and Other Drugs (CAN) reported in 2001 that among 15-16 year olds for all illicit drugs, "In 2000 10% of the boys, and 8% of the girls reported lifetime prevalence." Additionally, "In 1999 3% of the 9th year school students and military conscripts had used an illicit drug within the last 30 days. Some 5% of persons aged 16-24 have reported drug use during the last 12 months in telephone interviews."

Source:

Swedish National Council for Information on Alcohol and Other Drugs (CAN), Report No. 63, "Summary: Trends in Alcohol and Other Drugs in Sweden: Report 2001" (Stockholm, Sweden: CAN), p. 44, from the web at <http://www.can.se/news/newsfiler/Rep01sum.pdf> last accessed December 20, 2001.

5.

According to the Sweden's 2002 national drug report to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, "Indicators such as seizures (amounts as well as number of seizures), prices on the street and anecdotal data from users unanimous tell the same story: supply is more generous and prices lower than ever. The variety of drugs has also expanded during the 90s and now follows what happens in the rest of the EU."

Source:

Swedish National Institute of Public Health & Swedish Council for Information on Alcohol and Other Drugs, "National Report: Sweden 2002" (Lisboa, Portugal: European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, 2003), p. 10.

6.

According to the Sweden's 2002 national drug report to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, "With start in the early 1990s, an increase in lifetime prevalence of drugs has been observed among youths. In grade 9 (15-16 year) this has meant a gradual change from 4% among boys and 3% among girls to 10 and 9% in 2001. This upward trend still holds true for the 18 year old male military conscripts. Recent data (2000) from the repeated study among 16-24 years old also indicate an ongoing increase at the national level. "However, the school survey in grade 9 in 2002 points in a new direction. For the first time since 1990 the figures are mowing down. In 2002 8% of the boys and 8% of the girls stated that they had tried a drug. The number of smokers has also gone down since last year; for boys from 30 to 25%, and for girls from 36 to 34%. This is preliminary data from the 2002 school survey (CAN 2002a), which is made with the same methodology as the ESPAD survey."

Source:

Swedish National Institute of Public Health & Swedish Council for Information on Alcohol and Other Drugs, "National Report: Sweden 2002" (Lisboa, Portugal: European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, 2003), p. 15.

7.

According to the Sweden's 2002 national drug report to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, "About 12% of the general population aged 15-64 reports lifetime prevalence for drugs. Lifetime prevalence is slightly higher in the age group 15-34 compared to the total. This is an indication that people nowadays 40 to 50 years old tried drugs during their adolescence at a time when drugs, mostly cannabis, were spread in wider circles. Broken down to 25-34 and 35-44 years we find those with the greatest lifetime prevalence, namely 17%. Persons over 55 very seldom have tried drugs. The proportion of drug experienced in the 15-24 and the 45-54 year group were 11%. "Telephone interviews are made among young persons aged 16-24. In the years 1996, 1998 and 2000 it was relieved that 9, 11 and 13% had used drugs. The methodology used differs from that used in the previous surveys, so direct comparisons cannot be done. "Less than 1% of all respondents 15-64 have used drugs during the latest twelve months. In surveys in 1998 and 2000 respondents also were asked if they had used drugs the latest 30 days. Practically none had done that."

Source:

Swedish National Institute of Public Health & Swedish Council for Information on Alcohol and Other Drugs, "National Report: Sweden 2002" (Lisboa, Portugal: European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, 2003), pp. 17-18.

8.

According to the Sweden's 2002 national drug report to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, "Reported lifetime experience [of an illicit drug] was highest in the early 1970s, about 15%. It thereafter dropped to about 8%

and in the late 1980s it reached its lowest level at 4%. From that level it has again raised and was 9% (10% for boys and 8% for girls) in 2001 (Andersson 2000). In 2002 figures went down for the first time in a decade (CAN 2002a). This year 8% have tried drugs (same proportion for boys and girls). Figures for alcohol and tobacco also went down. Analysis of the measurement is ongoing and an explanation of this eventual break in the trend must wait. "Cannabis is the most commonly used drug, and in about 2/3 of the cases the only drug used. About 1% has experience of amphetamine, ecstasy and LSD. "Last month prevalence was reported by about 3% during the 1970s. After that it has been lower, in 1994 1%. From that point it has increased to 3% among boys and 2% among girls the last two years. The survey in 2002 is not fully analyzed and published."

Source:

Swedish National Institute of Public Health & Swedish Council for Information on Alcohol and Other Drugs, "National Report: Sweden 2002" (Lisboa, Portugal: European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, 2003), p. 18.

9.

According to the Sweden's 2002 national drug report to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, "The number of persons suspected of offences against the Narcotic Drugs Act and the Goods Smuggling Act (only drugs included) has continuously been increasing since the middle of the 1980s. A total of 6,567 suspected persons were reported during 1985 and in 2000 the corresponding figure was 12,545 persons."

Source:

Swedish National Institute of Public Health & Swedish Council for Information on Alcohol and Other Drugs, "National Report: Sweden 2002" (Lisboa, Portugal: European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, 2003), p. 26.

10.

"Throughout the 1990s the seizures of several drugs have increased. Particularly seizures of amphetamines and heroin have gone up significantly during the period, in numbers but also in kilos. Increase in seizures holds true also for LSD, ecstasy and cocaine, but at much lower and more fluctuating levels. "Heroin and amphetamine prices have decreased significantly during the decade. Ecstasy and LSD prices fluctuate and the price intervals reported are considerable, probably due to limited availability. Cocaine and cannabis prices remain relatively unchanged and also the cannabis seizures have more or less hovered during the 1990s, both in numbers and size (apart from the very high figures of 1999). "To sum up: availability of particularly heroin and amphetamines seem to have increased during the 1990s and there are no signs of this these trends to taper off."

Source:

Swedish National Institute of Public Health & Swedish Council for Information on Alcohol and Other Drugs, "National Report: Sweden 2002" (Lisboa, Portugal: European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, 2003), p. 35.

11.

"A quite obvious trend observed in regular national surveys during the 1990s is the increase in lifetime prevalence of drugs among Swedish teenagers. Among students in grade 9 (15-16 yearolds) the lifetime prevalence of drugs increased from 3% in 1989 to 8% in 1999, 9% in 2000 and 2001 (boys 10% and girls 9%). During the last three years the lifetime figure has been pretty stable, though. The increase among girls seems to have halted since 1996 while boys still show a small increase. The school survey in 2002 might point in another direction, as only 8% (both boys and girls) had used drugs. This drop is accompanied with corresponding drops in use of alcohol and tobacco too. "The upward trend continues among older teenagers however. In the early 1990s, 6% of the 18-year old male military conscripts had tried drugs at any occasion and the corresponding figure for 1999 and later was 17%. Similar increases among older teenagers have also been noted in studies done by various polling institutes as well as in repeated local studies. Also recent use (last year, last 30 days prevalence) have increased among teenagers during the 1990s, even though the figures have not yet reached the levels of the first half of the 1970s."

Source:

Swedish National Institute of Public Health & Swedish Council for Information on Alcohol and Other Drugs, "National Report: Sweden 2002" (Lisboa, Portugal: European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, 2003), p. 35.

12.

"The Swedish unemployment rates were rather low during the 1970s and the 1980s. During the first half of the 1990s unemployment rates reached relatively high levels, especially among youths (16- 24 years). In the late half of the 1990s the figures have decreased, but the unemployment rates 1998 was still four-folded compared to 1989. One possible reason for increases in drug use among younger people, apart from an increased supply, is problems connected to social exclusion and high levels of youth unemployment. Negative future prospects, at least for certain groups of youths, might be a reason for not giving up experimentation with drugs, which in turn might lead to long lasting severe drug use. "During the 1990s there has been financial cut downs within the general welfare systems as well as in special forms of treatment (walk in clinics, therapeutic communities, etc). This might have had impact both on recruitment of new drug users who fall through the welfare net but also on the possibilities to offer drug users appropriate treatment. Statements from social workers, policemen, hospital staff and others sometimes indicates that the group of severe drug users are worse off nowadays, regarding economic and health aspects."

Source:

Swedish National Institute of Public Health & Swedish Council for Information on Alcohol and Other Drugs, "National

Report: Sweden 2002" (Lisboa, Portugal: European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, 2003), p. 37.

13.

According to the Sweden's 2002 national drug report to the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, "Harm reduction in its usual definition is not in practice. In conflict with the restrictive policy two needle exchange programmes exist. They are situated in Scania (Lund since 1986 and Malmö since 1987) on clinics for infectious diseases as a reaction on an expected HIV-epidemic at that time. The National Drug Coordinator will present a recommendation on the programmes future in February 2003. One alternative is to close them down."

Source:

Swedish National Institute of Public Health & Swedish Council for Information on Alcohol and Other Drugs, "National Report: Sweden 2002" (Lisboa, Portugal: European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, 2003), p. 47.

14.

Swedish drug use data reports define severe drug abuse as "all intravenous drug abuse, regardless of substance, and all daily or near-daily drug abuse, regardless of how the substance is taken." (p. 43) According to CAN's 2001 report on drug abuse, in 1998 "the number of abusers was estimated at 26,000 (with the interval between 24,500-28,500)." (p. 45) It is further estimated by CAN that in 1998: 47% of the 'severe drug abusers' had used heroin in the last year, and only 28% of the 'abusers' had opiates as their primary drug. 73% of the 'severe drug abusers' had used amphetamine in the last year, and 32% had amphetamine as their dominant drug. 54% of the 'severe drug abusers' had used cannabis in the last year, but only 8% had cannabis as their dominant drug. 89% of the 'severe drug abusers' had injected drugs within the last year.

Source:

Swedish National Council for Information on Alcohol and Other Drugs (CAN), Report No. 63, "Summary: Trends in Alcohol and Other Drugs in Sweden: Report 2001" (Stockholm, Sweden: CAN), p. 46, from the web at <http://www.can.se/news/newsfiler/Rep01sum.pdf> last accessed December 20, 2001.

15.

"Since drug use is prohibited with a maximum of six months imprisonment, the police are allowed to conduct drug tests (blood or urine) if there is reasonable cause to believe that a person is under the influence of drugs, however not on persons younger

than 15 years old. The conservatives have however suggested a change in the legislation so that also these persons could be tested."

Source:

Report to the European Monitoring Center on Drugs and Drug Addiction by the Reitox National Focal Point of Sweden, Folkhalsöinstitutet (National Institute of Public Health), "Sweden Drug Situation 2000" (Stockholm, Sweden: NIPH and EMCDDA, December 2000), p. 13.

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