

**Statement of Tom Lloyd, QPM MA (Oxon),
Drugscope delegate to the 8th Meeting of HONLEA, Europe
17th June 2009**

Report on the side event “A New Role for Law Enforcement” at 12.45 p.m. today attended by nearly 30 people and presented by:

- Tom Lloyd QPM MA (Oxon) (Lead consultant for IDPC Law Enforcement project and former UK Chief of Police)
- Jan Wiarda (Former Chairman of EU-Police Chiefs, and Chief of Police, The Hague, Netherlands)

Law enforcement agencies have invested significant resources over many years into trying to reduce the scale of drug markets – investigating trafficking operations, seizing consignments of drugs and precursors, disrupting local drug markets, and arresting users. Despite many examples of operational success, these efforts have not produced an eradication or significant and sustained reduction in the scale of the illicit market, so managers and strategists are increasingly turning their attention to how law enforcement efforts can alter the shape of drug markets so as to minimize the harmful consequences.

The International Drug Policy Consortium has initiated a project that brings together senior law enforcement managers to come up with new strategies and tactics that focus the efforts of their agencies on minimizing the harmful consequences of drug markets (and the unintended consequences of enforcement action) as well as reducing their overall scale. This project will be looking at ways in which resources can be directed at minimizing the power and reach of organized crime, reducing the violence associated with drug markets, and supporting efforts to provide treatment and harm reduction services to drug users.

In the presentation we explored the concept of legitimacy in policing being dependent upon effectiveness, proportionality, subsidiarity and accountability, and proposed that the legitimacy of policing the drugs laws was being threatened by problems in these areas. We challenged the audience to consider the desirability and effectiveness of the criminal law being used to deal with drug users, particularly the young, and argued that relative ineffectiveness of current drug control activities was a strong reason for considering changes in approach. We also suggested that new objectives be developed to focus more on reducing the harmful consequences of the drugs market rather than on its scale.

We referred to Antonio Maria Costa’s, Executive Director of the UNODC, identification of five areas of ‘unintended consequences’ of drug law enforcement in March 2008: A large-scale criminal black market, Policy displacement, Geographical displacement, Substance displacement and the Marginalisation of users. We echoed his call that we must humanise our drug control regime. We also quoted Gil Kerlikowske, the new Head of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, USA, who spoke of the need to fix the drugs problem, not recycle it, the need to devote finite resources toward those people who are the most dangerous to the community and that “We’re not at war with people in this country.”

We provided examples of refocused enforcement activity, managing resources more effectively, and the potential for engaging in harm reduction activities that went beyond the usual focus on the treatment of users, important though that is. We explored opportunities for law enforcement to tackle harms caused

to relatives and friends of users, neighbourhoods and to act to reduce crime, corruption and the consequences of organised criminality having access to very large amounts of money derived from the illegal drugs market.

During the question and answer session the success of the policy of prescribing heroin in Switzerland, and elsewhere, was discussed as was the lack of problems and presence of improvements associated with supervised injecting sites and carefully managed treatment. Several people attending the session commented on how stimulating these ideas were and how the debate needed to continue.

In order to turn these ideas into real practical solutions for implementation by operational staff we need to engage with as many law enforcement officials as possible. We invite all HONLEA members to get in touch with us and seek to encourage further debate on this important and pressing issue, and we are always willing to present these ideas to you at other events in more detail than I have in this statement.