

Declaration of Principles for the regulation of cannabis in the Republic of Slovenia,

prepared by the ICANNA - International Institute for Cannabinoids
in collaboration with Doctors for Cannabis Regulation.



The Organising Committee, Honorary Committee, and Doctors Committee support evidence-based legislative reform for the cannabis plant (*Cannabis sativa* L.), based on science, respect for human rights and principles of harm reduction.

This Declaration is a response to the harmful, ineffective, and unnecessary prohibition of the cannabis plant, which has been used for healing or medicinal purposes for thousands of years.

We believe that the prohibition of cannabis is harmful.

- Cannabis is a traditional medicinal plant,¹⁻⁵ currently legally categorised in the group of drugs "very dangerous to human health due to the severe consequences that may be caused by their abuse".⁶⁻⁷
- The majority of medical doctors surveyed in Slovenia believe that cannabis is a medicinal plant and support the use of cannabis in treatment. As many as 95% said they lacked knowledge in this field,⁸ and 85% support clinician education on the healing properties of cannabis.⁹
- Countries that have legalised and regulated cannabis for medical use have confirmed a decline in the number of prescriptions for drugs treating pain, anxiety, nausea, psychosis, seizures, insomnia and depression,¹⁰ and a reduction of over 25% in opioid overdose deaths.¹¹⁻¹³
- Due to the prohibition of cannabis, more potent¹⁴⁻¹⁵ strains, sometimes made dangerous by contaminants,¹⁶⁻¹⁹ are present on the illicit drug market, and the use of dangerous synthetic cannabinoids is on the rise.²⁰⁻²⁵
- As many as 85% of illicit drug related criminal and misdemeanour offences in Slovenia involve cannabis,²⁶ and majority of cannabis related crimes involve personal use and possession, thus unnecessarily burdening an already overloaded criminal justice system.²⁷⁻²⁸
- Cannabis is the largest component of the unregulated and untaxed illicit drug market,²⁹⁻³⁰ where cannabis is sold to minors and adults – frequently along with dangerous drugs.³¹⁻³³
- Evidence shows that users of lower socioeconomic status are more likely to use cannabis and less likely to discontinue its use.³⁴⁻³⁵ Consequently, these users face disproportionate consequences of cannabis related law enforcement, mainly due to their inability to pay fines, hire attorneys etc., leading to even greater stigmatisation and social exclusion.³⁶⁻³⁸
- The prohibition of cannabis hampers and stigmatises medical doctors, clinicians, researchers and other experts involved in this field.³⁹⁻⁴¹

We believe that the prohibition of cannabis is ineffective.

- Cannabis is the most widespread prohibited drug around the world and in Slovenia.⁴²⁻⁴⁴
- More than 220 000 Slovenian citizens aged 15-64 have tried cannabis at least once, which represents 15,8 % of the population in this age group.⁴⁵
- Prohibition does not prevent or reduce access to cannabis for minors, as 45% of surveyed Slovenian high school students expressed the opinion that cannabis is easily accessible.⁴⁶
- Minors encounter cannabis very early, as 4% reported they first tried it at the age of 13 or earlier. Among 16 year olds, one-fourth of high school students have tried cannabis at least once.⁴⁷
- The failure and harm of cannabis prohibition can be clearly deduced from a report of the eminent Global Commission on Drug Policy,⁴⁸ while the International Drug Policy Consortium states that putting cannabis into the restrictive system of the United Nations is a historical anomaly that needs to be ended as soon as possible.⁴⁹

We believe that prohibition of cannabis is unnecessary.

- The use of cannabis is not risk-free, but responsible personal use of cannabis by adults is generally safe.⁵⁰⁻⁵¹
- Health risks associated with misuse of cannabis are lower than those of alcohol and tobacco, which are legal for adults.⁵²⁻⁵⁶
- There is no evidence of causality between cannabis use and the subsequent use of other drugs.⁵⁷⁻⁵⁸
- More and more countries are devoting their attention to the proper regulation of the medical and personal use of cannabis, rejecting prohibition and stigmatisation.⁵⁹⁻⁶⁰
- Although there is an understandable concern about a possible increase in the use of cannabis following regulatory changes,⁶¹ other nations have noted little or no related increase in cannabis use.⁶²⁻⁶³ Consideration should be given to the experience of countries that have implemented cannabis reform, the specific needs of Slovenia, and the proper implementation of our own regulatory system.⁶⁴
- Professional Paediatric associations advocate decriminalisation of cannabis use, calling attention to the potential harm of underage use and suggesting measures to reduce this risk.⁶⁵⁻⁶⁶
- Cannabis regulatory policies should be implemented and monitored in a comprehensive manner in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders.⁶⁷⁻⁶⁸

We therefore support research and effective regulation of cannabis for medical purposes, preventive education for minors, regulation for adults, and regulation of the industry.

- Effective regulation is beneficial to public health, as it allows government control over production, testing, labeling, distribution, and sales of cannabis.⁶⁹⁻⁷¹
- Effective regulation would encourage and facilitate open communication between patients and doctors on the use of cannabis.⁷²⁻⁷³
- Effective regulation would enable and facilitate research into the risks and benefits of cannabis use.⁷⁴⁻⁷⁵
- By implementing appropriate regulation, society would achieve a better understanding of the various aspects of the use of cannabis.⁷⁶⁻⁷⁷
- Ending prohibition would create a legal distinction between adult and underage cannabis use, with greater ability to study the risks of underage use and act more effectively in restricting underage access.⁷⁸⁻⁸³
- Cannabis use should be decriminalised, destigmatised, and demarginalised, ending penalties for the sake of basic respect for human rights, harm reduction and public health. Such recommendations have been advanced by many experts and international institutions, including the World Health Organisation, International Red Cross, Global Commission on Drug Policy, and others.⁸⁴⁻⁹³
- Preventive and therapeutic treatments programs should be established for those who need them, especially among minors.⁹⁴⁻⁹⁶
- Tax revenues from the sale of cannabis should go to research, education, substance dependence programs, and investment in Slovenian communities.⁹⁷⁻⁹⁹



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approved by the

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III.

Board of Doctors

Invite others on web page of the Institute ICANNA, tab Declaration.



Invitation

We invite Medical doctors and scientists with a doctoral degree of diverse disciplines – medicine, public health, social services, sociology, psychology, philosophy, education, law, human rights, harm reduction, chemistry, biology, agronomy, economics, etc., citizens of Slovenia – to endorse this Declaration of Principles for cannabis regulation in the Republic of Slovenia (info@institut-icanna.com).

Appeal

We appeal to other experts, the media, and general public, to encourage effective regulation of cannabis as an alternative to prohibition.

Organisation Board, Honorary Board, and Board of Doctors

Republic of Slovenia, January 2017

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