

[Finally, a politician talks sense on drug legalisation](#) [1]

Written by [Tim Worstall](#) [2] | Monday 9 April 2012

So, knowing that drugs are bad for human beings is not a compelling reason for advocating their prohibition. Actually, the prohibition paradigm that inspires mainstream global drug policy today is based on a false premise: that the global drug markets can be eradicated. We would not believe such a statement if it were applied to alcoholism or tobacco addiction, but somehow we assume it's right in the case of drugs. Why?

Moving beyond prohibition can lead us into tricky territory. To suggest liberalisation ? allowing consumption, production and trafficking of drugs without any restriction whatsoever ? would be, in my opinion, profoundly irresponsible. Even more, it is an absurd proposition. If we accept regulations for alcohol and tobacco, why should we allow drugs to be consumed and produced without any restrictions?

Our proposal, as the government, is to abandon any ideological position (whether prohibition or liberalisation) and to foster a global intergovernmental dialogue based on a realistic approach ? drug regulation. Drug consumption, production and trafficking should be subject to global regulations, which means that consumption and production should be legalised but within certain limits and conditions. And legalisation therefore does not mean liberalisation without controls.

A dialogue on drug markets regulation should address some of the following questions: how can we diminish the violence generated by drug abuse? How can we strengthen public health and social protection systems in order to prevent substance abuse and provide support to drug addicts and their relatives? How can we provide economic and social opportunities to families and communities that benefit economically from drug production and trafficking? Which regulations should be put in place to prevent substance abuse (prohibition of sales to minors, prohibition of advertising in mass media, high selective consumption taxes for drugs etc)?

There are a few minor points that can be made: Mill's point that even though something may be bad for someone that is not a justification for stopping them doing it. There's also the point that there are plenty of people arguing for prohibition of smoking tobacco altogether and their puritan compatriots in the anti-booze industry aren't far behind.

But the basic construction of the argument is entirely correct: we'll never actually stop drug taking, therefore never stop drug growing or trafficking. And the three of them being illegal is doing far more damage to drug users and also the civil liberties of everyone than that controlled legalisation would cause.

There is a sadness here as well though. I deliberately removed the part that would have identified this politician speaking sense as being the [President of Guatemala](#) [3]. You know, someone who has had to spend a considerable part of his life cleaning up the mess left by drugs wars rather than our own politicians whose experience is, if tales are to be believed, more about how fun it is to take drugs.

Which is something that has always puzzled me. Why is it so difficult to persuade those who have had and

enjoyed a toot that it would be a good idea to make it easier, safer, less violent and less destructive of civil liberties for everyone else to enjoy a toot? Sure, you or I may think that making it to the front bench is as low as any human being could go, as far as it is possible to fall as a result of the evils that drug use will do to you, killing brain cells and suppressing all morals, but surely the politicians themselves don't think that, do they?

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