

NSfK working-group *Changing Nordic Drug Policy?*

Work in progress

Meeting at Stockholm University November 7th-8th 2019

The five Nordic countries all have strict drug policies relying on penal legislation, police work, and imprisonment. These policies have increasingly been criticized. The policies have not delivered. At the same time a number of countries and states in the world have started to decriminalize and even legalize drugs. The Nordic countries have come under pressure, and the question can with *Nils Christie* be asked if there will be a retreat and if so what it will look like?

NSfK is therefore financing a working-group that looks into the question if there are signs of changing drug policies in the Nordic countries. The members of the working group are:

Denmark: Esben Houborg and Kim Møller

Finland: Pekka Hakkarainen and Heini Kainulainen

Iceland: Helgi Gunnlaugsson

Norway: Paul Larsson and Nicolay Johansen

Sweden: Johan Edman, Josefin Månsson, Mats Ekendahl, Patrik Karlsson and Henrik Tham.

A meeting was held at Stockholm University November 7th-8th 2019 and eight papers were presented.

An analysis of changes in Nordic drug policies also becomes a comparison. All five countries report increases in drug use, especially cannabis. Rising tolls of drug related deaths is a problem in most countries. Some harm reduction has occurred, but a rise in arrests and imprisonment is noticeable.

Sweden stands out as the most restrictive country with the government just recently announcing increases in the penalty scale for drugs and ordering the police to focus even more on drug dealing in the streets. Norway, on the other hand, has deserted the war on crime and looks for a more treatment-oriented policy. A public policy approach to a changing drug policy is also visible in other countries.

Both similarities and dissimilarities between the countries allows for an interesting analysis that hopefully will result in an open access book published by Stockholm University Press. There is still space for one or two more contributions to the special question of a changing drug policy. Would you be interested to contribute, please write to henrik.tham@criminologu.su.se.

Henrik Tham, professor emeritus at Stockholm University, Department of Criminology