

Uruguay to legalise marijuana trade

14th December, 2013



Uruguay has become the first country in the world to legalise the marijuana trade, from the drug's production to its distribution. This means it is the only nation where the government has total control of the commercialisation of

marijuana (also known as cannabis). Uruguay's President Jose Mujica said his goal is to try and disrupt the activities of drug traffickers and possibly put them out of business altogether. He hopes that his legalisation, together with the close monitoring of marijuana sales by the state, will reduce dependence on the drug and drug-related crime. Mr Mujica said he was well aware that the new legislation was "an experiment," which had no guarantee of being successful.

The legalisation has fallen foul of an international treaty on drug control. Uruguay is a signatory to the 1961 Convention on Narcotic Drugs. The Convention limits the use of cannabis "to medical and scientific purposes". The president of the International Narcotics Control Board, Raymond Yans, said he was "surprised" that Uruguay had "knowingly decided to break the universally agreed and internationally endorsed legal provisions of the treaty". He warned the move could backfire, saying: "It will not protect young people, but rather have the perverse effect of encouraging early experimentation, lowering the age of first use, and thus contributing to...earlier onset of addiction and other disorders."

Sources: MercoPress / Businessweek / EconomyWatch

Writing

The War on Drugs will never be won. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

legalise / the marijuana trade / total control / traffickers / drug-related crime / aware / fallen foul of / narcotics / backfire / protect young people / experimentation / addiction

True / False

- Uruguay is only the second country to legalise the cannabis trade. T / F
- Uruguay's government is trying to put drug traffickers out of business. T / F
- Uruguay's government will carefully check sales of marijuana. T / F
- The president of Uruguay knows his experiment might fail.
- Uruguay did not sign up to a 1961 convention on narcotic drugs.
- The 1961 convention let countries use drugs for medical reasons.
- The head of a world narcotics organisation liked Uruguay's idea.
- The organisation's boss said younger people will be turned off drugs.

Synonym Match

- | | |
|----------------|------------------|
| 1. legalise | a. business |
| 2. trade | b. contrary |
| 3. total | c. upset |
| 4. disrupt | d. assurance |
| 5. guarantee | e. law |
| 6. legislation | f. restricts |
| 7. limits | g. decriminalise |
| 8. purposes | h. backed |
| 9. endorsed | i. complete |
| 10. perverse | j. grounds |

Discussion – Student A

- What do you think of Uruguay's actions?
- What view does your government take on drugs?
- How do narcotic drugs affect your country?
- Do you think other countries will copy Uruguay?
- Can the world ever win the War on Drugs?
- The USA is still fighting its 40-year-old war on drugs? Why so long?
- Are drug traffickers cleverer than the police who try to catch them?
- What happens if Uruguay's experiment is not successful?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| 1. legalise the | a. was an experiment |
| 2. total control of the commercialisation | b. could backfire |
| 3. try and disrupt the activities | c. being successful |
| 4. well aware that the new legislation | d. an international treaty |
| 5. no guarantee of | e. marijuana trade |
| 6. fallen foul of | f. purposes |
| 7. a signatory to the | g. other disorders |
| 8. internationally endorsed | h. of drug traffickers |
| 9. He warned the move | i. of marijuana |
| 10. addiction and | j. 1961 Convention |

Discussion – Student B

- Is cannabis OK for medical purposes?
- Should legal action be taken against Uruguay for breaking its agreement?
- What are the consequences of Uruguay's legislation backfiring?
- How could the legislation protect young people?
- How could the legislation put drug traffickers out of business?
- Do you think the legislation will lead to greater drug abuse?
- How can society help drug addicts?
- What questions would you like to ask Uruguay's president?

Spelling

- the clsoacmeiitamnr / eaioizlmctaroinm of marijuana
- irsutdp the activities
- drug ferikafsrtc
- his ienslalogita / elitonzagail
- reduce enpeddneec on the drug
- no rtaegneau of being successful
- a ronitygas to the 1961 Convention
- medical and scientific sueppsro
- Uruguay had ynklwgnoi decided
- internationally endorsed legal ivripososn
- the pvrresee effect
- incoadidt and other disorders

Answers – Synonym Match

1. g	2. a	3. i	4. c	5. d
6. e	7. f	8. j	9. h	10. b

Role Play

Role A – War on Drugs

You think the War on Drugs is most important. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are difficult about their war. Also, tell the others which of these should be last on the list to fight (and why): the War on Poverty, the War on Terror or the War on Cyber-bullies.

Role B – War on Poverty

You think the War on Poverty is most important. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are difficult about their war. Also, tell the others which of these should be last on the list to fight (and why): the War on Drugs, the War on Terror or the War on Cyber-bullies.

Role C – War on Terror

You think the War on Terror is most important. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are difficult about their war. Also, tell the others which of these should be last on the list to fight (and why): the War on Poverty, the War on Drugs or the War on Cyber-bullies.

Role D – War on Cyber-bullies

You think the War on Cyber-bullies is most important. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are difficult about their war. Also, tell the others which of these should be last on the list to fight (and why): the War on Poverty, the War on Terror or the War on Drugs.

Speaking – Addictions

Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the worst at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- nicotine addiction
- shopaholic
- addicted to TV
- gambling
- drug addiction
- caffeine addiction
- overeating
- alcoholism

Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	T	d	T	e	F	f	T	g	F	h	F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.