

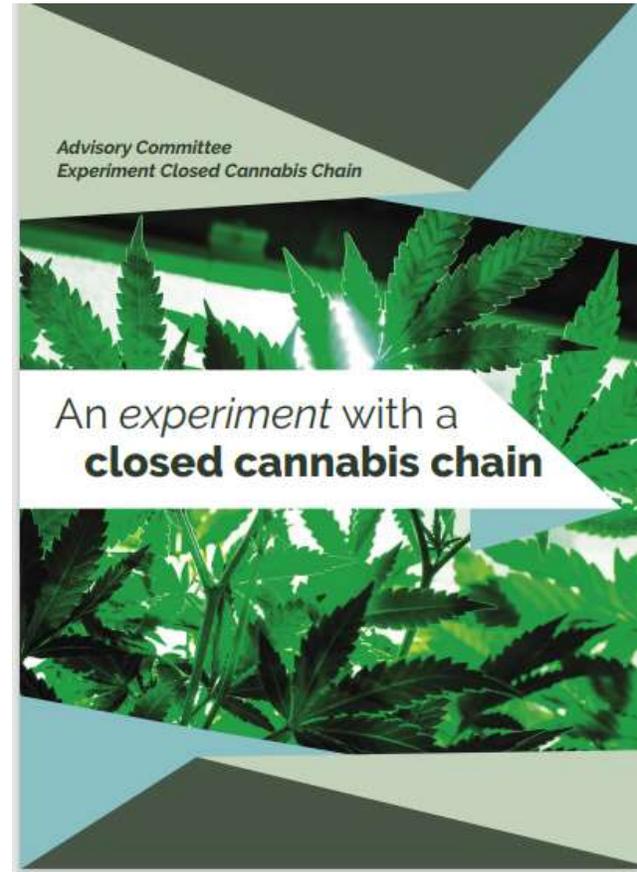
# Cannabis policy in The Netherlands: rationale and design of an experiment with a controlled legal ('closed') cannabis supply chain

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Chair Advisory Committee Experiment Closed Cannabis Chain (The Netherlands)  
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Committee members:

- Tom Blom, Professor of Criminal (Procedural) Law,
- Sanne van Eerden, Public sector consultant.
- Jan Mans, Former Mayor of Meerssen, Kerkrade, Enschede, Venlo, Zaanstad, Maastricht, Moerdijk, Gouda
- Dike van de Mheen, Professor of Transformations in Care
- Nico de Neeling, Senior scientific officer, Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport
- David Schelfhout, Public sector consultant,
- Jaap Seidell, Professor of Nutrition and Health.
- Wim van den Brink, Em. Professor of Psychiatry and Addiction
- Karin van Wingerde, Professor of Corporate Crime and Governance
- Albert van Wijk, Chairman Board IJsselland Hospital, former Attorney General



# Background and general approach

- The Dutch tolerance policy since 1970s

**The 'back door' (illegal)**

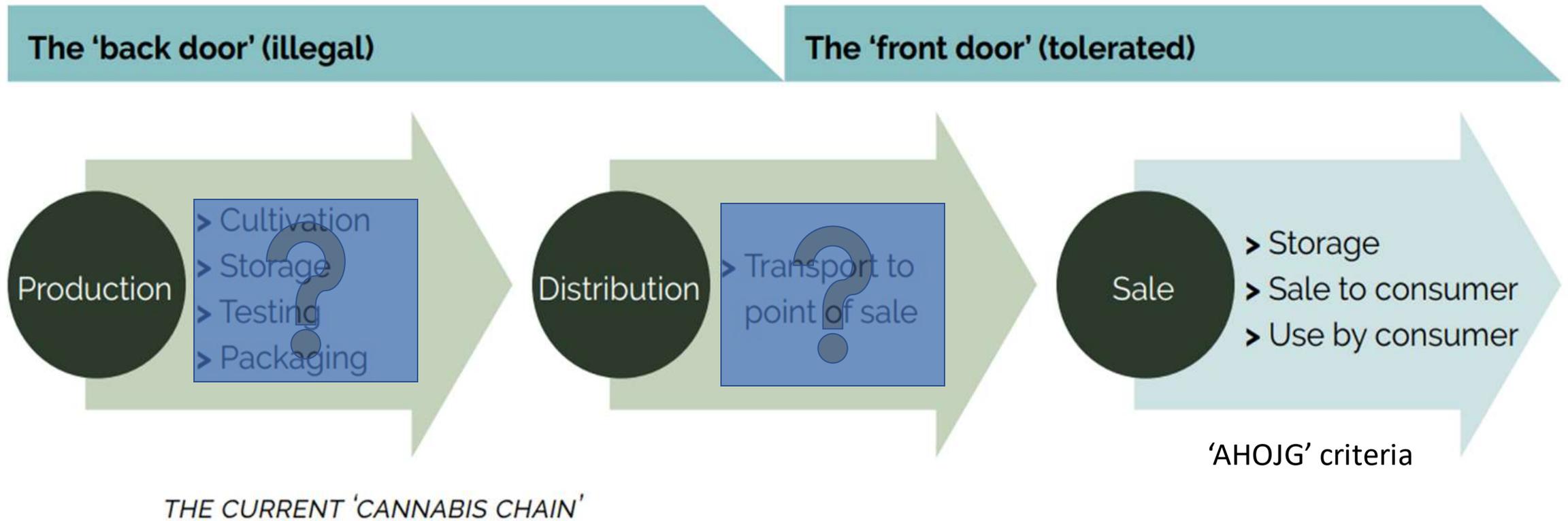
**The 'front door' (tolerated)**



# Background and general approach



- The Dutch tolerance policy since 1970s



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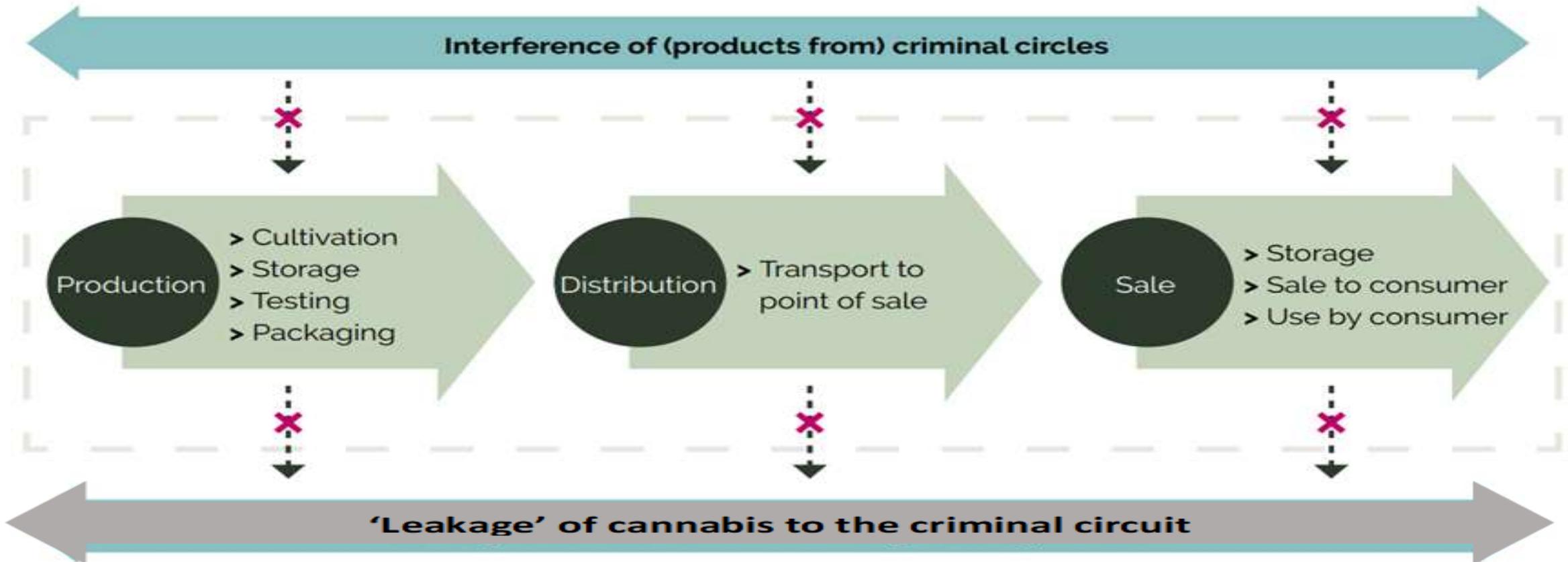


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  - Associated with public order and safety problems and additional health risks for consumers
  - Long debate about legalisation of cannabis production and supply.
  - 2017: agreement to conduct an experiment with a controlled legal ('closed') cannabis supply chain for recreational use; legally established 1 July 2020

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# Background and general approach



- The Dutch tolerance policy since 1970s
  - Associated with public order and safety problems and additional health risks for consumers
  - Long debate about legalisation of cannabis production and supply.
  - 2017: agreement to conduct an experiment with a controlled legal ('closed') cannabis supply chain for recreational use; legally established 1 July 2020
- Independent expert committee elaborated how the closed chain will operate and be evaluated
- Experience medicinal cannabis chain, round tables with stakeholders (mayors, coffeeshop owners, cannabis consumers, growers, regulators, scientists, and addiction experts)
- Production and supply of cannabis to the coffeeshops in 10 intervention municipalities, with product quality control, law enforcement, and preventive efforts to reduce health risks
- No changes in the cannabis supply to the coffeeshops in participating control municipalities
- Process evaluation: was the chain from production to sale in intervention group really closed?
- Quasi-experimental study comparing intervention and control municipalities, to assess the chain's effects on public health, cannabis-related crime, safety and public nuisance
- The experiment takes 4 years, including reporting to government/parliament, who will then decide on possible further steps towards legalisation of cannabis production and supply



# Overview of the closed cannabis chain (1)

## - **Production**

- 10 contracted growers
- Strict criteria. :
  - Sufficient variation of cannabis products
  - Accurate product information (e.g., % THC, CBD, health risks, use)
  - Secure packaging
  - Secure storage
  - Track & trace system and transparent records to monitor closed chain products
  - Directors have passed an integrity (BIBOB) screening; certificate of conduct for personnel
  - Exclusively growing cannabis for the experiment
  - Testing/quality control (e.g., THC and CBD levels, pesticides) in independent dedicated lab
  - Safe working & living environment
- Random sample of 10 growers if more than 10 candidate growers meet criteria



# Overview of the closed cannabis chain (2)

- ***Distribution***

- Growers responsible for secure transport/distribution, transport companies special license

- ***Sale***

- All coffeeshops in the intervention municipalities must participate
- Strict criteria:
  - Products purchased exclusively from designated growers
  - Maximum permitted trading stock sufficient for one week
  - Professional responsibilities and skills with regard to product information and prevention
  - Directors have passed integrity (BIBOB) screening; certificate of conduct for personnel
  - Prohibited: advertising, trading hard drugs, causing nuisance, people under 18 in the coffeeshop, selling more than 5 grams at a time, selling to non-Dutch residents (AHOJG)



# Overview of the closed cannabis chain (3)

## *Preventive measures*

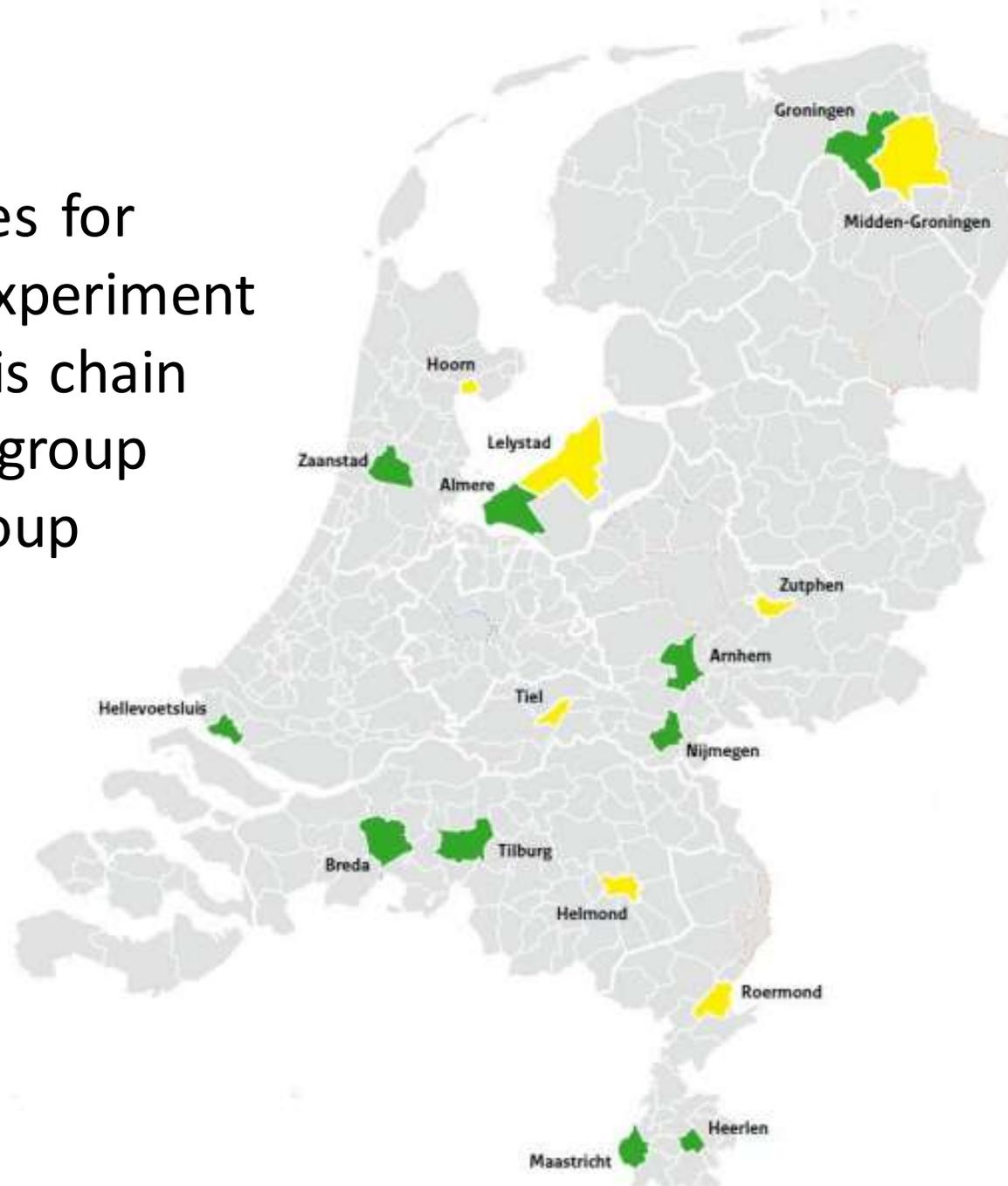
- Health education, early recognition and referral of problematic use

## *Surveillance and enforcement*

- *Production, quality and distribution:* Justice and Security Inspectorate, Netherlands Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority
- *Coffeeshops and sales:* mayor of the municipality, Justice and Security Inspectorate
- *Detecting/prosecuting criminal offences:* Police and Public Prosecution Service.
- *Sanctions* for non-compliance with regulations or violation of law, respectively
  - Withdrawal of grower designation or closure of coffeeshop
  - Warning, financial/administrative sanctions; criminal sanctions.

Selected municipalities for participation in the experiment with a closed cannabis chain

- Red: intervention group
- Yellow: control group



Nominatie van gemeenten voor deelname aan het experiment met een gesloten cannabisketen

Tweede rapportage van de adviescommissie Experiment gesloten cannabisketen



# Overview of evaluation of process & effectiveness (1)



- ***Process***

- Key questions to be answered:
  - Is the chain really closed (e.g., do intervention municipalities successfully eliminate supply and sale of illegally produced cannabis)?
  - How are the processes within the chain doing (e.g., quality and efficiency of the processes of cultivation, storage and supply to the points of sale)?
  - How is the sale of the delivered cannabis going (e.g., turnover, providing health information and prevention, buying behaviour)?
  - User experiences and perceptions regarding product quality and variety?
- Data sources: surveys, interviews, focus groups

# Overview of evaluation of process & effectiveness (2)



- ***Effectiveness***

- Quasi-experimental evaluation: intervention and control municipalities
- Outcome measures: cannabis use, other substance use, driving under influence of cannabis, cannabis-related crime, dependency and addiction, (short term) health effects, safety, nuisance
- Data sources: surveys, registries, incident-related data

- ***Follow-up***

- Four years, including reporting, with a possible extension of up to 1.5 years

- ***Independent scientific evaluation and guidance***

- Independent research team
- Independent Guidance and Evaluation Committee



# Appropriate international alignment

- Accurate effect measurements given possible overflow problems in Belgium, Germany and Northern France
- Relevant UN conventions on drugs and EU legislation
- Also other countries are searching for better cannabis policies; international comparative learning
- Facilitating international cooperation aimed at revising international treaties and agreements, given developing knowledge, opinions and experiences