



25 years Vienna International Centre



## International Narcotics Control Board (INCB)

### TRACKING TRAFFICKERS

When several tons of sleeping pills are found en route to a country with medical requirements of only a few kilos, alarm bells ring at INCB, the International Narcotics Control Board located in Vienna.

The Board, established under the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, is the international watchdog of the international drug control treaties which aim to ensure that cultivation, production and use of drugs is limited to medical and scientific purposes and that chemicals are not diverted from their licit manufacture and trade for their use in the illicit manufacture of drugs.

Its 13 members are independent experts, not government representatives. Through its secretariat, the Board is in constant contact with relevant authorities in almost every country in the world and manages the control system established by the Conventions, which oblige Governments to furnish information and data to INCB on a regular basis. All data is evaluated by the INCB Secretariat and enables the Board to keep a close watch on all available drugs in all countries at the main stages of production and trade.

Every day, INCB receives requests to ascertain the legitimacy of certain transactions involving controlled substances. Such as the recent enquiry by an Asian country on whether an order of five tons of diazepam (valium) from another Asian country was legitimate. The answer was no, for this quantity exceeds the annual medical requirements of that substance of large industrialized countries. The export of that substance, which is not only frequently abused by heroin addicts but also a common adulterant for heroin, was therefore prevented.

Such incidents are frequent and draw the immediate intervention of INCB with the health and enforcement authorities in the exporting countries. Close cooperation between the Board and Governments prevents the diversion of several thousand tons of chemicals per year, chemicals that are needed to illicitly manufacture drugs. As soon as the more than 160 States Parties to the 1988 United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances have strengthened their control systems, the diversions of these chemicals will continue to decrease.

In accordance with the international drug control treaties, the Board prepares an annual report on its work. In that report, the Board analyses the global drug situation and alerts Governments to existing and potential trends that may threaten drug control efforts and recommends improvements at both national and international levels. The report is based on information provided by Governments and international bodies to the Board. The annual report of the Board is supplemented by three detailed technical reports on narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and on precursor chemicals which can be used in the illicit manufacture of drugs.

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