



## PRESS RELEASE

*Recent press reports have suggested that a 'weed pass' is about to be introduced in Amsterdam that would prohibit tourists from visiting coffeeshops. This news release is intended to provide the full information on this situation and to rectify these erroneous reports.*

### **NO WEED PASS IN AMSTERDAM**

The concept of a 'weed pass' that would restrict tourists from visiting coffeeshops in the Netherlands has been on the table for some time. Reports that such a pass will be applied in Amsterdam are, however, completely without foundation. The Mayor and Council of Amsterdam are radically opposed to such a scheme and it will not be implemented in the city. For over thirty years coffeeshops in Amsterdam have provided a safe and controlled environment for consumption of soft drugs. This will remain so in the future. The wide choice of coffeeshops available to tourists means that they will have no need buy their cannabis on the street. Thus the coffeeshops are fulfilling exactly the function for which they were established.

Put forward by the Dutch Justice Minister, Ivo Opstelten, the 'weed pass' is still at proposal stage and will not even be discussed by the Dutch Parliament until 2012. What is more the Supreme Court equivalent in the Netherlands, the Council of State, has ruled that discrimination against tourists is outside of the law unless those tourists are responsible for more public disorder than residents. Within its ruling the Council of State made an exception under which, in cases of severe public disturbance, mayors may discriminate against nonresidents provided they can be proved to be responsible. Since coffeeshops are well known for their peaceful and non-violent ambiance -- no coffeeshop has ever been charged under a public order act -- such an exception is somewhat academic.

The 'weed pass' proposal was originally formulated in response to cross-border criminal buyers of large quantities of cannabis and large numbers of tourist buyers in the most southerly Limburg province of the Netherlands, notably in the town of Maastricht. The proposal was intended for implementation in Maastricht and other towns in Limburg and never for implementation nationally.

Cannabis Retailers Association,  
Amsterdam, July 18 - 2011

For further information, please contact:  
Michael Veling - spokesperson at +31-653780683  
or Maurice Veldman - lawyer at +31-654947384