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## 'Youth in Europe' drug prevention programme sees youth drinking drop from 42% to 9% / Iceland and Actavis continue to support the fight against substance abuse



Germany (ots) -

The Youth in Europe (YIE) drug prevention programme has released research tracking the incidence of smoking (daily), drinking and cannabis experimentation amongst 15 to 16-year-old students in Iceland from 1998 to 2011. And the results are astonishing.

The number of young people who got drunk within the last 30 days has dropped from 42% in 1998 to just 9% in 2011. The level of youngsters smoking on a daily basis has decreased from 23% to 5%, and those experimenting with cannabis from 17% to 3%.

YIE is considered by many to be the biggest health promotion project targeting youth substance abuse across Europe. This evidence-based, international programme was initiated by European Cities Against Drugs (ECAD) and is carried out in cooperation with major European cities. Taking a broadly holistic approach, its aim is to decrease the likelihood of substance use among young people. The city of Reykjavík, Iceland, serves as the chair and provides management for this programme, while research is conducted by the Icelandic Centre for Social Research and Analysis (ICSRA).

Today at the Frankfurt Book Fair, the programme's principal sponsor Actavis announced that it would be extending its backing of the programme until 2016. This international pharmaceutical company, which has its roots in Iceland, is also a sponsor of the Icelandic Pavilion at the Book Fair, and made its announcement alongside YIE's patron, the President of Iceland, Olafur Ragnar Grimsson.

Olafur Ragnar Grimsson, President of Iceland and Patron of Youth in Europe said: "It is a tragedy to see young people all over Europe fall prey to dangerous drugs. It is our duty to protect our youth from this scourge and the criminals who run this business. We all have to think constructively about how we can contribute to this important fight. The most productive way is to base our actions on scientific knowledge and social research demonstrating which preventive programmes produce the most successful results. The gathering of knowledge in Iceland is of this nature and it is a privilege to bring it now to the benefit of others and thus help families and young people to lead a healthy and happy life."

Claudio Albrecht, CEO of Actavis said: "The younger adolescents are when they start drinking alcohol, the more likely they are to become abusers of drugs later in life. This is one of the key findings of the studies to date. The research shows that spending time with parents is important in decreasing the likelihood of substance misuse, while having friends who misuse substances can increase the likelihood. Adolescents who participate in sports, organised youth work and extra-curricular activities in school, are less likely than other adolescents to use drugs. This means that we need to activate all at once, the family, the peer group, the school, those who organize youth activities and authorities in order to succeed in fighting substance use", said the CEO. "Experts in Iceland have spent more than a decade researching the factors that contribute most to the prevention of drug abuse, and Icelandic society has been mobilised in this fight. Today we are a global company, yet we remain extremely proud of our Icelandic roots and we are determined to help disseminate this valuable approach throughout Europe. That's why we have now extended our sponsorship until 2016."

#### About Actavis Group

Actavis is one of the world's leading generic pharmaceutical companies, specialising in the development, manufacture and sale of generic pharmaceuticals. The company has operations in 40 countries, with 10,000 employees. For further information on Actavis Group, please visit [www.actavis.com](http://www.actavis.com)

#### Note to editors:

Cities participating in the YIE drug prevention programme include: Reykjavik, Oslo, Helsinki, Riga, Vilnius, Sofia, Bucharest, Istanbul, St. Petersburg, Liepaja, Jurmala, Arilje, Kaunas and Klaipeda. Milan and Moscow have recently signed up to the programme. By the autumn of 2012, ECAD plans to have 25 cities participating and at least 50 cities by 2016.

In addition to the research conducted in Reykjavik, two pilot studies have been carried out in the other cities. A minimum of 2,800 students participated in the research in each city. The research is used to evaluate the most effective prevention measures. Young people and their families, schools, youth clubs and authorities, are then mobilised in a cooperative effort to combat substance abuse.

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#### Medieninhalte



*Olafur Ragnar Grimsson, President of Iceland (left side) and Claudio Albrecht, CEO of Actavis (right side), explained how Iceland and Actavis support Youth in Europe. This programme has successfully implemented methods to reduce substance abuse among young people in Europe. In Iceland youth drinking dropped from 42 to 9 percent. / Further text by ots and under [www.presseportal.ch](http://www.presseportal.ch). The use of this picture is for editorial purposes free of charge. Publication under source: "obs/Actavis Group".*

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