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WM Policy Update: Five Cannabis Legalization Hotspots Around the World

June 16, 2022



By WM Policy Team

Cannabis legalization is gaining global acceptance. Today, in addition to the 38 U.S. states, cannabis is legal for medical or adult-use in more than **40 countries** around the world…and that number seems to grow every day.

Here is a snapshot of five cannabis legalization "hot spots" compiled by the **WM Policy** team:

1. **Germany:** Most (outside of the medical program) cannabis sold in Germany is through the illicit market, where there is no quality control. The German government wants to change that. Germany **announced** its intention to fully legalize adult-use sales by the end of the legislative period, but no draft bill has been introduced. Though the pandemic and the war in Ukraine have taken priority, a draft bill could be released in the "second half of the year," **according** to the German Minister of Health. Germany is a parliamentary democracy, so there is much to be done before a bill can become law.

2. **Italy:** Several attempts to legalize cannabis in Italy over the past few years have been unsuccessful. Most recently, advocates hoped to use a **nationwide ballot initiative** to decriminalize personal cannabis cultivation and do away with penalties for cannabis possession. However, upon completing the signature-gathering process, Italy's highest court ruled that the national referendum process could not be used for full legalization.

3. **Switzerland:** Swiss authorities **announced** their plans to legalize cannabis cultivation, trade, and consumption last fall. Public health authorities believe cannabis should no longer be banned but carefully regulated instead. The National Council must now develop a framework for an integrated medical and adult-use cannabis program. Meanwhile, in Zurich, Switzerland's largest city, a **three-year pilot project** begins this fall to legalize adult-use cannabis sales and study its effects on Swiss society.

4. **Mexico:** In **2019**, Mexico's Supreme Court ruled that laws prohibiting adult-use cannabis possession and cultivation were unconstitutional and violated "free development of the personality." This ruling gave leaders in Mexico's Congress a directive to create legislation to regulate the lawful use, possession, and cultivation of cannabis for adult-use purposes. At this time last year, Mexico was close to passing a cannabis legalization bill with both the lower chamber and a visible majority in Congress. But it failed.A month later, the high court issued a further ruling making it easier for individuals to get permits to possess, cultivate, and use cannabis on an individual basis. The cannabis legalization bill does not seem to be a priority, and for now, the efforts to legalize and regulate cannabis for adult use is stalled.

5. **Thailand:** Thailand is the first country in Asia to decriminalize adult-use cannabis after the public health ministry successfully removed cannabis from the narcotics list. The 9th of June will mark a big day for Thailand, as decriminalization will take effect, and people will be **allowed** to cultivate any amount of cannabis for personal use. Thai officials **announced** earlier this month that over one million medical cannabis plants would be distributed to Thai households to celebrate this new cultivation law. Thailand's Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has **received** more than 4,700 applications for licenses to import, possess, grow, and manufacture cannabis and hemp. Thai officials anticipate a gradual ease in restrictions as the new cannabis industry flourishes.

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