

Doping Should Not Be A Criminal Offense, Says WADA

In a statement issued on Sunday, the World Anti-Doping Agency ([WADA](#)) has remarked it does not believe doping should be made a criminal offense for athletes.

The anti-doping agency said it does not wish to interfere in the sovereign right of any government to make laws for its people. The [World Anti-Doping Agency](#) added the current system has been globally accepted by sport and government. Presently, athletes who are caught doping face a four-year period of ineligibility for serious doping and have a right of appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

The WADA statement reads the World Anti-Doping Agency does not wish to interfere in the sovereign right of any government to make laws for its people. It added however the Agency believes that the sanction process for athletes, which includes a right of appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS), is a settled process, accepted by all governments of the world, and further that the sanctions for a doping violation by an athlete, which now includes a longer, four-year period of ineligibility, have been globally accepted by sport and government. The statement also reads the Agency as such does not believe that doping should be made a criminal offence for athletes.

The statement also reads WADA and its partners in the anti-doping community do however encourage governments to introduce laws that penalize those who are trafficking and distributing banned substances; those individuals who are ultimately putting banned substances into the hands of athletes. The WADA statement also reads this is a commitment that governments made in ratifying the UNESCO International Convention against Doping in Sport in 2005 and also reads that WADA acknowledges that countries that have introduced criminal legislation for doping have been effective in catching athlete support personnel that possess or traffic performance enhancing drugs.

The German government passed draft legislation earlier this year that makes it illegal for athletes to make use of performance enhancing drugs inside borders of the country. The law, which still must be approved by the parliament of the country, cites jail terms of up to three years for professional athletes who are caught using or possessing performance enhancing drugs and would affect approximately 7,000 elite athletes who are subject to

Germany's National Anti Doping Agency (NADA) regulations but this law does not apply to amateur athletes. Many of Germany's neighbors -- Italy, France, and Austria -- have passed legislation that has also criminalized [doping](#). Reservations have been voiced against the law by the German Olympic sports association that argued that pressure on athletes, whether based on performance or financial incentives, is overwhelming and all encompassing.

The *Daily Mail* reported on Monday that a new law has been proposed by Colin Moynihan, Lord of the British Olympic Association, which would see athletes caught using performance enhancing drugs sent to prison for up to two years. Moynihan is expecting the law will be in place for the 2017 World Athletics Championships in London. Under this proposed law, any athlete, regardless of nationality, who is caught of doping in the United Kingdom could be arrested and made to stand trial in the country.