

## 6th Civil Society Forum on Drugs (CSF)

The 6th Civil Society Forum on Drugs (CSF) took place on 10-12 October 2011 in the Residence Palace in Brussels, Belgium, to hold discussions on a common CSF statement on the EU Drugs Strategy from 2013 onwards. The CSF plenary agreed on the main messages and form of the statement, setting up an editorial team to finalise the document by February 2012 at the latest (for details see text box). In addition, the CSF has now the status of Expert Group, which will be included in the European Commission Transparency (Expert Group) Register. The new status will not impact current working methods. A total of 49 persons attended this second meeting in 2011, with representatives from the 35 [Civil Society Forum member organisations](#) and European Commission officials alike.

This 6th Civil Society Forum on Drugs plenary:

- agreed on the **spirit of recommendations** that CSF members judge important for further development of the EU Drugs Strategy. There will be no room for further discussion at the next meeting.
- set up an **editorial group** (volunteers: Fay Watson, Marie Nougier, David Liddell, Monica Luppi, Eric Carlin and Péter Sárosi, headed by Raminta Stuikyte,) which will work further on the draft document (based on the draft of the plenary and documents from working groups).
- **agreed on the format of the document:** recommendations should be like an executive summary or as a separate summary document: rationale / principles included in a longer document, while recommendations are directed at specific bodies (Member States, European Commission, etc.).
- agreed on a **timeline:** the final document of the CSF needs to be ready by February 2012, the editorial group will possibly meet, together with the Core Group, at the end of November 2011. The text should be sent to all CSF members by the end of the year.
- The next Civil Society Forum is scheduled for March 2012.

In addition, the CSF:

- voted for 6 members of the **Core Group**:

Eliot Ross Albert (International Network of People who Use Drugs), Amador Calafat (European Institute on Prevention Studies – IREFREA), Jeff Lee (Mentor Foundation), Matej Kosir<sup>1</sup> (Institute for Research and Development – ‘Utrip’), Eberhard Schatz (De Regenboog Groep), Frederik Polak (European Coalition for Just and Effective Drug Policies – ENCOD).

As regards the discussion on gender balance, the option of appointing a 7th, female candidate remains open.

- agreed to create a specific mailing list to exchange information and documents (responsible person: Péter Sárosi, Hungarian Civil Liberties Union – HCLU).

The main objective of the meeting was to provide input from civil society to the European Commission on how to develop EU drugs policy from 2013 onwards. The current EU Drugs Strategy, ending in 2012, is currently under evaluation.

Three working documents, agreed upon and elaborated since the 12-13 April CSF plenary, set the grounds for debate in the CSF workshops:

- **General principles and Civil Society Involvement** (chair: Eberhard Schatz, De Regenboog Groep)
- Proposal of a model for an objective **debate about current drug policies** (chair: Frederik Polak, European Coalition for Just and Effective Drug Policies – ENCOD)
- An **integrated approach to EU drug policy** (chair: Amador Calafat, European Institute on Prevention Studies – IREFREA)

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<sup>1</sup> Mr Matej Kosir could not assist personally at the meeting, but was represented by his colleague Mrs Vladka Tonica.

## DAY 1, Monday 10 October 2011

*The Core Group met in the morning to prepare the 6th Civil Society Forum meeting.*

### **The European Commission sets out the latest developments in EU drugs policy**

The CSF was opened by Ms Dana Spinant, Head of Unit at the Anti-drugs coordination unit at the European Commission, Directorate-General for Justice. She recognised the progress made to put the contributions made by civil society into shape. The European Commission will explore the ways how to submit the final CSF document to the upcoming EU Council presidencies in 2012 (Denmark and Cyprus<sup>2</sup>). Ms Spinant invited participants to remain actively involved in drugs policy at Member State level holding competence in drug policy.

Ms Spinant informed the CSF about what is **ongoing in drugs policies at EU level**:

- a reflection on current EU drug policy and its future and prospects;
- a process of evaluation of the current EU Drugs Strategy and its impact on drugs policy in Europe (launched at the beginning of 2011, with results expected at the beginning of 2012);
- an evaluation of the implementation of legislation in drugs policy across the board.

At the end of October 2011 the European Commission will publish a Communication assessing the challenges in drugs policy and legislative responses the EU needs to provide. Ms Spinant set out some of the findings, such as the need for stronger and more effective legislation on:

- **drugs trafficking, offences and sanctions,**
- **new psychoactive substances,**
- legislation on **confiscation and asset recovery** concerning organised crime in drug trafficking.

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<sup>2</sup> Denmark: 1 January to 30 June 2012, Cyprus: 1 July to 31 December 2012. The Polish EU Presidency, running until 31 December 2011, is involved in the evaluation process of the current EU drugs strategy.

Maurice Galla and Timo Jetsu (European Commission Policy Officers) gave an outline on **the state of play on EU drugs policy**. While Maurice Galla focussed on current developments, Timo Jetsu informed the CSF on its new status as an expert group.

**Ongoing developments** and activities include:

- Conference (June 2011) on “**Building an EU Consensus for Minimum Quality Standards in Drug Demand Reduction**”<sup>3</sup>: Most participants seemed to favour the development of an EU-level recommendation for common quality standards in demand reduction. The European Commission expects to issue a recommendation or report at the beginning of 2013.
- **Evaluation of the EMCDDA**: an evaluation report is expected for February 2012.
- **Revision of legislation for new psychoactive substances**<sup>4</sup>: an impact assessment report is expected for May 2012, followed by a legislative proposal.
- **EU market study**: interaction between organised crime markets and future challenges will be analysed (findings expected summer 2012).
- Overall renewal of **EU funding programs**: After 2013 the trend will involve larger, unspecified programmes to combine different programs managed by the Directorate-General for Justice into two. The European Commission Drugs Policy Unit stressed the **importance of and interest in cross-border projects in the drugs field**.
- Consultations on the EU Drugs Strategy with relevant target groups in selected Member States (Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, United Kingdom) and stake-holders are ongoing, as is public consultation: **Green paper on the application of EU criminal justice**<sup>5</sup>, with a prison condition dimension. Deadline was 30 November 2011.

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<sup>3</sup> More on DG Justice website : [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/anti-drugs/events/110615\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/anti-drugs/events/110615_en.htm)

<sup>4</sup> 2005/387/JHA <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32005D0387:EN:NOT>

<sup>5</sup> More information on the Green paper: [http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/criminal/opinion/110614\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/justice/newsroom/criminal/opinion/110614_en.htm)

## Civil Society Forum on Drugs has new status of expert group

Timo Jetsu set out how the European Commission works together with the civil society organisations, recalling that **drug policy is in the competence of the Member States**. Mr Jetsu informed about a change in the status of the CSF, which now has the status of **expert group**. The purely administrative change of status was necessary in order to be in line with EU requirements on consultation with stakeholders, such as the register of expert groups<sup>6</sup>. The requirements to become a member of the CSF have not changed<sup>7</sup>.

### What was at stake at the 6th CSF meeting?

CSF chairman Eberhard Schatz (De Regenboog Groep) set out the main aims of the meeting:

- Finding the **main message(s) of a common statement** made by the CSF members regarding the new EU drugs strategy, possibly a final agreement (with opportunities to discuss some minor aspects), and
- **Presentation of the document:** how to present messages which might be even contradictory? The best solution would be one single document submitted by all CSF members (having more political weight), or if no agreement is possible, separate reports signed by different members.
- **Future of the forum:** activities and plans for the next two years, including an outline on how to work on it, and
- Election of a **new core group** (out of 9 candidates, 6 are to be elected)

Candidates: Eliot Ross Albert (International Network of People who Use Drugs), Amador Calafat (European Institute on Prevention Studies – IREFREA), Leena Haraké (Women’s Organisations Committee on Alcohol and Drugs Issues – WOCAD), Jeff Lee (Mentor Foundation), Matej Kosir<sup>8</sup> (Institute for Research and Development – ‘Utrip’), Monica

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<sup>6</sup> Expert group information and register : <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/>.

<sup>7</sup> See also : Green Paper on the role of Civil Society in Drugs Policy in the European Union [ COM(2006) 316 final] [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/smartapi/cgi/sga\\_doc?smartapi!celexplus!prod!DocNumber&lg=en&type\\_doc=COMfinal&an\\_doc=2006&nu\\_doc=316](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/smartapi/cgi/sga_doc?smartapi!celexplus!prod!DocNumber&lg=en&type_doc=COMfinal&an_doc=2006&nu_doc=316)

Luppi (San Patrignano), Eberhard Schatz (De Regenboog Groep), Fay Watson (Europe Against Drugs – EURAD), Frederik Polak (European Coalition for Just and Effective Drug Policies – ENCOD).

The Chairman read out broad recommendations for civil society involvement in decision-making processes regarding drug policy at EU level, and also said that the topics would be dealt with in detail during the workshops. He also stated that these recommendations should be the first part of the document the CSF is to submit. In addition, Mr Schatz presented a summary of the first of three Working Papers, setting out 12 general principles<sup>9</sup> on good drug policy and practice. He added that the principles should be followed by a recommendation and a third paragraph concerning the justification/ argumentation of why a recommendation is being given (including a practical example of a best practice, if such exists).

Eric Carlin (The Mentor Foundation) presented a paper on “An integrated approach to EU drug policy”<sup>10</sup>, including recommendations, for instance, on the elaboration of the meaning of the common terms of “use” and “misuse”. Frederik Polak (ENCOD) presented a paper on the “Necessity and inevitability of serious consideration of new drug policies”<sup>11</sup>, focusing on a proposal for a model for the debate about new drug policies, including aspects of primary importance.

During the plenary session, some comments emerged on the papers presented and the Chairman invited the participants to elaborate further on the existing papers during the following day’s workshops.

**The European Commission welcomes the efforts of the Civil Society Forum to put the civil society recommendations regarding the upcoming EU Drugs strategy further into shape. The EC will explore the ways how to submit recommendations to the upcoming Cypriot and Danish EU Council Presidencies.**

**The status of the Civil Society Forum on Drugs has been changed to expert group in order to be in line with EU requirements on consultation with stakeholders.**

<sup>9</sup> Document 2, SC FORUM ON DRUGS, 10-12 October, working group 1, Working Group on General principles and Civil Society Involvement, VS2

<sup>10</sup> Document 3, CSF 10-12 October, Working Group 2: An integrated approach to EU drug policy.

<sup>11</sup> Document 4, CSF 10-12 October 2011, working group 3 : Necessity and inevitability of serious consideration of new drug policies

## DAY 2, Tuesday 11 October 2011

During three workshops and the plenary session CSF members discussed the CSF document, which “would have more weight if signed by all CSF members” according to the European Commission.

### **Workshop reports**

- Monica Luppi reported from **Workshop 1** (General principles and Civil Society Involvement), where 3 out of 11 recommendations were discussed, pointing out the need to avoid prolonging discussion to eternity.
- Reporting from **Workshop 2** (An integrated approach to EU drug policy) Amador Calafat informed the plenary about a discussion on the term “recovery”, but mainly put forward questions on how to proceed with the future document. Workshop 2 suggested working with delegates from the respective workshops to elaborate one single comprehensive document, something requiring further work.
- Valentin Simionov presented a summary of the outcomes of **Workshop 3** (Proposal for a model for an objective debate about current drug policies), where participants reworked the paper, refined phrasing and specified the needs for a discussion on current drug policy after 50 years of implementation.

The Chairman agreed that it makes sense to have a single document, while recalling that the CSF needed to **agree on the main messages**. “In spite of ideologies, we have issues we agree on: what do we want out of the drug policy” and the CSF being “more effective with clear recommendations, but we need to compromise, having a bargaining procedure, to have a consistent document, otherwise political leaders will just see controversy and not getting further in the topic” are just some examples of what was said during the following discussion.

The European Commission suggested the **elaboration of one single document, cut down for external presentation**.

## **Focusing on recommendations to set up a single document**

The plenary debate continued on a practical approach to setting up a single document.

Raminta Stuiyte (European AIDS Treatment Group – EATG) suggested **focussing on recommendations** only during the meeting, and highlighting the compromise and majority recommendations. The second step would be to agree on the format of the document, as different workshop papers show different formats / presentation of the content<sup>12</sup>. **An editorial group, composed of people with different backgrounds/ideologies, will work after the meeting on agreed recommendations, with clear instructions on how to work on the document.**

Participants went back to the workshops in their initial settings to continue to discuss the respective documents. During the lunch-break, Claudia Stoicescu (Harm Reduction International – IHRA) and Frans Koopmans (De Hoop Foundation) worked on those documents and merged them to a **single document**, which will form the basis for further discussions.

## **Working on a single document**

The recommendations made by Working Groups 1 and 2 were merged into one single document, under 6 headings: policy, services, civil society, monitoring and evaluation, human rights, key population and groups. No change in wording was made.

The plenary discussed how to continue: whether to split into two groups or leave the drafting of a unique document to a language expert. The idea was to find aspects where consensus exists in the broad message (details to be elaborated by an editorial team), and where there is need for further discussion.

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<sup>12</sup> Workshop 1: principle, recommendation, justification, practical example, references; Workshop 2: Recommendation and further information

Workshop 3: Only one recommendation

Discussion was continued in plenary, including requests for clarification, such as what exactly political actors should be asked, if Member States should start a debate on drug issues separately at national level or altogether, for instance, in international forums.

The CSF discussed the Consensus Paper, and either approved in consensus or added comments. A major discussion point concerned “children / human rights”, and it was agreed that two CSF members (Eric Carlin and Péter Sárosi) continue work on that issue on Tuesday night.

### **DAY 3, Wednesday 12 October 2011**

Discussions continued in plenary to find consensus on the **spirit of recommendations**, based on the “Final Consensus Document” elaborated the previous day, and to indicate where further discussions were needed. “Has anyone major objections to the spirit of the recommendation? Spirit, not content!” Raminta Stuiyte chaired the plenary discussions. When there were no more objections, the discussion was moved towards more specific comments, taking into account the remarks made by CSF members.

This plenary debate paved the way for **a draft document**.

### **Editorial team, exchange of information and deadlines are set up**

The **editorial team** that will continue work on this draft, Fay Watson, Marie Nougier, David Liddell, Monica Luppi, Eric Carlin and Péter Sárosi, volunteered to be member of this team, headed by Raminta Stuiyte as coordinator.

Exchange of information might take place first of all by email, also face-by-face if necessary, within the scope of Core Group meetings. The European Commission said that funding is available for another Core Group meeting. In response to the request from Ms Stuiyte for funding for the meetings of the editorial group, apart from the Core group meeting, Mr Horváth said there is money available but he needs to check the possibilities and promised to come back as soon as possible.

Mr Schatz suggested setting up a meeting of the Core Group at the end of November 2011. A final version should be sent to the CSF members at the end of the year. Ms Stuiyte remarked that the

Core Group should draft a consultation process in which the document elaborated by the editorial team is passed on to all CSF members.

At the next CSF meeting (March 2012) there will be no time for further discussion of the content.

The deadline to submit the final version of the paper to the European Commission (who will explore the ways how to forward the document to relevant political actors) is scheduled for mid-February 2012.

## **New Core Group members elected**

Timo Jetsu, European Commission, announced the successful candidates in the election for the Core Group:

Eliot Ross Albert (International Network of People who Use Drugs), Amador Calafat (European Institute on Prevention Studies – IREFREA), Jeff Lee (Mentor Foundation), Matej Kosir (Institute for Research and Development – ‘Utrip’), Eberhard Schatz (De Regenboog Groep), Frederik Polak (European Coalition for Just and Effective Drug Policies – ENCOD).

At the end of the meeting, debate arose about the mandate and candidates elected (all male). Mr Jetsu reminded CSF members about the mandate of the CSF in general (recalling the Green Paper), and that the Core Group is a sub-group of the CSF and not a formal body. “Persons are not here in their personal capacity, but as representatives of their NGO,” said Mr Jetsu, suggesting that the NGOs could send a female representative.

Chairman Eberhard Schatz recalled that the Core Group is there to facilitate work, not to push forward a specific ideology.

Jeff Lee said that he would be willing to withdraw from the group to leave his place for a woman. Timo Jetsu confirmed the possibility of withdrawal from the Core Group, which should have a maximum of 7 members (6 were elected), so another expert could be nominated, depending on the decision of the CSF.

## **Presentation: “Expert Group- What does it mean for CSF members?”**

Roman Horváth (European Commission Policy Officer) gave a short presentation on “Expert Group – What does it mean for CSF members?”<sup>13</sup>, setting out mainly that the CSF:

- remains organised as before, through an external contractor the European Commission will provide travel tickets, venues, etc. Only when it comes to stand-alone Core Group meetings will participants need to buy their own tickets first, which will be reimbursed afterwards by the European Commission.
- will be registered in the European Commission transparency register.

Mr Horváth recalled that expert groups do not make binding decisions; first and foremost they are forums for discussion and brainstorming, to provide the European Commission with high-level expertise.

In addition, he presented the Civil Society Forum on Drugs in the EU (<https://webgate.ec.europa.eu/fpfs/forums/drugs/>) created in July 2008 to facilitate information exchange and to discuss drug issues. The forum is open to everyone, subject to approval of the European Commission. A restricted area for the CSF could be created, upon request, with an option to upload documents. Mr Horváth calls upon members to register and login with their full names or with the name of their respective organisation.

## **Future topics open to discussion**

CSF members pointed out the following issues for consideration in the future:

- Strategy: Which political bodies do we want to address in the future? What topics?
- Gender specific issues: Women in prison – what is there for them, what treatment options?
- Poverty, homelessness, HIV
- How can we broaden representation of the CSF? Are 35 members enough at EU level?

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<sup>13</sup> Further information on European Commission expert groups :  
<http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/faq.cfm?aide=2>