

Wednesday 23 April 2008

The role of civil society in drugs policy in the European Union

P6_TA(2008)0169

European Parliament resolution of 23 April 2008 on the Green Paper on the role of civil society in drugs policy in the European Union (2007/2212(INI))

(2009/C 259 E/05)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its recommendation of 15 December 2004 to the Council and the European Council on the EU drugs strategy (2005-2012) ⁽¹⁾,
- having regard to the Commission's Green Paper of 26 June 2006 on the role of Civil Society in Drugs Policy in the European Union (COM(2006)0316),
- having regard to the Report and the replies received on the results of the open consultation carried out under the abovementioned Green Paper published on 18 April 2007 ⁽²⁾,
- having regard to Title VI of the EU Treaty and in particular Article 29 and Article 31(1) (e) thereof,
- having regard to the international, European and national instruments for the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and, in particular, the protection of the right to life and health,
- having regard to the UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 30 March 1954, amended by the Geneva Protocol of 25 March 1972; and to the UN Conventions on Psychotropic Substances of 21 February 1971; and against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 19 December 1988,
- having regard to Regulation (EC) No 1920/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 on the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction ⁽³⁾, which recast the earlier legislation,
- having regard to the 2007 annual report of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction ⁽⁴⁾,
- having regard to Decision No 1150/2007/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 September 2007 establishing for the period 2007-2013 the Specific Programme 'Drug prevention and information' as part of the General Programme 'Fundamental Rights and Justice' ⁽⁵⁾ and in particular Articles 2 to 7 thereof,
- having regard to the Commission Staff Working Document entitled 2006 Progress Review on the implementation of the EU Drugs Action Plan (2005-2008) of 21 December 2006 (SEC(2006)1803),
- having regard to the Communication from the Commission on the 2007 Progress Review of the implementation of the EU Action Plan on Drugs (2005-2008) of 10 December 2007 (COM(2007)0781),
- having regard to the EU Drugs Action Plan (2005-2008) adopted by Council in June 2005 ⁽⁶⁾,

⁽¹⁾ OJ C 226 E, 15.9.2005, p. 233.

⁽²⁾ http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/news/consulting_public/news_consulting_public_en.htm

⁽³⁾ OJ L 376, 27.12.2006, p. 1.

⁽⁴⁾ <http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/html.cfm/index407EN.html>

⁽⁵⁾ OJ L 257, 3.10.2007, p. 23.

⁽⁶⁾ OJ C 168, 8.7.2005, p. 1.

Wednesday 23 April 2008

- having regard to Council Decision 2005/387/JHA of 10 May 2005 on the information exchange, risk-assessment and control of new psychoactive substances ⁽¹⁾,
 - having regard to the EU Drugs Strategy (2005-2012) endorsed by the European Council of 16-17 December 2004 ⁽²⁾,
 - having regard to Regulation (EC) No 273/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 February 2004 on drug precursors ⁽³⁾,
 - having regard to the Political Declaration on Drugs and the resolutions adopted at the UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) of 8 and 10 June 1998,
 - having regard to the UN activities and in particular to the fifty-first session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs which took place in Vienna on 10-14 March 2008 ⁽⁴⁾,
 - having regard to the White Paper on European Governance (COM(2001)0428) and to the Communications from the Commission entitled 'Towards a reinforced culture of consultation and dialogue — General principles and minimum standards for consultation of interested parties by the Commission' (COM(2002)0704) and 'Strategic objectives 2005-2009, Europe 2010: a Partnership for European Renewal — Prosperity, Solidarity and Security' (COM(2005)0012),
 - having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs and the opinion of the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (A6-0073/2008),
- A. whereas a more searching dialogue between and with the various components of civil society (at transnational, national, regional and local level) on a European scale should be promoted, with a view to improving the formulation, implementation and assessment of decisions relating to drugs-related policies at both Member State and EU level,
- B. whereas the organisation of civil society groupings at European level has clearly added value from the point of view of national, regional and local civil society organisations,
- C. whereas in particular civil society can bring a breadth of experience to particular aspects of drugs policies, such as prevention, provision of information, support for those emerging from dependence, and social reintegration,
- D. whereas the priority objective for the 2005-2012 EU Drugs Strategy is to provide accurate information and strengthen the role played by civil society in relation to drugs,
- E. whereas the Green Paper on the role of Civil Society in Drugs Policy in the EU and the establishment of the Civil Society Forum on Drugs represent a first practical step towards the achievement of that objective,
- F. whereas most organisations that responded to the Commission's consultation gave a very favourable reception to the idea of thematic linking of existing networks,
- G. whereas it is important for there to be greater synergy between civil society and the EU institutions and bodies for the purpose of establishing a relationship based on continuous consultation and encouraging the exchange of information and best practices, with particular attention to scientific contributions,
- H. whereas the prime importance of action and of enhancing the role of the civil society organisations involved in cooperation with third countries and in the promotion of alternative, sustainable strategies for dealing with the drugs issues, should be emphasised,

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 127, 20.5.2005, p. 32.

⁽²⁾ doc. 15074/1/04.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 47, 18.2.2004, p. 1.

⁽⁴⁾ http://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CND-Session51/CND-51_Info_Participants.pdf

Wednesday 23 April 2008

- I. whereas an open medium such as the Internet should be included in any proposed structure for dialogue or consultations held with selected networks on specific issues, which would be backed up by open consultation of all interested stakeholders,
- J. whereas the important role that civil society can play in the matter should complement and reinforce the considerable responsibility of the Member States and international organisations to cooperate in the fight against the production of and trafficking in drugs, as they do in the case of terrorism,
- K. whereas a deeper involvement of the EU institutions with civil society in the field of drugs policies would help them to assess the current strategies properly,
- L. whereas the term 'drugs' is intended to cover narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances as defined by the abovementioned UN Conventions,
- M. whereas drug use can lead to specific health risks for young girls and women, in particular as regards pregnancy or the transmission of HIV/AIDS,
- N. whereas men tend to outnumber women in treatment programmes and women constitute around 20 % of those entering drug treatment programmes in the EU today,
- O. whereas significant differences in levels and patterns of drug use have been identified between men and women; whereas research studies show important gender differences in a range of physiological and psycho-social factors associated with the development of dependency, risk-taking and help-seeking behaviour,
1. Acknowledges the fundamental role of civil society in supporting the development, definition, implementation, evaluation and monitoring of drugs policies; stresses in particular the added value represented by its experience on the ground, its capacity for innovation and its potential in terms of information exchange and best practice, scientifically tested and documented in the actual application of drugs policies;
 2. Calls on all Member State governments, non-governmental organisations, civil society, and parent and professional associations to conduct exhaustive information campaigns on:
 - the risks and damage to physical and mental health caused by drugs, in particular to young girls, pregnant or breast-feeding women and children,
 - maternal health and the transmission of drugs from mother to foetus,
 - the treatments available for minors and delinquents addicted to drugs,
 - support for parents of children who use drugs;
 3. Acknowledges that churches and religious communities have been very active in the fight against drugs, and their experiences should therefore be taken into account in the formulation, implementation and assessment of drugs policies;
 4. Insists on a strengthening of the role played by civil society in developing a drugs policy embodying a European approach, which is the main objective of the 2005-2012 EU drugs strategy;
 5. Stresses the importance of the role to be played by the Internet in ensuring a transparent and coherent way of exchanging information about the implementation and development of the 2005-2012 EU drugs strategy, facilitating the involvement of and guaranteeing the participation of civil society (including users and community groups) in implementing the abovementioned Action Plan — at all levels and in the Civil Society Forum on Drugs — improving access to and the effectiveness of prevention programmes and raising awareness;

Wednesday 23 April 2008

6. Stresses the fundamental partnership with the media, including the electronic media, in disseminating scientific information about the risks of drug use on physical and mental health, particularly among young women and pregnant women; encourages such media to become principal partners in campaigns against drugs on account of their influence on the younger generation;

7. Welcomes the implementation of the 2007-2013 Specific Programme on Drugs Prevention and Information and points out that the involvement of civil society in the implementation and the development of the 2005-2012 EU Drugs Strategy is a specific objective of that Programme;

8. Regrets the fact that there has been a delay in the implementation of the funding made available in connection with that Programme;

9. Calls on the Commission to ensure that the new 2008-2013 health strategy takes account of the different impact of drugs on women, particularly with reference to the financing of anti-drug information programmes run by civil society organisations;

Forum — structural dimension

10. Stresses the importance of setting up the Civil Society Forum on Drugs as a first step towards the more practical and constructive involvement of European civil society associations in EU activities relating to policies to prevent drug use and combat drugs;

11. Regrets the fact that the process of selecting participants in the Civil Society Forum on Drugs has been perceived by certain organisations as lacking in transparency, and calls on the Commission to consider ways of remedying this problem, hoping that in future, enlargements of the Forum will happen in a more transparent way;

12. Considers that the Civil Society Forum on Drugs should be inclusive rather than exclusive, representing a wide spectrum and balance of views;

13. Points out that the purpose of the Civil Society Forum on Drugs is not to create an assembly intended to voice various ideologies, but to engage in a dialogue and direct contact with associations in the front line of the fight against drugs at the level of both prevention and rehabilitation, and to have a practical means of supporting the drawing-up and implementation of policies to prevent drug use and combat drugs on the basis of successful experience, as well as an analysis of the cross-border problems within the European Union arising from differences in national legislation, particularly in border areas;

14. Calls on the Member States to exchange best practices currently being used in the fight against drugs and in prevention and information for children and young people, and to encourage their development, in collaboration with representatives of civil society;

15. Regrets the poor participation in the Forum by organisations representing the new Member States; insists on the need for civil society in the new Member States to be made aware and more extensively involved, in view of the importance of those countries in an enlarged EU;

16. Regrets the lack of participation of non-governmental national and trans-national networks especially representative of women, mothers and young girls' associations as well as organisations dealing with sexual and reproductive health and rights in the first Civil Society Forum on Drugs held in December 2007; calls on the Commission to actively encourage the participation of such organisations as well as other organisations that have valuable experience relating to drugs and drug abuse in order to provide accessible and widely available specialised services;

Wednesday 23 April 2008

17. Supports the Commission in its efforts to find a role to be played by the Civil Society Forum on Drugs in the European approach to drugs, so that the ultimate objectives to be sought through consultation of the Forum can be clarified;

18. Considers that the Civil Society Forum on Drugs should have a clear mandate, well defined agendas, transparent procedures and achievable work plans with real input into the policy-making process;

19. Hopes that dialogue with civil society will have a tangible impact on the EU's decision-making process; considers, therefore, that civil society should be given formal status in connection with the objectives set out in the 2005-2012 EU Drugs Strategy and with future initiatives, inter alia through:

- participation, among other independent bodies, by the Forum in the evaluation of the EU Drugs Action Plan (2005-2008) that will be carried out by the Commission in 2008;
- more far-reaching and transparent relations with the Member States with a view to genuine cooperation between the Forum and the Member States;
- the permanent presence of the Forum at meetings held by the EU Presidency with national drug action coordinators;
- permanent contacts with Parliament, and Parliament's holding of an annual conference with the Forum, other concerned groups and the EU institutions working in the field of drugs, and assessing the results obtained;
- strong synergy between the activities of the Forum and those of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), which could devote a section of its annual report to the activities of EU civil society;

20. Calls on the EMCDDA to gather statistics concerning women's consumption of drugs in the European Union, to analyse the trend in such consumption and to take account of gender-differentiated impacts in its annual report, with the aim of providing better information and making European civil society aware of the problem more successfully;

21. Encourages the thematic linking of existing networks, either at the margins of the Civil Society Forum on Drugs or in the form of working parties or subgroups within the framework of the Forum;

22. Calls for, subject to budgetary control, a financial commitment from the EU to support EU civil society activities in connection with current projects and future initiatives in the field;

23. Calls on the Member States, where possible, to extend provisions concerning State funding to services provided by civil professional organisations, subject to compliance with appropriate quality assurance criteria, not only in the case of health or social services, but also in the case of harm-reduction and low-threshold services; considers that it thus will be possible to ensure that the functioning of the services can be planned and sustainable, and that they comply with quality standards;

24. Stresses how important it is for society to set aside funding to support voluntary organisations and parents' associations which are committed to combating drug abuse, particularly among young people;

Civil society — the internal dimension

25. Stresses the importance of action by civil society in achieving the objectives set out in the 2005-2012 EU Drugs Strategy as regards policies on prevention, the provision of information, the management of problems associated with drugs dependencies and the monitoring of the proper implementation of these policies;

Wednesday 23 April 2008

26. Calls on all parties involved at both EU and Member State level to pay greater attention to the innovative aspects which civil society's experience may contribute to achieving the objectives set out in the 2005-2012 EU Drugs Strategy, with particular reference to public awareness initiatives, harm-reduction policies, support for those emerging from dependence and social reintegration policies;
27. Attaches importance to strengthening the dialogue at EU level with organisations representing drug users — a necessary aspect of any response to the challenges of social reintegration and providing support for those emerging from dependence;
28. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote — with the cooperation of civil society — equal access to the programmes, secure coverage of hidden populations and marginalised groups and work towards capacity building — in order to ensure the sustainability and efficiency of the implemented programmes;
29. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote initiatives by civil society aimed at:
- reinforcing prevention and information on the risks of using drugs and psychotropic substances in the workplace and among young people;
 - treating drug addicts who are in prison;
 - putting in place detailed prevention plans to combat the use of drugs and psychotropic substances in at-risk urban neighbourhoods, particularly among young people, with the help of social and trade union organisations, in such a way as to meet physical and mental health needs in these neighbourhoods;
 - organising information and prevention campaigns on drugs and their damaging effects on health and social life, in collaboration with parents', students', teachers' organisations and scientists, to be conducted in schools, reaching out to different demographic groups;
 - implementing harm-reduction policies by direct contact work in the streets and deprived areas of towns and cities;
 - developing and putting in place special reintegration projects for street children and socially disadvantaged families;
30. Refers to increasing concerns that women may not be accessing care due to a lack of social and economic support and, in particular, childcare obligations, which have been identified as factors that can inhibit women from making use of drug treatment services; points out that compared with services that do not provide childcare facilities, those that do often have higher proportions of women among their clients;
31. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to pay particular attention to border regions, which often have to deal with the effects of differences in national legislation on drugs;
32. Supports civil society organisations in acting, in full awareness, to fight the consumption of drugs and their derivatives by minors;
33. Calls on the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights to carry out an analysis of the effects of anti-drugs policies and to assess their effectiveness, and whether and to what extent such policies have overstepped the mark and represented an infringement of individual rights;
34. Stresses the need to base drugs policies on sound scientific evidence obtained in cooperation with civil society in the field of drugs-related research, acknowledging the need to develop research-based, fact-driven policies and to implement evidence-based activities, including those aimed at preventing and reducing health-related harm;
35. Calls on the Member States to step up common activities and common executive services between law enforcement agencies and civil society organisations, particularly at local community level;

Wednesday 23 April 2008

Civil society — the external dimension

36. Acknowledges the importance of the role played by civil society in connection with the external dimension of Europe's drugs policy and values the fact that the EU is the world leader in the fight against drugs as regards the financing of external programmes and initiatives;
37. Calls for consideration and support to be given to an external EU strategy which will have a sustainable, tangible and practical impact on the situation in the regions where the raw materials of drugs are produced;
38. Emphasises the experience of European organisations which are involved in promoting the switch from local cultivation to therapeutic and other medical uses, recalling at the same time that such cultivation should be kept constantly under the strictest of controls;
39. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to explore ways of cooperating with EU civil-society organisations involved in promoting substances derived from coca leaves for lawful use purely as a means of contributing effectively (by absorbing raw materials) to international action against drugs trafficking, ensuring at the same time the safe use of such substances;
40. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to follow up its recommendation to the Council of 25 October 2007 on production of opium for medical purposes in Afghanistan ⁽¹⁾ and to support the civil society initiatives cooperating with countries producing drugs in the fight against drugs and their possible positive effects in those countries' democratisation process; stresses the importance of promoting for example pilot schemes such as 'poppies for medicine', which are intended to switch some of the existing illegal cultivation of poppies to industrial production of legal, opium-based painkillers and to consider the benefits which may be derived from the granting of licences for the use of poppy crops for medical purposes, as well as to determine in what way this may be brought about and with what controls under the responsibility of the UN;
41. Calls on the Commission, together with civil society, to explore the possibilities of combating illegal poppy plantations by means of spraying which is not harmful to humans, animals or the environment;
42. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to take advantage of cooperation involving the scientific institutes of Member States, scientific organisations and medical reviews, as well as study centres, associations, specialist institutes and civil society organisations which in recent years have provided a reference point for policies designed to combat drugs trafficking and for the analysis of the geo-political situation and of the economic flows stemming from the international narcotics trade;
43. Attaches importance to promoting cooperation between EU associations and international networks of drugs associations in order to encourage the exchange of experience and information;
44. Notes the experience of the Vienna NGO Committee on Narcotic Drugs — an NGO committee representing civil society at the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and hopes that a wider participation by organisations and individuals will characterise the future activities of that Committee, bearing in mind proposals such as 'Beyond 2008' — an initiative whose main objective is to promote the role of civil society in the ten-year revision of the parameters established in 1998 at the UN General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) on Drugs; proposes to establish similar consultations amongst European associations with a view to revising the EU Drugs Strategy after 2012;
45. Takes the view, in order to learn lessons for the future strategy, that 10 years after the 1998 UNGASS on Drugs — whose main objective was 'a world without drugs' within 10 years — it is necessary to proceed to an assessment of the actual results of the current drugs policies to determine which strategies were successful;

*

* *

⁽¹⁾ Texts Adopted, P6_TA(2007)0485.

46. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and, for information, to the European Council, the Commission and the governments and parliaments of the Member States, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, the Council of Europe and the United Nations and its specialist agencies.

Programming implementation of the 10th European Development Fund

P6_TA(2008)0171

European Parliament resolution of 23 April 2008 on the implementation of the programming of the 10th European Development Fund (2007/2138(INI))

(2009/C 259 E/06)

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the Partnership Agreement between the members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States of the one part, and the European Community and its Member States of the other part, signed in Cotonou, Benin, on 23 June 2000 ⁽¹⁾ (the Cotonou Agreement),
 - having regard to the Internal Agreement between the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the financing of Community aid under the multiannual financial framework for the period 2008 to 2013 in accordance with the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement and on the allocation of financial assistance for the Overseas Countries and Territories to which Part Four of the EC Treaty applies ⁽²⁾,
 - having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No 617/2007 of 14 May 2007 on the implementation of the 10th European Development Fund under the ACP-EC Partnership Agreement ⁽³⁾,
 - having regard to Rule 45 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - having regard to the report of the Committee on Development and the opinions of the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Budgets (A6-0042/2008),
- A. whereas implementation of the 10th European Development Fund (EDF) depended on completion of the ratification process (by all of the EU Member States and two thirds of the members of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) Group of States) no later than 30 November 2007 in order to allow entry into force on 1 January 2008 (Article 93(3) of the Cotonou Agreement),
- B. having regard to the 'sunset clause', which now rules out the possibility of using balances remaining from earlier EDFs,
- C. having regard to the Commission's undertaking to ensure that the full amount of funding under the 9th EDF would be committed by 31 December 2007,
- D. whereas the EDF to this day remains outside the EU budget, in spite of Parliament's calls for its incorporation,
- E. whereas the fact that the European Parliament and the national parliaments exercise no formal scrutiny over the EDF, because it is not entered in the EU budget, is, in democratic terms, a democratic deficit,

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 317, 15.12.2000, p. 3. Agreement as revised by the agreement signed on 25 June 2005 (OJ L 209, 11.8.2005, p. 27).

⁽²⁾ OJ L 247, 9.9.2006, p. 32.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 152, 13.6.2007, p. 1.