

## Civil Society Urges European Parliament to Make Drug Policy a Priority

**At a seminar held in Brussels today, the Civil Society Forum on Drugs urged the European Parliament to prioritize and fund drug policies based on evidence and human rights.**

On 5 December 2019, the EU Civil Society Forum on Drugs (CSFD), an expert group of the European Commission, organized a seminar for Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) entitled 'The Future of European Drug Policy'.

The event comes at a time when the EU is facing significant challenges in tackling the illicit drug market. Despite the EU's efforts to counter the drug problem, drug trafficking and production remain among the most profitable criminal activities in the region, while the health and social harms associated with drug use continue to rise, with more than 8,000 drug-related deaths reported in 2019. Drug-related issues affect millions of people within the EU, bringing with them complex health, security, social and criminal justice issues.

The expiry of the current European Drugs Strategy (2013-20) and Action Plan (2017-20) represent a key opportunity to be seized by the EU. It is a chance to review successes and failures of European drug policy and to build on the learnings and challenges from the last decade, by continuing to prioritize a drug policy approach grounded in the principles of public health and human rights.

However, civil society expressed concerns that the EU is failing to recognize the importance and cross-cutting nature of drug policy, and is now deprioritizing the issue.

"The seminar aimed at highlighting why drug policy should remain a key priority for Europe and for MEPs," said Laurene Collard, the chair of the CSFD. "We sought to identify ongoing challenges in drug policy, provided insight into how civil society can assist policy makers and legislators in tackling such issues with policies based on monitoring and evidence, and raised awareness of the value of civil society participation in drug policy processes."

During the seminar, the CSFD urged MEPs to undertake the following actions: prioritize health challenges associated with drug use, uphold human rights above all, discuss ongoing debates and policy shifts associated with cannabis regulation, ensure that funding is allocated for drug-related projects beyond 2020, and consider creating an informal group of MEPs interested in European drug policy to track key developments in European drug policy.

### Contact:

Ms. Laurène Collard | Chair of the CSFD | [l.collard@federationaddiction.fr](mailto:l.collard@federationaddiction.fr) | +33 6 15 26 35 95

### Notes to the editor:

The CSFD is an expert group of the European Commission, composed of 45 civil society organizations from across Europe, which purpose is to provide a platform for a structured dialogue between the Commission and European civil society in support of drug policy formulation and implementation through practical advice: <http://www.civilsocietyforumondrugs.eu/>

CSFD report for Members of European Parliament:

[https://www.dropbox.com/s/9zI3fdn3dgaouuc/CSFD%20policy%20paper%20for%20MEPs\\_2019.pdf?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/s/9zI3fdn3dgaouuc/CSFD%20policy%20paper%20for%20MEPs_2019.pdf?dl=0)

EMCDDA 'European drug report 2019': [http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/edr2019\\_en](http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/edr2019_en)

EMCDDA 'EU drug Markets report': [http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/joint-publications/eu-drug-markets-report-2019\\_en](http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/joint-publications/eu-drug-markets-report-2019_en)