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DRAFT REPORT

on the Green Paper on the role of civil society in drugs policy in the European Union
(2007/2212(INI))

Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

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PR_INI

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MOTION FOR A EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT RESOLUTION

on the Green Paper on the role of civil society in drugs policy in the European Union (2007/2212(INI))

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 Green Paper by the Commission 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 above-mentioned 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, protection of the right to life and health,

– having regard to the UN Conventions on Narcotic Drugs, of 30 March 1961, amended by the Geneva Protocol of 25 March 1972; on Psychotropic Substances, of 21 February 1971; and against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, of 19 December 1988,

– having regard to Council Regulation (EEC) No 302/93 of 8 February 1993 on the establishment of a European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction[3],

– 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 Article 2 to 7,

– 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),

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[1] OJ C 226E, 15.9.2005, p. 233.
[2] http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/news/consulting_public/news_consulting_public_en.htm
[3] OJ L 36, 12.2.1993, p. 1.
[4] http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/html.cfm/index407EN.html
[5] OJ L 257, 3.10.2007, p. 23.

– 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 on (2005-2008) adopted by Council in June 2005[1],

– having regard to Council Decision 2005/387/JHA of 10 May 2005 on the information exchange, risk-assessment and control of new psychoactive substances[2],

– having regard to the EU Drugs Strategy (2005-2012) endorsed by the European Council of 16-17 December 2004[3],

– having regard to Regulation (EC) No 273/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 February 2004 on drug precursors[4],

– 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 Commission on Narcotic Drugs which will take place on 10-14 March 2008[5],

– 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 (A6-0000/2008),

A. whereas a more searching dialogue between the various components of civil society (at national, regional and local level) and the European institutions should be promoted, and having regard to the benefits which a proper, effective dialogue with civil society may contribute to the formulation, implementation and assessment of decisions relating to drugs policies at both Member-State and EU level,

B. having regard in particular to the breadth of experience which civil society can bring to particular areas of drugs policies, such as prevention, the provision of information, rehabilitation treatments and social reintegration,

C. whereas the priority objective for the 2005-2012 EU drugs strategy is to strengthen the role played by civil society in relation to drugs,

D. whereas the Green Paper on the role of civil society in drugs policy in the EU and the establishment of the Civil Society Drugs Forum represent the first practical steps towards the achievement of that objective,

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[1] OJ C 168, 08.07.2005, p. 1.
[2] OJ L 127, 20.05.2005, p. 32.
[3] Council of the EU, EU Drugs strategy (2005-2012) doc. 15074/1/04.
[4] OJ L 47, 18/02/2004, p. 1
[5] http://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CND-Session51/CND-51_Info_Participants.pdf

E. having regard to the importance of 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,

F. having regard to 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,

G. having regard to the priority objective of enhancing the international dimension of European associations and networks by promoting greater cooperation and interaction in that field,

1. Acknowledges the importance of civil society as a key player in drugs policies;

2. Stresses the importance of the role to be played by civil society in the formulation, implementation and assessment of drug policies - the added value of that society stemming from experience gained at grass-roots level; in this connection, acknowledges the potential which civil society has to offer as regards the exchange of information and sound practices in the actual application of drugs policies;

3. Acknowledges the role of NGOs and voluntary organisations to be essential to the development of innovative approaches based on a realistic assessment of existing needs;

4. Insists upon a strengthening of the role played by civil society in pursuit of a drugs policy embodying a European approach, which is the main objective of the EU's 2005-2012 drugs strategy;

5. 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 EU's 2005-2012 drugs strategy is a specific objective of that programme;

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

FORUM - structural dimension

7. Stresses the importance of setting up the Civil Society Drugs Forum as a first step towards the more practical and constructive involvement of European civil-society associations in Community activities relating to drugs policies;

8. Regrets the fact that certain associations have criticised the lack of transparency in the criteria used for selecting the associations taking part in the Civil Society Drugs Forum;

9. Points out that the purpose of the Civil Society Drugs Forum is not to create an assembly intended to voice various ideologies but to create a practical means of supporting the drawing up and the implementation of drugs policies on the basis of practical advice;

10. Regrets the limited participation in the Civil Society Drugs Forum on the part of

organisations representing the new Member States; insists upon the need for civil society in the new Member States to be more extensively involved, in view of the importance of those countries in an enlarged EU;

11. Calls upon the Commission to provide a clearer definition of the role to be played by the Civil Society Drugs Forum, so that the ultimate objectives to be sought through consultation of that Forum can be determined;

12. Hopes that dialogue with civil society will have a tangible impact on the EU's decision-making process; considers, therefore, that dialogue with civil society should be given institutional status as a means of conducting continuous consultation with the EU institutions in connection with the objectives set out in the EU's 2005-2012 drugs strategy and with future initiatives;

13. Stresses the importance of formally involving the Civil Society Drugs Forum in the assessment of the 2005-2008 Action Plan which the Commission is preparing to undertake in 2008;

14. Encourages the Member States to enter into a more transparent and searching dialogue with civil society, pursuant to the objectives set out in the 2005-2008 Action Plan (Objective 3, Action 3.2);

15. Calls for consideration to be given to the need for the Civil Society Drugs Forum to be present at all the meetings between the EU's rotating Presidency and the Member States' drugs coordinators, as has already occurred on a number of occasions in the recent past; considers that the Forum's participation in such meetings should not preclude participation by NGOs or other representatives of civil society;

16. Stresses the importance of continuous dialogue between civil society and the European Parliament; to this end, proposes that an annual conference promoted by the European Parliament and involving the Civil Society Drugs Forum be held for the purpose of sharing information and discussing and analysing current topics relating to drugs policies;

17. Considers that there should be a strong synergy between the activities of the Forum and the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA); suggests that the Monitoring Centre's annual report should contain a section concerned with the activities of European civil society, in order to give substance and profile to that dialogue;

18. Calls for a greater financial commitment from the EU to support European civil society's activities in connection with current projects and future initiatives in the field;

Civil society - the internal dimension

19. Stresses the importance of action by civil society in the achievement of the objectives set out in the EU's 2005-2012 drugs strategy as regards prevention, the provision of information and the management of problems associated with drugs dependencies;

20. Calls upon 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 the

achievement of the objectives set out in the EU's 2005-2012 drugs strategy, with particular reference to damage-reduction policies, rehabilitation policies and social-reintegration policies;

21. Attaches importance to strengthening the dialogue at European level with consumers' associations – a necessary aspect of any response to the challenges of social reintegration and rehabilitation;

22. Calls for enhanced involvement of civil society in preventing the use of psychotropic substances in the workplace and in providing information on such use;

23. Considers that the specific skills of civil-society organisations may enable the latter to play an important role in the treatment of drug addicts who are in prison;

24. Calls upon the Member States and the Commission to promote initiatives in at-risk metropolitan areas with a view to introducing – with the support of social and municipal organisations – ways and means of preventing the use of psychotropic substances;

25. Calls upon the Commission and the Member States to promote – with the cooperation of parents' and students' organisations – programmes which will enable campaigns concerning drugs and the effects which they have on health to be conducted in schools;

26. Stresses the importance of civil-society organisations in street activities relating to the implementation of damage-reduction policies;

27. Calls upon the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights to carry out an analysis into the effects of anti-drugs policies and to assess the extent to which such policies have resulted in the infringement of European civil society's fundamental rights;

Civil society – the external dimension

28. 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;

29. Calls for consideration and support to be given to an external European strategy which will have a sustainable, tangible and practical impact on the situation in the regions where the raw materials of drugs are produced;

30. Emphasises the experience of European organisations which are involved in switching local cultivation to commercial, therapeutic and medical uses;

31. Calls upon the Commission and the Member States to initiate and consolidate cooperation with European civil-society organisations which are involved in the promotion of legal substances derived from coca leaves as a means of contributing effectively (by absorbing raw materials) to international action against drugs trafficking;

32. Calls upon the Commission and the Member States to support the civil-society initiatives relating to cooperation with Afghanistan in the fight against drugs and in that country's

democratisation process and designed to promote pilot schemes such as 'poppies for medicine', which are intended to establish the benefits which may be derived from the granting of licences for the use of poppy crops for medical purposes and to determine in what way this may be brought about;

33. Calls upon the Commission and the Member States to take advantage of cooperation involving study centres, associations, specialist institutes and civil-society operators 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;

34. Attaches importance to promoting cooperation between European associations and international networks of drugs associations in order to encourage the exchange of experience and information;

35. Views with interest the experience of the Vienna NGOs Committee on Narcotic Drugs – an NGO committee representing civil society at the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); in particular, emphasises the usefulness of 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 consultation amongst European associations with a view to the revision of the EU's drugs strategy after 2012;

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36. 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.