

CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM ON DRUGS IN THE EU

Dear colleagues,

Welcome to the first Civil Society Forum on Drugs newsletter under the renewed project covering our common activities.

The launch of the project was at a very challenging yet crucial time, with the current health crisis striking European citizens, and particularly the most vulnerable ones such as People Who Use Drugs, the public that we care for.

They need to have all the attention of the public authorities. Our role as an expert group to the commission is to make sure they are not forgotten and will access all the health and social measures possible. The CSFD's Core group and Working group 2 have accordingly sent a letter to the EC and the current and incoming presidencies to ask and recommend a series of actions to guarantee that the EU gives clear guidelines to Member states and adopt the appropriate measures responding to the crisis. We also reached out to the German presidencies which will follow Croatia in July, and are organising a regular collaboration.

The work and mobilisation of professionals and volunteers on the field are therefore necessary. We are aware that the current situation has primarily affected most of the

activities in Harm Reduction, Prevention and Recovery. Our global survey online also made clear how much you were able to adapt interventions both to prevent the risk of contamination and to outreach, meet the most vulnerable people and maintain the relation with your public. To highlight this exceptional mobilisation, we presented this situation to the EMCDDA and the European Commission. The CSFD is now in close contact with the EMCDDA, and that relationship should go-on in future activities. Finally, this crisis is not stopping all the activities of the Forum. All of you are still really active in providing inputs and carrying out activities under the new project, and the results are highly beneficial.

Thank you to all!

Enjoy your reading!

With our strongest support and solidarity,
Laurene Collard, Chair of the Civil Society Forum on Drugs

UPDATES



The CSFD Project CSFD Secretariat

Katrin Schiffer

The new CSFD Project has started in February 2020. Due to the Covid-19 travel restrictions, we cancelled our first meeting on 24-25 February. Instead, we organised an online session during which we discussed the working plan for the different WGs for the forthcoming two years and agreed on follow-up steps.

The CSFD Project aims to support and enhance the activities of the CSFD, not only within its four working groups (WGs) but also on a broader level. De Regenboog Groep/C-EHRN is the coordinator of the CSFD Project. It provides practical and administrative support towards the core group and the different WGs (e.g. through the organisation of online calls, taking minutes during CSFD Plenaries). This secretariat function includes communication and dissemination activities for the CSFD, as well.

Currently, we are developing a communication strategy, which includes the review and regular update of our website, and the dissemination of a CSFD newsletter to Civil Society Organisations (CSOs), including non-CSFD Members.

Needless to say, that all our activities depend on your active contribution and input. A few days ago, we sent out a short survey to all CSFD members, asking for your input, needs and expectations regarding the CSFD Project. We need you to please fill in this online questionnaire, to help us better perform our work and include your ideas and suggestions.

Those who have not yet done that please fill in the survey by using this link:

[HTTPS://WWW.SURVEYMONKEY.COM/R/My85TNY](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/My85TNY)

We would also like to receive your input on how to develop our newsletter further and you to share it with your network members and partners. Alongside updates on CSFD activities, in our next newsletter, we plan to promote upcoming events, new projects and initiatives, new publications and other relevant information. Please share these kind of news with us and we will include them in our next newsletters via:

INFO@CIVILSOCIETYFORUMONDRUGS.EU



WG 1 EU Actions Plan on Drugs

Iga Kender-Jeziorska

In recent weeks, the work of the WG 1 on the EU Action Plan focused mainly on contributions to the evaluation of the current EU Drug Strategy and contributing to the development of the new Strategy. We've developed and published the CSFD Position Paper on the Future of European Drug Policy, and sent it to the external evaluator of the EU Drug Strategy. Consequently, the voice of People Who Use Drugs got into the Strategy. The external evaluator followed our suggestions and has organised an online focus group meeting with representatives of PWUD organisations, which can be considered a success, given that there were no such plans in the original evaluation design discussed during the CSFR plenary in 2019. During the CND annual session, some members of our WG met with the European Commission, Croatian Presidency and some representatives of the HDG to discuss the current matters. At the beginning of April, our WG had a 2-hours meeting with representatives of a committee drafting the new Strategy. Although the information about the process we could obtain is limited, the Commission representatives were very eager to hear our opinions and recommendations for the future.



WG 2 Relations with International Institutions Marie Nougier & Lucia Goberna

The 63 session of the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) took place in Vienna, on 2-6 March 2020. The event was quieter compared to previous years due to COVID-19 Pandemic and had fewer resolutions and no controversial primary debates. However, the WG 2 on Relations with International Organizations was quite busy before and during the CND. Our main contributions were:

- We sent our **contribution prior to CND63**, highlighting aspects for the EU to raise in its statements at the CND as well as our concrete recommendations on the five tabled resolutions.

- We conducted a **bilateral meeting between members of WG2 and a Delegation of the European Union** at the margins of CND63, that counted with representatives from the HDG and EU Council Presidencies, European Commission and representatives from national delegations. The meeting was particularly productive, enabling each negotiator to provide open feedback on the resolution negotiations and receive further thoughts from us.

- We sent our **recommendations** for the **bilateral meeting of the EU and Brazil** at the margins of CND.

- We posed **questions for the Informal Dialogues** of civil society with the President of INCB, senior representatives of UNODC and the Chair of CND.

- We sent a **list of the side events** co-organised by CSFD members at the 63rd CND.

The WG held a meeting on March 30th to plan the upcoming work and share useful information.

On April 14th, Lucía Goberna assumed the coordination of WG2, as Marie Nougier went on maternity leave until October 2020.

We are happy to share that Marie gave birth to a sweet baby girl named Ellie! Congratulations.

CIVIL SOCIETY FORUM ON DRUGS IN THE EU

WG 3 Civil Society Involvement with National Drug Policy

Katrin Schiffer

The activities of WG 3 for the forthcoming two years will focus on:

1. Development of quality standards for meaningful civil society involvement
2. Assessment and development of national civil society networking structures
3. Strengthening of advocacy capacities for national CSOs through the organisation of an advocacy training event in cooperation with WG2

Peter Sarosi (Rights Reporter Foundation), Anke van Dan (AFEW) and Valeria Fulga (AFEW) are the three main persons responsible within the CSFD Project for WG3. They will coordinate and implement the activities related to our working group in close cooperation with the current WG3 chair Katrin Schiffer.

The first activity for our WG is desk research to identify existing reports and literature on civil society involvement - that can later be used to develop quality standards for CSI. **If you are aware of any statements, recommendations and/or articles on this subject from your country, region or internationally, please send it to us ASAP, but no later than June 1st.**

We will also draft a questionnaire, which will be shared with CSFD members and their related networks and organisations to assess current civil society involvement structures. To discuss it and its further developments, we will organise an online call for all WG members in May. WG members will be informed accordingly.

WG 4 Minimum Quality Standards

Matej Košir



GUIDELINES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION
OF MINIMUM QUALITY STANDARDS
IN DRUG DEMAND REDUCTION IN THE EUROPEAN UNION BY
CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (CSOs)



Website: www.civilsocietyforumdrugs.eu

Guidelines and recommendations in the field of minimum quality standards finally published

In September 2015, the Council of the European Union adopted Council conclusions on the implementation of minimum quality standards in drug demand reduction in the EU. This innovative initiative lists 16 standards that represent a minimum benchmark of quality for interventions in prevention, risk and harm reduction, treatment, social integration and rehabilitation.

Although non-binding for national governments, this document represents the **political will of EU countries** to address demand reduction interventions through an evidence-based perspective.

In 2014, the Civil Society Forum on Drugs (CSFD) prepared and published the **thematic paper on the EU minimum quality standards for drug demand reduction**. The paper presents the context in which the EU Member States, as well as candidate and potential candidate countries for EU membership, are recommended to promote and enforce the minimum quality standards in drug demand reduction. It also provides a brief overview of associated issues and opportunities for consideration (including assessment and evaluation of the implementation of standards).

Since then, the CSFD has operated a **working group on minimum quality standards**, and the work of this group has been enhanced by the CSFD project, co-funded by the European Commission under the Justice Programme (Drug Policy Initiatives). The previous project (2017-2020) produced **guidelines and recommendations for the implementation of minimum quality standards in drug demand reduction in the European Union by civil society organisations (CSOs)** in six languages (English, Spanish, Slovenian, Hungarian, Swedish and Italian). The focus of our WG is further dissemination and promotion of guidelines and recommendations across Europe, advocacy for assessment and implementation of standards in practice, and development and testing of a training course for CSOs to improve the implementation of standards within civil society sector.

NEWS

COVID 19



Position Statement of the EU Civil Society Forum on Drugs on Covid-19

The current Covid-19 crisis has impacted significantly our work and the life of people who use drugs (PWUDs). Therefore the CSFD core group has prepared and sent out a letter to the Stella Kyriakidou, Health and Food Safety Commissioner and Ylva Johansson, Home Affairs Commissioner to highlight the specific vulnerable position of PWUDs and call for the implementation of support measures. The content of this letter his letter is now transformed into a CSFD Position Statement, which can be used more broadly for advocacy purposes.

The Position Statement is available [HERE](#)

A French and Spanish version will also be available soon [HERE](#)

If you are able and willing to prepare a translation into other languages, we would very much appreciate that. We can provide you with a word document and prepare afterwards a nicely formatted pdf, which can be shared more easily for advocacy purposes.

Furthermore, we are very much interested in your experiences and reflections on the Covid-19 crisis. What is the situation in your country? How did covid-19 impact your work and the life of PWUDs? What can we learn from covid-19, once the crisis is over?
PLEASE SHARE!

Resource Centres

The COVID-19 pandemic has a significant impact on drug-related services. To support People Who Use Drugs and other underserved communities, as well as the organisations, which provide services to these groups, the services, a variety of online resource centres have been set up to share experiences and best practice examples. Please check below a couple of them and if you know other resources, please forward us these:

DROGRIPORTER.HU/EN/HOW-HARM-REDUCERS-COPE-WITH-THE-CORONA-PANDEMIC-IN-EUROPE/

WWW.CORRELATION-NET.ORG/COVID-19-RESOURCE-CENTRE/

IDPC.NET/ALERTS/2020/03/COVID19-IMPORTANT-INFORMATION

HARMREDUCTION.EU/DB

AFEW.ORG/COVID-19/HELPFUL-INFORMATION-ABOUT-COVID-19/

Some resources in the field of prevention (especially regarding parenting in COVID-19 crisis):

www.unodc.org/listenfirst/en/covid_parents.html

www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/healthy-parenting

www.end-violence.org/protecting-children-during-covid-19-outbreak

Pompidou Group initiative Save Lives – Protect People

The Pompidou Group's new response platform' Save Lives - Protect People' collects and presents innovative ideas and practical interventions that aim to contain the spread of COVID-19 and prevent harm to People Who Use Drugs and those in contact with them.

Help us and our partner organisations, Correlation – European Harm Reduction Network and European Federation of Therapeutic Communities Correlation (EFTC), to quickly spread potentially life-saving responses and ideas and discuss them in our LinkedIn and Facebook groups on 'COVID-19 and PWUD'.

Have a look and **SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES**

EMCDDA Mini-European Web Survey on Drugs (EWS): Impact of COVID-19 on patterns of drug use, harms and drug services in the European Union

EMCDDA is conducting an adapted version of the trendspotter methodology across the EU Member States, of which this survey forms a part. The primary purpose of this study is to understand better the impact of COVID-19 on patterns of drug use in EU countries. For a comprehensive picture, they need information from People Who Use Drugs.

[READ MORE](#)

EVENTS

The United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND2020)

Different CSFD members joined the CND2020 in Vienna in March. In cooperation with other European organisations the CSFD organised the side event 'Good practices in cross-sectoral cooperation: Civil society involvement in policymaking in Europe'.

The event focused on two levels of participatory policymaking. The European dimension showcased the work of the EU Civil Society Forum on Drugs – an expert group of the European Commission. Iga Kender-Jeziorska (CSFD) presented the Forum's activities, while Elina Kotovirta (Finnish Ministry of Health) highlighted the developed robust and trusting relationship between the EU and the CSFD. The national-level case study focused on the ongoing drug policy reform in Norway, with the constant involvement of the Association for Humane Drug Policies (FHN) representing People Who Use Drugs. Carl-Erik Grimstad (Norway's Standing Committee on Health and Care Services) highlighted the importance of the "Nothing about us without us" approach in policymaking and his motivations for pushing for reform. Arild Knutsen (FHN) shared how his long and bumpy road in advocacy resulted in positive outcomes in Norwegian drug policy and the meaningful involvement of PWUD in policymaking. The side event was moderated by Marie Nougier (CSFD).

[READ MORE](#)

The CSFD Workshop

Over the last few months, YODA and Forum Droghe have been preparing a CSFD workshop on the future of European drug policy. Initially planned for the end of April, the workshops had to be postponed due to the current COVID-19 Pandemic. Meeting participants are selected, however, and we are currently working on fine-tuning the meeting programme, which needs to be adjusted, as the original idea of contribution to the new EU Drug Strategy is not feasible anymore - it's more than likely that the new Strategy will be drafted by the summer. Being aware of all the limitations and uncertainty, we will do our best to organise the training in autumn before the CSFD plenary session.

Webinars and more

Covid-19 has also impacted our ways of communication and exchange and different organisation are organising webinars and online workshop to discuss and share the impact of the crisis. This includes for example:

22 May, 14-17pm

European Treatment Centers for Drug Addiction, Euro-TC.
What changes for the TC and Residential Treatment during the Time of Covid-19 Pandemic.

[READ MORE](#)

28 May

Correlation - European Harm Reduction Network
Drug Consumption Rooms in the Covid-19 crisis

[READ MORE](#)

Movendi International

The International Drug Prevention Standards - a summary of the most important points, and The Dos and Don'ts in drug prevention

[READ MORE](#)

3 June

Correlation - European Harm Reduction Network
Outreach during the Covid-19 crisis

[READ MORE](#)

4 June

Movendi International
Listen First and policy-making (environmental prevention), and the case for drug prevention from a societal perspective.

[READ MORE](#)



June 4, 11 & 18 2020 9am Pacific | 12pm Eastern | 5pm London

4, 11 and 18 June

ISSUP webinar series
Motivational Interviewing by Dr Igor Koutsenok, University of California San Diego

[READ MORE](#)

Please share any upcoming webinar events with us, so we can promote them on the website and in our following newsletters.

26 June

World Drug Day

June 26 is the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, also referred to as World Drug Day. International and European organisations are organising different events and campaigns during this day. This includes for example the **'Support Don't Punish' Campaign**

[READ MORE](#)

We would like to share information on CSFD members' campaigns. Shall you be interested in giving these a wider dissemination, please share the activities and campaigns of your organisation planned for 26th of June to

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MAY 2020