

For Immediate Release

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Barcelona Threatens to Eliminate the Pioneering Model of Cannabis Social Clubs

*City Council Seeks to Close These Globally Exemplary Spaces at a
Critical Moment for International Regulation*

Barcelona — The city of Barcelona is at a critical juncture regarding the survival of its cannabis social clubs (CSCs), a successful model being replicated in other countries. In recent days, around thirty associations have received notifications from the City Council, with proposed sanctions ranging from financial fines to temporary cessation of activities for periods of six months to two years. This situation reflects a persecutory strategy by the Barcelona City Council, seemingly aimed at the total closure of these harm reduction spaces in the city.

In January, [ICEERS presented a letter to the City Council](#) supported by 179 experts and representatives from institutions in over 53 countries, defending the model of Barcelona's CSCs, pioneers in creating these shared consumption spaces. Despite the strong and representative international support and the formal request for a meeting, there was no response or openness to dialogue from the City Council, which has now intensified its administrative persecution, lacking the transparency and rigor expected from public administrations.

This situation coincides paradoxically with the opening of the first fully legally guaranteed cannabis social club in Germany. Simultaneously, closure orders are being issued in Barcelona, marking a significant setback in local drug policies, aligned with prohibitionist approaches that the governing party itself rejected just a few years ago.

Structural Factors

The current context presents a combination of structural and circumstantial factors that further complicate the situation of cannabis clubs in Barcelona. Despite the existence of more than two hundred associations of this type in the city, the activist network has been dismantled due to years of police and judicial repression, the absence of support from the Barcelona Public Health Agency, and the emergence of actors with commercial interests. This situation has been exacerbated by the arrival of political leaders like Albert Batlle, whose career has been characterized by a conservative and prohibitionist vision.

Meanwhile, Barcelona's model has served as inspiration in other parts of the world, where its approach to harm reduction and regulated self-cultivation is valued. In countries like Uruguay, South Africa, Malta, and Germany, these spaces already operate under legal frameworks. However, in Barcelona, the movement seems to be regressing, as the recent municipal strategy threatens to dismantle this progressive model. Thus, the international community watches with concern the actions of the council led by Mayor Jaume Collboni from the Socialist Party of Catalonia.

ICEERS advocates for drug policies that respect consumers' rights and are based on scientific evidence. According to our experience, this measure will not only negatively affect CSCs but also could increase insecurity and the unregulated market, countering the principles of public health and human rights.

An Example for the World

Òscar Parés, ICEERS' Deputy Director, states: "The current strategy of the Barcelona City Council not only threatens the existence of CSCs but also undermines more than two decades of progress in creating a self-regulated and safe model that has served as an example for the world. We request that the council reconsider its stance and opt for a more dialogical and evidence-based approach."

ICEERS calls on the Barcelona City Council to reconsider its position and open a constructive dialogue that allows for the development of fairer and more effective drug policies. For the sake of public health, it is important to recognize the value of CSCs and work together towards a future where consumers' rights are respected, social equity measures are established, and public policies are based on [scientific evidence](#), thus ensuring the well-being of all its citizens.

Social clubs not only provide a safe environment for cannabis consumption but also educate their members on responsible use and reduce the risks associated with the unregulated market. The closure of these centers could lead to increased uncontrolled consumption, with more risks and adulterations, and without supervision, exacerbating public health problems instead of mitigating them. As already demonstrated, a collaborative approach between authorities and the associations themselves can establish a sustainable model that respects human rights and serves as a reference for other cities.

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