



Report from the Public Hearing on EU Drug Policy 1998 – 2007  
Organized in European Parliament, hosted by MEP Michail Tremopoulos (Greens-EFA).  
In collaboration with European Coalition for Just and Effective Drug Policies (ENCOD),  
23 February 2010.

The main objectives of the Public Hearing were to discuss the “Report on Global Illicit Drugs Market 1998 – 2007” and to define the conclusions of the Report that will be brought out by ENDOC during the General UNODC Conference in Vienna. The participants on the conference were EU NGOs representatives (40) as well as the members of the European Commission and Parliament; it was a rare opportunity to meet on one place members of the civil society and policy makers.

The EC members referred to the previous UN and EU Drug Policy treaties and expressed the need to stretch the competence of the International bodies. Politicians in the member states preferred to avoid the problem and take it into concern only during the elections; the UN bodies took a long time to raise the attention. EU was emphasizing the importance of the EMCDDA and other organizations, “but didn’t want to stay alone in the court”, so in 2008 proposed a year on reflection that was a part of the EU agenda.

ENCOD concluded that the Report, funded by the European Commission have proved that the current measures to control the drug effects are not sufficient enough to decrease demand and supply. Moreover, some policies have showed to be contra effective and most of the countries didn’t reduce the problem or just in a few Western cases. Money spent on police, customs, and justice system is “wasted”. “The war on drugs doesn’t work; it creates harm to our society”, ENCOD member stated. They asked the EU to make alternative polices from the war on drugs. ENDOC then reffered to the untransparent work of Civil Society Forum on Drug Policy that includes 26 organizations that “didn’t show any results” and met only three times.

EC representatives stated that the drug prevalence increased in transitional and developing countries and stated that “they do not still understand that by throwing the enforcement, problem will not just go away”. It was mentioned that the imprisonments and high penalties are still used to deter people, even thou it was clear that it is most expensive for the country, taking into account the funds spent for the reintegration to the society. It is estimated that there are six hundred thousands people that have some drug problem and that one of five have taken drug in their life. MP from Netherlands also agreed that if the states are “tuffer” to the drug users, as in case of drug offences, it won’t solve this problem. He reminded NGOs that they should take impact on the EMCDDA results and advocate for the drug policies scientificly proved.

After the findgs from the Report were presented by the EC representatives, civil society memebbers commenced the discussion that brought to the list of recommendations that ENDOC will uphold during UNODC Confrence. The discussion also showed that there are diagonal differences, pro and contra prohibition of drug use, between civil society memebbers and in some cases it turned to be non effective.



The common denominator was the necessity to respect the human rights of drug users, specially when it comes to treatments. Swidish and Dutch NGO representatives did not agree on the findings of the Report, adding that it should be more reaserched before making any conclusion. Recommendations defined promoted on the UNDOC Conference in two weeks: to move forward the UN and EU to organize a Summit with local, national authorites, civil society, as well as EP, EC, UN members to rethink the Drug Policy; General recommendation to the national gouvernements to review their national policies based on the finding of the Report (as a respect for human rights, individual freedom and social cohesion); to use the upcoming UNODC Conference to launch a debate to regulate the market that is not based on prohibition; to move forward intiatives to allow adult people to grow cannabis as a result of tolerance and acceptance that it is already widely spread (cannabis clubs in Spain, Belgium,Italy,Check, Holland); and to make Drug Policy priority at the EU Political Agenda.

It is worth mentioning that it was a unique opportunity for NGO Veza to have a chance to share ideas and problems regarding drug policies issues with the gouvernement representativ from the Ministry of Health and the Euro Health Group for three days. This Public Hearing help NGO Veza to biult a bridge of cooperation with the Ministry of Health and there fore with other state institutions competent to help drug users in Serbia.

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26 February 2010, Belgrade