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REPORT OF THE MEETING BETWEEN THE CSF CORE GROUP AND THE COMMISSION

BRUSSELS, 15 JUNE 2010

During the Civil Society Forum in 2009, a 'core group' of representatives of the CSF was identified, which would represent the Members of the Forum towards the Commission in-between official meetings of the CSF.

On the 15th of June 2010, the 'core group' consisting of *Mr Anders Ulstein, Mr Eberhardt Schatz, Mr Eliot Albert, Mr Amador Calafat, Mr Frederick Polak and Mr Joep Oomen*, met with the Commission to discuss the further development of the Civil Society Forum on Drugs and in particular the working agenda for the next two years. The Commission was represented by *Mr Carel Edwards* (Head of Unit), *Mr Timo Jetsu, Mr Andrzej Kosnikowski* (CSF contactperson) and *Mr Maurice Gallà*.

During the meeting a number of important issues were discussed, including the input of the CSF on the new EU Drugs Strategy (and subsequent action plans) and the planning of meetings and input and the renewal of the CSF by 2011.

1. Input on the new EU Drugs Strategy beyond 2012

The meeting started with a short reflection on the current practice and functioning of the CSF and on ways to make its work more relevant and timely. The Commission indicated that given the set up and positioning of Civil Society it is not always possible to make directly visible which impact the Forum may have on the day-to-day drug policy work at EU level.

However, examples of e.g. the Vienna NGO Forum 'Beyond 2008' did show that if Civil Society organisations from a broad range of backgrounds and views can come forward with a limited number of shared priorities, they can actually influence the policy debate. Therefore the Commission suggested that the CSF would developed – for the next EU Drugs Strategy 2013 and beyond – one or a few position paper(s) which could cover either the a range of policy issues of the new Strategy or specific priority topics, which the CSF would like to bring forward. Such position paper(s) would not have to be one full consensus document, although agreement on a number of key issues would make the paper stronger.

The Commission also suggested that such position paper(s) might be forwarded – possibly as an annex to the Commission proposal – to the Council and the European Parliament when reviewing the Commission's proposal for a new Strategy.

The Members of the core group agreed that this may be a viable way forward to work on in the next, although they envisaged that it may be difficult to reach consensus among the Members on specific opinions or proposals. But if the discussion in the Forum would respect the diversity of existing views it might be possible to find some common ground for a joint paper.

The Commission indicated that the strength of Civil Society in this discussion would lie in the creative and pragmatic views it may have on major drug policy issues and the implementation of policies, whilst taking into account the fact that the next Strategy would be limited in time. The Commission also indicated that the Civil Society Forum is in the 'driving seat' of this exercise.

2. Renewal of the Civil Society Forum by 2011

The Commission indicated that the mandate of the current Civil Society Forum on Drugs will expire this year. Therefore, the Commission will launch a call for Membership this fall so that a renewed CSF can take up its work in 2011. The Commission will ensure the transparency of the selection process.

The Commission restated that selection will be made according to the selection criteria adopted in the Commission's Green Paper on the Civil Society Forum on Drugs in 2007. However, there may be a need to fine tune some of the criteria.

3. Planning issues

The Commission indicated that funding had been reserved for a second core group meeting as well as a Civil Society Forum meeting in 2010. For 2011, funding will be reserved to cover at least 2-3 meetings of the core group as well as at least two Civil Society Forum meetings. Funding for e.g. secretarial support for the core group may be more difficult to arrange, as this would probably require specific tendering procedures.

The planning for the procedure for the renewal of the CSF in 2011 will be presented in September 2010. Generally speaking, applicant Members have 80 calendar days to apply for Membership once the call has been made.

4. Conclusions

The meeting concluded with a number of agreements.

- First, the Commission was asked to *circulate the report of the meeting*, accompanied by a further explanation of the framework and conditions the Forum is operating under.
- Second, the Members of the Civil Society Forum were asked to discuss and consider – *over the next few months* – which key topics it would like to raise and/ or focus on while drafting one or more position paper(s) on the new EU Drugs Strategy by the third quarter of 2011.
- It was also decided that the *next core group* meeting would take place in *October 2010* and that the *next Civil Society Forum on Drugs*, the last one of the current Membership, would take place in *December 2010* and be devoted to the renewal of the CSF and to the preparation of the CSF position paper(s) on the new Strategy.

- *Two additional meetings* of the CSF are foreseen to take place in 2011, whilst the Commission also indicated that a larger meeting might be organised bringing together a broader range of relevant organisations. The desirability of the latter is a matter of further discussion.
- The Commission will also *examine possibilities* of facilitating a permanent CSF Secretariat, in particular when a core group type of structure would be given specific tasks as well.
- The contact person in the Commission regarding the CSF work is Mr Timo Jetsu (timo.jetsu@ec.europa.eu; +32-2-2995784) or Mr Andrzej Kosnikowski (Andrzej.Kosnikowski@ec.europa.eu; +32.2.298.8629).

In the annex, a framework for the possible development of CSF position paper(s) on the new EU Drugs Strategy 2013 and beyond is included. On the basis of the deliberations between the Members of the Forum and following the next meeting of the core group in October, the agenda for the next Civil Society Forum on Drugs in December will be drafted.

ANNEX 1

FRAMEWORK FOR INPUT OF THE CSF TOWARDS THE NEW EU DRUGS STRATEGY BEYOND 2012

As by 2012, the current EU Drugs Strategy 2005-2012 will expire, the Commission will be working towards a proposal for a new Strategy from 2011 onwards. The current planning (August 2010) is such that the Commission anticipates to a proposal for a new EU Drugs Strategy by the end of 2011.

During the meeting between the Commission and the core group of the Civil Society Forum on Drugs, it was decided to propose to the Members of the Forum that in the next two years, common proposal(s) or position paper(s) would be developed by the Forum, incorporating a number of key views or concerns from Civil Society relevant for the new EU Drugs Strategy beyond 2013. It was agreed that:

- The nature of the position paper(s) would be something the CSF Members could exchange on and discuss further over the next months, so that a final decision could be taken during the meeting of the CSF in December 2010. The exchange may reflect on:
 - The type and format of the possible position paper(s);
 - Its contents and whether the CSF should strive for common position(s) on a limited number of topics, and/ or whether the paper(s) should include positions which reflect – in different areas – diverging opinions and views;
 - The process how the opinions can be developed, taking into account that there may be 3 to 4 meetings available to the Forum and taking into account that the Membership will be renewed during this period;
 - Suggestions on which Members may want to coordinate the development of specific areas or topics and/ or propose a specific working arrangement, e.g. by the establishment of working groups;
- The electronic Forum of the CSF can be used as an active exchange tool between the Members, ensuring that every Member has access to available information and proposals (<http://forums.ec.europa.eu/drugs/>).
- The Members of the core group will have a coordinating role in the exchange of views and proposals; discuss potential options with the Commission and present proposals to the Civil Society Forum meeting in December.
- The position paper(s) could cover the full range of EU drug policies as enshrined in the current EU Drugs Strategy and Action Plan (e.g. the EU model of drug policy), specific cross-cutting themes (e.g. human rights, international cooperation, coordination) or particular 'vertical' topics (e.g. drug prevention, law enforcement)¹.

¹ The Commission suggested to the core group that despite the divergence of views on EU drugs policy among various CSF members, the position paper, in order to gain in strength and have greater added value

- The final position paper(s) could be adopted by the Civil Society Forum by September or October 2011². The Commission will examine if the paper can be annexed to the proposed new EU Drugs Strategy and/ or be transferred integrally to European Parliament and Council.
- The Members of the Civil Society Forum will have the opportunity to make use of their own networks and contacts with relevant authorities and structures to further promote the position paper.

PLANNING 2010-2011

August – October 2010	Exchange on the proposal to develop a CSF position paper for the new EU Drugs Strategy 2013 and beyond; input to be collected through
October 2010	Meeting of the CSF core group and Commission
December 2010	4 th Meeting of the Civil Society Forum; decision on format and key topics of the position paper.
January 2011	Meeting of the CSF core group and Commission
March 2011	5 th Meeting of the Civil Society Forum; first draft of the position paper
May 2011	Meeting of the CSF core group and Commission
September 2011	6 th Meeting of the Civil Society Forum; adoption of the position paper Meeting of the CSF core group and Commission
October 2011	Position paper annexed to Commission's proposal on a new EU Drugs Strategy
November 2011	Position paper printed

especially to EU decision makers, might ideally contain '*common denominator areas/topics*' i.e. those where consensus among the CSF membership could be found, with some limitation in number of areas.

² NOTE: the Commission will present its proposal for a new EU Drugs Strategy **by the end of 2011**, which is a modified planning compared to what was discussed in the meeting with the core group.