

From Civil Society Forum members

Carel Edwards,
Head of Unit
European Commission
Justice, Freedom and Security
Coordination of anti-drug policy
LX/46 00-43
B-1049 BXL

Amsterdam, 26.11.2009

Dear Mr Edwards,

By sending this letter, the signatory members of the EU Civil Society Forum on Drugs would like to share their thoughts and point of view with the Commission, regarding the effectiveness of the consultative process within the SCF. In the past two years we identified a number of bottlenecks in regard to the operating process, which jeopardise the communication and consultation within the Forum.

First of all, we consider the 2-year membership mandate as too short. It needs time to understand the CSF functioning, to integrate the political dimensions and to organise the internal consultation among our networks in order to avoid the CSF to be an “expert group”. We propose that the mandate duration should be prolonged up to 4 years, which would also be in coherence with the Drug Action Plan duration.

Secondly, the consultation process between the CSF Meeting itself and the moment, when the CSF members receive the meeting agenda is far too short. To create more civil society impact and to avoid the character of an expert meeting, it is necessary to have sufficient time to be prepared on agenda issues, to consult our national and European networks.

In addition, the opportunity to rise agenda issues should be an integral part of the preparation of Forum meetings. It could give us opportunity to approach drug issues more widely than the official EU policies.

Consequently, we ask you to provide us as in time with the next meeting agenda and to give Forum members the opportunity to rise own agenda point.

To ensure an effective organisation of this procedure, we suggest that the Commission creates a new unit, consisting of two staff members of DG JLS and two representatives of the Forum. This could be organised in different ways:

The Commission could

- > hire the representatives as consultants or hire an external consultant to take care on this process or
- > prepare a call for members of the Forum to facilitate this process for a certain period of time or

> interested members of the Forum submit a project proposal to the Drug Prevention and Information Programme in order to receive the financial support for the coordination of the CSF.

Finally, we would like to ask your specific support on how to make information digest and usable for field stakeholders, how to consult and inform efficiently the local stakeholders and last, but not least, how to reach consensus on relevant points before the meeting.

We are most interested in the Commission's point of view and your ideas in regard to the points we mention in this letter. What would be the best way to respond to our needs and to improve the consultation process with CSF?

We would be happy to discuss our proposal in person with you.

Looking forward to your answer.

With kind regards,

On behalf of the signatories

Thierry Charlois
Eberhard Schatz

Signatory networks:

Association Française de Réduction des Risques
Correlation Network
ERIT
Eurasian Harm Reduction Network
Euro-TC
International Harm Reduction Association
ITACA
IREFREA
Romanian Harm Reduction Network