

# Draft Drug Policy position paper for CSF on HIV

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# Growing momentum to rethink policies?

- Vienna Declaration calling for decriminalization – **no statement by EC**
- The upcoming EU Drugs Action Plan review and evaluation of EU Drugs Strategy;
- In 2011 50-year “anniversary” of the UN Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs;

*Initiative followed from a group of CSF members*

# Why we need the position?

- ▶ In relation to HIV drug policies proved to do more harm than good;
  - ▶ An opportunity to facilitate the advocacy of drug policy reform, human rights on behalf of HIV organizations;
  - ▶ United and strong voice of HIV community in the time of review of EU drug policies provides;
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# Why we need this paper – EU policies


EU Drugs Strategy and Action Plans provide adequate basis for balanced policies (in a way of drug supply and demand reduction); **BUT**

- Lack of the impact assessment on country level;
- Lack of united and strong position promoting evidence based policies on international and national level;
- Lack of leadership in “saving” new EU and neighborhood from HIV epidemic;

# Part 1 : health harms and risks associated with drug use;

- Between 750 000 – 1 million IDUs in the EU;
- Health harms of drug use: HIV, hepatitis, tuberculosis – “new” EU member states;
- HIV doesn't stop at borders – EU is next to the largest IDU driven HIV epidemic in the world;
- Overdose – common among PLWH and using drugs;
- While the investment in HIV treatment is expanding, the high levels of HCV, TB, possible overdose compromises the treatment outcome.


## Part 2: how policies contribute to these harms;

- Criminalization and punishment of drug use/ possession prevents people from seeking health services;
  - Exclusion and marginalization including in health setting;
  - Drug law offenders make a large proportion of prison population, where there are even less services than in community setting;
  - Risky behaviors provoked by prohibition;
  - Restricted access to controlled medicine, pain relief including for PLWH
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# Part 3: evidence in policy shift from enforcement to health

- Expansion of harm reduction policies and practices in EU. Evidence prove the reduction of HIV, health and social harms – policy embedded in pragmatic argument to fight drug use consequences, rather than use it self;
- Access to controlled medicine – from pain relief to heroin prescription treatment – evidence of government control over distribution, supply, and use of substances;
- Decriminalization of drug use/possession. Positive impact on health, as data from Portugal shows;

# Part 4: Call for action and recommendations

- We do not call for legalization, rather for EC to:
    - (1) support of evidence based practices and policies and respect for human rights – Vienna Declaration;
    - (2) make an impact evaluation of the EU policies for the next EU Drugs Strategy;
    - (3) lead on debate on arguments for and against legal regulation on behalf of governments, rather than sole prohibition;
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# Recommendations – need work

- ▶ EU level
- ▶ Member states
- ▶ Civil society

*Do we want to address health care professions, international agencies, balance them, or focus ONLY on EC action?*

# How can we use the paper?

- ▶ Gather the increased support of HIV organizations in Europe for drug reform;
  - ▶ Appeal to European Commission and member countries;
  - ▶ Work with countries, promoting the position and recommendations;
  - ▶ *Open for discussion.....*
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