

SOLIDIFY project: a broad European partnership stands for a local drug policy based on the principles of harm reduction and supports the implementation of Supervised Drug Consumption Facilities

On 5 and 6 December 2019, 150 participants took part in the final conference of Efus' SOLIDIFY project, held in Lisbon, Portugal. Co-hosted with the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) and the Municipality of Lisbon (CML), the event showcased work produced over two years on how to foster local multi-agency partnerships around Supervised Drug Consumption Facilities (SDCFs) in order to capitalise on the positive impacts they can have for urban security and public tranquillity.

A hub for intense exchange and discussion

The participants – representatives of local, regional and national authorities, civil society organisations, research centres, law enforcement agencies, and initiatives and networks of people who use drugs – discussed a range of key questions relating to the future of European drug policies.

These included:

- How to foster local multi-stakeholder partnerships?
- How to improve cooperation between providers of health services, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the police?
- How to better assess the impact of harm reduction on public health and urban security?
- What role can drug checking play in reinforcing prevention and harm reduction at the local level?

These questions were discussed during lively panel discussions, breakout sessions and workshops, but also during 7 study visits to local harm-reduction services. These visits were organised by the Municipality of Lisbon in cooperation with the NGOs CRESCER, Medicos do Mundo, GAT and Ares do Pinhal, as well as the parish of Lumiar and the EMCDDA.

Co-producing balanced drug policies in Europe

In her keynote speech, Ruth Dreifuss, former President of the Swiss Confederation and Chair of the Global Commission on Drug Policy, called on the participants to further intensify and professionalise their efforts in the face of a current global pushback against progressive drug policies: "My experience has led me to believe that cities are the level where reforms are

required and can take place, beyond national legislation. This is where professionals from health service providers, law enforcement and policymakers are working together on the ground. We should not wait for a technical organisation with a limited mandate to tell us what to do in order to save lives and ensure the safety of our citizens”.

Alexis Goosdeel, EMCDDA Director, said: “I am particularly pleased to see so many health, security and law enforcement practitioners together at this conference. Multi-sectoral cooperation at the local level is what will make the difference in the future. We must prepare new generations to continue this work.”

Nuno Veludo, advisor for health policy at the Lisbon City Council (CML), stressed the link between harm reduction, drug policy and democracy: “We must reinforce our measures to support drug users and other vulnerable groups and empower them to participate actively in local democracy and public deliberation – all citizens have an equally important place in the public sphere.”

Bernard Rivail , Deputy Mayor of Lormont and member of Efus’ executive committee, stressed the need for peer-to-peer support among cities: “Through the promotion and exchange of experiences and successful practices between European cities, we wish to continue to work on this issue by mobilising local elected representatives and all local actors in order to bring out the full potential of drug prevention projects and programmes.”

[Read full news release in EN and FR >>](#)

ESMA updates Q&A on MiFIR data reporting

The Q&A provide clarifications in relation to the requirements for submission of reference data and transactions under MiFIR. In particular, the Q&As relate to the reporting of reference rates not included in RTS 22 and 23, under art. 26 and art. 27 of MiFIR.

The amendments to the existing Q&A on MiFIR data reporting becomes effective from 06 December 2019.

The purpose of this Q&A is to promote common supervisory approaches and practices in the application of MiFIR. It provides guidance to Investment Firms, Trading Venues, ARMs and Systematic Internalisers on compliance with the reporting provisions of MiFIR.

ESMA will periodically review these Q&A and update them where required

Press release – Towards a Conference on the Future of Europe



On Monday 9 December, MEPs from the Constitutional Affairs Committee will vote on their input to Parliament's Conference of Presidents (i.e. President Sassoli and political group leaders) on the organisation of the upcoming Conference on the Future of Europe.

Following the establishment of the relevant Working Group by Parliament's leaders, the Constitutional Affairs Committee was invited to contribute to its work in line with its leading role on topics of significance affecting the future of Europe. This will in turn help define Parliament's position in the negotiations with the Council and the Commission on the structure, mission and objectives of the Conference.

When: Monday, 9 December, 18.00 – 20.00

Where: European Parliament in Brussels, Spinelli building, room 3E2

You can [follow the meeting live](#).

Background

The Conference, to be organised by Parliament, Council and Commission, is among Commission President von der Leyen's most prominent commitments. It is expected to start in 2020 and run for two years, involving a cross-section of society to give citizens the chance to contribute in shaping the future of the EU.

The most recent in a series of debates in the Constitutional Affairs Committee was [a public hearing](#) with Parliament's Vice-President [Othmar Karas](#)

([EPP, AT](#)), European Economic and Social Committee President [Luca Jahier](#), Committee of the Regions President [Karl-Heinz Lambertz](#) and a range of academic and civil society experts, as well as the two Commission Vice-Presidents: [Dubravka Šuica](#) (Democracy and Demography) and [Věra Jourová](#) (Values and Transparency).

[Article – Propaganda: “The weapons used against us are continuously evolving” \(interview\)](#)



How safe are European elections from interference by third parties, cyberattack and hostile propaganda?

We are talking about 27 parallel unique electoral processes in each member state, which can be targeted by hostile actors using a tailor-made set of tools: the malicious use of bots, algorithms, artificial intelligence, trolls, deepfakes and fake accounts in political campaigns as well as cyberattacks during the electoral process.

I am sure that following recent cases of meddling in elections and referenda, member states have started to assess situations within their territories.

However, investing in capacity to counter disinformation campaigns and improve the ability of citizens to detect disinformation takes time, plus the weapons used against us are continuously evolving. This is why some specific steps have been taken at the EU level, like the EU Code of Practice on Disinformation, which ensures transparency of political advertising and encourages decisive action against fake accounts on social media platforms.

What do we need to do to improve?

We should think one step ahead, rather than merely reacting. We definitely need to put more focus on the malicious use of artificial intelligence – and developing and employing AI in order to be able to effectively counteract it.

Critical to success is publicly naming the perpetrators, their sponsors and the goals they seek to achieve. A robust response by the Union should include a range of measures including targeted sanctions.

Are some EU countries more vulnerable to disinformation?

Aggressive information operations are part of a broader strategy. Information warfare accompanying military offensives should be taken seriously and counteracted with determination and unity. Russia's disinformation campaigns continue to focus heavily on eastern Ukraine and Crimea, but always targets countries where it sees cultural, historical, linguistic or political links. The [EUvsDisinfo project](#) has debunked over 4,000 cases of disinformation campaigns on a wide variety of subjects.

How can we make sure that while countering propaganda we do not encourage censorship or hamper freedom of speech?

As we highlight in our report, freedom of speech and expression as well as media pluralism are at the heart of resilient democratic societies and provide the best safeguards against disinformation and hostile propaganda. Censorship would undermine us. This is why we underline the importance of the transparency of media ownership and pluralism. The biggest concern we highlight in our report are social media platforms. We understand that the banning of suspicious accounts may be seen as censorship, and therefore, such actions must be clearly justifiable.

[Coordinated arrests of international drug trafficking group](#)

6 December 2019

The national authorities of Germany, Denmark, Spain, Italy, the Netherlands, Sweden, the UK and Norway, with the active support of Eurojust, have taken

down an organised crime group (OCG) involved in drug trafficking. The investigation showed that a transport company based in the Netherlands was involved in smuggling large quantities of drugs to several European countries. Police suspect that the drugs were transported by truck, along with legal cargo, from Spain into the Netherlands, and redistributed to other countries.

As the result of an investigation lasting one year in many countries, coordinated arrests of the main suspects of the OCG were conducted. Dutch suspects were arrested in the following countries: one in the Netherlands, one in Germany, one in Spain, three in Italy, one in Sweden, one in the UK, and three in Norway.

Seizures were conducted in all countries, for a combined total of 4 tonnes of hashish, 200 kg of amphetamines, 64 kg of cocaine, 45 kg of MDMA, and 25 kg of heroin. As an expansion of the Eurojust case, 50 suspects were charged in Norway.



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Criminal activities of the OCG

In 2017, the number of violent activities, including shootings, increased in Oslo. The Norwegian authorities initiated an investigation into an OCG, with clear links between southern countries and Nordic countries, but also involving countries in central Europe. Due to the cross-border dimension of the investigation, a Eurojust case was opened in September 2018, which targeted the alleged Moroccan and Dutch main suspects, including Dutch trucking and transport firms.

Eurojust's crucial role

Eurojust's involvement was instrumental in coordinating the actions in all countries. Eurojust organised five coordinating meetings in one year, during which information was shared and strategic decisions were taken. To ensure an efficient investigation and prosecution, Eurojust assisted in overcoming legal obstacles by advising on jurisdictional issues and reaching an agreement on the best place to prosecute. Eurojust swiftly set up a joint investigation team (JIT), financed by Eurojust, with Norway, Denmark and Sweden to speed up the criminal investigations into the OCG and enable the swift gathering of evidence and sharing of information.

#Justice Done

A Norwegian court recently sentenced one of the main suspects to 19 years' imprisonment and confiscated more than EUR 4.5 million.

A Danish court recently sentenced two suspects to two and six years' confinement, respectively.

A German court recently sentenced one perpetrator to eight years' imprisonment for the possession of illicit drugs.