



EUROPEANS NEED MORE SCIENCE IN EU POLICY ON DRUGS AND ADDICTIONS

The Platform for Better Preventive Healthcare came together on 22 July 2021 to discuss the need for more science in EU policy on drugs. The event was held by MEP Cyrus Engerer (S&D, Malta) and featured a distinguished panel of EU drug policy experts: Mr Jindrich Voboril (IRAP), Ms Rafaela Rigoni (CORRELATION-EHRN), Mr Antonio Molina (Dianova International), and Ms Iga Jeziorska (Youth Organisations for Drug Action).

The panel agreed that the basis of good quality drugs legislation rests in destigmatizing drugs and people who use and are dependent on drugs. Now it is time to move from ideology and outdated perceptions of morality to evidence. The panel extends the following policy recommendations that will lead to improved EU drugs policy based on human rights:

INCLUDE RELEVANT EVIDENCE IN EU DRUG POLICY DECISIONS

- Promote up-to-date scientific research in the EU health policy making.
- Debunk scientific myths surrounding addictions and prevention of diseases in general. Make sure to know what works and what has counterproductive effects in managing addictions.
- Devote more space to research about addictive behaviours' predictors, mediators, and modulators, and about psychosocial and socioeconomic factors.
- Implement a proper framework to analyse causes & consequences of addictions, while integrating health and social factors in the analysis, and developing integral models for research, prevention, and intervention.
- Implement impact evaluation as a key element of assessing the effectiveness of EU drug policies.
- Consider the experiences and the evidence produced by civil society organizations, and networks of people who use drugs.

"Evidence is not only
made in academia."
Iga Jeziorska

ENSURE THAT EU DRUGS POLICY WORKS IN REAL-WORLD

- Develop prevention and health promotion strategies based on scientific evidence and ensure that they are implemented by qualified professionals and peers.
- Adapt the strategy to the needs of specific key populations, for instance, by using online tools to improve the reach to young people.
- Ensure more social, economic, and political protection by taking into consideration the context of drug use.
- Consider already existing solutions and best practices developed by the communities and the civil society sector. Promote real-world experiences on dealing with addictions on illicit and licit substances, in addition to behavioural addictions.
- Meaningfully involve civil society actors and people who use drugs in the dialogue and decision-making processes to ensure that drug policy will work in real world.

"Civil Society must be
involved in evidence
production and
decision-making
process related to
drugs policies."
Rafaela Rigoni



- Make sure that the public, businesses, and non-profit organizations can introduce means to reduce the risk of addictive behaviour to people who use drugs without unnecessary restrictions founded on outdated science.

PROMOTE THE ACTIVE ROLE OF THE EU-LEVEL POLICY-MAKERS ON ADDICTIONS

- In the light of the current challenges in the field of addiction, the European Parliament should demand that evidence-based measures on addictions are being implemented at the EU, national and local levels.
- The European institutions should work to prepare sound methodology and data that will serve as a basis for new laws in disease prevention.
- European Parliament should push for the full exploitation of resources that the European Commission has at its disposal to make sure that addictions are managed effectively. This means deeper involvement of the Commission's own agencies, that possess important data, in health policy making, through expansion of their mandates. The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) should be allowed to promote an integrated approach to addictions.
- Combine scientific knowledge with political weight to promote the scientific validity of the EU legislation in front of the European public and increase transparency in available options to reduce the negative consequences of substance and behaviour addictions on human health.

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<https://www.preventivehealthcare.eu/science-based-policy-call>