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Brussels, 1 February 2010

Dear friends

We have the pleasure to invite you to a **Public Hearing on Drug Policies in the European Union**, to be held on **Tuesday 23 February 2010**, from 10.00 to 17.00, in the **European Parliament**, Brussels, in **Room A1E3**.

The hearing is **hosted by MEP Michail Tremopoulos** (GREENS/EFA), in collaboration with the **European Coalition for Just and Effective Drug Policies** (ENCOD).

The purpose of the hearing is to formulate a set of recommendations concerning current drug policies and proposals to adopt alternative policy options, that are based upon the conclusions of the **"Report on Global Illicit Drug Markets 1998 – 2007"** (the Reuter-Trautmann report) of March 2009, as well as on the experiences and arguments brought forward by the main stakeholder in this issue: civil society.

In March 2009, the European Commission presented the **"Report on Global Illicit Drug Markets 1998– 2007"** (the Reuter-Trautmann report,

http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/doc_centre/drugs/studies/doc/report_short_10_03_09_en.pdf).

This report contains a valuable database and conclusions that reaffirm previous evaluation reports on drug policies in the EU. These conclusions are that current policies are failing in their main objective, which is to reduce the demand and supply of illicit drugs, and that they are a crucial factor in generating and increasing harm to individual drug consumers, their direct surroundings and society at large.

In 2007, upon the recommendation of the European Parliament, the European Commission installed the Civil Society Forum on Drug Policies in the European Union, in order to increase informal consultation and the input of civil society on drug-related activities, policy proposals, policy implementation and priorities of the EU Drugs Strategy. The Civil Society Forum has been organised three times since then, but participants have criticized the Commission for not allowing the CSF to discuss the impact of current policies and recommend alternatives.

From 8 to 12 March 2010, the next annual meeting of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) will be held in Vienna, Austria. On this meeting, the European Union representatives will defend common viewpoints on the future course of global drug policies. It is of essential importance that both European civil society organisations and Members of the European Parliament discuss the conclusions of the Reuter-Trautmann report and formulate recommendations to the EU delegation at the next CND meeting.

The **programme of the hearing** will be as follows:

10.00 - 12.00: The Reuter-Trautmann report

Introductory speeches by Mr. Michail Tremopoulos (MEP), Mr. Peter Reuter, co-author of the "Report on Global Illicit Drug Markets 1998 – 2007", Mr. Carel Edwards, head of the Drugs Coordination Unit of the European Commission, and Mr. Joep Oomen (ENCOD), followed by debate with the floor.

13.30 - 16.00: Roundtable with Members of European Parliament

All participants are invited to give their feedback on the conclusions of the Reuter - Trautmann report and present their own input to the discussion on European drug policy. To this roundtable, various Members of European Parliament of the Committee on Civil Liberties will be invited to participate.

16.30 - 17.00: Press conference, presentation of the results of the hearing.

Working language of the hearing will be English.

Access to this hearing is public and free. Participants need to be in the EP reception at least 20 minutes earlier in order to get the necessary accreditation badges.

If you wish to attend this hearing, it is necessary to register in order to assist the accreditation process.

Please copy the form that you find on <http://www.encod.org/info/ENCOD-PROPOSES-NEW-SESSION-OF-THE.html> and send it before 15 February 2010 by email to info@encod.org

Looking forward your participation

Michail Tremopoulos
MEP GREENS/EFA