

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING
OF THE VIENNA NGO COMMITTEE ON NARCOTIC DRUGS**

Friday, 4 February 2005

Present

Members: R. Benesch (Sorooptimist International), rbenesch@utanet.at
E. Carlin (Mentor Foundation), ec@mentoruk.org.uk
E. Frei (Salvation Army), NGO@swi.salvationarmy.org
S. Gfundner (Zonta International)
E. Jensema (The Senlis Council), jensema@senliscouncil.net
T. Legl (1st Vice-Chairman), (ICAA, Euro-TC), thomas.legl@gmx.at
I. Luxon (IFUW)
M. Musalek (Anton Proksch Institute), musalek@api.or.at
M. Perron (2nd Vice-Chairman) (Canadian Centre on Substance

Abuse),

mperron@ccsa.ca

F. Pothier (The Senlis Council), Pothier@senliscouncil.net
R. Spalt (CeIS), rosetta.spalt@gmx.at
I. Szabolcs (IFUW), szabolcsing@hotmail.com
E. Tongue (Chairperson), (IFUW) atongue@worldcom.ch
B. Walsberger (European Union of Women), barfrina@utanet.at
N. Zimmer (Rotary International), fax 01/587 15 65-12 or 30

UNODC M. Beg (HIV/AID Unit), monica.beg@unodc.org
S. Berterame, stefano.berterame@unodc.org
M. Dummar Frahi, mirella.frahi@unodc.org
S. Eze, smart.eze@unvienna.org

Guests: F. Gehart (Vice-President of CONGO), friedrich.gehart@gmx.net

Apologies: E. Hauer-Rona (ICW), boefv.ncwaustria@utanet.at
E. Wartburg (ICAA), esther.wartburg@aon.at

Agenda

1. Approval of the agenda
2. Approval of the minutes of the meeting of 26 November 2005
3. Accounts
4. NGO Committee membership
5. NGO Forum 2005
6. NGO Committee Conference 2006 or 2007
7. Any other business

The Chairperson welcomed everyone to the first meeting in 2005 and greeted in particular the four members from outside Austria (Ms. Jensema and Messrs.

Carlin, Perron and Pothier). She also welcomed the new Treasurer, Ingrid Szabolcs, and the Vice-Chairman of CONGO, Friedrich Gehart.

Before turning to business, the Chairperson expressed her warm thanks on behalf of the Committee to Smart Eze, the NGO Liaison Officer from UNODC, for all his past cooperation.

Mr. Eze will retire from the United Nations at the end of February 2005, and to remind him of our Committee, the Chairperson presented him with three CDs.

Item 1: The agenda was approved in its present form.

Item 2: The minutes of the meeting of 26 November 2004 were approved.

Item 3: The Chairperson called on the Treasurer, N. Zimmer, to report on the accounts of the past year, which will be the responsibility of I. Szabolcs in the future. After the Treasurer had shown his final report to the Chairperson, it was agreed that a copy of the report would be attached to the minutes of this meeting. In the meantime, N. Zimmer would meet with I. Szabolcs and B. Walsberger to hand over the files and to prepare an up-to-date list of members of the Committee.

The final report as of 2 December 2004 showed a balance of 5,222 euros, which included 3,000 euros provided by The Senlis Council for the international conference. The Committee approved the accounts. The Chairperson thanked the Treasurer and his Deputy, O. Gambrill, for their work during the past two years.

Item 4: The Chairperson asked the Committee for agreement to authorize the Secretary and new Treasurer to prepare an up-to-date membership list for communication by e-mail to the three Chairpersons and for discussion of the membership fee at the next meeting. The Chairperson felt that no organization should be excluded from membership as the result of non-payment of the fee for one year. The Treasurer pointed out that the United Nations permitted a three-year period before excluding members due to non-payment of the fee, after having sent adequate reminders. The Chairperson thought that this procedure could also be accepted by the Committee. The Treasurer was asked to make a recommendation concerning the level of the fee for 2005.

Item 5: The previous meeting of the Committee had set up an organizing committee for the 2005 NGO Forum consisting of E. Carlin, T. Legl, M. Musalek and E. Tongue. The organizing committee had decided that the theme of the Forum will be: "Now to reduce the harmful consequences of drugs abuse", language taken from the text of a UN document. Six speakers had been invited so far.

E. Carlin reported that one of his two speakers had withdrawn but he was confident of finding a replacement. The other speaker who had confirmed his attendance was a member of the UK National Health Education Group and had been advising on good relations in schools. He had prepared the UK Government's guidance for schools. E. Carlin confirmed that the Mentor Foundation would cover the cost of travel and arrangements for the speakers they are inviting.

M. Musalek intended inviting two speakers: one was a social worker in the out-patients clinic of the Anton Proksch Institute, who also dealt with hospital management, and the other was head of an addiction clinic in Egypt who worked with the societal facts of harm reduction in addition to treatment.

E. Tongue had approached the National Institute for Drugs Prevention in Budapest. They had identified a speaker who was one of the key persons in developing guidelines for treatment and prevention. It might be necessary to fund his travel from Budapest. Her second speaker was David Turner of CeIS who had a good overview of the Italian scene in harm reduction issues. E. Tongue will discuss with him the theme of his talk after returning to Lausanne later in the month.

She said that the possibility had also been discussed of inviting a Swiss speaker who had been the father of the famous needle park in Zurich. He was probably one of the most outstanding and knowledgeable persons in the area of harm reduction who had also looked at the feasibility of implementation while avoiding controversy per se.

As harm reduction was a sensitive topic for UNODC, M. Perron suggested linking the topics of the NGO Forum with discussions in the ongoing Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND). He proposed that the Committee's statement to the CND use the content of the Forum. The Chairperson said that speakers could be requested to make a connection. E. Carlin offered to provide a briefing to the speakers on this aspect. Some copies of the CND agenda were distributed which will also be available on the UNODC website (www.unodc.org).

With regard to raising interest in the Forum, M. Perron offered to prepare a flyer for the Forum which could be sent beforehand to interested NGOs. Concerning a press release, the Chairperson said it was extremely difficult to raise the interest of the media. In the past, the UN Information Service had mentioned the Forum in a press release. M. Perron and E. Carlin both thought that their organizations could provide useful contacts with the press.

Item 6

M. Perron, the lead person for the organization of the Committee's international conference, distributed a paper summarizing the history of the three international conferences already organized by the NGO Committee, together with proposals for the 4th conference. The main aspects to be considered are:

- Main focus, themes and scope of topics for the conference;
- How to optimize contributions to the 2008 response to UNGASS directive for results;
- Identification of potential sponsors and assignment of responsibilities to pursue;
- Preferred timing, potential locations and venues;
- Scope of participation
- Structures and processes (governance and management, planning/organization/programme committees, etc.)
- Range of budget
- Identification of groups/individuals to be consulted;
- Next planning steps

Taking advantage of the attendance of many NGOs at the CND, a meeting will be arranged to look at the main focus of the conference. As the support (rather than approval) of UNODC will be required, it is hoped that they will also attend. After the preliminary meeting, planning can be done electronically. M. Perron offered the resources of his organization to shop for sponsorship. The conference is planned for 2006 or early 2007. The initial group should look at the feasibility of dates, bearing in mind the need for a maximum impact for the UN meeting in 2008. E. Carlin also committed his organization to providing resources for the conference.

The contents of the paper prepared by M. Perron were approved by the Committee. The Chairperson said that a small planning committee for the conference would consist of M. Perron, E. Carlin, M. Jelsma, G. Jeremiah, T. Legl, M. Musalek, E. Tongue, D. Turner and, hopefully, an observer from UNODC. Representatives of other NGOs could be co-opted as required. B. Walsberger was requested to provide secretarial assistance.

F. Gehart, Vice-President of CONGO, referred to his letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs concerning possible Austrian assistance to NGO meetings and offered to request financial support for the international conference. The Chairperson felt that it was too soon at this stage but his offer would be remembered when the Committee has decided on the logistics.

Item 7:

Commission on Narcotic Drugs 2005

S. Berteramo, Officer-in-charge of the UNODC Global Challenges Section spoke about the highlights of the forthcoming CND. There will be two thematic debates: community capacity-building dealing with demand reduction as well as alternative development; and preventing HIV/AIDS and other blood-borne diseases. S. Berteramo said that his Section was responsible for area of demand reduction. It was a topic which had not found consensus among Member States. Data on demand reduction taken from three 2-year questionnaires completed by Member States since 1998 would appear next week on UNODC's website (www.unodc.org). Petr Piot, Director of UNAIDS will moderate the latter debate. There will be an open debate around three main questions and Member States can develop the topics as they wish. Experts will be nominated by regional groups.

Thanks were given to S. Berteramo for his presentation. He said that a representative from his Section will attend the NGO Forum.

The Chairperson, speaking on a statement by the NGO Committee to the CND, asked for volunteers to prepare a draft by 18 February, for circulation by e-mail. A decision concerning the agenda item under which to speak must still be taken. E. Jensema agreed to prepare the draft and requested copies of previous statements for this purpose. M. Perron mentioned that NGOs in Canada had expressed much interest in the Commission and he suggested that the voices of such NGOs could be included in our statement.

CONGO

F. Gehart informed the meeting that a new Vienna NGO Committee on Human Rights was being set up. Thirty NGOs were drafting the statutes and programme of work. A meeting on 28 April will establish the Committee.

NGO committees on drugs and crime

E. Carlin referred to the discussion at the last meeting to set up a link between the two committees to discuss matters of common interest. He suggested that this item could be put on a future agenda of the Committee. M. Perron suggested inviting the crime committee officially to attend the NGO Forum 2005 as well as regularly sending them copies of our minutes.

Forthcoming meetings

9 March 2005 at 10 a.m. NGO Forum "Now to reduce the harmful consequences of drugs abuse"
Conference Room I (second floor)

10 March 2005 at 10 a.m. Extraordinary NGO Committee meeting in the Press Briefing Room

The Chairperson closed the meeting with her renewed good wishes to Smart Eze on his retirement.

Barbara Walsberger

Secretary, Vienna NGO Committee on Narcotic Drugs