

WORK GROUPUP RESULT 3.5

Inclusive mechanisms to reduce the inequality gap of the population involved in minor drug offences

10 May 2023 15:30 (1.30 hours duration)
Virtual Webinar

ACCESS TO THE SESSION:

<https://zoom.us/meeting/register/tJcucOqsqDwrG9Vm3GLKhKX81Mg-vplzhi5D>

Context

COPOLAD is the cooperation programme between the European Union and Latin America and the Caribbean on drug policy that has been working for more than 10 years in the region to promote comprehensive, coherent and sustainable policies to address the public problems generated by the different links in the drug chain, under a sustainable development and public health approach.

As in previous phases, COPOLAD III (2021-2024) aims, through bi-regional, bilateral, trilateral and South-South international cooperation instruments, to create a privileged space for interaction between institutional partners from the European Union, Latin America and the Caribbean to analyse and discuss the main challenges related to the design and implementation of drug policies, with the possibility of launching transformative and innovative processes aimed at improving the effectiveness of interventions and the implementation of drug policies.

The Programme seeks to improve the results and reduce the negative impact on sustainable development in LAC of supply reduction policies based exclusively on drug interdiction, arrest and prosecution of illicit market actors. The objective is to support public policies that offer comprehensive solutions, combining solid intelligence work and impact on the finances and power of criminal organisations with strategies and interventions for citizen security and development, decent employment, social protection, legality and trust in institutions, also prioritising the interests of the most vulnerable groups and women. This implies the development of alternatives to arrest and incarceration linked to social, health and economic inclusion programmes to prevent recidivism in drug-related crime.

Specifically, Outcome 3.5 will be aimed at contributing to the improvement of the proportionality of criminal law on drugs and the development of alternatives to arrest or imprisonment in the case of minor drug offences, through various methodological tools that will be applied by a set of institutional and technical actors that support the Programme.

The main tool that will drive the actions of Outcome 3.5 will be a **Virtual Working Group** that will give impetus to different processes such as fostering the debate on the proportionality of criminal law on drugs, the search for alternatives to arrest/imprisonment and the understanding and importance of addressing the circumstances that determine the participation of the most vulnerable sectors in the drug chain. The group will also support the search for best practices, exchange of experiences and the sharing of some of the national reforms that will be supported by COPOLAD.

This session proposes to address public policies in Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean that contemplate inclusive mechanisms to reduce the inequality gap of the population linked to minor drug offences, based on the understanding that these are people who participate in the weakest link of the drug trafficking chain and who generally belong to highly vulnerable sectors (involved for reasons of economic survival or in some cases under threat). This universe, as well as that of users or consumers, requires a more timely and adequate response from the state apparatus, as an alternative to arrest and imprisonment, that promotes the guarantee of their human rights and provides opportunities for social and economic inclusion to avoid recidivism.

Main outcome and objectives of the session

The main outcome sought by this activity is to consolidate the multi-country working group, with participation of public policy makers, on proportionality of criminal drug legislation and development of alternatives to detention or imprisonment for minor drug offences.

Specific objectives for session 2 include:

- Consolidate the working group for the promotion of the results and activities foreseen in the framework of COPOLAD III Outcome 3.5.
- Generate a debate on the challenges faced by the region to carry out inclusion mechanisms to reduce the inequality gap of the population linked to minor drug offences.
- Share good practices from Europe and Latin America and the Caribbean on the subject; main challenges and opportunities.
- Develop a roadmap for the group's work on proportionality of penal frameworks and alternatives to arrest/incarceration.

Participating institutions and individuals

The working group is aimed at Latin American and Caribbean countries involved in the implementation of the COPOLAD Programme and, more specifically, at institutions and individuals involved in the formulation and implementation of criminal law for minor drug offences, as well as in the creation/application of alternative measures to incarceration.

It also seeks the participation of national institutions linked to social and economic inclusion processes in order to carry out a multidimensional approach to the social determinants that lead sectors of society to participate in the drug chain and the impact it has on their lives.

In this particular session, the focal points of each country are invited to convene those national institutions with which they articulate - or are interested in coordinating - actions of social, labour and economic inclusion for the population involved in minor drug offences.

Methodology

The core focus of the working group will be sustainable development, with special attention to **public health, non-criminalisation, gender and human rights**.

The working group will comprise three moments:

1. Prior to the virtual session

- The COPOLAD team will send an email calling for the second working session scheduled for 10/05/23 15.30 and the Save The Date will be attached.
- Sending the registration link to the activity (SIA).

2. During the virtual session

It will promote debate on the need to work on the development of public policies that promote the socio-economic inclusion of this population, as well as the legal instruments necessary to generate a positive impact on the lives of individuals and society as a whole.

In the first part, a main presentation will be made on the barriers to the inclusion of the population linked to minor drug offences (economic, labour, training, socio-health, community, among others). This will be followed by a brief presentation on the challenges and specific levers of public policies to address this scenario and its impact on the legal instruments for procedural and penal approach.

Subsequently, good practices from Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean will be presented on the incorporation of the social and business fabric for the generation of opportunities in the different stages of the process (pre-trial, judicial and post-prison) in order to initiate dialogue and exchange between the countries participating in the session.

The following guiding questions are proposed for the moment of joint reflection:

- What mechanisms does the country implement as an alternative measure to arrest and imprisonment for minor drug offences?
- Are there specific socio-economic inclusion programmes aimed at people linked to these minor offences? Brief description and institutional actors involved.

- Which governmental and non-governmental institutions can be partners in the implementation of socio-economic and labour inclusion initiatives?
- What challenges does the country face in developing alternative mechanisms?
- From civil society organisations and the private sector that carry out inclusive practices, what suggestions are made to improve and generate new practices aimed at people involved in minor drug offences?

At the end of the session, the Programme management will close the session.

3. After the session

The conclusions of the virtual session will be shared with the participants via CONNECT, as well as a roadmap for the next sessions/activities to be carried out in the framework of the working group.

Work Agenda

Hour	Content
15.30 – 15.35 5 min	Opening Javier Sagredo , Director of COPOLAD III
15.35-16.00 25 min	<p>Main Presentation (15 min)</p> <p>Barriers to the inclusion of the population involved in minor drug offences.</p> <p><i>GISELLE AMADOR MUÑOZ, Ibero-American Network of NGOs working on Drugs and Addictions. (RIOD), Costa Rican Association for the Study and Intervention on Drugs (ACEID).</i></p> <p>Round Table (10 min)</p> <p>Impact on population linked to minor drug offences: challenges and levers</p> <p>Challenges and specific levers for social policies, in particular educational and socio-labour policies in Latin America, to tackle this knot of development focused on the population linked to minor drug offences.</p> <p><i>VIRGINIA TEDESCHI, expert in social policies</i></p>
16:00 – 17.00 60 min	<p>Experiences of articulation of the institutional, social and business fabric for the generation of opportunities at different stages of the process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PORTUGAL. Decriminalization of consumption: dissuasion as a non-criminal approach to the consumer and opportunities for social and labor inclusion. Catia Lima, Comissão para a Dissuasão da Toxicodependência do Porto. (10 min.)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - URUGUAY. Inclusion of women in detention, Andrea Hernández y Teresa Godoy, Proyect Crisálidas, co-financed by the European Union. (10 min.) - MÉXICO. Youth with a Purpose Centres, Daniela Dorantes Salgado, Executive Director of Servicios a la Juventud A.C. (SERAJ) (10 min.) <p><u>Open Debate</u> (30 min.) Modera: Beatriz López Lorca, expert in Criminal Low Framework</p>
17.00 5 min	<p>Closing</p> <p>Laura Guirao Stern, COPOLAD responsible for Component 3.5.</p>