

Press release

European Industrial Hemp Association (www.eiha.org)
Brussels, 1 February 2019

European Industrial Hemp Association greets WHO's recommendations to remove low THC preparations from international control and reschedule cannabis and cannabis-related substances

EIHA was involved in WHO process of evaluation of substances under international control three times already. In November 2017 we delivered written and oral statement on the case of Cannabidiol advocating against its potential inclusion under international control, in June 2018 we pointed out several inconsistencies in nomenclature and bias in scientific evaluation of cannabis-related substances used by WHO review documents authors and finally in, November 2018, EIHA proposed changes of control of low-THC preparations for medicinal use as well as of CBD-rich extractives from industrial hemp for the consumer market. It seems WHO listened!

The 41st meeting of the WHO Expert Committee on drug Dependence (ECDD) convened from 12 – 16 November 2018 at WHO headquarters in Geneva. Outcome was due to be published in Vienna during 31st reconvened session of Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) on December 7. A long-awaited outcome of evaluation process was postponed as WHO representatives announced ECDD experts need more time to digest overwhelming amount of scientific data and evidence. Finally, on 24 January 2019 WHO's Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus sent a Note Verbale to Secretary-General of the United Nations, His excellency Mr António Guterres proposing unprecedented changes to international control of cannabis and cannabis-related substances.

These breakthrough recommendations reflect changing perspectives on licit use of hemp and cannabis-derived products and preparations already applied in many countries around the globe. However a final decision has to take place on UN level, more specifically on upcoming 62nd CND Session taking place in March 2019. EIHA honestly believe voting member states will adopt – without any political bias - WHO's science-backed advise to the benefit of the whole mankind.

WHO experts on drug dependence have listened to proposal of the hemp industry represented by EIHA

EIHA has been representing interests of business operators active in CBD sector since 2016. We believe that the “whole plant use” not only brings extra income to farmers, but also allows creation of innovative consumer products for prevention of civilization diseases and maintaining of homeostasis in humans and pets.

In a written contribution to 41st ECDD submitted to WHO Secretariat on November 8, 2018, EIHA proposed that “preparations for medicinal products, foods and food supplements, pet-foods and cosmetic, provided they do not exceed a maximum content of 0.2 weight-% of total Δ^9 THC should be exempted from any scheduling and thus from international and national control over psychotropic substances”.

On this agenda item WHO proposes the following: “To give effect to the recommendation of the 40th meeting of the ECDD that preparations considered to be pure cannabidiol (CBD) should not be scheduled within the International Drug Control Conventions by adding a footnote to the entry for cannabis and cannabis resin in Schedule I of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961) to read ‘Preparations containing predominantly cannabidiol and not more than 0,2 percent of delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol are not under international control’”.

EIHA welcomes this clear message and cheers the experts' bold decision. If adopted by CND, this will fully legitimize industrial hemp-derived CBD sector worldwide.

EIHA welcomes WHO's proposal to exclude extracts and tinctures of cannabis from Schedule I of the Single Convention

Major regulatory confusion has existed with respect to extract and tinctures of cannabis that was compromising development of the CBD sector worldwide. WHO even evaluated hempseed oil and hemp essential oil within the same group of materials as hashish oil!

Another important dilemma is resolved by this proposal: WHO got trapped into their own nets declaring cannabidiol extracted/isolated from cannabis plants as “extract of cannabis”. Under this false interpretation only synthetically manufactured CBD would be released from falling under international control. Also, such a statement has put derivatives of cannabis into more difficult position than some products obtained from opium that are not under international control.

Changes on the medicinal usage of cannabis and cannabis-related substances

While EIHA's main mission is to represent interests of the industrial hemp community, we also welcome breakthrough recommendations of WHO on cannabis, cannabis related substances and pharmaceutical preparations.

These decisions finally remove from cannabis a stigma of one of the most dangerous substances without any medicinal value. Proposal to delete cannabis and cannabis resin from Schedule IV of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961) means that a therapeutic potential cannabis has been reclaimed and scientific research will become more widespread.

Inclusion of preparations containing cannabis and natural and synthetic cannabinoids to Schedule III is a clear token of their low abuse potential with much eased access of patients to innovative medicinal products.

EIHA hereby expresses big Thank You to authors and contributing authors of “EIHA statement on recommendations of the 40th ECDD on Cannabidiol and contribution to the 41st ECDD Critical reviews of Cannabis-related substances” (<https://bit.ly/2PkzCys>), namely to Dr. Bernhard Beitzke and Boris Bañas (both members of the Advisory Committee to EIHA.org) to Mr Daniel Kruse (Board member of EIHA.org), Mr Pavel Pachta (member of Scientific Board to ICCI.science) and Mr Kenzi Riboulet Zemouli (founder of FAAAT.net).

Responsible under press legislation (V.i.s.d.P.):

Lorenza Romanese, Managing Director
European Industrial Hemp Association (EIHA)
Internet: www.eiha.org
Email: info@eih.org
Phone: +32483320380

Note to Editors:

The European Industrial Hemp Association (EIHA) is a consortium of the hemp-processing industry. It represents the common interest of industrial hemp farmers and producers, both nationally and on a European level. EIHA is the only European consortium in the industrial hemp sector. This sector includes, amongst other things, the use of hemp fibres, shavings, seeds and cannabinoids. Originally founded as an association for the European hemp industry, a quarter of the 130 EIHA members are based in countries outside the EU.



Tel. direct: +41 22 791
Fax direct: +41 22 791
E-mail:

In reply please
refer to: ECDD41

Your reference:

His Excellency
Mr António Guterres
Secretary-General of the United Nations
New York, NY 10017
USA

24 January 2019

Dear Mr Secretary-General,

The forty-first meeting of the WHO Expert Committee on Drug Dependence (ECDD) convened from 12 to 16 November 2018 at WHO headquarters in Geneva. Following recommendations made by the fortieth ECDD in June 2018 regarding the pre-review of cannabis and cannabis-related substances, the forty-first ECDD carried out critical reviews of these substances to determine the most relevant level of international control for cannabis and cannabis-related substances and whether the World Health Organization (WHO) should recommend changes in their level of control.

In addition, the forty-first WHO ECDD reviewed ten New Psychoactive Substances (NPS), five of which are synthetic opioids; and two pain-relieving medicines, pregabalin and tramadol. The recommendations regarding these substances are communicated to you through a separate letter under the same date as this letter.

The review of cannabis and cannabis-related substances was carried out in relation to Resolution 52/5 of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, in which the Commission stated that it looked forward to an updated report on cannabis by the Expert Committee.

With reference to Article 3, paragraphs 1, 3, 5, and 6 of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961), as amended by the 1972 Protocol, and Article 2, paragraphs 1, 4, and 6 of the Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971), I am pleased to submit recommendations of the forty-first meeting of the ECDD regarding the review of cannabis and cannabis-related substances as follows:

ENCL: (1)

Cannabis and cannabis-related substances

- **Cannabis and cannabis resin**
 - To be deleted from Schedule IV of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961)
- **Dronabinol (*delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol*)**
 - To be added to Schedule I of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961)
 - To be deleted from Schedule II of the Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971), subject to the CND's adoption of the recommendation to add dronabinol and its stereoisomers (*delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol*) to Schedule I of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961)
- **Tetrahydrocannabinol (Isomers of *delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol*)**
 - To be added to Schedule I of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961) subject to the CND's adoption of the recommendation to add dronabinol and its stereoisomers (*delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol*) to Schedule I of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961)
 - To be deleted from Schedule I of the Convention on Psychotropic Substances (1971), subject to the CND's adoption of the recommendation to add tetrahydrocannabinol to Schedule I of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961)
- **Extracts and tinctures**
 - To be deleted from Schedule I of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961)
- **Cannabidiol preparations**
 - To give effect to the recommendation of the fortieth meeting of the ECDD that preparations considered to be pure cannabidiol (CBD) should not be scheduled within the International Drug Control Conventions by adding a footnote to the entry for cannabis and cannabis resin in Schedule I of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961) to read "*Preparations containing predominantly cannabidiol and not more than 0,2 percent of delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol are not under international control*"
- **Preparations produced either by chemical synthesis or as preparation of cannabis, that are compounded as pharmaceutical preparations with one or more other ingredients and in such a way that delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (dronabinol) cannot be recovered by readily available means or in a yield which would constitute a risk to public health**
 - To be added to Schedule III of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs (1961)

The assessments and findings on which they are based are set out in detail in the forty-first report of the WHO Expert Committee on Drug Dependence. An extract of the report is attached in Annex 1 of this letter.

I am very pleased with the ongoing collaboration between WHO, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), and in particular, how this collaboration has benefited the work of the WHO Expert Committee on Drug Dependence (including through the participation of UNODC and INCB in the forty-first meeting of the ECDD), and more generally, the implementation of the operational recommendations of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) 2016.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus
Director-General