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I assent.

(L.S.)

**GEORGE VELLA**  
**President**

18th December, 2021

**ACT No. LXVI of 2021**

*AN ACT to establish the Authority on the Responsible Use of Cannabis and to amend various laws relating to certain cannabis activities.*

BE IT ENACTED by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the House of Representatives, in this present Parliament assembled, and by the authority of the same, as follows:-

ARRANGEMENT OF ACT

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PART I  
Preliminary

1. (1) The short title of this Act is the Authority on the Responsible Use of Cannabis Act, 2021. Short title and commencement.

(2) This Act shall come into force on such date as the Minister responsible may by notice in the Gazette establish, and different dates may be so established for different purposes and different provisions of this Act.

PART II  
Authority on the Responsible Use of Cannabis

The provisions of this Part provide for the establishment of the Authority on the Responsible Use of Cannabis.

2. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires:

"Authority" means the Authority on the Responsible Use of Cannabis established by this Act; Interpretation.

"Minister" means the Minister responsible.

3. (1) There shall be established a body to be known as the Authority on the Responsible Use of Cannabis. Establishment of the Authority on the Responsible Use of Cannabis.

(2) Subject to the provisions of this Act and of any other law, it shall be the function of the Authority to regulate the use of cannabis for purposes other than medical or scientific purposes and to carry out work, including as defined in sub-article (3), to implement harm reduction from the use of cannabis. The Authority shall also assist other law enforcement and regulatory authorities in the fight against crime in the field of dangerous drugs.

(3) Without prejudice to the generality of its functions as detailed in sub-article (2) the Authority shall have the following duties and functions and may:

(a) submit proposals and recommendations to the Government concerning a national policy on the responsible use of cannabis that will take due account of the specific situation and requirements of Malta from time to time;

(b) participate in the national planning process relating to social policy and dangerous drugs policy;

(c) monitor the use of cannabis in Malta, other than use for medical or scientific purposes, either directly or through the

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commissioning of surveys and other professional studies;

(d) act as regulator and to implement any function which may be assigned to it in accordance with any law with regard to any private organisation the activities of which involve the cultivation and possession of cannabis for distribution amongst its members;

(e) organise or promote educational campaigns on the responsible use of cannabis based on scientific facts and on the aim of harm reduction also giving clear and impartial information on the risks and other elements of cannabis use with reference to age and with appropriate content, whilst promoting open dialogue on the subject;

(f) organise or promote the training of officials working with cannabis users;

(g) give advice on cannabis related matters and to perform any other task related to the analysis of cannabis use as the Minister may from time to time request;

(h) undertake periodic reviews of educational programmes and structures concerned with cannabis activities and of policies relating to cannabis, to recommend improvements in such programmes and policies and to identify sources for the training of persons in relevant fields of activity so as to ensure the continued availability of suitably qualified personnel;

(i) administer any budgetary allocation as may be assigned to it for purposes related to the responsible use of cannabis or such other purposes as may be linked to such budgetary allocation;

(j) promote effective communication and coordination with government entities and non-governmental organisations working with cannabis users or involved in the formulation of policies related to cannabis;

(k) identify overseas developments related to cannabis use that are of direct interest and relevance to Malta;

(l) set up databases and obtain access to international databases in the field of cannabis use;

(m) act as a contact point with respect to various regional, interregional and international organisations and to organise

participation in seminars, conferences and in action groups and working groups of relevance to Malta's interests in the field of activity of the Authority;

(n) set up networks of professional persons and organisations to assist in the formulation of policies, and the implementation of programmes, and to monitor areas of importance related to responsible cannabis use of interest to Malta;

(o) carry out any other function not covered by the preceding paragraphs of this sub-article related to the responsible use of cannabis as may be delegated to it by the Minister;

(p) carry out any other function ancillary or conducive to the functions, duties, and aims of the Authority.

(4) The Authority shall be a body having a distinct legal personality from that of the Government and shall be capable, subject to the provisions of this Act, to enter into contracts, to hold and dispose of property of any kind for the purpose of its functions, to sue and be sued and to enter into all such other transactions as are incidental or conducive for the proper performance of its functions.

(5) The Authority shall consist of a Board and of a Directorate.

(6) The legal and judicial representation of the Authority shall vest in the Chairperson:

Provided that the Board of the Authority may appoint the Chief Executive Officer or any one or more of the members of the Directorate staff to appear in the name and on behalf of the Authority in any judicial proceedings and in any act, deed, contract or instrument or other document whatsoever.

(7) Any document purporting to be an instrument made or issued by the Authority and signed by the Chairperson on behalf of the Authority shall be received in evidence, and shall unless the contrary is proved, be deemed to be an instrument made or issued by the Authority.

4. (1) The Board of the Authority shall consist of a Chairperson and of from four (4) to eight (8) other members appointed by the Minister from amongst persons who in the opinion of the Minister have experience and knowledge of the field of activity of the Authority, or experience in the field of non-governmental organisations, or other regulatory experience, or who are qualified in sciences or have experience in research or who have experience as

Board of the  
Authority.

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educators or in the exercise of the legal profession of advocate, or persons who in the opinion of the Minister represent the wide perspective of the various opinions of the stakeholders in the sector.

(2) One of the members of the Board of the Authority shall be appointed by the Minister as Deputy Chairperson. The Deputy Chairperson shall have all the powers and perform all duties of the Chairperson during the absence of the Chairperson or during any period where the Chairperson cannot perform his function for any other cause, or during any vacancy in the office of the Chairperson.

(3) The Board may act notwithstanding any vacancy in its composition or during the absence of any of its members as long as the Chairperson or the Deputy Chairperson and any two (2) other members are present.

(4) A person shall not be qualified to be appointed, or to continue to hold office, as a member of the Board if he is:

- (a) interdicted or incapacitated;
- (b) has been declared bankrupt; or
- (c) has been found guilty of an offence in Malta or abroad other than:
  - (i) an offence of an involuntary nature; or
  - (ii) an offence liable to the punishment established for contraventions.

(5) For the purpose of paragraph (c) of sub-article (4) a person who has been found guilty of an offence as specified in that paragraph shall still be disqualified to hold office notwithstanding that any punishment awarded has been suspended or such person has been conditionally released or put under probation without the infliction of any penalty or such person has been sentenced according to the Probation Act without the infliction of any penalty.

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(6) The Chairperson and the Deputy Chairperson and the other members of the Board shall be appointed for a term of three (3) years and may be reappointed.

(7) The members of the Board shall receive such remuneration as the Minister may determine upon their appointment.

(8) The Minister shall appoint a person being an advocate or a legal procurator or a public officer to act as Secretary to the Board.

5. (1) The Board shall be responsible to establish the policy to be adopted by the Authority in the exercise of its functions under this Act. In establishing such policy the Board shall give due consideration to Government policy, to the requirements of public order and public health and to the rights and freedoms of the individual on a democratic society.

Functions of the Board.

(2) The Board shall be responsible to ensure that the Authority carries out its functions in accordance with this Act and in accordance with any policy established by it.

(3) The Board may from time to time, if it thinks fit, make general rules for the guidance of the Directorate in the exercise of its functions under this Act, and may at any time revoke or vary such rules.

(4) The Board shall also verify and approve the accounts of the Authority and the draft estimates and the financial plans of the Authority, prepared by the Chief Executive Officer before their final submission to the Minister in accordance with this Act.

(5) The Board shall be kept informed by the Chief Executive Officer on the general running of the Authority.

(6) Notwithstanding the other provisions of this Act the Minister may decide that for any determined period the overall management, the executive action, the administration and organisation of the Authority and the administrative control of its officials and employees shall be vested in the Chairperson who in such a case shall during such period also perform all the functions and responsibilities granted by this Act to the Chief Executive Officer.

(7) The decision of the Minister referred to in sub-article (6) shall be given in writing in the letter of appointment of the Chairperson or at a later stage in the case that the office of Chief Executive Officer is vacant. When an appointment is made as provided in sub-article (6) the Chairperson shall be styled as the Executive Chairperson and the conditions of employment of the person occupying such office shall be determined by the Minister.

6. (1) The Directorate of the Authority shall consist of the Chief Executive Officer, who shall be the director of the Authority, a Deputy Director and such other officers and employees of the Authority as may be engaged by the Authority from time to time.

The Directorate.

(2) The Chief Executive Officer shall be in charge of the overall management and executive action of the Authority and shall keep the Board informed on the general running of the Authority and of the

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result of the operations of the Authority.

(3) The Chief Executive Officer shall be appointed by the Minister, after consultation with the Board, for such period and on such terms as the Minister may, in consultation with the Board, determine.

(4) The Deputy Director and the other officers and employees of the Directorate shall be selected by the Chief Executive Officer and engaged by the Authority in accordance with such procedures and on such terms as the Board may from time to time determine.

(5) The Authority may also act through such contractors as it may from time to time engage:

Provided that such contractors shall at all times act in accordance with such instructions as may be given to them by the Chief Executive Officer.

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(6) The Chief Executive Officer and the Directorate staff shall for all purposes of the Criminal Code be considered as public officers, and shall be afforded all protection and may incur all liability as such.

(7) The Chief Executive Officer and the Directorate staff shall, subject to any contrary provision in this Act or in any other law, abide by any code of ethics applicable to public officers:

Provided that nothing in this sub-article may be deemed to preclude the Board to make further rules regulating the conduct of the Chief Executive Officer and of the Directorate staff to supplement any such Code of Ethics.

Meetings of the Board.

7. (1) The Board shall meet at least ten (10) times a year so however that the Board shall ensure that the period of time between one meeting and another shall not exceed six (6) weeks. Other meetings of the Board shall be convened as may be necessary.

(2) The Secretary to the Board shall take minutes of decisions at its meetings. The minutes shall be signed by the Secretary and the Chairperson.

(3) The meeting of the Board shall be chaired by the Chairperson or in his absence the Deputy Chairperson.

(4) Decisions of the Board shall be adopted by a simple majority of votes of the members present and voting, and in the event of an equality of votes the Chairperson, or where the meeting is presided by the Deputy Chairperson, the Deputy Chairperson shall have and

exercise a second or casting vote. The quorum at Board meetings shall consist of three (3) members.

(5) Without prejudice to the provisions of sub-articles (6) and (7) of article 5 the Chief Executive Officer shall be entitled to attend the meetings of the Board and to take part in the discussions. The Board may invite any other member of the Directorate staff to attend meeting of the Board and to participate in the discussions. The Chief Executive Officer and any member of the Directorate staff taking part in any discussion of the Board of the Authority shall not have a vote in the meetings in which they participate:

Provided that the Chairperson may, if he considers it proper so to do, at any time exclude the Chief Executive Officer or any member of the Directorate staff invited to attend at a meeting of the Board from any meeting or part thereof.

(6) Any participation in a meeting of the Board of a person not entitled to be present shall not invalidate the proceedings of the meeting nor shall such proceedings be invalidated if it is subsequently discovered that a person acted in good faith as a member and a defect in his appointment or qualification is afterwards discovered.

(7) A week's notice shall be given to the members of the Board of any meeting thereof:

Provided that in case where an urgent situation arises and decisions are to be taken forthwith, decisions taken by at least two (2) members of the Board, one of whom being the Chairperson or the Deputy Chairperson, shall be valid as if taken by a meeting of the Board regularly convened with proper notice.

(8) Subject to the other provisions of this Act, the Board shall regulate its own proceedings.

**8.** Without prejudice to the other provisions of this Act, the appointment of officers and other employees of the Authority shall be made by the Authority. The terms and conditions of employment shall be established by the Authority with the concurrence of the Minister.

Staff appointments.

**9.** The Authority shall appoint and employ, at such remuneration and upon such time terms and conditions as it may determine, such officers and employees of the Authority as may from time to time be necessary for the due and efficient execution of the functions of the Authority.

Appointment and functions of officers and employees of the Authority.



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Detailing of public officers for duty with the Authority.

**10.** (1) The Prime Minister may, at the request of the Authority, from time to time direct that any public officer shall be detailed for duty with the Authority in such capacity and with effect from such date as may be specified in the Prime Minister's direction.

(2) The period during which a direction as aforesaid shall apply to any officer specified therein, shall, unless the officer retires from the public service, or otherwise ceases to hold office at an earlier date, or unless a different date is specified in such direction, cease to have effect after one year from the effective date of such direction unless the direction is revoked earlier by the Prime Minister.

Status of public officers detailed for duty with the Authority.

**11.** (1) Where an officer is detailed for duty with the Authority under the provisions of article 10, such officer shall, during the time in which such direction has effect in relation to him, be under the administrative authority and control of the Authority but he shall for other intents and purposes remain and be considered and treated as a public officer.

(2) Without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, an officer detailed for duty as aforesaid:

(a) shall not during the time in respect of which he is so detailed:

(i) be precluded from applying for a transfer to a department of the Government in accordance with the terms and conditions of service attached to the appointment under the Government held by him at a date on which he is so detailed for duty; or

(ii) be so employed that his remuneration and conditions of service are less favourable than those which are attached to the appointment under the Government held by him at the date aforesaid or which would have become attached to such appointment, during the said period, had such officer not been detailed for duty with the Authority; and

(b) shall be entitled to have his service with the Authority considered as service with the Government for the purposes of any pension, gratuity, or benefit under the Pensions Ordinance and the Widows and Orphans' Pensions Act and of any other right or privilege to which he would be entitled, and liable to any liability to which he would be liable, but for the fact of his being detailed for duty with the Authority.

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(3) Where an application is made as provided in sub-article

(2)(a)(i) the same consideration shall be given thereto as if the applicant had not been detailed for service with the Authority.

(4) The Authority shall pay to the Government such contributions as may from time to time be determined by the Minister responsible for finance in respect of the cost of pensions and gratuities earned by an officer detailed for duty with the Authority as aforesaid during the period in which he is so detailed.

**12.** (1) The Authority may, with the approval of the Prime Minister, offer to any officer detailed for duty with the Authority under the provisions of article 10 permanent employment with the Authority at a remuneration and on terms and conditions not less favourable than those enjoyed by such officer at the date of such offer.

Offer of permanent employment with the Authority to public officers detailed for duty with the Authority.

(2) The terms and conditions comprised in any offer made as aforesaid shall not be deemed to be less favourable merely because they are not in all respects identical with or superior to those enjoyed by the officer concerned at the date of such offer, if such terms and conditions, taken as a whole, in the opinion of the Prime Minister offer substantially equivalent or greater benefits.

(3) Every officer who accepts permanent employment with the Authority offered to him under the provisions of sub-article (1) shall for all purposes other than those of the Pensions Ordinance and of the Widows' and Orphans' Pensions Act, and saving the provisions of sub-article (6), be deemed to have ceased to be in service with the Government and to have entered into service with the Authority on the date of his acceptance, and for the purposes of the said Ordinance and of the said Act, so far as applicable to him, service with the Authority shall be deemed to be service with the Government within the meanings thereof respectively.

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(4) Every such officer as aforesaid who, immediately before accepting permanent employment with the Authority, was entitled to benefit under the Widows' and Orphans' Pensions Act, shall continue to be so entitled to benefit thereunder to all intents as if his service with the Authority were service with the Government.

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(5) The Authority shall pay to the Government such contributions as may from time to time be determined by the Minister responsible for finance in respect of the cost of pensions and gratuities earned by an officer who has accepted performance of employment with the Authority as aforesaid during the period commencing on the date of such officer's acceptance.

(6) (a) For the purposes of this article posts and salary grades with the Authority shall be classified in the most nearly corresponding

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grades and incremental levels in the service under the Government of Malta by reference to job description, skills, responsibilities and other analogous factors.

(b) The classification referred to in paragraph (a) shall be carried out by a board composed of a chairman appointed by the Ministry responsible for finance and two (2) other members, one appointed by the Ministry responsible centrally for personnel policies in the public service and one appointed by the Authority. The classification shall be subject to the final approval of the Minister responsible for finance.

(c) Such classification shall take place within three (3) months of any adjustment of salaries of employees in Government service and, or, of employees of the Authority.

(d) No post shall be classified in a grade higher than that of a Grade 3 in the service of the Government or such other grade that the Minister responsible for finance may from time to time by notice in the Gazette determine.

(e) Without prejudice to article 113 of the Constitution, no person may, following a classification as aforesaid, be entitled to rights under the said Pensions Ordinance less favourable than those to which he would have been entitled prior to such classification.

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Right of the  
Authority to  
acquire  
information.

**13.** (1) In the exercise of his functions under this Act, the Chief Executive Officer and any member of the Directorate staff, authorised by him, shall have power to seek and obtain from any public authority any information with regard to any person or with regard to any matter, which is relevant to the functions of the Authority and the public authority in possession of such information shall, saving the provisions of any other law, be obliged to give the Chief Executive Officer or any such member all information so requested:

Provided that where any public authority has acquired information from any person or authority in any State other than Malta through the operation of any treaty or arrangement with such other State to which Malta is a party, and such treaty or arrangement provides that any information passed through the operation of such treaty or arrangement may not be divulged to any other person except with the consent of the person passing the information requested, the person from whom the information is requested may withhold the information if such consent is not given.

(2) The information referred to in sub-article (1) shall be provided within such time not more than thirty (30) days from the date of receipt of the request:

Provided that after good cause being shown to the Chief Executive Officer, such period may be extended by the Chief Executive Officer for such other period or periods as he may deem reasonable.

**14.** The financial year of the Authority shall begin on the first day of January and end on the thirty first day of December: Financial year.

Provided that the first financial year of the Authority shall commence on the date of coming into force of this Act and shall end on the 31st day of December of the following year.

**15.** (1) The Chief Executive Officer shall, not later than sixteen (16) weeks before the end of each financial year, submit to the Board of the Authority estimates of the income and expenditure of the Authority for the following financial year. Estimates and expenditure.

(2) In the preparation of such estimates the Authority shall endeavour to ensure that the sums to be allocated to the Authority are at least sufficient to meet all sums properly chargeable to its income and expenditure accounts including, but without prejudice to the generality of that expression, depreciation.

(3) The estimates shall be made out in such form, and shall contain such information, and such comparisons with previous years, as the Board may direct.

(4) Not later than three (3) weeks from the receipt of such estimates from the Chief Executive Officer, the Board shall consider such estimates and shall transmit the same with or without amendments to the Minister for his approval.

(5) Before the end of the financial year, the Minister shall approve and adopt such estimates with or without amendments.

(6) If in respect of any financial year it is found that the amount so approved is not sufficient or a need has arisen for expenditure for a purpose not provided for in the estimates, the Chief Executive Officer shall cause supplementary estimates to be prepared and to be sent forthwith to the Board for transmission to the Minister for his approval, and in any such case the provisions of this article shall as far as practicable apply to the supplementary estimates.

**16.** The Minister may, acting in accordance with an appropriation Act, make advances and provide such funds to the Authority for carrying out its functions under this Act, in accordance with such estimates approved in accordance with article 15. Advances by the Government.

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Accounts and  
audit.

**17.** The Authority shall keep proper books of accounts in such manner as the Minister, following consultation with the Minister responsible for finance, may from time to time direct. Such accounts shall be audited by auditors appointed by the Board of the Authority with the concurrence of the Minister from among persons qualified to be appointed as auditors of a company in accordance with such law which will be from time to time in force in Malta. Such accounts shall moreover be subject to audit by the Auditor General.

Annual report.

**18.** (1) The Board shall as soon as may be but not later than three (3) months after the close of each financial year, transmit to the Minister an annual report consisting of:

(a) a copy of the annual accounts certified by the auditors; and

(b) a report on the operations of the Authority during the previous financial year.

(2) The annual report shall be laid on the Table of the House by the Minister not later than six (6) weeks after its receipt, or where the House is during that period not in session, not later than the second week after the House reconvenes.

Liability for  
damages.

**19.** The Authority, the Board, the Chief Executive Officer and members of the Directorate staff shall not be liable for damages for anything done or omitted to be done in the discharge or purported discharge of any function under this Act unless the act or omission is shown to have been done or omitted to be done in bad faith or through gross negligence.

Power to make  
regulations.

**20.** The Minister may make regulations for the better implementation of the provisions of this Act and, without prejudice to the generality of the aforesaid, those regulations may provide for the better implementation of any act falling within the powers of the Authority, for the elimination of difficulties or the setting of time frames and conditions, in respect of the implementation of such act.

### PART III

#### Amendments to the Conduct Certificates Ordinance

Amendments of  
the Conduct  
Certificates  
Ordinance.  
Cap. 77.

**21.** This Part amends the Conduct Certificates Ordinance and it shall be read and construed as one with the Conduct Certificates Ordinance, hereinafter in this Part referred to as "the principal Ordinance".

Addition of new  
article in the  
principal  
Ordinance.

**22.** Immediately after article 8 of the principal Ordinance there

shall be added the following new article:

"De-registration of convictions. 8A. Where a person has been convicted of an offence which has been subsequently decriminalised or depenalised, that person may send a written request to the Government Department or Entity responsible for the issue of conduct certificates, to de-register the said conviction from his conduct certificate, and the said Government Department or Entity shall, upon ensuring that such offence has been so decriminalised or depenalised, accept that person's request and affect the said de-registration."

PART IV

Amendments to the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance

23. This Part amends the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance and it shall be read and construed as one with the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance, hereinafter in this Part referred to as "the principal Ordinance".

Amendments of the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance. Cap. 101.

24. Article 2 of the principal Ordinance shall be amended as follows:

Amendment of article 2 of the principal Ordinance.

(a) immediately before the definition "coca leaves" there shall be added the following new definition:

" "Cannabis" means the inflorescence and leaves of any plant of the genus Cannabis and includes any resin obtained from the said plant and any preparations derived from the said plant, but does not include its seeds, or cannabinoid products containing not more than zero point two (0.2) percent of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC);"; and

(b) the definition "Indian hemp" shall be deleted.

25. In the principal Ordinance, the words "Indian hemp", wherever they occur, shall be substituted by the word "cannabis" and, without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing, in the following places and as follows:

General amendment in the principal Ordinance.

(a) in the title to Part III;

(b) in the definition "dangerous drug" in article 12, the words "obtained from Indian hemp", wherever they occur, shall be substituted by the words "obtained from cannabis"; and

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(c) in Part I of the First Schedule the words "CANNABIS (Indian hemp)" shall be substituted by the word "CANNABIS".

PART V

Amendments to the Commissioners for Justice Act

Amendments of the Commissioners for Justice Act. Cap. 291.

**26.** This Part amends the Commissioners for Justice Act and it shall be read and construed as one with the Commissioners for Justice Act, hereinafter in this Part referred to as "the principal Act".

Amendment of the Schedule to the principal Act.

**27.** The Schedule to the principal Act shall be amended as follows:

(a) in the third column of the item relating to the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance (Cap. 101), the words "or three point five grams of the drug cannabis" shall be substituted by the words "or more than seven grams but not more than twenty-eight grams of the drug cannabis"; and

(b) immediately after the words "Environmental Management Construction Site Regulations" there shall be added the following:

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| "Drug Dependence (Treatment not Imprisonment) Act | Cap. 537 | Articles 4, 4A, 7A." |
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PART VI

Amendments to the Drug Dependence (Treatment not Imprisonment) Act

Amendments of the Drug Dependence (Treatment not Imprisonment) Act. Cap. 537.

**28.** This Part amends the Drug Dependence (Treatment not Imprisonment) Act and it shall be read and construed as one with the Drug Dependence (Treatment not Imprisonment) Act, hereinafter in this Part referred to as "the principal Act".

Amendment of article 4 of the principal Act.

**29.** Article 4 of the principal Act shall be amended as follows:

(a) in sub-article (1) thereof, the words "a charge of possession of a prohibited drug in a quantity of less than two grams of any drug other than cannabis or three point five grams of the drug cannabis or two 'ecstasy' or two other prohibited pills" shall be substituted by the words "a charge of possession of a prohibited drug other than the drug cannabis in a quantity of less than two grams or of two pills of the drug 'ecstasy' or of two other prohibited pills";

(b) sub-article (2) thereof shall be deleted and sub-articles (3), (4) and (5) shall be renumbered as sub-articles (2), (3) and (4) respectively;

(c) in sub-article (2) as re-numbered, the words "in terms of sub-articles (1) or (2)" shall be substituted by the words "in terms of sub-article (1)";

(d) in sub-article (3) as re-numbered, the words "in terms of sub-articles (1) or (2)" shall be substituted by the words "in terms of sub-article (1)"; and

(e) in sub-article (4) as re-numbered, the words "in terms of sub-articles (1) or (2)" shall be substituted by the words "in terms of sub-article (1)".

**30.** Immediately after article 4 of the principal Act there shall be added the following new article:

Addition of new article in the principal Act.

"Possession for personal use and consumption of the drug cannabis.

4A. (1) Notwithstanding the provisions of any other law, the possession by a person over the age of eighteen (18) years of the drug cannabis in an amount not exceeding seven grams, in circumstances in which it may be reasonably deemed that such possession is for the personal use of such person, shall not constitute an offence, and that person shall not be subject to being taken into custody under arrest saving when there is a reasonable suspicion of trafficking or dealing in the drug cannabis:

Provided that any person under the age of eighteen (18) years found in such possession of the drug cannabis shall be subject to being summoned to appear before the Commissioner for Justice who, after taking cognizance of the case may propose that such person should submit himself to a care plan or to treatment. In making such a proposal the Commissioner for Justice may consult the Drug Offenders Rehabilitation Board and such other person or public authority as the Commissioner for Justice deems appropriate.



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Cap. 291. (2) Where a charge for breach of the drug laws consists of a charge of possession of the drug cannabis in a quantity of more than seven grams but not more than twenty-eight grams, irrespective of purity, in circumstances which do not give rise to reasonable grounds to believe that the prohibited drug is not for personal use by the person in possession thereof, that person shall be tried in accordance with the Commissioners for Justice Act and, upon conviction by the Commissioner for Justice assigned by the Minister to hear drug offence cases, shall be liable to a penalty of between fifty euro (€50) and one hundred euro (€100):

Provided that the person shall not be subject to being taken into custody under arrest saving when there is a reasonable suspicion of trafficking or dealing in the drug cannabis.

Cap. 291. (3) A person who consumes the drug cannabis, other than as may be authorised for medical reasons, in a public place, which includes any place to which the public has or is permitted to access whether on payment or otherwise, shall be liable to a penalty of two hundred and thirty-five euro (€235), to be imposed in accordance with the provisions of the Commissioners for Justice Act.

Cap. 291. (4) A person who consumes the drug cannabis in any place, whether public or private, in the presence of any person under the age of eighteen (18) years, being aware that such person is under the age of eighteen (18) years, shall be liable to a penalty of not less than three hundred euro (€300) and not more than five hundred euro (€500), to be imposed in accordance with the provisions of the Commissioners for Justice Act.

Cap. 291. (5) In all circumstances detailed under the preceding sub-articles of this article, the drug cannabis shall be seized by the Executive Police only if found in excess of seven grams or if there is a reasonable suspicion of trafficking or dealing in the drug cannabis. Following its exhibition in the course of proceedings, the seized drug shall be sent to the Registrar of the Criminal Court for destruction. Due record shall be kept of such fact.

(6) A person over the age of eighteen (18) years charged with a breach of the provisions of this article other than with a breach of sub-article (4), may, unless the charge is contested, pay any penalty due in its minimum through electronic means and without proceedings before the Commissioner, at any place and in such manner as may be established by the Minister."

**31.** Immediately after article 6 of the principal Act there shall be added the following new articles:

Addition of new articles to the principal Act.

"Cultivation of the plant cannabis for personal use.

7. (1) Notwithstanding the other provisions of this Act or of any other law, the cultivation of up to four plants of the drug cannabis, and the possession of not more than fifty grams of dried cannabis, for personal use, by a person over the age of eighteen (18) years, within the residential address appearing on an official document showing his place of residence, such as a national identity card or other identity document, shall not constitute an offence, and that person shall not be subject to being taken into custody under arrest only by reason of such cultivation and possession at the said address:

Provided that:

(a) such cultivation shall not occur in a space which is visible to the public;

(b) the Executive Police shall in all cases seize the dried cannabis found on the premises only if it is in excess of fifty grams. Where after the seizure of the dried cannabis it results that there are no grounds to institute proceedings due to the fact that the amount of cannabis seized was within the limits permissible by law the Police shall send the seized cannabis to the Authority on the Responsible Use of Cannabis or other public authority as the Minister may by order in the gazette appoint for the purpose so that it shall be returned to its owner subject to such conditions as such authority or authority may establish. Due record shall be kept of such facts:

Provided further that no action shall lie against the Police if the seized cannabis after having been weighed with precision results to have been in a quantity which does not exceed fifty grams.

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(2) Nothing in this article shall be interpreted as authorising the cultivation of more than four plants of the plant cannabis irrespective of the number of residents within any given residential address and irrespective of the strains of such plants.

(3) For the purposes of this article and of article 7A "dried cannabis" means the dried inflorescence and the dried leaves of the plant cannabis.

Organisations  
of individuals.

7A. (1) Notwithstanding the other provisions of this Act or of any other law it shall be permissible to establish, and an individual may be a member of, an organisation the membership of which shall consist only of individuals in their personal capacity and acting only in their own name the only purpose of which being the cultivation of the plant cannabis exclusively for its members in a collective manner to distribute it only to those members.

(2) An organisation as referred to in sub-article (1) shall comply with the following provisions:

(a) it shall be registered with the Authority on the Responsible Use of Cannabis and prior to commencing its operations it shall obtain a permit from the said Authority to operate, which permit may be subject to general or particular conditions;

(b) it shall operate on a non-profit basis in accordance with the definition in article 2 of the Voluntary Organisations Act in such a manner that the provisions of the First Schedule of the said Act shall *mutatis mutandis* and to the extent to which they may be applied, apply to the said organisation;

Cap. 492.

(c) it shall distribute cannabis only to its members and it shall not permit any other person not being its member to be present in any premises which it operates;

(d) it shall have distinctive marks on the containers in which it distributes cannabis in a manner which renders the distribution of the said containers by it identifiable and it shall carry out controls of the quality of cannabis distributed;

(e) it shall not have more than five hundred members or such other number of members as the Authority on the Responsible Use of Cannabis may determine by order in the Gazette;

(f) it shall not be allowed to advertise its activities in any manner and no indication by signs, words or designs, or otherwise of activities related to cannabis or to the cannabis culture shall be allowed to be shown from any premises managed by the organisation on the outside or in a way which is visible from the outside;

(g) any premises managed by the organisation shall not be within a distance of less than two hundred and fifty metres from the perimeter of a school, a club or a youth centre;

(h) it shall ensure that the presence of premises managed by it does not cause nuisance in the locality where it is situated, also including nuisance because of loitering, and ensure that every premises managed by it is in conformity with every law and regulation on health and safety as in force from time to time;

(i) that the persons who manage the organisation and the persons who render service in the premises managed by it shall be of good conduct and the organisation shall register them as such with the Authority on the Responsible Use of Cannabis;

(j) that no person under the age of eighteen (18) years may be a member of the organisation or be present in any premises managed by it;

(k) that at no time shall there be more than five hundred grams of dried cannabis in any premises managed by it or in its possession;

(l) that it shall not cultivate more cannabis plants than such number authorised by the Authority on the Responsible use of Cannabis and that it shall abide by all conditions and controls as such Authority may impose, including conditions relating to the places where cultivation may take place, where cannabis plants are dried and how they shall be transported;

(m) that the cannabis distributed to members should be in a sealed container the shape of which and the words or designs written or printed thereon shall require the approval of the Authority on the Responsible Use of Cannabis;

(n) that no alcoholic products shall be sold from any premises managed by the organisation;

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(o) that the organisation shall cooperate fully and honestly at all times in any inspections which may be made in its regard from time to time by the public authorities, also including inspections held for the purpose of verifying what quantity and quality of cannabis is being distributed to the members of the organisation and to establish that the law is being observed;

(p) that it shall render account in writing every three (3) months to the Authority on the Responsible Use of Cannabis on the amount of cannabis distributed amongst the members of the organisation and about the number of members of the organisation without giving their personal details;

(q) that it shall keep a register of its members which shall include as a minimum the names and copies of the identity card or of another official identity document or of the passport of the said members. Such register shall be kept in a manner which complies with any law on data protection as applicable from time to time;

(r) that it shall not permit the same member to receive more than seven grams of cannabis in a single day or more than fifty grams of cannabis in any calendar month;

(s) that it shall not accept as members or in the continuation in its membership persons who are members of another organisation of the same type;

(t) that it shall abide by all conditions as the Minister may by regulations which may be issued on the basis of this article from time to time establish;

(u) that the owners, management and membership of the organisation shall consist only of individuals and shall not include legal persons or other legal entities.

(3) Every organisation as referred to in sub-article (1) shall be allowed to distribute unsterilized seeds of the plant cannabis to its members in sealed packets, with regard to the shape and presentation of which paragraph (m) of sub-article (2) shall *mutatis mutandis* apply, in a total quantity of not more than twenty seeds per calendar month to each member.

Cap. 291. (4) Any person who permits a person under the age of eighteen (18) years to be present in premises managed by an organisation as referred to in sub-article (1) shall be liable on being found guilty to a penalty of not less than five hundred euro (€500) and not more than one thousand euro (€1000) which shall be imposed in accordance with the provisions of the Commissioners for Justice Act.

Cap. 291. (5) The Minister responsible for the Authority on the Responsible Use of Cannabis Act may make regulations for the better implementation of the provisions of this article and, without prejudice to the generality of the aforesaid, such regulations may also provide for the manner in which and the reasons for which any authorisation, permission or licence related to the provisions of this article shall be issued, be made subject to other conditions, and, in the case of breach of the law or regulations, be withdrawn or suspended, the fees payable in respect of any authorisation, permit or licence and the penalties to which a person who fails to observe the law or regulations shall be subject which penalties shall not exceed a penalty of ten thousand euro (€ 10,000) and shall be imposed after trial in accordance with the Commissioners for Justice Act.

(6) Any organisation as referred to in sub-article (1) and every member thereof which in their activities abide by the provisions of this article and any regulations, conditions or orders issued thereunder shall be tolerated in their activity within the limits of what is provided in this article and they shall be exempt from being made subject to proceedings under this Act or under the drug laws for anything done by them in accordance with this article."

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Passed by the House of Representatives at Sitting No. 530 of the  
14th December, 2021.

ANĠLU FARRUGIA  
*Speaker*

RAYMOND SCICLUNA  
*Clerk of the House of Representatives*