

Belgian parties want to legalize medical use of cannabis

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About three years after the authorisation of cannabis-based sprays in Belgium, the Christian Democratic and Flemish (CD&V) party is calling for the medicinal use of marijuana to be broadened.

Epileptic persons or people with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS, also known as motor neuron disease) should be able to benefit from this type of medication, according to parliamentarian Els Van Hoof.

The CD&V parliamentarian says she plans to present a draft resolution in January demanding that the Government recognize cannabis as a medicinal drug, Het Nieuwsblad, Gazet van Antwerpen, Het Belang van Limburg and De Standaard reported on Thursday.

“There is enough scientific evidence to show that cannabis has medicinal properties than can reduce the symptoms of a disease like amyotrophic lateral sclerosis,” Mrs Van Hoof said.

ALS is characterised by the slow wasting away of the motor neurons in the brain and spinal cord, eventually causing the loss of muscular control in various parts of the body. It is also a very painful condition.

Some patients “already use cannabis oil, which they obtain from abroad, but the oil is banned here, so its importation is also illegal,” the CD&V parliamentarian said.

The CD&V wants the law to be expanded in two ways. It wants cannabis oil to be made legal for people with multiple sclerosis and children with certain types of epilepsy. It also wants an authorisation for ALS patients to use Sativex, a spray legalised since 2015 under strict conditions.

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The Brussels Times*