



The DPNSEE General Assembly



European Harm Reduction Conference



RECODOD Conference



Situation in Romania is full of challenges

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Prevent, Serbia

- Reducing the problems of the dependency

The DPNSEE General Assembly



With the support from the Central European Initiative (CEI) and funded through the European Union project, The Drug Policy Network South East Europe organized regular annual General Assembly on 10 December 2018 in The Palace of Serbia, in Belgrade, Serbia.

The participants held voting rights from 16 out of 22 ordinary member organizations. That provided the Assembly with the right to make qualified decisions, even those related to the amendments to the Statute.

The Assembly was chaired by Anna Lyubenova, representative of the member organization Initiative for Health Foundation from Bulgaria.

During the agenda point on membership issues, candidatures for membership from two organizations were discussed. The Assembly unanimously recognized as ordinary members Timok Youth Center from Zaječar, Serbia and Center for Human Policy from Sofia, Bulgaria. The Network now has 24 ordinary and 2 associate member organizations.

The General Assembly discussed the Operational and financial report for 2018 and elements for the Action plan and the Financial plan for 2019. The General Assembly welcomed the reports. They will be completed with the activities in December and then be adopted. The Assembly analyzed the donor and funding trends and issues and concluded that, based on donor research, negotiation and exchange, no funding from EU for the Network can be expected for 2019 and some amounts can be obtained for year 2020, more project based. Funding plans and activities and possible issues that might be funded in 2019 include budget advocacy, the Network being the leader on the issue of quality of services in the region, redefining harm reduction and human rights element of the approach in work. The need for greater participation in relevant international events and DPNSEE taking role in organizing regional events were emphasized.

Nine candidates applied for elections to the DPNSEE Board. The new Board includes Anna Lyubenova from Initiative for Health Foundation, Denis Dedajić from Margina, Marios Atzemis from Positive Voice, Nebojša Đurasović from Prevent, Safet Blakaj from Labyrinth, Sanja Šišović from Cazas and Vlatko Dekov from HOPS.

The Assembly decided to keep at the current positions Vlatko Dekov as the President, and Nebojša Đurasović as Vice-President.

An external consultant Jarmila Bujak Stanko facilitated the strategic workshop through which participants analyzed achievement of aims and objectives of the strategic plan adopted in 2016 and indicated in which way and by which activities the priorities will be followed in the next two years.

RECODOD Conference



Drug Policy Network South East Europe organized the Regional cooperation for the development of civil societies and open dialogue conference (RECODOD), in Belgrade, Serbia, on 11 December 2018, in The Palace of Serbia. The Conference was aimed to bring together organizations of members and other civil society organizations, policymakers and drug researchers in South East Europe to discuss policy developments and drug trends, sharing experiences and best practices in the region.

The agenda of the conference included three interesting and important issues:

- Drugs and immigrants
- Legislation and procedures in cases of arrest and judiciary process for drug users
- Accreditation of services by national health institutions

Speakers at the Conference were Vladimir Cucić, Commissioner for Refugees and Migration, of the Government of Serbia, Miloš Stojanović, Regional Project Officer, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Marianella Kloka, Advocacy Officer, NGO Paksis, Greece, Janko Belin, Areal, Slovenia, Daniela Simic, the Institute from Public Health, Serbia, Kalin Anguelov, acting attorney-at-law, Bulgaria, Nataša Boškova, the Coalition 'Sexual and Health Rights of Marginalized Communities', North Macedonia, Dr. Ahmed Novo, Director of the Agency for Healthcare Quality and Accreditation, the Federation of Bosnia Herzegovina, Denis Dedajić, Margina, Bosnia Herzegovina, Nenad Petković, UNDP National Project Coordinator in Serbia and Aleksandar Prica, from Association "Duga", Serbia.

European Harm Reduction Conference

The Correlation Network in cooperation with Romanian partners and different European Networks and partners, organized the 4th European Harm Reduction Conference from 21 to 23 November 2018 in Bucharest, Romania. The Conference was aimed at professionals that work in the areas of harm reduction, treatment, prevention, medicine, research, law enforcement and politics and, finally but importantly, drug user and community organizations. The Conference presented the latest harm reduction research results, innovative and next best-practice practices, discussed drug policy including the need to scale up harm reduction services and provided an appropriate platform to create a link between national and European developments in drug policies and harm reduction.

Also, with the support from the Open Society Foundations, the Drug Policy Network South East Europe organized the South East Europe Meeting on 20 November in Bucharest, Romania, prior to the 4th European Harm Reduction Conference. The event aimed to get together activists working on harm reduction services, exchange experiences and promising ideas for the future, meet with international partners and discuss future opportunities for collaboration. 36 representatives of harm reduction organizations and institutions from countries of the region and from various international organizations attended this meeting: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Greece, Kosovo*, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia.



Situation in Romania is full of challenges

Delegation of the Drug Policy Network South East Europe with Nebojša Đurasović, Vice-President, Denis Dedajić, Secretary of the Board, and Milutin Milošević, Executive Director, visited Romania on 19 November 2018. It was one of the two remaining in the serial of visits aimed to present DPNSEE to the society, build strong relationships with the authorities, institutions and services and explore opportunities for partnerships.

The situation in the country is far from good with no harm reduction services available outside Bucharest, no support for MSM services and no HIV strategy and strategic plan (a proposed document is in the Ministry of Health for one year but not approved). Opioid Substitution Therapy funding is a nightmare (procedurally), therefore hospitals do not want to engage in that, and Harm Reduction is in a survival mode. State institutions and civil society organizations have different data on key populations, with number of drug users ranging from 9.000 to 19.000.



At the meeting with Sorin Oprea, Director of the Agency for Combating Drugs, in a friendly atmosphere created through recent contacts, we discussed about the potential to raise drug policy higher on political agenda during the Romanian presidency over EU starting in January. Discussion with our colleague Dragoş Roşca, director of the Romanian Harm Reduction Network, presented a bit different and challenging situation in the country. Among others, Dragoş gave us a good insight in functioning of country coordinating mechanism after departure of Global Fund. Dan Popescu from our member organization ARAS took us to two methadone centers where they serve almost 500 people. We also had an opportunity to see one of two their outreach team and their van which cruises the streets of Bucharest and provides service on the spot.

A tool presenting the situation in South East Europe

The Drug Policy Network South East Europe published the document "Addressing the acute funding crisis facing harm reduction services in South-East Europe" with the aim to emphasize the acute funding crisis facing harm reduction services in Balkan states and South-East Europe, to influence the policies and actions of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and other donors. It is a complementary part of a larger body of work being done by a wide range of partners - including the Open Society Foundation and the International Drug Policy Consortium - to document the consequences of changes in donor eligibility policies and to urgently try and influence donor policy away from a withdrawal from middle-income countries in South East Europe. DPNSEE worked with their partners and members across the region to gather case studies of Opioid Substitution Therapy stock-outs or shortages, service closures or reductions in coverage, and other critical issues experienced by civil society partners in South East Europe related to transitions away from Global Fund support. Through interviews with key stakeholders and desk-based research, DPNSEE gathered information, experiences, feedback and recommendations from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo*, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia.

The material was collected in November - December 2017. Since then, it was used only internally. The document was published and shared with the participants of the South East Europe pre-Conference meeting, held in November 2018 in Bucharest, Romania.

Click [here](#) to download the document.

Glossary of terms translated into Serbian and Bosnian

Drug Policy Network South East Europe prepared the Serbian version of their Glossary of terms with the support of the Office for combating drugs of the Republic of Serbia. DPNSEE published the Glossary of terms used in drug policy in English in 2017. This publication aims to contribute to better understanding the drug problem in more emphatic manner. Glossary is an alphabetical list of terms used in a domain of drug policy, with the definitions for those terms. It contains explanations of concepts and terms related to the field of drugs and relevant related matters.

Version in Spanish followed at the beginning of 2018. Now, the versions in Serbian and Bosnian were prepared and published at the end of 2018. The one in Macedonian is in the process and we hope that versions in other languages of the region will follow soon.

You can find all the versions at the DPNSEE website.



DIOGENIS DRUG POLICY DIALOGUE

GREECE

Open National Dialogues in Italy (Turin) and Portugal (Lisbon)

Between 28/10 and 1/11, “Diogenis Drug Policy Dialogue”, with the support of “Forum Drogue” (Italy) and APDES (Portugal), organized and coordinated two national open dialogues in Turin and Lisbon respectively. Dialogues were carried out with the participation of partners from state bodies, civil society and peer users of psychoactive substances, about harm reduction services in times of economic crisis - good practices, difficulties and challenges.

These meetings were organized under the project "New Approaches to Harm Reduction Policies and Practices", responsible for their implementation were Sofia Galinaki (Advocacy Officer) and Nikos Stergiou (Communication & PR Officer) and funded by the EU and OSF .

In the near future, the project report will be published with all the 6 meetings that took place in 2018 (Greece, Romania, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Italy, Portugal).

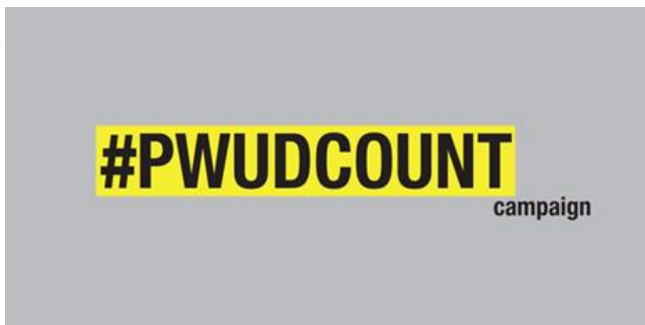


World Day Against Death Penalty and Human Rights Day: Persons Who Use Drugs Count!

On the occasion of the World Day Against Death Penalty (October 10th) and of Human Rights Day (December 10th), organization “Diogenis – Drug Policy Dialogue”, concluded its awareness campaign entitled “Persons Who Use Drugs Count”.

The "Persons Who Use Drugs Count" campaign supports the immediate abolition of the death penalty and joining with other organizations, we are calling for drug policies which ensure security, protection, public health, respect for human rights and fundamental principles of freedom of all people without any form of discrimination, so that “no one is left behind”.

This campaign is within the frame of the project “Strengthening NGO capacity and promoting public health and human rights oriented drug policy in South Eastern Europe”, funded by the European Commission and by the Open Society Foundations. You can read more at the follow link: <https://bit.ly/2Gix4jN>



DIOGENIS DRUG POLICY DIALOGUE

GREECE

The Greek organizations of the Platform for psychoactive substances have put forward ideas and proposals to address the consequences of drug use in the center of Athens.

The Health Minister has asked NGOs co-operating in the NGO Platform on Psychoactive Substances to submit ideas and proposals for an Action Plan to address the consequences of use of psychoactive substances in the center of Athens.

The NGOs welcomed the invitation since civil society organizations were considered as stakeholders in policy making and were invited to give their views and suggestions for an action plan specifically for the area of the center of Athens. NGOs interpret this as positive and as a recognition of the need for active and effective participation of Civil Society in the process of formulating, implementing and evaluating psychoactive substance policy. However, the organizations noted that this participation should not be of an occasional nature. Greek organizations have submitted a request for an institutionally safeguarded participation in the National Drug Planning and Coordination Committee.

In their statement, they presented their ideas and suggestions. The Ministry thanked for the proposals and indicated that it will ask organizations to participate in the implementation of the Action Plan. We will await the call for participation.

Supervised drug consumption rooms are an important part of harm reduction measures. Greek NGOs put pressure on the Minister of Health to implement the measure.

The NGO Platform for Psychoactive Substances, where Diogenis is an active member, addressed a letter to the Minister of Health on the occasion of the debate that took place in the Greek Parliament on 22/10/2018 as part of parliamentary scrutiny on a timely question on a recent amendment tabled by the party "Democratic Alignment" for the creation of supervised drug consumption rooms. The NGOs highlighted some important points that they consider necessary for the effective planning and functioning of this specific harm reduction measure.

The NGO's emphasize in their letter that for the proper and effective operation of supervised drug consumption rooms it is necessary to develop synergies and cooperation protocols. All stakeholders (user community, local community, local government, social and health service providers, civil society organizations, businesses, police, judicial authorities) should be involved in the process of designing, implementing and evaluating their interventions. In addition, the decriminalization of the possession and use of psychoactive substances for personal use, a position defended by the World Health Organization, the protection of personal data and the solution of the problem of homelessness must be regulated.

The Health Minister said that he would shortly table an amendment regulating the operation of supervised drug consumption rooms. NGOs hope that the Minister will soon implement his promise.

HOPS

NORTH MACEDONIA

6th annual “School of Drugs, Policies and Practices”

As a tradition, in the period between the 4th and 9th of November 2018, for the sixth time, HOPS organized the “School of Drugs, Policies and Practices”. The school was intended for youngsters from several different professions which are treating drug issues, such as psychologists, psychiatrists, doctors, lawyers, social workers and inspectors. The goal of this school is to train the future young professionals and motivate them to work in the field of addiction.

The school was attended by 20 participants who were introduced with the basics of drug policies and practices in the world and in North Macedonia at the beginning of the school. Also, topics like HIV, counselling and testing, prejudice about drugs and HIV were discussed during the second day. The third day was very challenging for the participants. They exchanged views on why do people use drugs. Moreover, they were learning about the multifactorial approach in defining the use of drugs, practicing basic communication skills and psychotherapeutic approaches and counselling techniques in the treatments of addiction. The following day, movies and programs for harm reduction were presented and the use of drugs in minors was deliberated. Furthermore, the participants were introduced with the psychosocial services for people who use drugs and the types of treatment of drug addictions and their human rights as well. The participants worked actively, both in groups and independently. They were devising strategies for working with drug users, simulating psychotherapeutic sessions, and were also working on examples from real cases in court, trying to resolve them.

The school was financed by Open Society Institute.



JUVENTAS

MONTENEGRO

The need for an organized system for drug policy in Montenegro

Within the framework of the project ARYSE (At-Risk Youth Social Empowerment), funded by the European Union through the European Commission, NGO [Juventas](#) organized the round table "Young people who use drugs in Montenegro" on 12 November 2018 in Podgorica. The hosts emphasized that there is no systematic commitment in solving the problem of dependence on psychoactive substances in Montenegro and that clarifying the government responsibility is very important. Improving support programs, developing preventive work, in order to help young people who use drugs, must be in coordination with many institutions. The Executive Director of DPNSEE Milutin Milošević gave introductory presentation about models and standards of prevention of psychoactive substances use in Europe and presented concrete examples of drug policy approaches in Croatia, Spain, The Netherlands, Serbia, Sweden and Turkey.



The speakers at the round table were: Marija Milić, Coordinator of the Programme of direct assistance for people who use drugs, NVO Juventas, Ivana Vujović, Executive Director of NGO Juventas, Nebojša Kavarić, Director of the Health Centre in Podgorica, Dr Ljiljana Golubović, the Public Health Institute representative and psychologist, Dijana Milošević, representative of the Institution for Resocialization and Rehabilitation of Drug Addicts Kakaricka gora. The representatives of local communities from Nikšić, Podgorica, Budva, Bijelo polje, Tivat and Kolašin also took part in the discussion. It was pointed out that cooperation with official institutions is at an unsatisfactory level. Also, the discussion concluded that there is no systematic plan for dependence on psychoactive substances problem.

ARYSE project also includes the partner organizations: ARSIS (Albania), Association Margina (Bosnia Herzegovina), HOPS (North Macedonia), Labirint (Kosovo), Prevent (Serbia) and Foundation SHL (Germany).

PREVENT

SERBIA

Reducing the problems of the dependency

Association Prevent held their annual Press Conference "Activities on the field of reducing the problems of the dependency" on 20 December 2018 in the EU info Centre in Belgrade. Representatives of the institutions and organisations with whom Prevent and DPNSEE cooperate participated in the Conference.

Nebojša Đurasović presented activities which Association Prevent conducted in scope of the project "At Risk Youth Social Empowerment" and other projects realised in 2018. For a good work, Prevent deserved the award "Responsible attitude and work with vulnerable young people" offered by the city of Novi Sad. Đurasović also spoke about extending the programme of needle exchange to Belgrade and draw attention to the issues of drugs in Serbia including raising number of overdose deaths in young population.

Milan Pekić presented the co-operation between the Office for Combating Drugs and civil society organisations in Serbia as an example of good practice, especially in the process of designing the new Action Plan for implementation of the Strategy for drug prevention.

Milutin Milošević presented a situation in the region of South East Europe, activities in 2018 and plans of the Drug Policy Network South East Europe for the future. His comments on new psychoactive substances and change of culture of drug use raised a special attention.

Two news publications were presented at the Conference: Prevent published the one on "Empowering against the discrimination of youth at risk", while DPNSEE prepared the Serbian version of their Glossary of terms used in drug policy with the support of the Office for combating drugs.





4Life, Podgorica, Montenegro
 Aksion Plus, Tirana, Albania
 Aliat, Bucharest, Romania
 ARAS, Bucharest, Romania
 Cazas, Podgorica, Montenegro
 Centre for Human Policy, Sofia, Bulgaria
 Centre for Life, Athens, Greece
 Coalition "Sexual and Health Rights of Marginalized Communities", Skopje, North Macedonia
 Diogenis Drug Policy Dialogue, Athens, Greece
 HOPS, Skopje, North Macedonia
 Initiative for Health Foundation, Sofia, Bulgaria
 Juventas, Podgorica, Montenegro
 Labyrinth, Kosovo
 Margina, Tuzla, Bosnia Herzegovina
 Positive Voice, Athens, Greece
 Prevent, Novi Sad, Serbia
 Proi, Sarajevo, Bosnia Herzegovina
 Re Generacija, Belgrade, Serbia
 RHRN, Bucharest, Romania
 SEEAN, Ljubljana, Slovenia
 Terra, Rijeka, Croatia
 Timok Youth Center, Zaječar, Serbia
 Viktorija, Banja Luka, Bosnia Herzegovina
 Prometheus, Athens, Greece

The newsletter is aiming to inform and keep updated organisations, institutions and individuals on drug policy developments along with news in the website and social media of the network. Our plan is to actively involve member organisations to report about their activities and about developments in their countries.

The Newsletter is prepared and published by the Diogenis, Drug Policy Dialogue.

Members of the drug policy network feed into the Newsletter following on topics related to criminal justice, social and Health programmes, human rights and events of interest.

Reactions can be sent to: Diogenis Drug Policy Dialogue, Fokionos 8, 10563 Athens, Greece

E-mail: info@diogenis.info

