

Meeting 10 March 2012, Vienna, Austria

The South East Europe Network, Evaluation and next steps

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Structure of the SEE Network

One SEE Network member raised an issue about miscommunication on the agreed points from the previous meeting of the SEE Network regarding the structure and way of functioning of the Network.

Diogenis, which co-organised the previous meeting of the Network in Thessaloniki referred to the report of that meeting. The main decisions taken at the Thessaloniki meeting were as follows:

- The SEE Network will, for the moment, not be formalised and officially registered as a legal entity.
- The SEE Network will be led by Diogenis
- The SEE Network will have an advisory board composed of members of the Working Group and will act as the managing body of the Network. The members of the advisory board are: Andrej Kastelic (SEEAnet, Slovenia), Elena Yankova (Initiative for Health Foundation, Bulgaria), Genci Mucollari (Aksion Plus, Albania), Tijana Pavicevic (Juventas, Montenegro) and Thanasis Apostolou (Diogenis, Greece).
- The Vision, Mission and Policy Principles were agreed upon and were distributed to the members of the SEE Network members for comments before being finalised. The information is available on the Diogenis web

site: http://www.diogenis.info/index.php?menu_id=c59092ce-820c-11e0-822c-1c0ce76237ea&language=en.

The documents will be sent around again with the report of this meeting.

Regarding the Advisory Board, it was decided in Vienna that the Board would not be composed of only five individuals, but of one representative from each country of the SEE Network (11 members). The Board will be responsible for the implementation of the work plan.

ACTION:

Diogenis will follow up with the members of the SEE Network so that members nominate one person per country to be part of the Advisory Board.

ACTION:

IDPC will design short Terms of Reference for the Advisory Board to the SEE Network members for their approval. These will include the following information:

- The Advisory Board will be composed of a representative from each country of the SEE Network.
- The Advisory Board will meet once a year.
- The Advisory Board will propose a yearly action plan to the rest of the Network.
- The Advisory Board will be responsible for the monitoring and implementation of agreed activities.
- The Advisory Board members will be responsible for the communication between the Board and the rest of the Network from their own country.
- The Advisory Board members will be required to consult with the SEE Network members from their own country before attending meetings.
- The SEE Network will have an advisory board composed of members of the Working Group and will act as the managing body of the Network.

2.

Membership

The members of the SEE Network were asked to identify NGOs in their own country that would be interested in becoming members of the Network. One issue raised by this requirement was whether the Network should incorporate local NGOs which are part of national networks. In Serbia, NGO Veza declared that they could ask a few local organisations as to whether they would be interested in becoming members of the Network, but also felt that they could create a national network that could then feed into the SEE Network. Association Prevent warned that there were only few NGOs working in the field of harm reduction in Serbia. In Bulgaria, Dose of Love could be an interesting NGO for the SEE Network. The Initiative for Health Foundation will approach this organisation, as well as a movement of individuals working on drug policy reform (including professionals, activists, journalists, harm reduction service providers, etc.) In Romania, all of the NGOs that work in harm reduction are already part of the Romanian Harm Reduction Network.

3.

Communication/information sharing

It was agreed that the SEE Network would continue to meet once a year, but that more communication was needed throughout the year. A Google Group was created in December to ensure wide dissemination of information among the SEE Network. The name of the Google Group is: seendp@googlegroups.com It seems that SEE Network Members have not all been subscribed to this Group.

ACTION:

IDPC will check who is subscribed to the Group and may need to create a new Google Group to ensure that all are subscribed. We will be in touch with the SEE Network on this. It was agreed in Vienna that a quarterly newsletter would be prepared by Diogenis, which members of the SEE Network would feed into, focusing on the following topics:

- Criminal justice
- Social and health programmes
- Human rights
- Events of interest

In order to make the process more efficient, the idea will be to focus on 3 countries every three months to ensure that the information provided is as comprehensive as possible.

ACTION:

IDPC to suggest a model for the newsletter and a rolling mechanism for the countries for each newsletter for the year 2012-2013.

Diogenis to start the newsletter process for a first newsletter to be created in May 2012. Each newsletter will be posted on the Diogenis website.

It was also agreed that each member of the SEE Network would create a link to the website of Diogenis on their own website to improve the visibility of the Network.

4.

Publications

The members of the SEE Network were requested to propose themes for potential IDPC briefing papers for the year 2012-2013. Those that have been proposed so far include:

- New drug law in Greece—the factors that play a decisive role in terms of drug law reform
- The impact of budget cuts within the Global Fund in South East Europe
- Cannabis policy in Albania.

ACTION:

SEE Network members should get in touch with the IDPC Secretariat (mnougier@idpc.net) if they wish IDPC to coordinate the drafting of briefing papers relevant to South East Europe.

5.

Advocacy

It was felt that we needed to be more strategic about the organisation of advocacy work at the national level, with support from the SEE Network, IDPC and Diogenis. This could, for example, translate into the drafting of a letter as an advocacy tool, signed by other NGOs at the national, regional and/or international level to give more weight to an advocacy action conducted by one member of the SEE Network. It is also necessary to prioritise advocacy actions in order to be strategic and maximise impacts.

ACTIONS:

The members of the SEE Network should think of which activities from the SEE Network could help support their advocacy actions at the national level.

6.

Upcoming events of interest

19 May: 6th Regional Conference on HIV and AIDS in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, focusing on the treatment of co-infections and innovative approaches to prevent HIV. More information: <http://idpc.net/events/sixth-regional-conference-on-hiv-aids>

21-23 June: Conference of the SEEANet in Tirana, Albania, on juveniles, the treatment people with co-morbidity, workshop on treatment, panel discussions and posters.

Next meeting of the SEE Network: It was decided that the SEE Network would meet again at the end of the year or early next year. Several countries were named as potential locations for the meeting: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Albania, Romania, Serbia and Bulgaria. It was agreed that the format of the meetings would remain the same—a mixture of discussions with policy makers and field visits, and a discussion on the SEE Network activities. Some SEE Network members announced their interest in visiting NSP and drug dependence treatment facilities. In order to give more visibility to the SEE Network and our meetings, it was also decided that we would seek to approach a government body to co-host our meetings. This would also increase the possibility of civil society engagement with policy makers at the local or national level in a given country.

7.

Funding opportunities

The European Commission (EC) has published a call for applications to fund networking activities for four-year projects covering the EU, the Western Balkans and Turkey. The thematic should be on human rights and social inclusion. The deadline for application is 13th April. The minimal grant amount is EUR 500,000 over four years, and there is a requirement for co-financing of 20%. This funding opportunity was considered as highly relevant to the SEE Network activities. IDPC and Diogenis will not be able to lead on the management of the grant. The grant could be an interesting opportunity to build the capacity of one (or several) organisations from the SEE region. IDPC will provide support to review the draft of the proposal and seek to strengthen it. Each member of the SEE Network will need to feed into the application to ensure that the proposal includes all of the countries from the Network. Aksion Plus was considered as a good partner to bring forward the proposal on the Network

although this should be confirmed by Genci Mucollari. Other possibilities included the Romanian Harm Reduction Network and the Healthy Options Project Skopje.

Aksion Plus will come back with a confirmation on whether they are able to lead on the proposal in the coming days. They have experience in terms of EC funding as are finishing a project on national networking.