

REPORT

Meeting Advisory Board Drug Policy Network South East Europe Belgrade 16-18 January 2013

On 17 January 2013 the advisory Board of the Drug Policy Network in South East Europe met in Belgrade. Seven members of the Advisory Board were present. The representatives from Bulgaria and Croatia had announced that they could not attend the meeting, the representative from Slovenia could not come due to bad weather conditions. IDPC could not attend the meeting and sent around a note to be discussed at the meeting.

The Agenda of the meeting

1. Opening, welcome, adoption of the agenda
2. Review of Developments and activities in the past year (March-December 2012)
 - Discussion paper "Activities of the Drug Policy Network In South East Europe"
 - Report Drug Policy Network SEE, Vienna March 2012
3. Planning for 2013
4. Proposals, suggestions for future initiatives and activities
4. Closing of the meeting

1. The meeting has been opened with a welcome to the Board members. By the introduction of the agenda it has been pointed out that this annual meeting is important for the functioning of the network in the coming period. The Network exists now two years and we have to discuss how we are going to continue this initiative. The method we have used up to now is one of "learning by doing". It has been a conscious choice not to make too quick steps towards a formal organisation and have looked for opportunities to cooperate and develop joint activities. Last year in Vienna there has been some discussion about new members and the decision making procedures. This meeting must provide more clarity about these items. What can be consolidated and what can be changed and improved. Further it is important to follow the ongoing developments in drug policy on the National, European, and International level. By agenda item planning of activities for 2013 the discussion will focus on questions: Which activities with a regional perspective can be undertaken and in which areas are possibilities for bilateral and/or regional cooperation. The agenda as proposed was adopted.

2. Review of Developments and activities in the past year (March-December 2012)

- Looking back to the submission of the common application by the European Commission it has been noted that the misunderstandings about the lead organisation were a rather

annoying point. At the end all went well, but much time has been spent to agree about the procedure. Several members took the floor and expressed their feelings about this point. The conclusion was that by such initiatives a good communication among the members is necessary. This is an issue that may be remedied if we make some internal rules about better communication.

-The composition of the Advisory Board has been decided in the Vienna meeting of last year. The question has been raised whether the term of the Advisory Board members (one year) is not too short. It has been suggested to change it in a term of three years. This issue has to be on the agenda of the next Network meeting. Then a decision can be taken based on a detailed proposal. Also the decision making procedure in the board meetings has to be clear. Seeking consensus will be the rule, but it is good to have some guidelines in case no decision can be reached by consensus. Also the issue of the chair of the board has been raised. Diogenis would like to continue providing support for the meetings in collaboration with a chair person.

-The membership of the Network. There is a need to define criteria for acceptance of new organisations. Also on this point guidelines have to be formulated. It has been decided that the secretariat (Diogenis) will send to the Board Members a proposal for guidelines on the above mentioned items. The proposal with eventual comments will be discussed at the next Network meeting.

Planning for 2013

In short presentations the following activities with a regional perspective have been suggested.

1. The IDPC secretariat pointed out in a written note (the note is attached to this report) that the IDPC secretariat will now step back from being directly involved in coordination, communications, work planning and implementation of activities for the SEE network. IDPC will continue to support the SEE network indirectly through promoting its work and in instances IDPC has available budget may dedicate some funds for small and clearly defined pieces of work or activities (such as the financial contribution to the organisation of the January 2013 advisory group meeting). In 2013, IDPC will fund two individuals from the members in the SEE region to attend the Commission on Narcotic Drugs meeting in Vienna. These individuals should be from organisations that have not yet had a representative attend the CND as this should be a 'rolling' mechanism. IDPC has also offered to fund one individual from each IDPC member organisation to attend the 2013 International Harm Reduction Conference in Vilnius, Lithuania. IDPC has budget available for registration, and may also have budget available for travel and subsistence, but this will be confirmed in February 2013.

The advisory board expressed its appreciation for the involvement of IDPC during the past two years and is pleased to hear that IDPC will continue its involvement by supporting the Network as described in the IDPC note.

The Advisory Board would like to improve the communication between the SEE Network and the IDPC Steering Committee. IDPC will be asked to inform the Network about the SEE

Network participation in the steering group partly with a view to possible changes in the IDPC governance structure.

2. DIOGENIS has planned the following activities for 2013 that have a regional perspective.

-In early spring an expert seminar will be organised on developments and trends in drug legislation in South East Europe. The objective of this seminar is to discuss and evaluate the initiative on Drug Law Reform in South East Europe (SEE) and exchange best-practices regarding cooperation between authorities, public services and civil society organizations in the field of legislative reforms. Participation at this expert seminar will be on invitation. The date of the seminar will be announced in February.

-In May/June DIOGENIS will organise an Informal Drug Policy Dialogue in SEE.

The dialogue will focus on the following items:

a. the impact of the EU Drug Strategy and Action Plan on drug policy making in SEE countries;

b. the implementation and relevance of the Draft Action Plan on drugs between the EU and the Western Balkan countries (2009-2013) and the possible actions which can be part of the EU action Plan 2013-2017

c. the outcomes of the first year (2012) of the Drug Law Reform Project in South East Europe and of the expert seminar on developments and trends in drug legislation in South East Europe.

Invitations will be sent to policy makers from the SEE countries, experts and NGOs. All Organisations of the SEE Drug Policy Network will be invited for this Dialogue. At the margins of this dialogue there will be a possibility to discuss as Network some practical issues like, membership, advisory board, communication rules etc.

-The quarterly Newsletter will be published in 2013 and Diogenis will organize country visits to Bulgaria, Romania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

-An important activity where the involvement of all Network organisations is needed is the follow up of the country reports on legislative reforms in the SEE region. A volume with all reports of the Drug Law Reform Project will be published in March 2013. In co-operation with the Network organisations and the cooperating Universities/research institutes per country, a public presentation of the volume "Drug Policy and Legislation in SEE" can be organised.

-In a bilateral cooperation with Aksion Plus, DIOGENIS is planning to support the organisation of a workshop on the cannabis issue in Albania.

-In the planning of 2013 is included a new research project about " Sentencing of drug offenders, the legislators policy and the practice of the courts." The organisations of the Network will be asked to support this project.

-Diogenis started in 2012 with a series of briefing papers in Greek. The first two publications are translations of TNI briefing papers. The idea is to translate such briefing papers in several languages of the countries in the region. It will depend on the financial possibilities whether this plan can be implemented. Diogenis is willing to coordinate.

3.

-Aksion Plus is working on a proposal of drug trafficking confiscated money and assets for treatment purposes. This is interesting for other organisations of the network. Aksion plus has sent a note to IDPC about this issue. Diogenis has been asked to send the note on confiscated assets to the Network organisations. Aksion Plus will keep in touch with the Network and inform it about developments.

-Aksion plus will organise 3 advocacy meetings on the national level in cooperation with NGOs, health state services, universities, other stakeholders and research institutes. These activities will help the existing treatment services to coordinate joint advocacy efforts for sustainability beyond 2013.

-The workshop/seminar in cooperation with Diogenis will focus on the cannabis situation in Albania. A briefing paper will be written as result of the seminar.

-Aksion plus would like to organize a study visit to Portugal, because of the interesting approach of the Portuguese model. This can be realised if funds will be available.

- A campaign "working together for safe communities and schools" will be implemented with Swedish support . The objective of the campaign is to raise awareness by students, teachers, police and the community concerning the risks and consequences pertaining to drug use. To increase the participation of youngsters and especially their parents in substance abuse matters focusing on human right issues. Further to strengthen the capacity of social workers in high schools, teachers, parents and police.

4.

-Juventas will continue its work with drug dependent users with support from the Global Fund for tuberculosis, AIDS and malaria, as well as government, although the state resources are scarce. The dropping centre will again be financially supported by the government.

- Juventas will continue its work with drug dependent users on hepatitis C and HIV infections. Some of these activities are directly targeting drug users, and others missing law regulations in this field.

-Juventas is working on a eight year long project in prisons regarding drug abuse within prisoners, as well as promotion of human rights protection. In next period Juventas will focus on law regulation regarding health issues in prison.

- Juventas has implemented a project, supported by OSI, on documentation on human rights violations among drug dependant users within Justice system in Montenegro (during police custody, trials, precaceration and incarceration period, as well as during social rehabilitation). The report is going to be published in March 2013. and will contain numerous recommendations to Montenegrin Government

-Juventas will focus on overdose prevention among drug dependant users, as well as on provision of harm reduction services, psychological support to users and their families, etc.
-Organising workshops/information meetings with the police is a ongoing activity.

5.

A presentation of the activities of Margina Association and The Association Viktorija in Bosnia and Herzegovina referred to activities that have taken place in 2012. The presentation of the activities for 2013 followed.

The activities of Association Margina in 2013 will focus on:

- Continuation of harm reduction activities among PWID as part of GFATM project, Phase II;
- Provision of harm reduction services for PWID in 4 prisons in Federation of BiH;
- Provision of harm reduction services for sex workers in two areas: Mostar and Orasje;
- Psychosocial support for PWID and their families;
- Post release treatment and support for PWID sentenced to prison sentence;
- Implementation of various types of voluntary actions in community, managed and implemented through Local Voluntary Services;

The plans of Association Viktorija for 2013 are:

- Continuation of harm reduction programs and HIV prevention program with injection drug users and prisoner through Global Fund programs
- Opening of the detox centre in Dobricevo
- Psychosocial rehabilitation and psychotherapy work with addicts and their families in the counselling offices and the Therapeutic Community
- Organization of the Second Symposium on Addictions decease with international participation
- Start with implementation of project "INFO-HEP CENTRE - with cross-border cooperation to easily accessible health and social services" in partnership with "Hepatos" form Croatia. This project is a component of Cross-border programme Croatia-Bosnia and Herzegovina under the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA).

6.

The presentation of activities of the Romanian Harm reduction Network has referred to actions of the past years. They have been presented as an illustration of activities that can also be undertaken by other organisations of the network. The research report "risk assessment of new psychoactive substances consumption among children and youth in Romania", a joint activity with Unicef, the Anti-drug Agency and Romanian Harm Reduction Network, has been an important activity in 2012. Due to cuttings in the budget the activities of RHRN are less than in the previous years. The successful project "Count the Costs" could

be a model for other organisations in the region. The experience of RHRN can be shared with interested organisations.

7.

Association Prevent is developing a good relationship with the provincial authorities and the municipality of Novi Sad. Beside four big projects that are funded by Global Fund, Prevent realized 11 small projects in 2012 funded by provincial and city authorities. Fund raising activities are intensified and cooperation with other organizations and public health services is improving. An association of NGOs working with HIV positive has been established and there is progress in establishing a Harm Reduction Network in Serbia.

There is since short a new government. The minister of health is well known with the drugs issue because she has worked in the field, but it has to be seen what will be the policy she is going to follow and actions she will undertake. There would be a new law on drugs, but the old one is still in place.

8.

HOPS limited its presentation to activities which have a regional component. HOPS has established the Center for education, documentation and research that provides services as in the area education, and training, documentation and research, offers consultancy services for the preparation, development, monitoring and evaluation of strategies, action plans, projects, seminars, conferences, study visits. HOPS is available to the Network Organisations to undertake joint activities in these areas.

The projects that HOPS will realise in 2013 are: -resocialisation of drug users; -children of drug users;-Overdoses, the availability of Naloxon;-Hepatitis C monitoring

-Young drug users, in cooperation with dialog, (the project visited by the Network in Vienna last year)

-HOPS has a group of young people who are specialised in video advocacy . Referring to the proposal of presentation of the country reports of the Diogenis Drug Law reform Project it has been suggested that this group could be involved using internet ,short films etc.

Conclusions/ decisions list

Summarising the activities with a regional component we come to the following list of activities:

- The 2013 International Harm Reduction Conference in Vilnius, Lithuania can be attended with (partly) funding of IDPC
- IDPC will fund two individuals from the members in the SEE region to attend the Commission on Narcotic Drugs meeting in Vienna.
- For the items: better communication, the term of the advisory board, the chair of the board and the rules for membership, a note will be written and will be presented to the next network meeting. Diogenis will write a draft.
- Participation at the expert seminar of Diogenis will be on invitation. The date of the seminar will be announced in February.
- All Organisations of the SEE Drug Policy Network will be invited for the Regional Drug Policy Dialogue. At the margins of this dialogue there will be a possibility to discuss

as Network some practical issues like, membership, advisory board, communication rules etc.

- The quarterly Newsletter will be published in 2013 with contributions of the network organisations
- Involvement of all Network organisations is needed for the follow up of the country reports on legislative reforms in the SEE region. In co-operation Universities/research institutes per country, a public presentation of the volume "drug policies and legislation in SEE" can be organised.
- in 2013 a new research project will be initiated on " Sentencing of drug offenders, legislators policy and practice of the courts." The organisations of the Network will be asked to cooperate with this project.
- The idea to publish briefing papers in several languages of the countries in the region is supported. Several briefing papers on relevant drug policy issues can be a translation of existing documents. It will depend on the financial possibilities whether this plan can be realised. Diogenis is willing to coordinate.
- The Aksion Plus proposal of drug trafficking confiscated money and assets for treatment purposes is interesting for all organisations of the network. Aksion Plus will keep in touch with the Network and inform it about ongoing developments.
- The workshop/seminar of Aksion Plus in cooperation with Diogenis will focus the cannabis situation in Albania. A briefing paper will be written as result of the seminar.
- HOPS has established the Centre for education, documentation and research that provides services in the area of education and training, documentation and research, offers consultancy services for the preparation, development, monitoring and evaluation of strategies, action plans, projects, seminars, conferences, study visits. HOPS is available to the Network Organisations to undertake joint activities in these areas.
- The group of young people by HOPS specialised in video advocacy: Referring to the proposal of presentation of the country reports of the Diogenis Drug Law reform Project it has been suggested that this group on social media could be involved in the country debates making materials for internet ,short films etc.

January, 2013

South East Europe Drug Policy Network

Update from IDPC Secretariat – January 2013

The South East Europe Drug Policy Network (SEE Network) has gone from strength to strength since it was set up in March 2010. The International Drug Policy Consortium secretariat (IDPC) has been proud to have been involved in setting up and supporting the coordination of SEE Network over the last three years.

The work of the SEE Network now has momentum that is driven by the coordinating organisation based in the region, Diogenis, with the support of the members. Given the maturity of the SEE Network and the increased capacity of Diogenis to lead and coordinate on the network's activities and work plan, the IDPC secretariat will now step back from being directly involved in coordination, communications, work planning and implementation of activities for the SEE Network.

We will continue to support the SEE network indirectly through promoting its work and in instances where we have available budget we may be able to dedicate some funds for small and clearly defined pieces of work or activities (such as our financial contribution to the organisation of the January 2013 advisory group meeting).

The IDPC secretariat will continue to support individual IDPC members in the region as we do elsewhere. In the region, our support remains the same. In 2013, we will fund two individuals from the members in the SEE region to attend the Commission on Narcotic Drugs meeting in Vienna. These individuals should be from organisations that have not yet had a representative attend the CND as this should be a 'rolling' mechanism. We have also offered to fund one individual from each IDPC member organisation to attend the 2013 International Harm Reduction Conference in Vilnius, Lithuania. We may have budget available for registration, travel and subsistence but this will be confirmed in February 2013.

We wish the advisory group a fruitful meeting in Belgrade in January 2013. We look forward to hearing the outcomes and supporting the continued growth and development of the SEE Network led by Diogenis.