

Report of the discussion of the note "Drug Policy Network South East Europe" at Vilnius, Lithuania in the margins of the Conference of Harm Reduction International, 10 June 2013

The Note "Drug policy Network South east Europe" has been discussed on Monday 10 June 2013 at the margins of the International Harm Reduction Conference with representatives of Network organisations who were in Vilnius.

The following organisations were present at the Meeting: Veza, Prevent, Juventas, Romanian Harm Reduction Network, Association Margina, SEEA-net, Initiative for Health Foundation, HOPS, Diogenis and IDPC.

At the meeting there have been some comments and suggestions for additional points on the paragraph about membership. I have added the suggestions made in the original note.

Some participants at the Vilnius meeting expressed dissatisfaction with some aspects concerning the Network. The points that have been mentioned were:

- The Network needs to have a more structured action plan, clear rules about communication and a higher profile.
- A website of the Network, not as part of the Diogenis website, complimented with social media as facebook etc. and a more clear articulated ambition will contribute to this higher profile.
- The Network must be formalised as a legal entity. That will create possibilities to act as an independent organisation, acquire financial resources and implement an action plan of its own.

Other participants were of the opinion that the Network has worked up to now as an informal entity organising 4 meetings in several countries combined with visits to institutions working in the field of drugs, exchanging information about best practices and about international trends and developments in the area of drug policy. It gave the possibility to members to participate in international fora (as the annual session of the UN Commission on Drugs (CND), and the International Harm Reduction Conference etc.). The initiative to inform each other through the Newsletter of the Network, has -by trial and error- functioned and has to be improved. The Network has tried to acquire financial resources by submitting a proposal for a project where all member organisations of the Network have participated. Unfortunately the proposal was not awarded. It has been however a good exercise in cooperating together despite of tensions and misunderstandings that have been part of the process. These activities are positive and need to be improved. The policy up to now was a policy of "learning by doing". There is however no objection against exploring possibilities for a model of working which could be more ambitious and more structured. Therefore, the discussion has been concluded with the agreement to let Valentin Simionov of the RHRN write a paper with ideas how to further improve the Network in order to acquire more consistency, better communication mechanisms and a higher profile. He will send the paper, accompanied by a questionnaire, to all members of the network in September 2013.

The reactions of the network organisations on this paper will be the basis for further deliberations.

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