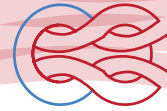


NEWSLETTER



DRUG POLICY
NETWORK SEE

APRIL - JUNE 2016



DPNSEE Board Meeting in Thessalomiki, Greece



Regional conference on "Drug Policy after the UNGASS", Thessaloniki 2-4 June 2016

News from the organizations of the Network

Hops

- Summer school on addictions

Association Prevent

- Support Don't Punish action held in Novi Sad

Diogenis – Drug Policy Dialogue

- JUNE 26th: WORLD DRUG DAY People count! #PWUDcount
- "Diogenis" is "On Air"!



A good insight in the Montenegrin Drug Policy situation.



International Symposium "Towards Changes"

UPCOMING EVENTS

27/9/2016: Presentation of Diogenis 's new publication "Sentencing of drug offenders, the legislator's Policy and the Practice of the Courts in South Eastern Europe" in Athens, Greece

DPNSEE Board Meeting



The second Board meeting of the Drug Policy Network South East Europe was held in Thessaloniki, Greece on the 2nd of June 2016 just before the Conference “Drug policy after the UNGASS 2016” organised by our member organisation Diogenis. The Board welcomed three organisations and proposes to the General Assembly to recognise them as full members of the Network: Aktion Plus from Albania, Juventas from Montenegro and Centre for Life from Greece. The Board also welcomed staff members of the newly established office in Belgrade who presented themselves to the members of the Board.

The meeting then continued towards ways the Code of Conduct, that will define management policies and procedures in DPNSEE will be designed. The Staff will prepare the draft of the document that will be adopted at the Third Board Meeting. In addition, the Board was discussing Strategy of the Network for the period 2016 – 2019. The working meeting of the Board will be organised in late August in FYRO Macedonia where the Strategy will be shaped in detail.

Members of the Board alongside with Staff discussed and updated the Action plan for 2016 and agreed on the timeframe of the country visits that are planned for this year. The Board also brainstormed possibilities of fundraising needed for the future activities of the Network. Organisation of the General Assembly, planned for late autumn will be at the agenda of the next Board Meeting in August.



A good insight in the Montenegrin Drug Policy situation.

Representatives of the Drug policy network South East Europe visited Montenegro from 28 June to 1 July 2016. The delegation included Denis Dedajić, member of the Board, Milutin Milošević, Executive Director and representatives of two local member organisations Tijana Žegura from Juventas and Saša Mijović from NGO 4 Life.

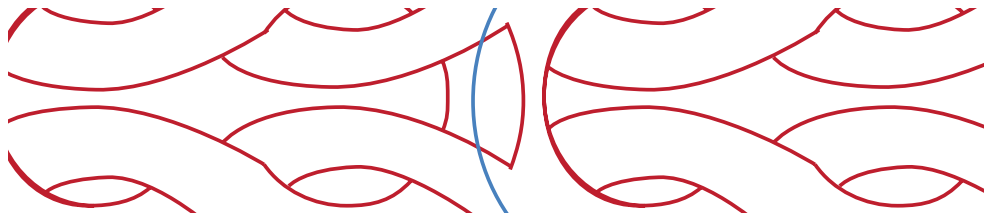
Purpose of the visit was to present DPNSEE to the Montenegrin society and build strong relationships with the authorities, institutions and services. Aims included establishing contacts and exploring possibilities for cooperation with authorities and various institutions, understanding Montenegrin model of functioning of structures for participation of civil society in decision making and identifying models for improvement, supporting member organisations in their work and contacts with authorities, institutions and services, issue of supporting (young) people on festivals and in clubbing and meetings with NGOs, especially potential new members of the Network.



Meeting with Mr. Boris Marić, Minister for Labour and Social Welfare

The delegation held a large number of meetings including authorities and institutions: Minister for Labour and Social Welfare, National Committee for Drugs, Public Health Institute, Sektor za suzbijanje krijumčarenja droga u Upravi policije (drug abuse prevention department in the Ministry of interior), KPZ Spuž (largest state prison), Special psychiatric hospital Dobrota, Metadonski program održavanja opijatskih zavisnika (methadone centre), Terapijska zajednica Kakaricka gora (therapeutic community), Kamp raseljenih lica sa Kosova na Koniku (Kosovo refugees centre). Besides our member organisations, good and constructive meetings were held with NGOs including Cazas, Preporod and Narcotics Anonymous.

The most positive impression from the visit is that most of the authorities and institution value very high the work of the NGOs and underline that they are the ones who have a direct contact with drug users which is an excellent channel for accessing them. The most challenging is that many actors in the field of drugs are working hard but that there is no efficient system that should coordinate their efforts in an effective way.



international Symposium "Towards Changes"

On the occasion of 26 June - the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, the Special Hospital for Substance Abuse in Belgrade, Serbia, organised the international Symposium "Towards Changes" on 16 and 17 June. Topics included changes of trends in drug use, organising a network of institutions that provide treatment to addicts, including private medical services and local communities and prospective of further development of clubs for cured alcoholics and gamblers. Besides local medical experts, guests came from Bosnia Herzegovina, Croatia, FYRO Macedonia and Montenegro. Keynote speaker was Mr Antti Jearventaus from Finland who presented his work on use of Internet in fighting drugs, prevention and addiction treatment.

Irena Molnar, representing her NGO ReGeneracija and the DPNSEE Office (the only one from the NGO sector), was invited to participate in the open table dialogue with representatives from the region and to speak about involvement and use of resources of local community and organizations of civil society in resolving drug addiction.

Irena met and established contacts with many participants from different countries. Most important were those with Serbian Director of the Office for combating drugs, the Focal point and Office for monitoring of Ministry of Health, referring to EMCDDA and Director of the Special hospital for addictions. She presented DPNSEE and announced visits that we shall pay to countries of the Western Balkans.



HOPS

FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Summer school on addictions

HOPS – Healthy Options Project Skopje opened the Summer school on addictions in 2012 as first and only educational event in Macedonia where young professionals acquire knowledge on working in the field of drug dependence. The School offers the rare opportunity for multidisciplinary approach in addictology. The curriculum tends to offer a comprehensive overview of drug policy models, evidence-based treatments, reduction of drug related harms, psycho-social support and the human rights concept. This year the School was held in the city of Ohrid, Macedonia in the period of 24.06 – 01.07.2016. The participants were young professionals in the field of social work, psychology, law, medicine, safety, police and detectives. Trainers of the school were well established practitioners, social workers, psychiatrists, medical doctors and PhD professors. The topics covered by the School are very significant for the future professionals working in this area. The School complements the knowledge and skills young professionals acquire during their formal education with the opportunity to acquire insight in the practical implementation of the Harm reduction program, the Program for dependence treatment and the Program for rehabilitation and re-socialization of drug users, apart from the theoretical knowledge and skills.

Anica Dimovska
Program Assistant for Education
Healthy Options Project Skopje



PREVENT

SERVIA

Support Don't Punish action held in Novi Sad

On the occasion of the World Drug Day (June 26th), activists and allies from 70 different countries took part in the fourth Support Don't Punish "Global Day of Action". The wide variety of actions, organized by Civil Society and networks of affected groups around the world, clearly illustrates that harm reduction and drug policy reform initiatives gain more and more ground around the world.

Association Prevent, from Novi Sad (Serbia), is supporting this action during the last two years. We organized various public actions in the area of the city beach and the river Danube, while at the same time our volunteers held actions at the Ohrid Lake in Macedonia and at the Fruska Gora Mountain near the city of Novi Sad.

We want to remind that the 26th of June is the United Nations' International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking' – a day on which many governments celebrate their contributions to the global "war on drugs". We, on the contrary, we chose to dedicate this day for the aforementioned actions.

NGO Prevent, Serbia.



DIOGENIS – Drug Policy Dialogue

GREECE

JUNE 26th: WORLD DRUG DAY People count! #PWUDcount
A campaign by DIOGENIS – Drug Policy Dialogue



All human beings are born free and equals in dignity and rights (Article 1 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, United Nations, 1948). On the occasion of the World Drug Day, on June 26th, we place people at the heart of the dialogue and in this regard we joined our voices with the slogan “People count!” and dozens stated their support using the hashtag #PWUDcount (Persons Who Use Drugs count) from 22/6/2016 up to 26/6/2016.

The campaign will be completed in a few days, after “Diogenis” organize and forward the reactions to the competent authorities working in the field of psychoactive substances in our country (Prime Minister’s Office, National Drug Coordinator, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice), the European Commission – in our organization’s capacity as a member of the Civil Society Forum – and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime.

“Diogenis” is “On Air”!

We started on May 11th and from that day, every Wednesday 16:00 – 17:00, drug policy has a new voice! At the friendly e-radio of Klimax Plus, <http://bit.ly/1T8qE8e>, the program “the Jar”, with Sofia Galinaki and Nikos Stergiou, broadcast great music and analyze issues concerning drug policy in Greece and other countries, with special guests from the Civil Society, Social and Public servants and scientists. Placing the Human being and its needs at the centre of the discussion, we reopen the public dialogue on the issue of psychoactive substances, trying to include all the new available data, facts and best practices from all around the world.

You can hear the all the past programs at our channel on YouTube: <http://bit.ly/29Xos1E>.



Regional conference on “Drug Policy after the UNGASS”, Thessaloniki 2-4 June 2016

From 2-4 June 2016, Diogenis, Drug policy Dialogue organized in Thessaloniki, Greece a regional Conference on “Drug policy after the UNGASS 2016”. The meeting was aiming to inform NGOs, policy makers and researchers in the region of South East Europe, about the outcomes of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) which took place from 19-21 April 2016 in New York (USA), to discuss about international, regional and national developments in the field of drugs and take stock of initiatives and proposals for action during the coming two years. Speakers from UNODC, academics, professionals working in the field of harm reduction and treatment, experts in palliative care and the cannabis issue, commended on the UNGASS outcome document “Our joint commitment to effectively addressing and countering the world drug problem” and stressed the significance of its implementation in the coming two years. The mixed feelings about the outcome of the UNGASS, did not dominate the discussions. There was a general recognition that the member states have different approaches which cannot yet lead to consensus. The process on the way towards the UNGASS was positive. There has been open dialogue about subjects that until recently were not negotiable. The issue of the death penalty for drug related offences remains on the agenda, the wording on harm reduction is not satisfactory but the UNGASS document contains several positive points by recognising explicitly the harm reduction approach and is making openings for further dialogue on most of the issues. The meeting proposed an agenda for action on the national and regional level for the coming period. In focus groups the participants suggested items for action regarding the main challenges for the countries in South East Europe in the field of treatment and harm reduction, actions needed to achieve decriminalization of drug possession for personal use, ways to involve drug users and civil society organisations in policy making and methods to exercise strong advocacy towards the competent authorities. A report of the Conference will be published soon.



Open Informational Meeting at Athens.

On April 7 (World Health Day), the open informational meeting on the occasion of the UN General Assembly Special Session on Drugs (UNGASS 2016) organized by DIOGENIS-Drug Policy Dialogue, concluded in great success, with the participation of more than 50 guests.

Attended the event were representatives from civil society organizations, local authorities, secondary education, professionals working in the field of prevention, harm reduction, treatment and social reintegration, and from the office of the National Coordinator for Drugs.

During the meeting, lots of information, suggestions and experiences were presented by the speakers and the participants on the background, objectives, preparations and expectations concerning the upcoming UN Special Session on Drugs, the current drug policy and the challenges both in international and national level. As a result, the discussion revealed the need to create a statement which will include the main proposals raised during the meeting, to be taken into consideration by the Greek representation at the UNGASS 2016, which will be sent within the next few days to the relevant government agencies.



New publication Sentencing of drug offenders, the legislator's Policy and the Practice of the Courts in South Eastern Europe.

Diogenis has published the book "Sentencing of Drug Offenders: The Legislator's Policy and the Practice of the Courts in South Eastern Europe". The publication contains the findings of the research that has been initiated by Diogenis and has been done by researches affiliated with research institutes and law faculties of Universities in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Greece, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia.

The purpose of the research was to identify and analyse the development of punitive legislative policy in the countries of South East Europe during the last 10 years and identify sanctioning practices on state and county courts. Cases from one county court were scrutinised to find out which cases were brought before the court, who were the perpetrators and how objective and subjective circumstances were evaluated by the court in sanctioning the convicted persons.



Sentencing of Drug Offenders: Legislators' Policy and the Practice of the Courts in South Eastern Europe

Edited by:
Thanasis Apostolou
Director, Diogenis Association


SAKKOULAS PUBLICATIONS
ΑΘΗΝΑΙ ΤΕΡΜΑΚΟΝΙΚΗ

A significant finding of the research is that the judges are interpreting legislation in different ways. There is a small number of judges that impose sanctions which are harsher than the legislator is requiring. There is common practice of some of them that they see drug possession per definition as drug trafficking. The vast majority of the judges, however, is more lenient than the legislator, because they take into consideration all aspects of the situation of the offender (family, social and economic situation, previous convictions etc.) It is more and more common practice that the courts see drug offenders primarily as persons in need of treatment. The book and the separate country reports are available in electronic form in the follow link: <http://www.diogenis.info/library/diogenis/publications/>

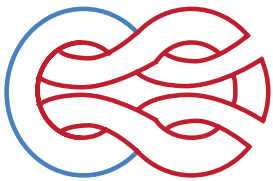
Protest at Ministry of Health

The "Platform of NGOs for Psychoactive substances" on the occasion of the World Day for Harm Reduction (May 7), organized with its members, a protest yesterday, Monday, May 9 at 13:00 at the entrance of the Greek Ministry of Health.

A year ago we published a corresponding press release, which highlights the need to strengthen and extend the relevant interventions, scientifically documented their effectiveness at the global level and the importance of revising the existing legal framework in order to better support operations and benefited from them. However, despite the promises of the political leadership of the Ministry of Health for shielding of Harm Reduction interventions, during the presentation of the annual report of the National Focal Point in June 2015, there has been no progress in any of our requests.

More can be found here: <https://ppsg.org/>





DRUG POLICY NETWORK SEE

Romanian Harm Reduction Network (RHRN),
Romania

Aksion Plus, Albania

Healthy Options Project Skopje (HOPS),
Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia

Juventas, Montenegro

The "South Eastern European and Adriatic Addiction
Network", SEEAN, Slovenia

NGO Viktorija, Banja Luka, Bosnia Herzegovina

Association Margina, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Association Prevent, Novi Sad, Serbia

DIOGENIS, Drug Policy Dialogue, Greece

Centre for life, Greece

Positive Voice, Greece

NGO 4life, Montenegro

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 Association, Fokionos 8, 10 563 Athens, Greece

E-mail: info@diogenis.info

