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DPNSEE Moved!



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DPNSEE Glossary of terms published in Spanish!

The Board Meeting



The Drug Policy Network in South East Europe Board held a regular board meeting in Skopje from 28 February to 2 March 2018. 5 of 7 Board members and Staff participated.

Significant part of the meeting was dedicated to reviewing the results of the work in the previous year and evaluating the growth of the Networks activities and actions on national, regional and the global scene. The Board sees 2017 as a year full of activities with DPNSEE international recognition and improved profile. At the General Assembly in 2016, DPNSEE made first step in developing DPNSEE strategic plan. Following the discussion at the 2017 General Assembly, Board took steps to continue strategic discussion to identify priorities for the work in 2018 and beyond. Analysis of the DPNSEE Code of Conduct concentrated on the Board dynamics and improving relations with member organizations.

The Operational plan for 2018 includes more actions and activities for the upcoming year: capacity building, resource centre, additional translations of the Glossary of term used in drug policy, documenting cases of discrimination of vulnerable populations and international developments.

Dialogue between civil society and the donors in Belgrade enhanced by Open Society Foundations.

The Open Society Foundations convened civil society activists from HIV, harm reduction, sex worker and LGBT communities from South Eastern Europe and health and human rights donors to discuss opportunities for strategic collaboration to sustain HIV prevention services for key populations and facilitate transition to domestic financing of these programs. The half-day meeting was held on 18 January 2018 in Belgrade, Serbia.

The aims of the meeting were:

- Share examples of civil society advocacy towards domestic financing of HIV services, including efforts to push national governments to commit to provision and financing of services for key populations;
- Discuss current challenges sustaining programming for key populations in the region with a specific focus on the threats to the human rights movements, programs, and advocates that were directly and indirectly supported by the Global Fund when it was still active in the region;
- Present examples of how targeted donor support for civil society engagement in transition and sustainability process can bolster government ownership of the HIV response;
- Discuss strategies and opportunities to address the service gap and enable civil society to navigate the transition process, as well as roles that donors, regional networks and technical agencies can play.



Civil society organizations from South East Europe met a day before to discuss current developments regarding the work of the South East Europe Regional Coordinating Mechanism (RCM) and preparation process of the multi-country application, possible cooperation with EECA regional networks as well as opportunities for advocacy funding initiatives sustaining HIV prevention services in South East Europe. Out of 30 representatives of the civil society organizations, 9 DPNSEE member organizations were present: Aksion Plus, Margina, Viktorija, Labyrinth, Cazas, Juventas, ARAS, RHRN and Prevent.

On the margins of the dialogue between civil society and donors, representatives of the Open Society Foundations visited DPNSEE office on 18 January 2018: Daniel Wolfe, director of International Harm Reduction Development, Julia Greenberg, director of Governance and Financing, and Ekaterina Lukicheva, program officer for the International Harm Reduction Development Program (all three from the OSF Public Health Programme) along with Raminta Štуйkyte, consultant. Vice-President Nebojša Đurasović, Secretary of the Board Denis Dedajić and Executive Director Milutin Milošević welcomed the distinguished guests. DPNSEE hosts presented work and potentials of the Network and answered many questions. Guests were especially interested by the fact that DPNSEE gathers member organizations from all SEE countries and that it has a wide approach to the issue, including various elements of drug policy. Discussions about potential cooperation extended throughout the next two days of meetings.

Before the meetings in Belgrade, OSF and GF representatives visited Montenegro to discuss implementation of the two project they finance since 2017 and preparations for the national project application to the Global Fund. Our member organizations Cazas and Juventas were involved in the meetings. The OSF visit ended with visit to the Drop-in for drug users and Shelter for sex workers in Novi Sad managed by Prevent. The visit was very effective, with excellent presentation of Prevent's work and very emotional discussion with three sex workers in the Shelter. At the end the guests (including representatives of SWAN and Mama Cash foundation) haven't made any concrete promise for support but they expressed their willingness to help finding donors. The visit should be used as a model for welcoming donors and convincing them to finance services.

DPNSEE Glossary of terms published in Spanish!

Drug Policy Network South East Europe created a Glossary of terms used in drug policy, hoping to contribute to better understanding the drug problem in more emphatic manner. Glossary is an alphabetical list of terms with definitions. It also contains explanations of concepts and terms related to the field of drugs and relevant related matters. The glossary should serve firstly to DPNSEE member organizations in a way that will help in process of harmonization of opinions and attitudes. Secondly, this material is imagined to serve a wider range of groups of people including policy makers, stakeholders, activists, the media, police, judiciary and others. The latest published version of the glossary is published on Spanish thanks to Andrés Palencia, political scientist from the organization Simplemente Opinión from Columbia translated the Glossary. It can be downloaded from this link <http://www.dpnsee.org/cms/files/2018/02/DPNSEE-Glossary-ENG-January-2018-compressed.pdf>

The next version of Glossary is planned to be published in Serbian, and by the end of the year DPNSEE hopes to publish it on at least at one more language from the region.



DPNSEE Moved!

The first trimester for the DPNSEE Office was marked with a lot of activities where one of them was moving the Office! DPNSEE staff is now settled in a beautiful area called Zemun, looking forward for a good time in an inspiring working space. The new contact details are available at the DPNSEE website (<http://www.dpnsee.org/contact/>).



JUVENTAS

MONTENEGRO

Developments and challenges on fighting HIV and HCV in Montenegro.

By Marija Milić, Coordinator of Harm Reduction Program

Though Montenegro is a country with a low HIV prevalence (0.02%) within the general population, it has been facing with a possibility of concentrated epidemic among MSM people and proved very high prevalence of Hepatitis C among people who use drugs.

While the most common route of transmission, and the one that is increasing since the beginning of the HIV/AIDS epidemic is unprotected sex- 85% (2015 HIV/AIDS Report by the Institute of Public Health in Montenegro), sharing of injecting equipment is responsible for high prevalence of Hepatitis C among PWUID. Taking this into account, specific prevention measures have been developed by NGOs and provided to PWUID, sex workers, MSM, prisoners, merchant marines and most at risk adolescents.

Montenegro has benefited from GFTAM funding since 2006 until July 2015, when obligation for funding of community based services, provided by NGOs failed to be transitioned to government. NGOs have faced with very limited sources of funding, and have either decrease their reach (e.g. Juventas), or closed their services for a year (e.g. Cazas).

From 2015, Juventas has implemented a sound campaign among decision makers and general public to raise awareness of an alarming problem of lack of funding, meaning lack of accessible services for key affected populations. The campaign was supported through project based funding by Norwegian Embassy, Canadian Embassy and Delegation of European Union and by many international and national stakeholders, resulting in changing of the Laws on Budget for 2016 and 2017 and introduction of HIV related budget.

Open Society Foundations have awarded funds to NGO Juventas and CAZAS in May 2017, in order to support the process of development of new social contracting mechanism, where NGO Juventas was responsible in managing the rules and procedures of the contracting mechanism, while NGO CAZAS has been implemented capacity building.

This social contracting mechanism has been put in place in December 2017 while funding is secured with matching fund of GFTAM and Ministry of health for the following 3 years. NGOs will continue to advocate for a sustainable services after the new transition period, meaning after 2021.



CENTRE FOR LIFE

GREECE

2nd Joint Court of Athens adopts the message “U = U”

A historic decision was issued unanimously by the 2nd Joint Court of Athens, explicitly adopting for the first time the message of the scientific community which states that a person living with HIV and who has undetectable virus load is untransmittable.

More specifically, the Court acquitted an accused who was sued by a partner, with whom he maintained an occasional sexual relationship, on the grounds of him trying to transmit to her the HIV virus through an alleged unprotected sexual encounter. Additionally, the Court recognized as a non-incriminating element the decision of the accused not to reveal his seropositivity to his occasional sexual partner, considering that it was critical for his acquittal or guilt to be the fact that he took the necessary precautions and treatment, so that a third person is not at risk of having sex with him.

Given that the accused received stable treatment and during the indicative time his viral load was steadily below the detectable limit (<20 copies/ml), the Court held that the objective and subjective nature of the accusation for attempted repeated serious intended bodily injury was not met at all, as well as the accusation for attempted repeated serious intended bodily injury with possible deception.

The case was taken over by the Centre for Life, offering free legal support at the beneficiary throughout the whole judicial procedure. We salute with great joy the first Greek court recognition of the message “Undetectable = Untransmittable”. At the same time, however, we draw the attention to the responsible bodies for the non-functioning of the reagents for a period of time that exceeds 1 ½ year, which, apart from the other very serious problems that this may entail in terms of health, leads to the loss of the most important evidence in criminal trials against people living with HIV and leaves open the possibility of increasing incidences of blackmail against HIV positive people.



DIOGENIS

GREECE

Meeting of the National Drug Planning and Coordination Committee

The first meeting of the National Drug Planning and Coordination Committee for 2018 was held yesterday, Monday 22/1/2018. The meeting was attended by: the Minister of Health, the Deputy Secretary General, representatives of the Ministries of Labor, Education, Justice, Home Affairs, KETHEA, OKANA, 18ANO, the Department of Addictions of the Ministry of Health, the Fiscal Criminal Investigative Corps, the Greek Police and the Coast Guard.

The competence of this Committee, as described in Article 50 of Law 4139/2013, is to draw up the National Action Plan on Drugs, to design and develop the country's international co-operation, to coordinate and promote the necessary measures, actions by the competent Ministries in the framework of the National Action Plan, as well as the monitoring of their implementation.

The Committee has set as a key priority the issue of the institutional framework for the licensing, operation and control of private centers operating in the field of dependencies, based on the recent findings of the Health and Welfare Services Inspectors' Corps.

The Minister of Health, Mr. Andreas Xanthos, stated as the main objective of the ministry the remodeling and the modernization of the institutional framework governing the field of dependencies (L.4139.2013).

Finally, the National Coordinator for Drugs, Dr. Christina Papoutsopoulou-Diamantopoulou stressed that "the Commission will work on the priorities set by the Minister. The aim of the Committee is to draw up a national strategy and national action plan"

For more information, read the Relevant Press Release (in Greek) published by the Press Office of the Ministry of Health, at the follow link:
<https://bit.ly/2MleA2w>



Open dialogue meeting: “Drug Policy: everyday practice and challenges for a consistent and effective policy”

On Tuesday, March 27, 2018, “Diogenis Drug Policy Dialogue” organized an open dialogue meeting at Impact Hub, in Athens, on the subject: “Drug Policy: everyday practice and challenges for a consistent and effective policy”.

The aim of the dialogue was to discuss the conditions prevailing in the last 5 years in Athens with regard to the use of psychoactive substances, in particular (a) available services and interventions of harm reduction for active users in the city, (b) the latest trends and recent developments on the issue of new psychoactive substances, (c) the particular problems faced by adolescents and young people using psychoactive substances and their relationship to delinquency.

In addition, the participants were briefed on the work and results of the recent session of the Commission on Narcotic and Drugs 'CND 61', held on 12-16 March 2018 in Vienna.

Our main objective was to provide a comprehensive overview of the issues under discussion, to exchange information and disseminate knowledge through the equitable and constructive participation of all stakeholders. Representatives from the Ministry of Health, the City of Athens, the national institutions and the Civil Society, participated in the dialogue, contributing with their experience in better information and cooperation.

The dialogue was part of the program "New Approaches in Harm Reduction Policies and Practices" (NAHRPP), in which “Diogenis” is partner, along with the Transnational Institute (TNI) – Netherlands (Leader Organization), “Forum Droghe” (FD) – Italy (partner) and “International Center for Ethnobotanical Education, Research and Service” (ICEERS) -Spain (partner). The program is funded by the EC and OSF. The results of the dialogue will be announced shortly on the “Diogenis” website www.diogenis.info.



New Campaign by “Diogenis”: Persons Who Use Drugs Count!

Radu Cata
Head of the Harm Reduction Department
NGO “ALIA”
Romania



20.02.2018
World Day
of Social Justice
#PWUDCOUNT
campaign



Powered by EU
Co-funded by the Ministry of Health

On the occasion of the World Day of Social Justice, February 20th, organization “Diogenis – Drug Policy Dialogue”, launched an awareness campaign entitled “Persons Who Use Drugs Count”. The campaign is running through 2018 in selected international/world days.

“Persons Who Use Drugs Count” campaign, highlights and promotes the need to respect the human rights’ of an extremely vulnerable and marginalized population, reminding all of us that persons who use drugs do not lose their rights as citizens and human beings.

You can watch the video of the campaign at the link https://youtu.be/LhJY3nfzl_g and you can follow #PWUDCOUNT for updates.

The Greek parliament adopted the law on medicinal cannabis

On March 1st 2018, the Greek Parliament adopted the bill “Provisions for the Production of end products of medicinal cannabis”. The Standing Committee on Social Affairs discussed the draft law at two meetings of the committee and organized a hearing in the Greek Parliament with participation of patient organizations, drug service providers, representatives of the scientific community, agricultural trade unions and civil society organizations. An extensive debate took place in Parliament’s plenary, which ended with the adoption of the bill. The majority of the Parliament voted in favor of the bill.

You can read the full document by Thanasis Apostolou, Director, at the follow link:
<http://www.diogenis.info/cms/files/2018/03/new-greek-law-medical-kannabis-eng-1.pdf>



POSITIVE VOICE

GREECE

A trimester of activities

In January (12-1) a lecture was organized by the "Positive Voice" in the Psychology Department of the Athens Philosophical School in undergraduate students for HIV/AIDS, the use of psychoactive substances and the reduction of harm. On January 11th, "Positive Voice" participated in Thessaloniki at the conference organized by the Hellenic Patients' Association "Prometheus" on "Combating inequalities in health - HCV and using intravenous drugs".

In February, a working group of the Association for the implementation of chemsex mapping interventions in Greece and the development of harm reduction actions was launched. Also, "Positive Voice" participated in the important meeting "PreP in Europe Summit 2018" in Amsterdam and in the 2nd European ChemSex Forum in Berlin in March, receiving important information on best practices abroad and presented interventions planned in Greece.

This quarter also continued the informative educational seminars on day centers, reception halls and communities on HIV / AIDS, safer use of psychoactive substances and harm reduction, as well as peer empowerment at Korydallos' prison hospital "St. Paul".

PROMETHEUS

GREECE

Assessment of living conditions and access to health services for people who use drugs and live with hepatitis C in Greece.

Hellenic Liver Patients Association "Prometheus", under the scientific lead of Ass. Professor of Health Policy – University of Peloponnese, Mr K. Souliotis, conducted a study titled "Assessment of living conditions and access to health services for People Who Use Drugs and live with Hepatitis C in Greece".

The purpose of this research is to highlight any barriers encountered by this population group during their interaction with the National Health System, as well as to evaluate their living conditions in order to elucidate this multifaceted problem in a period of economic crisis.

Out of 311 participants, 53,8% were members of substitution programs (OKANA) and 43,9% members of rehabilitation programs (KETHEA). The majority of the sample, at a rate of 64%, is not aware of their liver fibrosis and 48,4% states that is not monitored by a doctor for hepatitis C currently. Furthermore, 26% of participants state to have coinfection with HIV and 21% with hepatitis B.

Out of the total number of participants, 38% stated to face obstacles while accessing their doctor, and attributes these obstacles to and lack of health insurance (25,5%) and delay in appointment arrangements (20,1%). High percentage of participants (43,8%) encounters barriers while accessing treatment for hepatitis C; 19,5% attributes these barriers to not meeting treatment access criteria and 16,7% to bureaucracy.

Finally, in comparison with 2019, 42,4% of the sample stated that the attention they pay to their health issue(s) was worsened.

One day meeting: tackling health inequalities – Hepatitis C and drug use in Northern Greece

ΗΜΕΡΙΔΑ

**ΑΝΤΙΜΕΤΩΠΙΣΗ
ΑΝΙΣΟΤΗΤΩΝ ΣΤΗΝ ΥΓΕΙΑ
ΗΠΑΤΙΤΙΔΑ C ΚΑΙ ΧΡΗΣΗ
ΕΝΔΟΦΛΕΒΙΩΝ
ΝΑΡΚΩΤΙΚΩΝ ΣΤΗΝ
ΒΟΡΕΙΑ ΕΛΛΑΔΑ**

Porto Palace Hotel
& Conference Center

26ης Οκτωβρίου 65,
Θεσσαλονίκη 546 28

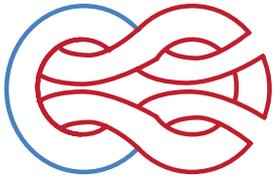
Hellenic Liver Patients Association "Prometheus" in collaboration with Ms V. Sypsa – Ass. Professor of Dept. of Hygiene, Epidemiology and Medical Statistics School of Medicine, University of Athens, and Mr I. Goulis – Ass. Professor of Gastroenterology, 4th Pathological Clinic of Ippokrateio Gen. Hospital of Thessaloniki, organized a one day meeting titled "Tackling Health Inequalities: Hepatitis C and Drug Use in Northern Greece".

The purpose of this meeting was the holistic approach of Hepatitis C and injecting drug use, in the light of understanding linkage to care of PWUD with the National Health System in Northern Greece. The one-day meeting was conducted via 4 round tables with presentations and inputs from our distinguished speakers.

The content of round tables was respectively: "Epidemiological Data for Hepatitis C in PWUD and Elimination Prospects", "Hepatitis C treatment in Substitution Programs of OKANA in Northern Greece", "Treating Hepatitis C in rehabilitation programs: The Role of KETHEA and Psychiatric Hospital of Thessaloniki" and "Monitoring hepatitis C in Northern Greece: Good Practices and Obstacles".

Διοργάνωση:





DRUG POLICY NETWORK SEE

4Life, Podgorica, Montenegro
 Aksion Plus, Tirana, Albania
 Aliat, Bucharest, Romania
 ARAS, Bucharest, Romania
 Cazas, Podgorica, Montenegro
 Centre for Life, Athens, Greece
 Coalition 'Sexual and Health Rights of Marginalized Communities', Skopje, FYRO Macedonia
 Diogenis, Athens, Greece
 HOPS, Skopje, FYRO 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
 Viktorija, Banja Luka, Bosnia Herzegovina
 Romanian Harm Reduction Network (RHRN), Romania
 Prometheus, 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

