

HARM REDUCTION WORKS – FUND IT!

REGIONAL FORUM ON HEALTHCARE AND HUMAN
RIGHTS OF PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS

СНИЖЕНИЕ ВРЕДА РАБОТАЕТ – ОБЕСПЕЧЬТЕ ФИНАНСИРОВАНИЕ!

РЕГИОНАЛЬНЫЙ ФОРУМ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ЗДОРОВЬЯ
И ПРАВ ЛЮДЕЙ, УПОТРЕБЛЯЮЩИХ НАРКОТИКИ

REPORT

On 19 - 20 May, 2014 a high level Regional Forum on healthcare and human rights of people who use drugs took place in Chisinau (Moldova) under the auspice of Eurasian Harm Reduction Network (EHRN). The Forum was attended by over 150 participants. During the two days of sessions, social integration, human rights and access to healthcare for people who use drugs were discussed, with a focus on the issue of transitioning from international to national funding for health and social services. This was a unique opportunity for harm reduction service providers, national and international experts in public health, health finance and human rights, people who use drugs, and high level officials and decision makers to meet face-to-face and jointly discuss the most important issues in the region and ways forward.

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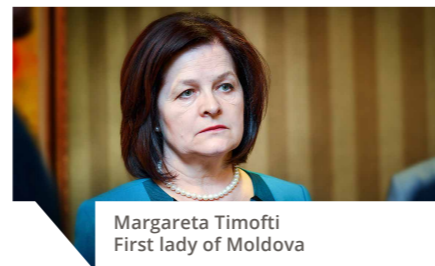


157 PARTICIPANTS

- 135 PARTICIPANTS FROM CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA**
- 25 COUNTRIES REPRESENTED**
- 114 CIVIL SOCIETY REPRESENTATIVES**
- 56 PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS REPRESENTATIVES**
- 13 HIGH-LEVEL SPEAKERS**



“The criminalization of people who use drugs is costly, ineffective, and does not meet international and European standards of human rights and health – standards that this region has publically committed to but not enforced through its national drug policies or law enforcement practices.”



“Moldova is proud to be hosting for the first time this Regional Forum on healthcare and human rights of people who use drugs. We support the state institutions and civil society organizations that are involved in harm reduction activities and hope to facilitate an ongoing dialogue on how we can better integrate and serve marginalized communities in the region.”



“I get a lump in my throat when I see that people are dying because decisions are being made without participation of people who use drugs.”

“UNODC highly values the input from non-governmental organizations in all aspects of HIV prevention and treatment for vulnerable groups (people who inject drugs and prisoners), and closely collaborates with civil society around these issues. UNODC and EHRN have developed a joint action plan for Eastern Europe and Central Asia and are implementing activities to advocate for reduced stigma and discrimination and the promotion of hands-on approaches based on human rights principles and gender sensitivity.”



Zhannat Kosmukhamedova,
Expert, Gender and HIV, LE and HIV Eastern Europe and Central Asia, United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime, HIV/AIDS Unit

“Harm reduction is cheap, effective and human. There is no argument that could simply deny harm reduction interventions. However, there is still a lot of resistance among decision makers as well as the general public.”



Pavel Bem,
former Mayor of Prague, Member of Parliament, Czech Republic

“I'm from Crimea, and I'm a patient of the OST program. I don't have the heart to say 'former patient!' Now I am certain that to avoid situations similar to that in Crimea we all need an emergency 'lifebelt' – a combination of medical components and prompt, efficient support from decision-makers.”



Igor Kuzmenko,
Eurasian Network of People who Use Drugs

“There is strong and undeniable evidence that harm reduction protects people who inject drugs from HIV and improves their health, yet unjustly it remains unavailable to people in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The Chisinau Forum allowed people who use drugs and decision makers to sit at the same table together to mutually reflect on the drivers of this disturbing harm reduction status quo in the region and how best to change it.”



Michel Kazatchkine,
UN Secretary General Special Envoy on HIV/AIDS in Eastern Europe and Central Asia

“We succeeded in making arguments that harm reduction works, but for funding it we need a special mechanism. Government needs to develop this mechanism on how to fund the NGOs.”



Ala Iatco,
Union for HIV/AIDS Prevention and Harm Reduction (UOHR), President, Moldova

“HIV epidemics and the prevalence of drug use in Estonia; it has not been an easy task for us in Estonia. It is a small society but we had a very large epidemic of HIV, big numbers of drug users. The harshness of problems pushed us to find good solutions and find resources. In 2003, we adopted the first strategy that introduced an evidence-based harm reduction approach. We also decriminalized drug use. In 2014 we adopted a comprehensive “White Paper” on Reducing Drug Use that validates main principles and values and sets clear goals for unified action.”



Ken Marti Vaher,
former Minister of Interior, Member of Parliament, Estonia

“ If you want to stop police violence against women who use drugs, you should think about decriminalization. This is the way out. ”



Anand Grover,
UN Special Rapporteur on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health

“ EHRN's activities promote humanity towards people who use drugs – the population that has been marginalized for years and driven to believe that they are outcasts of society, criminal elements, a waste on the face of the planet. I won't even start counting the benefits of these activities for the society – it would take a lifetime. Yet, I'd like to emphasize the importance of the campaign “Women Against Violence”. The mere existence of such a program gives hope to many scared woman who are facing abuse and degrading treatment. ”



Anna Otarashvili,
Eurasian Network of People who Use Drugs

OUTCOMES

- + For the third year EHRN, in partnership with international organizations, has organized a regional forum on the healthcare and human rights of people who use drugs. The next forum, which is a unique (and already traditional) platform for dialogue between the community and politicians, will be organized in 2015. We hope that the forum will not only help share opinions between the community and decision-makers from ECEA countries, but also contribute to concrete decisions on drug policy reform and funding for harm reduction.
- + At the regional forum, a mini-grant competition was announced for initiative groups and self-organizations of people who use drugs. Submission deadline: 19 June 2014. Detailed information about the competition is available [here](#).
- + The methodology for evaluating existing funding for harm reduction and calculating the needed investments was highly rated by the international and national experts of the Investment Monitoring Group. The final version of the methodology and related tools will be available on the EHRN website after 1 August 2014.
- + The regional campaign “Women Against Violence” received widespread support from UN agencies and international organizations. The participation of Moldova's law enforcement structures in the regional forum was an important step towards resolving the problem of police violence against women who use drugs.
- + The Eurasian Network of People who Use Drugs (ENPUD) is continuing its rapid development. By the time of the Chisinau forum, ENPUD united 169 community leaders from 13 countries. At the forum, important groundwork was prepared for the development of the new network strategy based on availability of treatment, including drug treatment, and activities aimed at reforming drug policy in ECEA. In the immediate future, activists will start monitoring the human rights of people who use drugs in Crimea and issue a special newsletter for the community.



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