



Urban drug policies should be stages of consensual actions, not battlefields

PRESS RELEASE, 26th June 2010

In 1987, the United Nations declared 26 June as the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. United Nations International Treaties define the borders for drug policies – also on a local level. The conference on ‘Urban drug policies in the globalised world’ is opening a pragmatic dialogue among those influencing and implementing drug policies in European and non-European cities.

The common objective of the participants in the conference ‘Urban drug policy in the globalised world’ is to draft and agree on the Prague Declaration on the principles of efficient urban drug policies. The Prague Declaration should define, in a consensual, pragmatic, understandable, and non-partisan way, the basic principles of policies that are aware of the fact that in the recent reality, drug use is part of modern urbanised societies globally, and that to push it away to the peripheries of the city and to adopt one-size-fits-all political solutions threatens to bring major negative consequences and high economic costs.

The scientific part of the conference, put together by Program Committee comprised by distinguished experts, will discuss the opportunities and limits of drug policies on a local level that is close to exactly those drug scenes and their risks, as well as to public opinion, and must at the same time adjust and balance its activities with regard to the three UN Drugs Conventions. A plenary ‘From the grassroots through the capitals into the UN?’ will be introduced by Martin Iguchi, who has been doing drug policy research for more than 20 years and works in the prestigious think-tank RAND and for the University of California in Los Angeles.

An absolutely crucial topic will be discussed in the plenary ‘Public health vs. Public safety?’, which will be introduced and facilitated by Pavel Bem, former national drug coordinator of the Czech Republic and recently Mayor of the City of Prague.

Important thematic foci of the conference are innovative or modernised interventions in prevention, treatment, law enforcement and harm reduction and their monitoring, and evaluations of their impacts. Viktor Mravcik, the Head of the Czech Monitoring Centre on Drugs and Addictions, will introduce recognised scientists and distinguished speakers presenting the results of their work.

In several sessions, the conference will concentrate on the sociological and practical aspects of achieving a consensus on the extent and type of interventions that should be prioritised, too often expressed by the slogan ‘Not in my backyard!’ Closely related to this topic, Jean-Paul Grund, who has spent his life doing research into marginalised populations in their natural environment and introducing health-oriented interventions on the community level, will facilitate the session ‘Peers, policy and practice’, focusing on the inclusion of former and current drug users in the planning and implementation of services and policies.



Efficient law enforcement with minimal 'collateral damage', innovative interventions, and topics that are often seen as controversial - such as consumption rooms for injecting drug users or assisted heroin treatment - implemented at city level will be the subject of discussions and practical how-to-do workshops.

The languages of the conference are English, Russian, and Czech.

Sign up for the conference and send your presentation abstract/s; we would welcome (but are not limited to) the following topics:

- Public health vs. Public safety?
(balance or complementation?)
- The police and policing
(How do we evaluate police activities and what we learn of the evaluations?)
- Prevention, treatment and harm reduction services and their monitoring at the city level.
(planning, implementing, and evaluating)
- Peers, policy and practice?
(peer support and how to encourage it)
- Not in my backyard!
(building a community consensus)
- From the grassroots through the capitals into the UN?
(how the local level of drug policy is translated into national and international politics - and vice versa)
- Prague and drugs: where are we and where do we want to be in four years?
(is there any agreement possible?)

Unique how-to-do workshops will be available for a limited number of conference participants; the selection of participants will be on a "first-come, first-served" basis

- Primary prevention at the city level
- Opioid substitution treatment and cities. How can it be evaluated and improved?
- Consumption rooms and assisted heroin treatment in cities. How can public discussion be started?
- The (semi) open drug scene, the police, and the specialised services. How can the public nuisance be dealt with?
- Innovative interventions for stimulant users
- Community policing and drugs. How does it work and why?