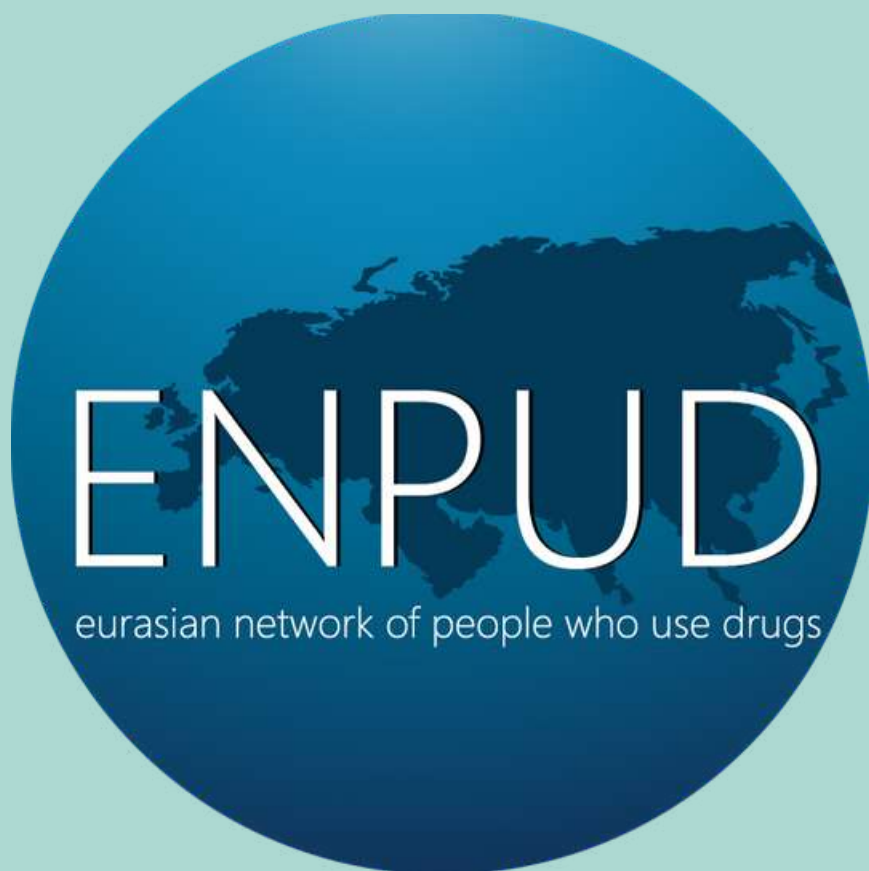


INFORMATION DIGEST

JULY / AUGUST 2020



ENPUD
network news



BELARUS COMMUNITY IS ON FIRE



Today, the whole world is watching the situation in the Republic of Belarus as potentially historic events take place. Peaceful revolution and unification of the people – this has not been the case in the country for a very long time.

Belarus has been ruled by a dictator for 26 years – the last one in Europe. Everyone was so tired of this that the falsification of the last presidential election by Alexander Lukashenko became a tipping point, after which the people's patience broke. The people are finally awake. They have stopped being afraid and have taken to the streets all over the country.

BELARUS COMMUNITY IS ON FIRE



The government have responded with violence, beatings, and killings of peaceful protesters.

The streets of the cities were filled with rivers of people who did not agree with the existing regime. All Belarusians say that they have never seen such a thing. It is not clear how events will develop in the future, but what is happening is, of course, the recent history of Belarus, which is free and democratic.

As for the community of opioid substitution therapy (OST) patients and people who use drugs – as always in such situations, whether it is the COVID-19 pandemic, revolution, etc., they are most vulnerable to the consequences. Despite the fact that OST programs and harm reduction services are operating normally, many members of the community are afraid of the consequences of what may happen in the country in the very near future.

Today there is a danger that, in order to save his power, Lukashenko will turn to Russia for help. People are afraid of Russian interference, despite the fact that this has been happening for a long time at various levels of politics and economy. The influence of Russia is also felt on the development of substitution therapy programs in the country, which is why for many years it has not been possible to register buprenorphine in Belarus. New programs are not opened, and despite the great need for them, those programs that already exist are closed.

The main fear and expectation of the community in Belarus today is a repeat of the situation in Crimea in 2014, when all OST programs were simultaneously closed there. This was a disaster and caused numerous deaths of the program's participants. In Belarus today, 700 people are participating in the OST program throughout the country. These people are so scared that some clients are already ready to reduce their dosages and are going to leave the OST program.

Their actions feed various rumors that exist in the community, but no one knows what is really waiting for them in the very near future.

#WE REMEMBER THE VICTIMS OF REPRESSIVE DRUG POLICIES, WE CARE ABOUT LIVING PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS



July 21 – International Drug Users Remembrance Day. On this Day, the community of people who use drugs remembers the victims of repressive drug policies.

On this Day, we pay tribute to our friends and family; because of the death, which no one recognized as the consequences of the rash actions of politicians and police officers.

Today, and every day for twenty years now, we-people who are driven to poverty by disease and/or the use of substances that are safe for outside people, criminalization, and broken lives by prisons, rape, and torture-address the Governments of Eastern Europe and Central Asia in the words of Ruth Dreyfus, President of Switzerland:

"No international Convention exempts States from their obligations to protect the life, health, and dignity of their citizens, and to guarantee them equal rights and non-discrimination."

A key function of government agencies around the world is to regulate risk-related products and activities. It is an established rule in all areas of policy and law in addition to policy in relation to drugs. As you pay attention to road safety, the same approach should be applied to psychoactive substances.

The international drug control regime has two main objectives. The first is to provide access to narcotic drugs for scientific and medical purposes. The second is to prohibit access to certain funds for persons with other purposes.

Despite the General goal of protecting the "health and well-being of mankind", the current regime and its supporting regulations, which have been in force since the 1960s, are primarily based on criminalizing people who produce, sell or use drugs.

#WE REMEMBER THE VICTIMS OF REPRESSIVE DRUG POLICIES, WE CARE ABOUT LIVING PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS



The failure of repressive drug policies to achieve the goal of Providing access to narcotic drugs for scientific and medical purposes.

Due to inadequate government actions in drug policy, doctors are unable to provide full access to life-saving medicines, in particular opioid analgesics. More than 80% of the world's population experiences unbearable pain and suffering that can be prevented by providing access to essential medicines. And this situation does not change.

Under the right to health, first formulated in the who Constitution in 1946, countries have a clear obligation to ensure access to medicines, including substances controlled under conventions or national legislation. The fact that the substance is controlled does not remove the obligation of the state to provide access to it for medical purposes. It is a crime to force people to suffer from pain when there are medications that can alleviate their suffering.

Drug control requires paramilitary protection for people who are in the substitution therapy program, but the state is not going to allocate funds for protection, and the issue has not been resolved in 10 years. At the same time, people consider themselves lucky to see the suffering and even greater torture experienced by opiate-dependent people in countries that resist the introduction of this program.

The Eurasian network of people who use drugs advocates for people who use psychoactive substances to preserve their dignity, freedom, health and opportunities to earn money legally, through risk reduction services and support programs that are adequate to the needs of the person for whom psychoactive substances have become a part of life. Criminalization and, as a result, legal discrimination against people who use drugs makes it impossible to achieve the goals of prevention and treatment programs.

#WE REMEMBER THE VICTIMS OF REPRESSIVE DRUG POLICIES, WE CARE ABOUT LIVING PEOPLE WHO USE DRUGS



The failure of repressive drug policies to achieve the goal of Prohibiting access to certain funds for people with other goals.

The Eurasian Network of people who use drugs exists so that there are NO more of us. Substance dependence is a physical and mental illness. During the formation of our addiction, a repressive drug policy began to develop, so instead of adequate support, we all became part of a plan to detain "criminals" and self-heal after often unable to help drug treatment and/or trying to restore life after prison.

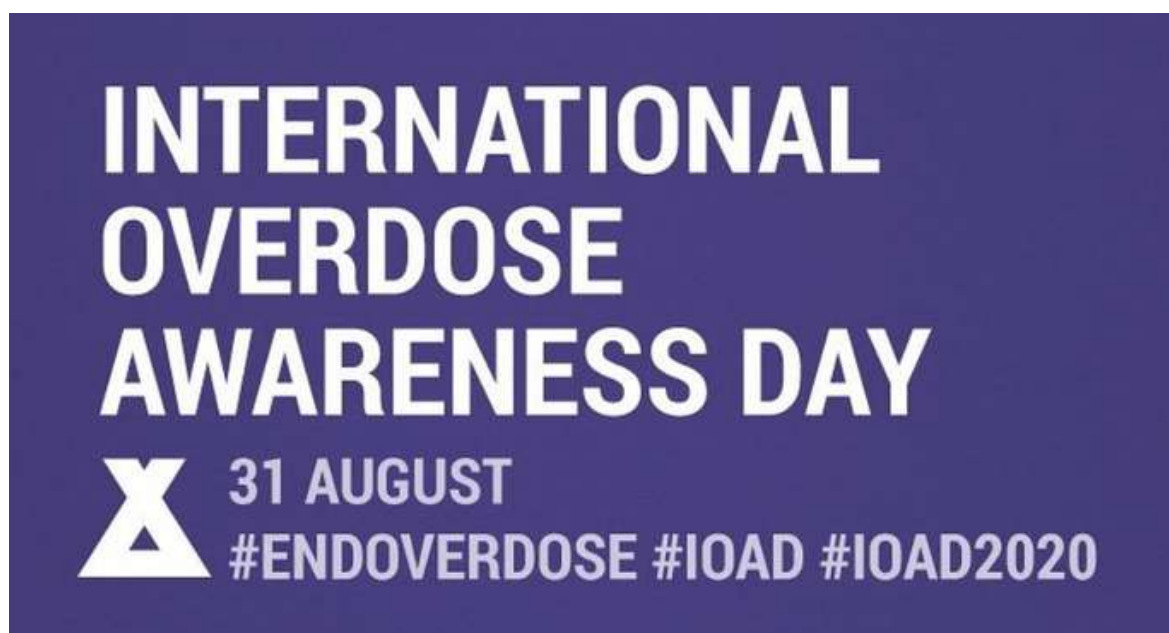
There is strong evidence that drug enforcement approaches based on widespread criminalization and deterrence, aimed at reducing demand by increasing the cost of drugs and taking action against low-level criminal actors and users, are ineffective, cause serious damage and no longer meet the challenges of modern drug markets.

Last year, thousands of people were killed in the war against people who use drugs. They were killed in extrajudicial executions; they were executed; they died of blood-borne infections; they died unassisted from overdoses.

As Part of the international day of remembrance on July 21, ENPUD activists prepared and conducted an information campaign in the countries of the region. Posters, Facebook frames and basic slogans, hashtags and messages were made for it. Dozens of people these days remembered their loved ones and showed their voice in support of humane drug policy!

For more information, follow the link on the ENPUDF website:
<https://goo.su/26Xd>

AUGUST 31: TIME TO REMEMBER, TIME TO ACT



On August 31, the world community celebrates an important date-international overdose awareness Day. This is a global event that aims to raise awareness about overdose around the world.

The Eurasian network of people who use drugs (ENPUD), as always, joined the International day of overdose awareness. On this day, we remember people who died from drug overdoses, and situations when we or our friends were left alive thanks to timely assistance. The call that is the main theme of The international day of raising awareness about overdose is "Time to remember, time to act " (Time to remember, time to act). This means that we must not only remember our loved ones and all those who have died from overdoses, but also act so that our friends no longer die from drug overdoses.

While global figures are hard to come by, the World Health Organization (WHO) has estimated the number of overdose deaths between 195,000-292,500 people annually. The number of overdoses in the world is growing every year. And we are not talking about one-time cases, but about an increase in the number of overdoses associated with a fatal outcome by tens of percent.

Non-fatal overdoses can leave drug users with significant health problems, such as muscle breakdown, kidney failure, heart problems, seizures, nerve damage, or cognitive impairment.

AUGUST 31: TIME TO REMEMBER, TIME TO ACT



31 AUGUST

Death and the negative consequences of an overdose are completely preventable. Most of the dead could have been saved if someone had been with them, if someone had known how to recognize an overdose, and most importantly, how to provide the necessary help. The infinite value of each person and the ability to save their life negates all the fears, prejudices and stigma against people who use drugs.

Today, repressive drug policies in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) region imply criminal liability for drug possession and, in some countries, for drug use. Criminalization drives people who use drugs into unsanitary and marginal conditions, increasing the risk of infection with HIV and other diseases, as well as death from overdose. Criminalization also stops people from seeking medical help if their friends or family members overdose.

The burden of stigmatization and its extreme consequence, criminalization, create barriers to the real involvement of people who use drugs in decision-making, service delivery, and mutual support. Other socio-structural factors, such as the devastating impact of the prison system (especially after release) and various reprisals, also increase the risk of overdose and need urgent correction.

It is obvious that such a policy is not able to prevent overdose and death associated with the drug. It only increases the risk of premature death from overdose and the acute consequences of drug use. Around the world, the problem continues to worsen due to the emergence of new synthetic drugs - fentanyl and carfentanyl, which are many times stronger than heroin in their effects.

AUGUST 31: TIME TO REMEMBER, TIME TO ACT



International Overdose Awareness Day

Today, one of our top priorities for ENPUD is the availability of Naloxone. This is a medication that can stop an opiate overdose. In most EECA countries, naloxone is available only by prescription, which means that it is not under the control of your hand at the right time – after all, an overdose counts for minutes. There are also no other overdose prevention programs that have proven effective in our countries. Although experience shows that these measures are low-cost and contribute to saving many thousands of lives and significantly improving the health of the population as a whole.

In addition, targeted programs and activities, such as safe drinking places and training in overdose management, can prevent overdoses that lead to death and negative consequences. Voluntary and affordable treatment and harm reduction services reduce the risk of overdose.

Many countries around the world are moving towards punitive drug policy reform, including developing overdose prevention programs and increasing the availability of Naloxone among injecting drug users. Decriminalization and empowerment of people who use drugs are becoming an integral part of anti-drug overdose policies.

But all these effective measures to combat overdose are still not available in the countries of our region. To change the situation with overdoses in the region, needs attention of the state and society to the problem of drug overdose and the following actions that can reverse the situation in the following countries:

- implementation of a consistent state strategy to reduce overdose;
- introduction of programs that increase access to Naloxone for key populations, especially people who use drugs;
- exclusion of Naloxone from the list of prescription drugs;
- introduction of the nasal form of Naloxone into the trade of pharmacy chains.

We call on all interested parties not to remain indifferent and to do everything possible to implement these actions.

It's time to act!

AUGUST 31: UKRAINE



Flash mob on the occasion of the International Overdose Awareness Day "OVERDOSE UA - save life!" supported by all of Ukraine. Kiev, Luhansk region, Ivano-Frankivsk, Dnipro, Zhitomir, Lutsk, Poltava, Sumy, Voznesensk, Mariupol, Kharkov, Odessa, etc.

"Every year Ukraine loses hundreds of its citizens due to the lack of a system and program of assistance in case of overdose. Unfortunately, the drug Naloxone is almost not available commercially and is partially available in HIV / AIDS prevention programs. At the same time, statistics do not reflect reality. On this day, we, as a community of people with drug addiction, demand immediate measures to ensure prevention of overdose. We demand from the state to bring overdose cases to zero in 2020," said Oleg Dymaretsky, director of the All-Ukrainian Association of People with Drug Addiction ("VOLNA"), during a campaign held near the Ministry of Health of Ukraine in Kiev.

"Globally, thousands of people die from drug overdose per day, but, unfortunately, Ukraine has not yet had adequate statistics on overdose. And only we, as representatives of the community, know how serious this problem is! This is especially dangerous when pharmacies lack such a key "lifeline" to prevent overdose, such as the drug Naloxone. We know what a grief it is for all family and friends when someone close to you dies and could have been saved. Therefore, our today's message - "Death from an overdose can be prevented!" - said Anton Basenko, VOLNA chairman.

AUGUST 31: KYIV



AUGUST 31: LUHANSK REGION



AUGUST 31: IVANO-FRANKIVSK



AUGUST 31: POLTAVA



AUGUST 31: ODESSA



AUGUST 31: KYRGYZSTAN



Kyrgyzstan has successfully completed the STOP (Stop Overdose Safely) research initiative to introduce innovative models of assistance in the event of opioid overdose. All events were held in Bishkek, Kant and Sokuluk, and just under 5,000 people were able to use the project's services.

Participants and participants of the SOS project, in addition to training, received prevention kits containing carefully Packed naloxone ampoules, syringes, alcohol wipes and gloves.

Sergey Bessonov and his employees from the harm reduction Network Association placed the materials of the S-O-S project on the stand at the Republican center of Narcology in Bishkek.



AUGUST 31: KAZAKHSTAN



The campaign dedicated to the International overdose awareness day was held in Kazakhstan for the first time. It was joined by participants of various Telegram channels in Kazakhstan, volunteers from the community of people who use drugs, participants of the PUD Forum Kazakhstan.

PUD Forum Kazakhstan has developed 28 thematic illustrations and gif animations specifically for this campaign. This is the second consecutive campaign in this format for the Forum (the first campaign is the international day of remembrance for victims of the war on drugs on July 21, 2020).

As a result, 74 thematic posts were made and published on various resources (photos, articles, etc.). 5 stores that sell new psychoactive substances (NPS) in the Karaganda region allowed Forum activists to talk about overdose prevention on their resources (and this is also a great achievement). It were reached 4,369 people (these are the people who viewed and read these materials).

Naloxone has acquired a "different face" among the community of Kazakhstan thanks to the story of the ENPUD program coordinator Oly Belyaeva called "Magic bracelet" (<https://harmreductioneurasia.org/ru/volshebniy-braslet/>). Many who joined the campaign began to speak more consciously about this drug and the guys wanted to have Naloxone in their medicine cabinet.

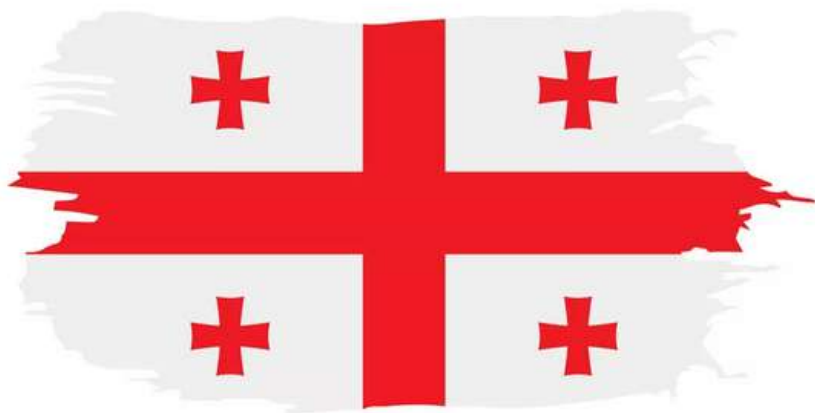
Thematic illustrations and gif animations can be found on the PUD Forum Kazakhstan Facebook page at www.facebook.com/KCCV.Kz.

The campaign has shown that such actions are a good way to mobilize the community. People unite in support of each other and change their approaches. Time to act!

AUGUST 31: KAZAKHSTAN



AUGUST 31: GEORGIA



On August 31, GeNPUD (Georgian network of people who use drugs), Georgian harm reduction network, people who use drugs, and family members of overdose victims joined the International overdose awareness day and planted cypress trees—symbols of eternity. Cypress trees, or "Trees of life" – a memory of those who died of overdose in the conditions of repressive drug policy.

Trees were planted in 9 cities of Georgia by GeNPUD activists from the organizations such as New Vector, Phoenix 2009, HEPA Plus, Rubicon. The "Trees of life" campaign and cypress planting on August 31 was held for the 7th year in a row. More than 800 cypress trees have been planted throughout Georgia over the years.

In addition, on August 31, the round table "save more lives!" was held at the Marriott Tbilisi hotel. The meeting was attended by members of GeNPUD, members of the public, representatives of the NCDC, the Ministry of health, as well as narcologists, psychologists, psychiatrists and other specialists in this field.

The meeting discussed overdose and problems associated with it, risks of overdose with new psychoactive substances (NPS), mental disorders/primary psychoses and their treatment, as well as the regulation of Naloxone in Georgia.

In addition, the campaign provided training to peer mentors in GeNPUD member organizations on topics such as drug overdose and prevention, new psychoactive substances, and overdose on August 31.

AUGUST 31: TBILISI



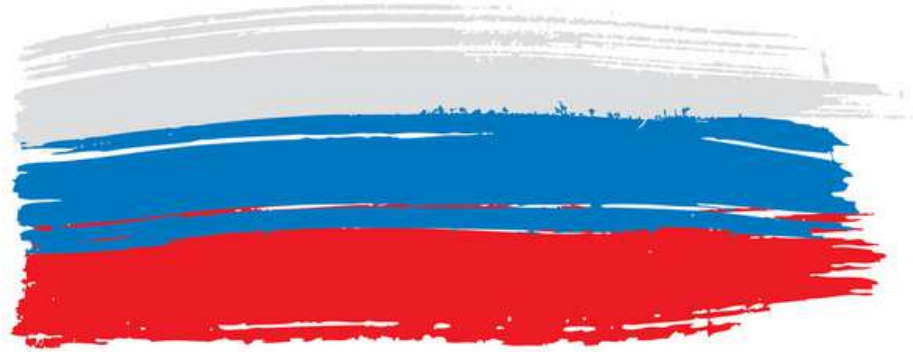
AUGUST 31: OZURGETI



AUGUST 31: KUTAIISI



AUGUST 31: RUSSIA



In 2019, more than 18 thousand cases of drug poisoning and more than 4.4 thousand cases of fatal overdoses were registered in Russia. At the same time, the country's authorities ignore the awareness Day. On August 31, 2020, this was once again confirmed by activists of the Andrey Rylkov Foundation for health and social justice (ARF), who held a round table "Dialogue to save lives".

The name was not chosen by chance. Foundation staff wanted to invite to the round table as many members of the government and close to the authorities structures, which are seemingly directly should care for the life and health of citizens: the Ministry of health, Department of health of Moscow, Moscow scientific-practical center of narcology, National scientific center of narcology. However, none of the representatives of these agencies came to the round table.

ARF staff reiterated that the world health organization has been calling on the world community for six years to develop programs to increase access to Naloxone. In Russia, naloxone is included in the list of essential medicines, but the drug is strictly prescribed and people who use drugs do not have access to it.

"The lack of Naloxone on the streets is a problem. Our organization makes a total of 12 outreach trips a week to various districts of the vast Moscow region. We do not cover everyone, but nevertheless we can draw some conclusions – for example, that approximately every 10th ampoule is used successfully, " said Timur Madatov, the ARF lawyer at the end of the press conference.

AUGUST 31: ENPUD



TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF!

August 31 - International overdose awareness day.

That day is over, but the overdose problem hasn't gone away.

This day is just a reason to be surprised that life is too fragile.

This day is an opportunity to remember the dead and to love and think about the living even more.

CONTACT INFORMATION

In the digest the materials used: <https://www.svoboda.org>

The ENPUD website : **<http://enpud.net>**

ENPUD Facebook group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ENPUD/>

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