

S4: Changes in HR practice

Evidence and availability of harm reduction in Europe 2003-2013

Alexander Grabenhofer-Eggerth

Public Health Austria, Vienna

While it was possible to decrease substantially the number of HIV infections among drug users in most European countries during the last decade, unfortunately this effect could not be reached for deaths due to an overdose. Peer naloxone programs and improvement of harm reduction in prisons (and after doing time) are two recommended actions to reduce drug-related mortality in the scope of the project. Based on the analysis of scientific evidence, the epidemiological situation and the coverage of services overall 13 concrete actions for the field of harm reduction are postulated in the study. The report was prepared by Gesundheit Österreich GmbH and SOGETI on behalf of the European Commission's Executive Agency for Health and Consumers (EAHC) and in close collaboration with the European Monitoring Centre on Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), the Directorate-General for Health and Consumers (DG SANCO), and the Directorate-General for Justice (DG-JUST). It contains:

- Country profiles concerning harm reduction for all EU member states and candidate countries
- Analysis of epidemiological situation in the field of drug-related harm
- Analysis of coverage of harm reduction measures in Europe
- 4 systematic literature reviews (peer naloxone programmes, prison release management, needle exchange in prison, measures to change the route of drug administration)
- Results of a survey covering 43 field organisations from 21 countries
- Results of a survey among decision makers in the field of drug policy from 31 countries

Besides the analysis of scientific evidence and the surveys among field organisations and policy makers, all data available at the EMCDDA (national reports, statistical tables, structured questionnaires, best practice portal, statistical bulletin, etc.) was used and analysed. The report provides a comprehensive overview of the development as well as the status quo of harm reduction in Europe.