

Eurasian Harm Reduction Network (EHRN) raised funds to conduct two regional consultations to discuss to UNGASS on the World Drug Problem, aimed to (a) inform the civil society, public health and human rights experts on the UNGASS process and its importance for national drug policy improvement, (b) define main best practices and drug policy challenges to be highlight through country statements in the UNGASS preparation process, CND and UNGASS itself, and (c) develop joint regional position of Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (CEECA) for UNGASS.

Regional consultation #1

Tbilisi, September 29-30, 2015

The Regional consultation #1 was organised on September 29-30, 2015 in Tbilisi, Georgia, in the framework of the Regional Forum “ROAD TO SUCCESS”. It was held in a format of a workshop aimed to exchange best practices (September 29), followed by a plenary session (September 30).

The consultation provided an opportunity to exchange opinions on the whether the current legislative environment in the countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia promotes the implementation of health-based approaches to drug policy and what legislation and/or drug policy changes need to be done to ensure sustainability of harm reduction programs and other health and social services for people ho use drugs. The consultation helped to promote best practices of cooperation between law enforcement and health sector from Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Poland, Russia and Ukraine, but also highlighted legal and policy vulnerabilities, which people who use drugs face in these countries.

The total number of participants of the consultation was 62 persons, representing mainly the civil society sector, but also representatives of health and law enforcement sector. The plenary session on September 30 gathered over 310 participants from 21 countries of CEECA. The consultation was supported through participation of international organizations such as UNODC, UNAIDS, and CADAP.

Key outcomes:

- Over 310 participants from 21 countries of CEECA were introduced to the processes of UNGASS on the World Drug Problem and opportunities of the improvement of national drug policies through the civil society engagement into it;
- A first paper reflecting regional consensus on the need of drug policy improvement in EECA was developed.

For more information, including citations from participants see <http://www.harm-reduction.org/29-september-technical-consultation-2-impact-drug-policies-public-health-and-public-safety> and <http://www.harm-reduction.org/30-september-session-5-enabling-environment-and-drug-policy-opportunities-and-challenges-era>.

Regional consultation #2

Vilnius, February 2, 2016

The Regional consultation #2 was organised in Vilnius, on the 2nd of February among representative of national civil society networks for 27 CEECA countries, as well as the Eurasian Network of People Who Use Drugs.

During the full day consultation, detailed information on the UNGASS processes was presented, including how the civil society can be engaged on both national and international

level; the current issues with the draft outcome document and possible changes of its language. Participants have also got introduced to technical support tools developed by EHRN and aimed to help in organizing countries meetings among civil society groups and the state and in developing country position for UNGASS.

A moderated discussion on the regional position statement for UNGASS was developed. During 2 weeks after the meeting there was also an online consultation process at the EHRN website to get civil society comments for the regional position statement. The regional position statement was used as a basis for Daria Mogucheva's speech at the Informal Civil Society Hearings in New York and in national consultations.

In total, 60 civil society representatives from 27 CEECA states participated in consultation.

Key outcomes:

- 60 participants from 27 countries of CEECA got knowledge of diplomatic process around UNGASS and practical skills on organizing country-level meetings to develop national civil society position for UNGASS and negotiate it with state actors;
- The joint position statement for UNGASS was developed (available at <http://harm-reduction.org/sites/default/files/inline/files/Joint-position-statement-ENG.pdf>).

National level work

EHRN also mobilized civil society in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to organise face-to-face country consultations on UNGASS and civil society face-to-face meetings with state actors to provide civil society input to country positions on UNGASS. A similar online consultation was organised in Kazakhstan.