



EURO **HRN**

European Harm Reduction Network



Promoting harm reduction approaches within Europe



Colophon

Harm Reduction International

Unit 2D12
South Bank Technopark
90 London Road
London
United Kingdom - SE1 6LN

Phone: + 44 (0) 207 922 8822
Fax: +44 (0) 207 953 7404
Email: info@ihra.net
Join us on facebook at: Harm Reduction



"With the financial support of the Drug Prevention and Information Programme of the European Commission. The contents of this publication are the sole responsibility of the EuroHRN and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Commission".





The EuroHRN conference

Thierry Charlois, AFR

The involvement of the city of Marseille in the 1st European Harm Reduction Meeting

Why
Marseille
??



The city of Marseille has a long experience of promoting and implementing harm reduction services targeting various groups such as injecting drug users, sex workers, drug users in prison, young people in recreational settings, etc. This municipal policy is based on a local and integrated partnership involving the municipality (Drugs and HIV Unit) as well as harm reduction NGOs, addiction services in hospitals, health service in prison, the social integration field, housing service for drug users, etc.

At the time of the EuroHRN application designing, Ms Béatrice Stambul, the former AFR president based in Marseille, took the initiative to propose to Mr Patrick Padovani, the Deputy Mayor for Health in Marseille, to host the 1st European Harm



Reduction Meeting. This proposal was accepted with enthusiasm by the Mayor and the municipal team in charge of drug policy. Several meetings were organised during the project duration between the AFR representatives and the Marseille team to organise the meeting. The municipality offered the location for the meeting so that AFR could provide French/English interpretation.



In addition, ASUD organised its annual meeting in Marseille for the first time on October 5th, also invited by the city, taking the opportunity of the presence of many European DU activists, who founded the EuroNPUD network.

All the local civil society organisations¹ involved in the harm reduction field were invited by the municipality to form a local committee aiming at contributing to the meeting: posters presentations, stands, drug analysis presentation, co-chairing and reporting sessions as well as field visits to local drug services: a drug service in a squat and a housing service for drug users.



The Mayor of Marseille invited Mr Jean-François Mattei at the opening session. Mr Mattei is a former French Minister for Health who supported the development of harm reduction policies at the beginning of the HIV-AIDS epidemic and is currently president of the French Red Cross. The Deputy Mayor for Health of the city of Bordeaux was also invited to take part in the workshop on the partnership with local elected officials.

¹ ACCES, AIDES, AMPTA, ASUD Marseille, AUTRES REGARDS, BUS 31-32, CEIP TIMONE, CRIPS PACA, CSAPA des BAUMETTES, Dispositif d'Appui Drogues et Dépendance (DADD), Groupe de Recherche sur la Vulnérabilité Sociale, HOPITAL NORD, L'ELF, LE TIPI, MEDECINS DU MONDE, NOUVELLE AUBE, PROTOX, PSA, RESEAU CANEBIERE – LE CABANON, SLEEP IN, SOS HEPATITES, Service addictologie Hôpital Ste Marguerite



The local committee met on the 28th of June, 2011 in order to prepare those contributions.

At the occasion of the official reception held at the city hall after the 1st meeting day, Mr John-Peter Kools, Chairman of Harm Reduction International and Ms Béatrice Stambul, at the initiative of the meeting, received the medal of the City of Marseille on behalf the Mayor.

An informal reception was organized by the organisation "le Tipi" in their premise during the evening of the second day. During the two days the premise of the drug user organisation ASUD was open for participants in needs of resting or conviviality.

For the municipality of Marseille and the local civil society organisations, the added value of their involvement in the 1st European Harm Reduction Meeting are:

- At the political level, the meeting promoted the harm reduction approach of the Mayor and was considered as an important step in the development of the local harm reduction policy. Marseille demonstrated that HR needs synergy between local authorities, professionals and users;
- For the stakeholders, the meeting was a strong opportunity to create contacts at the European level, to learn about harm reduction policies and practices across Europe as well as to show their own practices to European colleagues;
- Finally the main added value for the municipality and the stakeholders has been the breaking of isolation they felt before.



The First European Conference on Harm Reduction Marseille

This event took place on the 6th and 7th October 2011 in Marseille, France and attracted just over 180 delegates from all twenty-seven European union member states – including national and international policy makers, leading drug user activists, front-line workers, researchers and officials from the city of Marseille. The two days were broken up into a mixture of workshops and plenary sessions, and there was also one morning of site visits to harm reduction services and homeless shelters. In total, there were around fourteen plenary speakers that presented during the main sessions; focusing on drug user organisations, the European audit report on harm reduction and the importance of a regional network in Europe. (*The full programme can be viewed online at: http://www.eurohrn.eu/images/stories/conference/marseille_programme.pdf*).

Some highlights from the event were the formation of a new drug user network to be known as the European Network of People who Use Drugs (EuroNPUD), and the large amount of networking possibilities that were open to all the delegates that attended. Moreover the Hungarian Civil Liberties Union conducted interviews and produced a video of the event – which can be found here (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3KxldfcQIQE>)

EuroHRN would especially like to thank the City of Marseille for their generous support for this event and all the delegates who contributed to the development of the network and advocacy for harm reduction in Europe!



A Wrap Up of Civil Society Advocacy Priorities, collected on the Marseille Conference:

North

- Providing and increasing access to DCRs, NSPs and OST (including HAT)
- Improving coverage and integration of HIV, viral hepatitis and TB prevention and treatment services
- Providing basic housing and social support for homeless people who use drugs
- Developing national and pan-European drug user and civil society networks
- Advocating for drug policy change and in particular, decriminalisation of drug use.

South

- Implementing evidence-based harm reduction services, particularly NSPs, and scaling up provision of OST in prisons and other places of detention
- Implementing or scaling up DCRs
- Increasing integration of harm reduction interventions, including overdose prevention programs, safer night-life initiatives, and testing and treatment services for HIV, viral hepatitis and tuberculosis
- Improving the meaningful involvement of people who use drugs in service design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation

East

- Ensuring adequate, predictable funding for harm reduction programmes from national governments
- Reorienting drug policies to reflect evidence-based public health and human rights-based approaches, including decriminalising drug use for personal possession
- Implementing evidence-based harm reduction services, particularly NSPs, and scaling up provision of OST, in prisons and other places of detention
- Scaling up provision of current NSP and OST programmes in the community



EuroHRN North

Marseille Meeting gives a push to networking in the North region

Eberhard Schatz, John-Peter Kools, Rainbow Foundation



The Northern region of Europe is characterised by enormous social, economical and cultural diversity, this is reflected in notable differences when it comes to harm reduction policies and services:

- Countries such as the Netherlands and Great Britain stood at the cradle of a pragmatic and health-based approach towards drug use and now have over 20 years of experience.
- Countries such as Germany and Switzerland currently have the most comprehensive range of services to reduce risks and unintended side effects of drug use.

- The Nordic countries have specific policies with a general tendency of an increased acceptance of harm reduction orientated interventions. However, Norway remains only Nordic country with a drug consumption room and Sweden continues to apply the most repressive policies in Northern Europe

Looking at the entire region, harm reduction has become widely accepted embedded in mainstream health policy. Services are widespread, although there are significant gaps in overall availability and access of essential services.

Participants of 14 different countries in the North region gathered at the EuroHRN meeting in Marseilles. In the regional session we discussed the state of affairs in every particular country (from Austria to Iceland, and from Belgium to Finland). We learned about recent trends in drug use, new services, significant policy developments and so on.

For instance did you know that:

- Ritalin and Fentanyl are the main substances used in Iceland
- UK and Ireland had a severe heroin drought last winter, while other countries were on the same '20 euro a gram' level.
- Some countries report 'legal highs' like becoming more and more popular in cycles of recreational and problematic drug use (and are often reported to be injected).
- There is no heroin available in Finland. And new substances on the market is MDPV ('alphabet').

We also discussed recent policy developments. Many country representatives recognise that harm reduction is increasingly under pressure in the region:

- Budget cut backs are a threat for health policies. Even, if one could suppose that the economical crisis will create a boost for a proven effective and cost effective policy towards drug use and the prevention of blood borne infection diseases. Moreover low threshold services face serious budget cuts in most countries in Western and North Europe.



But it's not only the economics; also other factors challenge the harm reduction movement:

- New agendas dominate the current discussion in the UK, drug free programs have become the main priority in service provision, in the Netherlands and the German speaking countries, harm reduction measures often are (mis)used as a tool, to manage and control a 'deviant' group of people

Furthermore, in countries with a long harm reduction history, the harm reduction community sometimes seems to be tired, missing a common vision and adequate tools to develop common strategies.

We can recognise the impact of these policies on our current work and we have to be aware, to anticipate on these developments by being more pro-active towards an effective and efficient policy of harm reduction and drug policy reform.

Consequently, we discussed ways to continue cooperation between agencies and advocates and how to build new opportunities for exchange, networking and common actions.

A broad range of ideas, suggestions and proposals came along on how to develop and advocate for a better harm reduction policy and practice and which role the Network can play in the future. Information exchange, easy accessible data bases on available research, proven practices, economical issues (cost effectiveness), education and training, broadening the scope of target groups, building bridges (medical staff, lawyers), addressing national and EU politicians, drug consumption rooms and last but not least the debate on decriminalisation and alternative drug policies should be on the common agenda for action.

All in all the meeting was an inspiring event which for sure gave a great push for collaboration, networking and advocating for harm reduction in Europe. Let's keep the momentum!

EuroHRN South

New horizons for Harm Reduction gather professionals in Marseille: The spotlight on the Land of Paradoxes.

Diana Castro, José Queiroz, Marta Pinto, APDES

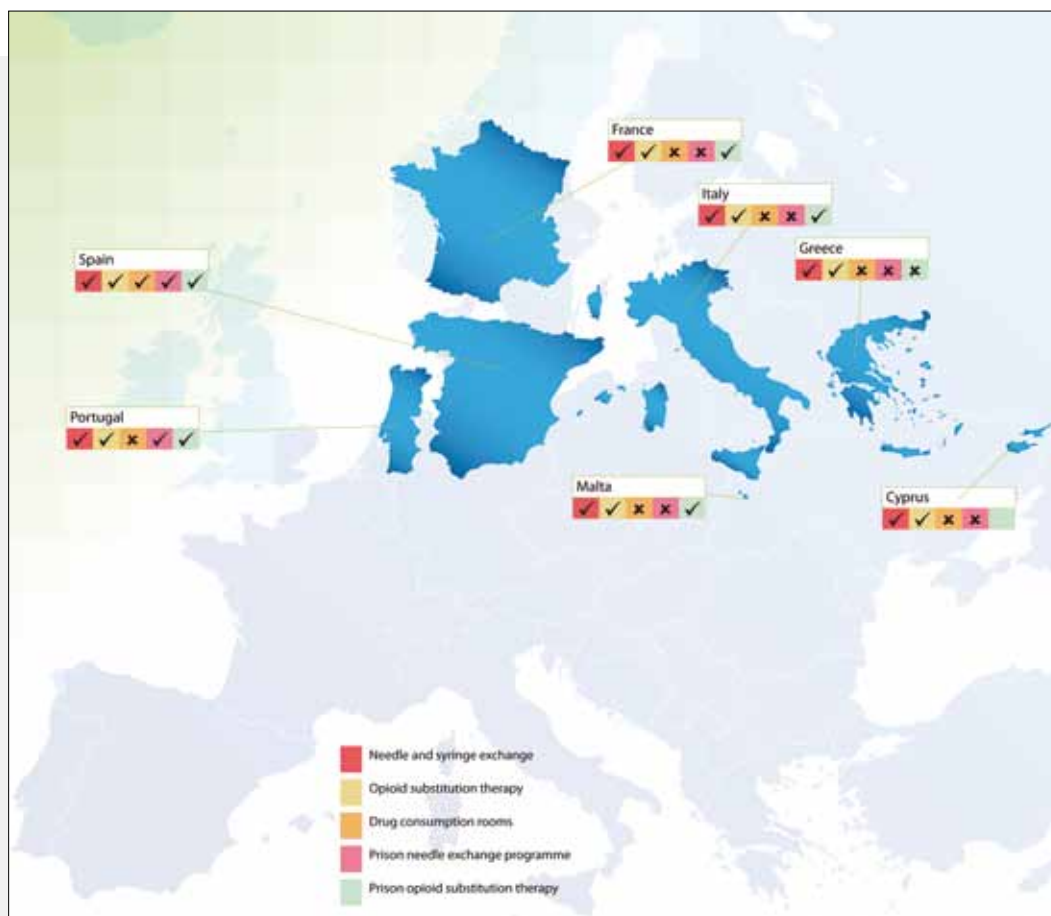
Generally, the South European region is associated with the image of countries involved in deep conservative traditions, mainly relating to cultural and religious influences, where the development of civilisation is constantly relegated to a secondary level.

Despite there being a grain of truth in this perspective, Southern Europe is also considered the cradle of the great ancient cultures, and has been continuously marked by historical events which reflect its paradoxical nature: old vs innovation; "underdevelopment" vs civilisation.

In a similar way, this feature is reflected in the field of Harm Reduction. In these southern countries we find the most advanced legislative models of drug policy in the world. One need only look at the unique Portuguese legal framework, the Spanish pragmatic template, the empathic approach of the francophone Switzerland, to foreseeing that this small region encompasses some of the most highly developed concepts and practices in Harm Reduction.

On the other hand, it is also in the South Europe region that we observe a number of serious difficulties in daily intervention. In Italy for instance, pronouncing the term "Harm Reduction" is prohibited and professionals have to conceal their intervention under the umbrella of some other nomenclature. In the South European region, the Land of Paradoxes, the pacific coexistence of contradictions remains the rule, not only in relation to differences between countries, but mainly in the nexus between policy/legislation/services, as shown through these cases in point:

- Spain is one of the countries providing the most comprehensive set of services to drug users, despite there being no national legal framework for Harm Reduction, so its implementation depends on the will and investment of municipalities, public services and civil society. Despite the difficulties arising from the cultural stigma related to drug users, the dissemination of treatment and HR services around the country is replicated across organisations in a desire to emulate best practices.
- Similarly In Italy, there is no law regulating HR. The intervention with drug users is not well regarded by the community or by the State. So in many cases the continued existence of these projects is directly related to the skills of the organisations involved in concealing labels, goals and approaches.



- The advanced and courageous legal framework in Portugal has not been coupled by similar precepts when it comes to services implementation. Is not uncommon to find that, despite this legal recognition (as in respect of drug consumption rooms and NSE in prisons) many obstacles block their effective enforcement. In some cases these obstacles result from conflicts between law and jurisprudence, law and regulation, or even conflicts between different laws.
- France has similar problems, with significant inconsistencies between policy and law, thus giving rise to arbitrary decisions, especially concerning HR.

Even so, not everything is lost in the Land of Paradoxes. During the EuroHRN Conference in Marseille, around 70 participants from 7 South European countries gathered to discuss the Harm Reduction state of play and to express their expectations of the future course of action for this region.

During the past two years, important steps have been taken in the effort of the EuroHRN: a) bringing on board new partners from countries where HR and drug policy has very little expression, and expanding the knowledge base of Harm Reduction; b) organising meetings and workshops with its diverse partners in order to better understand the specific

context of each country and to discuss new approaches to advocacy and lobbying on drug policy; c) promoting the creation of new HR networks at national level (in Italy, Belgium and Spain) as well as in the Iberian region.

Beyond these important advances, the expectation of participants is unanimous with respect to further improvements. It is the general consensus that EuroHRN must maintain its efforts in international networking. The steps previously taken in promoting local networks have proven that this is worthwhile to continue with. The support and focus given to lobbying and advocacy was considered one of the best tools to improve on an effective implementation of HR. The recourse to European and international recommendations and the dissemination of evidence-based measures, reinforced by an European organisation such as the EuroHRN, is seen as a good approach in influencing national and local governments. To spread new trends, to invest in professional training, and to discuss the concept of the HR worker profile, are other priorities that need to be worked on. The recent global crisis and the ensuing restrictive measures, already being felt in many fields, make it all the more compelling for southern European countries, and civil society, to join forces in order to ensure the continuity of HR, in moving forward with new actions, and in promoting and guaranteeing fair conditions for people using drugs.



Sub-regional workshops: EAST

Larisa Abrickaja | Eurasian Harm Reduction Network

The workshop of the Eastern Sub-regional network was held on October 6th during the 1st EuroHRN meeting in Marseille, France and gathered together around 30 participants from Slovakia, Hungary, Lithuania, Macedonia, Georgia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia, Ukraine, Latvia, Poland, Czech Republic and Albania as well as representatives from France, Canada, Spain, Switzerland, and Ger-



many. Delegates represented variety of organizations, including NGOs that provide harm reduction services (NSP, OST, safer nightlife initiatives, projects with sex workers), a drug user group and international organizations such as Red Cross, Medecines du Monde and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.

Countries across Eastern Europe struggle to provide high quality, measurable harm reduction services, scalability, and integration with other HIV prevention, care and treatment efforts. The aim of the workshop was to identify common challenges pertaining to harm reduction in the countries of Eastern sub-region and to elaborate a common vision on how EuroHRN could help deal with these challenges.

One of the biggest issues identified is dependency of the countries, especially in South-Eastern Europe, on international donors the Global Fund is the major donor supporting harm reduction in the region) while national governments are reluctant to provide support for harm reduction services. All countries of Eastern sub-region have harm reduction included in either national drug strategies or national HIV strategies, however workshop participants reported that these plans prove to be inefficient as there is lack of national funding and harm reduction programmes do not have an equal status with therapeutic or abstinence oriented programmes. Criminalization of possession of illicit substances for personal use poses an obstacle for people who use drugs to access drug treatment programs and harm reduction services in majority of the countries of the sub-region. For example, in Albania a person can face up to 3 years in prison for carrying needles which contain traces of illicit substances. Workshop participants reported that in their countries drug users are highly stigmatised by police, media, policy makers and general public while drug user support groups either do not exist or have a poor structure and lack funding. There is also a lack of lawyers in the region who are trained to specifically defend the rights of people who use drugs. Finally, the Czech Republic and Slovenia are the countries with the most developed harm reduction services and widest national OST coverage, however getting new harm reduction programs - such as drug consumption rooms - on the political agenda remains a challenge.

Participants of the workshop agreed that continuous civil society advocacy is important for increasing support for harm reduction from national governments across Eastern Europe, however unlike their colleagues in North and South, NGOs in this region have less capacity to engage in advocacy, as they struggle to provide a basic harm reduction services.

Representatives of the Eastern Sub-regional network look forward to further collaboration, communication and networking through EuroHRN in order to exchange best practices and advocate for adequate, predictable funding for harm reduction programmes from national governments as well as evidence-based and human rights-based drug policies.



The EuroHRN Civil Society Audit

Claudia Stoicescu, HRI

The EuroHRN civil society audit is a report which collated existing epidemiological and service coverage data and consultations with experts in order to map key issues for harm reduction in Europe. This includes harm reduction interventions, policies and civil society advocacy priorities. A complementary questionnaire was disseminated to focal points in each EuroHRN member country to understand the barriers to accessing these services at the national and local levels. This publication aims to provide a snapshot of the current state of harm reduction for the region and provide a baseline for EuroHRN and civil society in the region and act as an invaluable regional advocacy and planning tool.

The report presents information on drug use and drug related harms, recent data on drug use trends, harm reduction coverage barriers to access and scale up across the region, text boxes highlight relevant emerging issues and innovative

harm reduction practices in the region, finally advocacy priorities for Europe are presented.

Key issues for harm reduction in Europe

- Going beyond needle and syringe exchange programmes and opioid substitution therapy: drug consumption rooms, heroine assisted therapy, prison-based NSPs, naloxone, harm reduction in recreational settings are key issues for harm reduction in Europe.
- Drug user involvement in harm reduction service design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation
- More sustainable financing for harm reduction particularly in Eastern Europe
- 'Protecting' gains made to date and maintaining harm reduction on national agendas
- Improvement of data quality and gaps

Directory of Organisations of People who Use Drugs in Europe

In preparation for the launch of the European Network of People who Use Drugs (EuroNPUD) in Marseille in October, I was commissioned to undertake a thorough study of the current level of development of organisation amongst people who use drugs across the region. This was the first time that such a piece of work has been carried out, and it has proven so successful that it is hoped that the model of research developed will be rolled out across other regions. The research has demonstrated that it is only with strong regional networks, that an international network can thrive. Apart from acting as a detailed audit of the spread of grass roots organising, the work also acted as a capacity building exercise, strengthening networking among the already existing national organisations, and identifying areas in which development and capacity building is needed. The research consists of three interlinked outputs, i) a Directory of Organisations of People who Use Drugs in Europe, which will be an online resource to which, it is hoped, further groups will be added; ii) detailed case studies of two, very different, but representative groups; and finally, iii), a report on the work as a whole, summarising the methodology employed, drawing out key lessons, illustrating the composition of the constituent groups, and developing the key messages that the European network will bring forward on the pan-European level.

The detailed knowledge acquired in the course of the research demonstrated both a great diversity in the nature of the groups who responded, but also more significant points in common.

Unequivocally the research demonstrated that the bulk of the groups were formed by and for people who use opiates, whether in illicit forms, or as part of a substitution programme; the groups all showed a strong activist attitude, being unequivocally anti-prohibitionist, having a human rights agenda, and promoting a positive drug using identity. All of this is thoroughly consonant with the outlook and perspectives of the International Network of People who Use Drugs (INPUD), who were a major partner in the research, which has resulted in the organisation of its European arm, EuroNPUD. We are hoping to undertake research and advocacy work to further strengthen the network and advance its objectives on the European stage.



Dr Eliot Ross Albers
Deputy Director/Programme
Coordinator, International
Network of People who
Use Drugs



Conclusions

Maria Phelan, HRI

The European Harm Reduction Network was formed in 2009 and has exceeded many of the project aims and the expectations of those involved. The lack of a pan-European network was clear and EuroHRN has provided a much needed platform for people working in the field across the region.

Membership uptake has been rapid with 202 members currently fully registered and members identified and signed up in every one of the target countries. Organisations consist of (for example) harm reduction services, HIV organisations, drug user organisations, activists and people who use drugs. The network has held several meetings, in the Southern region, Sub-regional network coordinators APDES held a very successful week long workshop in Porto, events such as this and the planned final meeting in Marseille offer all members an opportunity, for the first time, to participate in a Europe wide network. These meeting served to strengthen the network through collective information and practice exchange, advocacy planning and capacity building.

As part of the membership process we asked members what they required from a European network – the graphs below show the breakdown of member priorities. By asking members what they require from EuroHRN the network has been able to meet the needs of the membership more easily.

Members have been especially active around information exchange via the pan-European newsletter which has facilitated the sharing of information on events, publications and innovative practice between a wide range of stakeholders. EuroHRN also recently launched a report which collated existing epidemiological and service coverage data and consultations with experts in order to map key issues for harm reduction in Europe.

Moreover the founding of EuroNPUD during the Marseille meeting and the production of original research on drug user organising has been a key component of EuroHRN.

The information exchanges, cross-national learning and coordinated advocacy efforts around common objectives will continue as EuroHRN increases its membership. Even at this early stage in its development, it is clear that this network has been and will continue to be of significant benefit to harm reduction within Europe.

Civil Society Audit



www.eurohrn.eu





Collaborating Partners

HRI

Maria Phelan
Unit 2D12
South Bank Technopark
90 London Road
London
United Kingdom - SE1 6LN
Phone: + 44 (0) 207 922 8822
Fax: +44 (0) 207 953 7404
Maria.phelan@ihra.net

Akzept

Christine Haberkorn
Heino Stöver
Bundesverband fuer akzeptierende Drogenarbeit
and humane Drogenpolitik (Akzept e.V)
Suedwestkorso 14
D- 12161 Berlin
Germany
akzeptbuero@yahoo.de

ASUD

Association d'Auto Support des Usagers de Drogues
Fabrice Olivet
204 – 206 Rue de Belleville
Paris 75020
France
asud@club-internet.fr

Foundation De Regenboog Groep (FRG)

Eberhard Schatz
John-Peter Kools
Droogbak 1
Amsterdam
Netherlands
eschatz@correlation-net.org
jpkools@gmail.com

AFR

Association Francaise pour la
Reduction des Risques
Tour Essor
Jean-Marc Priez
Thierry Charlois
14, rue Scandicci
93508 Pantin Cedex
France
coordination@a-f-r.org
thierry_charlois@yahoo.fr

APDES

Agencia Piaget para o Desenvolvimento
Jose Queiroz
Marta Pinto
Alameda Jean Piaget, 100
4410 – 372 Arcozelo
Portugal
jose.queiroz@apdes.net
marta.pinto@apdes.net

EHRN

Viesoji istaiga Eurazijos zalos mazinimo tinklas
(in English: Eurasian Harm Reduction Network)
Svitrigailos 11B
03228 Vilnius, Lithuania
info@harm-reduction.org

ITACA (Italy)

Maurizio Coletti
Edoardo Polidori
coletti@itacaeurope.org
e.polidori@ausl.fo.it

SDUU (Sweden)

Berne Stålenkrantz
berne.stalenkrantz@svenskabrukarforeningen.se

INPUD (UK)

Mat Southwell
Eliot Albert
matthewsouthwell@mac.com

Please check for more partners

www.eurohrn.eu