

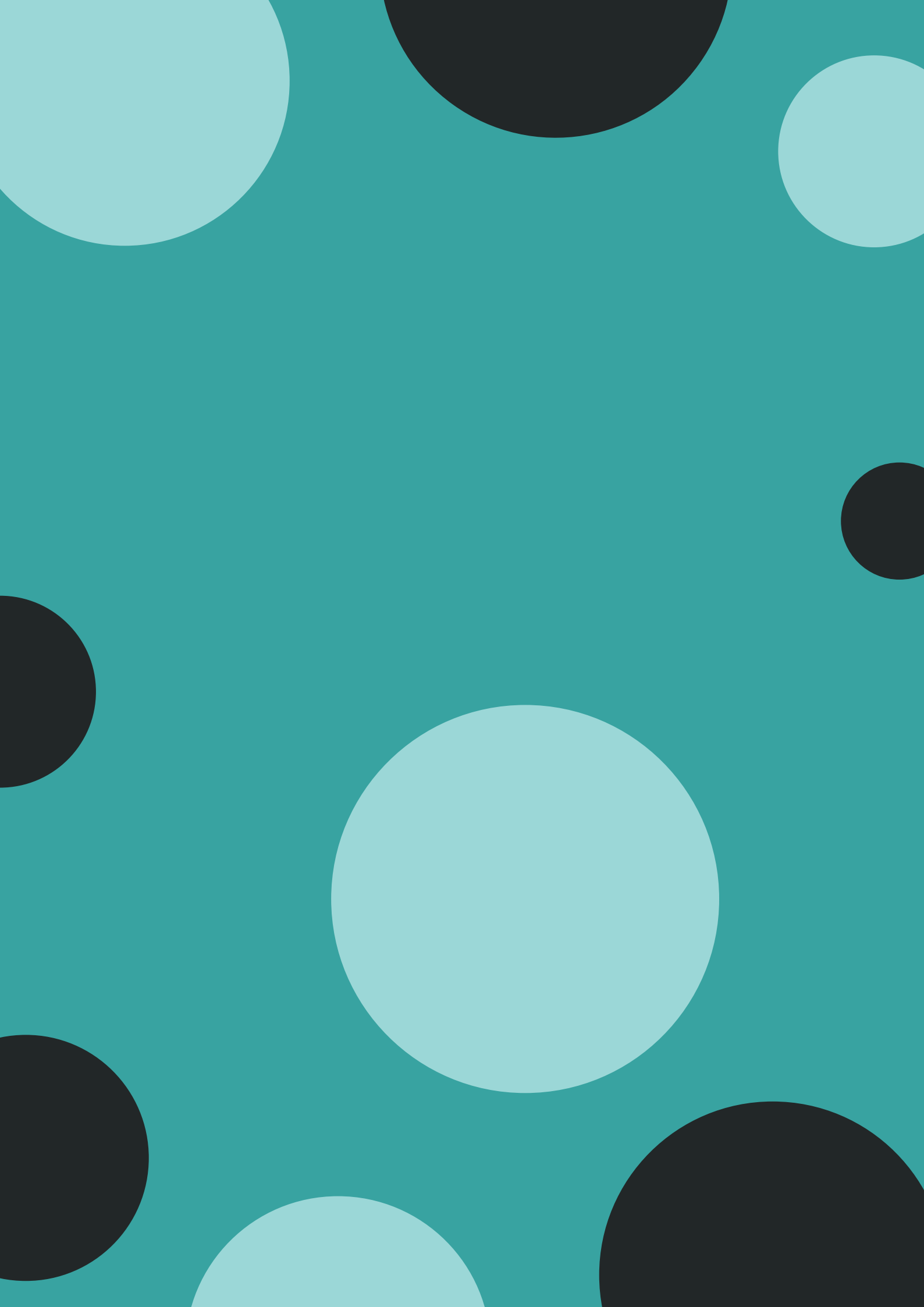
CONFERENCE

DCRs 2021

Drug consumption rooms in Europe: maintaining the momentum in the face of the major challenges of the 21st century.

2nd European conference on drug consumption rooms





SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION	p.3-5
OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE	p.6-8
GENERAL INTRODUCTION	p.9-11
WHAT DEVELOPMENTS HAVE TAKEN PLACE IN DCRs SINCE THE 2019 CONFERENCE?	p.12-16
INTERACTIVE PANEL BETWEEN THE ELECTED OFFICIALS OF A TERRITORY	p.17-23
WORKSHOPS AND FILM	p.24-27
CLOSING SESSION	p.28-31
ACCOMODATION	p.32-33
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	p.34
CONTACT	p.35

INTRODUCTION

The health and social damage associated with the use of licit and illicit psychotropic substances fully justifies the urgency of supporting the development of a supported policy of risk and harm reduction, even more so with the epidemic of COVID-19, which is making the most vulnerable people more vulnerable. More than ever, in the face of such challenges, it is important to strengthen risk reduction strategies at the local, national and European levels.



Photograph by Marine
Saiah DCR Argos
Strasbourg, Ithaque
association

On July 1, 2021, the second European conference on Drug consumption rooms (DCRs) was held in Strasbourg. "The aim was to share the wealth of experience, to support existing rooms and to contribute to the development of such harm reduction facilities in European countries. It is about being at the core of issues that connect human rights, tranquility and public health.

Organized by the city of Strasbourg, the Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe and the association Ithaque, manager of the DCR Argos in Strasbourg, in partnership with the MILDECA, the ARS Grand Est, the EFUS and the Correlation Network, this conference brought together more than 300 participants, physically and online, from 33 different countries.

"The presence of elected officials from many French cities at the conference in Strasbourg is a very positive sign, as is the work underway in Lille, where a DCR project was recently approved, in Marseille, where the project is ongoing, and in Paris, where the mayor has reiterated her request to open other drug consumption rooms on her territory" - Jeanne Barseghian, Mayor of Strasbourg, and Alexandre Feltz, Deputy Mayor of Health of Strasbourg.



Photograph by Candice Imbert
(Photographer, Directorate of Communication of the Council of Europe)
Council of Europe Hemicycle, The Palais de l'Europe Strasbourg.

On this occasion, Olivier Véran, Minister of Health and Solidarity of France, gave his support and congratulations to the City of Strasbourg for the work undertaken on harm reduction through the experimentation of the care facility with medico-social accommodation attached to the Argos DCR. This experiment was authorized by the Grand Est regional health agency in June 2021 and is a first in France.

Reflections have been focused on the DCRs developments since the 2019 conference. Then, in workshops, participants shared on:

- The impacts of Covid-19 and the responses provided by DCRs.
- The opportunities and challenges of opening a DCR from the professionals' point of view.
- How to overcome the political, legislative and material obstacles to the setting up of a DCR.

The conference ended with a brainstorming session on the creation of a European network of DCRs.

OPENING OF THE CONFERENCE

MODERATED BY DENIS HUBER, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY OF
THE POMPIDOU GROUP OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE



"An effective way to stay with marginalized populations."

"Drug consumption rooms have proven to be effective tools for improving public health and safety at the local level. They are an effective way to reach and stay connected with highly marginalized populations, supporting their access to addiction care and treatment."



BJORN BERGE
Deputy Secretary General of the Council of Europe

"Many benefits for users and for the society as a whole"

JEANNE BARSEGHIAN
Mayor of Strasbourg



"For several years, Strasbourg has been involved in this health policy in close collaboration with the State services and local associative partners. This has had many benefits for the users of the rooms, but also for the society. The INSERM evaluation (French scientific organization) released in May 2021 has pointed out that the drug consumption rooms have positive effects on the health of users."

"Policies need to be pragmatic, rooms, a local response."

"Policies must be pragmatic, seeking to reduce risk. These policies must be developed taking into account the needs on the ground, in each specific city or region and must be able to adapt to constantly changing political contexts as well as to the reality on the ground."



JOAO GOULAO
Chair of the Pompidou
Group Permanent Correspondents

"These rooms are the result of the collaboration of all the stakeholders."



MICHEL HASSELMANN
President of the Ithaque Association

"I am also particularly happy to see that these rooms, the result of the collaboration of all the stakeholders, the State, the City, the Police, Justice, Social Security, and associations, are truly at the service of the users. They are the ones who are the target of the actions of these rooms. They make it possible to secure their difficult pathways, to give them access to care from which they are often very far away, to enable them to access their social rights."

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

MODERATED BY ALEXANDRE FELTZ, DEPUTY MAYOR
IN CHARGE OF HEALTH, STRASBOURG



"A medical and social approach that is pragmatic, scientific, humane and legalistic."



Photo © assemblée-nationale.fr

"SCMRs are not the miracle solution, but they do contribute to it, and now we have the proof. "

OLIVIER VÉRAN
Minister of Solidarity and Health
France

"Harm reduction in drug use is not a religion or an ideology. It is a medical and social approach, pragmatic, scientific, deeply human and rigorously legalistic... This is a cost for the health system, but it is offset by the resulting savings, and in any case it is justified by the solidarity that must drive us."

"Our motto: Support rather than punish"



"The dignity, safety, and humanity of drug users must always be at the forefront of any debate on this issue. {...} Working together, we can change the world, change the city for these people who use drugs."

MIA NYEGAARD
Mayor of Social Services of Copenhagen

"Let's seek to stop cleavage, moral judgment, and invisibility of processes."

"This is not a moral judgment. The most important thing to remember here is that we are health actors when we work on this, we are social actors when we promote and develop this type of centre, that's our role, we don't go beyond that."



PHILIPPE CLOSE
Mayor of Brussels

"An effective harm reduction intervention to encourage drug users to enter treatment"

"International evidence clearly shows that DCRs are an effective harm reduction intervention to encourage drug users to enter treatment."

"These facilities also respect the human rights of people who inject drugs by providing a safe, hygienic and private place to do so."



FRANK FEIGHAN
Minister for Public Health and
National Drug Strategy, Ireland
Irelande

*Department of Health, Ministry of Public Health and
National Drug Strategy, Ireland*

DEVELOPMENTS IN DCRs SINCE THE 2019 CONFERENCE

MODERATED BY GAUTHIER WAECKERLÉ, DIRECTOR
OF THE ITHAQUE ASSOCIATION



"Drug policy in terms of public health has proven its usefulness and effectiveness"

"Harm reduction schemes are there to promote the health, dignity and citizenship of drug users, and contrary to what has been heard and is still frequently heard, a drug-free society does not exist. The repression of drug use has never proven to be effective or useful. On the other hand, drug policy in terms of public health is today the only policy that has proven its usefulness and effectiveness."



GAUTHIER WAECKERLÉ
Director of Ithaque

"The rooms strengthen the entire ecosystem of harm reduction."



" I am convinced that there is a place for a pragmatic approach to the implementation of new devices when such an implementation can be useful in addition to other actions. You can therefore always count on MILDECA to support such a path."

NICOLAS PRISSE
President of the Inter-ministerial Mission for
the Fight against Drugs and Addictive Behavior
(MILDECA)

"It took a lot of perseverance for a project that is outside the normative frameworks"

"The success of the drug room was essentially due to good coordinated, local work, a collective approach involving a community, an association, institutions (health, justice, police) and it was only because of this framework and common strategy that we were able to achieve the success that the DCR has been."



VIRGINIE CAYRÉ
Director General of the ARS Grand Est

"The Cosinus study made it possible to evaluate the effectiveness of DCRs."

" We observe a confirmation of the hypotheses that we had wanted to test at the beginning, i.e. a positive impact on HIV-HCV risk practices, on complications, on abscesses at injection points, on emergency room visits, on overdoses, on crime, on injections in public spaces, and on the willingness of injecting drug users to continue using the injections in the public space, and a willingness on the part of injecting drug users to continue to use DCRs."



PROFESSEUR LAURENCE LALANNE
Head of the Addictology Department,
Strasbourg Hospital, INSERM

"DCRs must be integrated into a comprehensive treatment program".

"Regarding questions of social acceptability of DCRs, it is important to know that there is now a consensus among health professionals and harm reduction professionals on the effectiveness of DCRs in the media debate. Based on the analysis of 1750 press articles published in France from 1990 to 2018, there is no longer any debate on the usefulness of these rooms in the field of health professionals. On the other hand, there is a shift in this debate and controversy in the political sphere and among local residents."

" The evolution of representations related to drug users and the acceptability of the SCMRs is closely linked to the clarification of the objectives of the SCMRs and to the improvement of the level of information in the public arena. Injections have been divided by three and concern a limited number of users. There has been no increase in acts of delinquency ".

"This sociological research highlights that the DCRs must be integrated into a comprehensive care program, offering accommodation, social rehabilitation, greater care for the psychiatric disorders of the population that frequents the DCR or of those who have difficulty going to the DCR, and the need also to develop mediation actions with local residents in order to reinforce the impact of the DCR on public tranquility."



MARIE JAUFFRET-ROUSTIDE
Sociologist, researcher at CNRS

"62% of residents expressed a positive attitude."

" One of the dilemmas at the heart of drug policy is the balance that needs to be achieved between public health and public order. In general, the residents gave priority to public health. 62% of the residents had a positive attitude towards drug consumption rooms."



ESBEN HOUBORG
Center for alcohol and drug research,
Copenhagen

"We were on alert. Eventually, we were extremely convinced."



"Drugs are always scary, they're a taboo in society. So we were on the lookout for it... and for the past five years, we have been extremely convinced... "

"The benefits of the DCR: there is no longer an open stage nearby. What we have gained a lot in this device, are the interlocutors. One DCR in Paris is not enough. We must continue to work with the local residents, we must listen to them, even those who are opposed."

NICOLAS HUBÉ
Representative of a collective of
neighborhood residents of the DCR in Paris

INTERACTIVE PANEL BETWEEN THE ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES OF A TERRITORY

MODERATED BY ALEXANDRE FELTZ, DEPUTY MAYOR
IN CHARGE OF HEALTH, STRASBOURG



" We will never have public tranquility without health care."

"These consumption rooms are a tool that has nothing political about it and that can only be of service to everyone, including in a dense territory"



ANNE SOUYRIS
Deputy Mayor in charge of health, City of Paris



" Moving further, with different locations in the city "



MARIE-CHRISTINE STANIEC
Health Deputy of Lille

"If we have more locations in the city, we may be able to meet better the needs of drug users rather than concentrating everything in one place. This may be a second step, which will be allowed by law, in any case we hope so. We believe that the traffic cannot exist, but the care must be developed and put in place."

"Many elements will inspire me "

" Many elements inspire me, both on the need for coordination, which is a sine qua non, but also on the overall management, which must be multi-partner, and also the need to bring out the very local, and a strong association of local residents and the link with collectives."



CELINE DE LAURENS

Deputy for health and prevention in the city of Lyon

"Our consumption room is necessary but is just a component in the chain "



"Our drug consumption room is the only one link in the chain of care that must combine prevention, therapy, harm reduction, drug dealing repression and judicial follow-up.

I should say that having worked in this field both as a member of parliament and as a mayor, I am convinced that these facilities are necessary in the metropolises, and I am delighted to see that a large country like France, with its cities and metropolises, is getting on board, which is a good sign for Europe."

WILLY DEMEYER

Mayor of Liege and President of the European Forum on Urban Security

“We will once again become a city that does not walk away from its responsibilities.”



" We must work and convince the Prefecture and the Regional Health Agency to achieve this establishment. The mayor of the city and this office have a strong desire to do so. We are finally going to become a city that does not walk away from its responsibilities and that finally offers prevention, thereby guaranteeing the public tranquility."

ÉLODIE BRUN MANDON

City councilor in charge of health prevention and the fight against addictions, Montpellier

"We still have a step to take, we are ready to resume the debate."

"In Bordeaux there is a long-standing policy of harm reduction carried out by local actors. We realize that we still have a step to take. The consumption room in Bordeaux was {...} a successful project that was stopped for political reasons in 2018. We have a new municipal team with a strong desire to review this project. We are waiting for the green light."



ISABELLE FAURE

City councilor in charge of health and solidarity in Bordeaux

"It's very interesting to hear the experiences, very helpful to progress."



Photographer Klara Beck © Council of Europe

THOMAS ANDERSSON
Chairman of the Regional Council of
Jämtland and Härjedalen, Sweden

"I really like your approach, which is a human rights approach.

It's very interesting to hear the experiences gleaned from the different countries, within this conference. I think it will have been very useful in Sweden to move forward and I'm glad to have this European-wide cooperation that allows us to see how we can together find better solutions to protect drug users."

Representative of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe

"Local authorities are very important in bringing changes in legislation"

"It is true that local authorities are very important to put pressure on the countries when there are difficulties in changing legislation. "

ALEXANDRE FELTZ
Deputy in charge of health,
Strasbourg City Council



"We must not go to confrontation, but to the persuasion of necessity"

"We must not go to confrontation, but towards the persuasion of necessity. We will create citizens' committees. What we want to do is to instill a dynamic that can make people accept and understand these public policies with real and factual data that we can rely on now and not on ideas constructed by fear. "



MICHÈLE RUBIROLA
Deputy Health Officer
Marseille

"Can we imagine flexibility in the legal framework?"

" Can we imagine an evolution whereby we would no longer have to wait for the green light from a municipality, which would be committed and concerted, but which would be at the level of a State representative, the ARS for example, to be able to give a green light to the implementation? This flexibility is missing in the DCR implementation legal framework."



GEORGES JOSELON
Director of Spiritek, Lille

"I would love to see European Union legislation on this."

"Sometimes disobedience is a way that opens the way.

You have to look at it from a global, European point of view, and I would love to see European Union legislation on this. We really need to deal with this in a cross-border, global, European way."



MIA NYEGAARD

Mayor of Social Services in Copenhagen



"The issue now is sustainability and deployment."

"The issue now is the perpetuation and deployment of these absolutely essential public health structures. In medium-sized cities, it would be interesting to have more diffuse facilities."



JEAN-MICHEL DELILE

President of the Addiction Federation and psychiatrist in Bordeaux

WORKSHOPS AND DOCUMENTARY FILM

WORKSHOP 1: IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON DCRs

WORKSHOP 2: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF OPENING A DCR FROM
THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE COMMUNITY AND PROFESSIONALS

WORKSHOP 3: HOW TO OVERCOME THE POLITICAL, LEGISLATIVE OR
MATERIAL OBSTACLES TO THE CREATION OF A DCR ?

WORKSHOP 4: CREATION OF A EUROPEAN NETWORK OF DCRs

DOCUMENTARY FILM: AT LOWER RISK

WORKSHOP 1: IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON DCRs



Street Work Actions in Greece, by Okana 2020

The COVID-19 crisis has had a profound impact on the delivery of health services, particularly harm reduction services. DCRs worldwide have been challenged during the pandemic, as well as people who drug users. DCRs had to adapt their facilities so that physical contact could be avoided through physical distancing. However, during the first wave of the pandemic, many services had to restrict access to their premises or close their doors by order of the health authorities.

In this session, field actors testified on the challenges encountered in the functioning of DCRs and what these facilities brought during the pandemic.

WORKSHOP 2: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES OF OPENING A DCRs FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE COMMUNITY AND PROFESSIONALS



DCR fixed in Lisbon since May 2021

In many European countries, the community and harm reduction workers are fighting and advocating for the opening of DCRs to improve services for people who use drugs. In the last few years, some countries have opened such structures after sometimes decade-long struggles, while in other countries the discussion is still going on.

In this session, we discussed the opportunities and challenges of opening a DCR. Speakers shared their experiences during this process and explained their strategies and struggles.

**WORKSHOP 3:
HOW TO OVERCOME
THE POLITICAL,
LEGISLATIVE OR
MATERIAL OBSTACLES
TO THE CREATION
OF A DCR?**

Despite the benefits of DCRs for the different stakeholders, there is still opposition from politicians and policy makers who do not want DCRs to be introduced in their country/city. For some, talking about DCRs may be seen as an acknowledgement of the existence and extent of risky drug use in the city and this acknowledgement may be politically risky. However, for others, the establishment of DCRs would require a change in legislation. As a result, the debate on the implementation of new DCRs remains high on the political agenda in a number of countries around the world.

**WORKSHOP 4:
CREATION OF A
EUROPEAN
NETWORK OF
DCRs**



Staff training Lisbon

Creating a network of DCRs would increase collaboration between European cities to establish key partnerships and help create new DCRs in Europe. Participants discussed the creation of a European network of DCRs that could include field actors, local politicians, practitioners, field organizations, as well as drug user representatives in order to continue discussions on good practices and exchange views. Stakeholders expressed their desire to join forces and bring together existing associations in order to have the greatest possible impact. The opportunity to form a platform for political advocacy was also discussed. The statutes and objectives of this new network remain to be defined during a future general assembly, with the support of the Pompidou Group and the City of Strasbourg.

SCREENING OF THE FILM : AT LOWER RISK

SYNOPSIS

In the fight against hard drug addiction, the repressive approach has continued to maintain marginalization to the detriment of public health and safety as well as human dignity.

After 30 years of debates between public authorities and militant associations, the first two French reception centers allowing the injection of hard drugs opened in Paris and Strasbourg in the fall of 2016: the drug consumption rooms, sadly afflicted with the name of "shoot rooms".

At Lower Risk is an immersion in the Argos room in Strasbourg.

Production: UN FILM À LA PATTE & FRANCE
TÉLÉVISIONS

With the support of the Centre National du Cinéma
et de l'image animée, the Région Grand Est and
Strasbourg Eurométropole in partnership with the
CNC, and the Procirep-Angoa

First broadcaster: France 3 Grand Est © 2021

TECHNICAL TEAM:

Image & sound : Cécile Favier

Additional images: Aidan Obrist

Additional sounds: Grégory Pernet & Jérémie
Vernerey

Editing: Frédéric Arnoux

Original music : Frédéric Arnoux

FESTIVALS :

Official selection at the Nancy Social Action Film
Festival, 2022



CLOSING SESSION



Towards a "constitutive general assembly of the network", in the Council of Europe in 2023"

"We are launching a process of discussion and creation of a European network of drug consumption rooms, so that at the next conference there may be a constitutive General Assembly that will be held here at the Council of Europe, a symbol of the issue of human rights, and to put back at the heart of the policy of harm reduction the people concerned, the users, but also that this network that will be created will also be a place where users can express themselves."

GAUTHIER WAECKERLÉ
Director of Ithaque



"A vision of the human, of society, of fragility is posed. It is something that is mostly European, in fact."

"This very rich and dense day will have consequences at the local level and also at the national level, to make the devices evolve, to continue to convince that the solution in the management of drug use is indeed the accompaniment to the reduction of risks and damages, and not the sanction."

"We need to converge on these two networks: the network of elected officials and the network of drug consumption rooms. All this goes beyond the technical question of consumption rooms, it is indeed a vision of the human, a vision of society, a vision of fragility too that is posed. It is something that is mostly European, in fact. It can make sense in terms of European values. We can and will continue to work together with the Council of Europe and the Pompidou Group to move forward."

ALEXANDRE FELTZ
Deputy in charge of health,
Strasbourg city hall



"It takes time to open minds, change mindsets. We're making progress."

"I quote Aurélie Kreiss: It takes time to open minds, to change mentalities, to get a message across and to get people out of an abstract or ideological vision."

"The member states agreed that the Pompidou Group should be a co-organizer of this second colloquium, even though three quarters of them do not have a consumption room. They are interested, little by little, things are taking shape, minds are opening up, and little by little, we are moving forward."

"We are launching the process today" and we give ourselves two years"

DENIS HUBER
Executive Secretary of the
Pompidou Group of the Council of
Europe



ACCOMMODATION

ABOVE THE DCR ARGOS HELD BY THE ASSOCIATION ITHAQUE IN STRASBOURG

ACCOMMODATION

The front-line work of the DCR has confirmed that the most marginalized psychoactive substance users with health problems do not have access to the necessary care. They are often excluded from existing services, whose functioning cannot be adapted to their use practices and life realities. They access care late and in an emergency after experiencing a series of breakdowns, resulting in heavy and costly hospitalizations and treatment that could have been avoided.

This is why the Ithaque association has built an innovative project integrating a care system with accommodation at the Argos DCR. The aim of this experiment is to improve the treatment of active drug users in very precarious situations who have one or more pathologies that are incompatible with life on the streets. The specificity of this place is a highly adaptable and high tolerance accommodation, offering "home care" for homeless people. A multidisciplinary team trained in Harm Reduction is present 24 hours a day to guarantee access to the consumption space, while ensuring the organization of daily life. The workers are responsible for providing care and social services, coordinating the person's progress, facilitating referrals to external partners and organizing the rest of the stay.

This temporary stay, lasting two months and renewable, is a springboard for care for the people for whom it is intended, a link between the street and an "aftercare" situated in the fabric of the common law.



Photography Marine Saiah
Lodging Argos Strasbourg,
device of the association
Ithaque.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

One of the strengths of the conference is the joint expression of the actors in the field (CAARUD, associations, collectives) and the presence of political, elected and institutional figures.

The co-organizers Alexandre Feltz, deputy in charge of health in Strasbourg, Denis Huber, Executive Secretary of the Pompidou Group, and Gauthier Waeckerlé, Director of Ithaque, would like to thank each participant for their interest in this conference, the participants for the quality of the exchanges, the speakers for the quality of their interventions, and the partners for their unfailing support.



CONTACT

ithaque@ithaque-asso.fr

pompidou.group@coe.int

