

3rd EXASS Net meeting
Frankfurt/Main, Germany
26 – 28 May 2008



Abridged Report

P-PG – COOP (2008) 6

“I have seen things I have never seen before.” Participant

“We don’t have solutions to the drug problem but we were able to improve the situation of drug users and civil society.” Jürgen Weimer, City of Frankfurt Drugs Department

Background

1. Frankfurt faced an open drug scene in a city park and around the main railway station during the late 80s and early 90s that was of a dimension without precedent: at an average 700 and up to 1000 injecting drug users were present on this scene day and night. Zurich and Frankfurt were the most affected cities in Europe by the number of injecting drug users in open drug scenes.
2. An average of 60 drug injection related medical emergencies per day requiring ambulance/doctor assistance cost the City over € 6000 a day. Intensified repression and policing of the situation led to an on-going displacement of the scene which finally ended up in the gardens of the well to do districts of the City.
3. There were nearly 6000 registered drug users (being recorded by the law enforcement agencies) at the time with a dark field estimated 3 or four times as high. Throughout the period of intensified law enforcement, the number of registered drug users increased as did drug related crimes, in particular property offences. Annual drug-related deaths reached nearly 150 per year in this time.
4. On the political level, Frankfurt’s bid for the seat of the European Central Bank (ECB), the presence of the open drug scene directly in front of all major banks, as well as the occurrence of the drug scene in gardens and green spaces of the up-market residential areas, are seen as key factors in bringing about a turn towards more innovative drugs policies. However, on the level of concerned stakeholders at frontline level (law enforcement, judiciary, social

and health services etc.) it was probably the sheer dimension of the phenomenon that led to a concerted effort.

5. The 'Monday Round' of decision makers in key positions of the above mentioned stakeholder agencies, as well as the 'Friday Round' bringing together professionals working at front-line level were the informal institutions that created the cooperation in partnership and moved this forward over the past 15 years.
6. The four pillar concept: (1) prevention, (2) treatment, (3) securing survival + harm reduction, and (4) repression and law enforcement, developed by this inter-agency partnership of stakeholder agencies, is still in place today. The number of registered drug users has been reduced by over 30 % and drug related crime is equally down by significant numbers as statistics show. Drug-related medical emergencies are down from an average of 60 per day to approx. 12 per week. And above all, the number of drug-related deaths p.a. fell from 147 (1991) to 24 (2005).
7. A variety of low threshold services are established in various parts of town, dealing with different types of drug use and associated health and social problems. There is virtually no more visible open drug scene in Frankfurt. The passage from the railway station to the city centre has become safe again and the park in the banking district is clean and frequented by families and children again. Today's main concern of public nuisance in the park is fast bicycle riders.
8. A detailed timeline on the development of the local drugs policy and consolidation of the drug user support services in the City of Frankfurt has been prepared by Jürgen Weimer and is included in appendix 1.

Observations

9. The programmes and interventions developed under the four pillar approach 15 years ago are still functional today with little modifications. Changes in drug cultures, consumption patterns, like poly-drug use etc. were successfully addressed by the existing approach. Flexible responses are ensured through specific projects in which different front-line services and professionals regularly engage. Professionals and other drug workers delivering front-line services show a continued high level of motivation. These factors, together with the statistical indicators on drug use and crime, suggest that the approach and the applied low-threshold services have worked and are still working. This is further corroborated by the fact that the concept has not been dropped by any city government during the last 15 years despite various changes across the political spectrum.
10. Approaches that push or force drug users into services and treatment had not worked in Frankfurt. It appears to be a key strength that the post 1992 approach seeks to facilitate an infrastructure of services and interventions that allow drug users to manage themselves. This infrastructure provides various

entry ways into stabilisation, maintenance, treatment and eventually abstinence. It allows the drug user to be channelled into a passageway of life situation improvement based on his readiness to do so. The system also provides for the most problematic groups of chaotic drug users who have multiple therapy failures and suffer from HIV/AIDS, hepatitis etc., by providing a heroin medication programme.

11. A high degree of discipline among drug users was observed when visiting different projects and low threshold services around town. Most professionals working with drug users attributed that to the fact that (1) rules are clear and simple, (2) not too many rules, (3) sanctions are not unreasonable, (4) in the event of failure there is a path to return. Above all, drug workers concluded that it was the concept voluntary participation and the fact that the services offered a true improvement for the life situation of the drug users led to an overall more disciplined behaviour. Drug users feel that the services offer them something they need and want; consequently they are willing to accept the conditions, even if it is sometimes hard for them to comply with them.
12. Participants noted that there were no real user involvement or participation structures in the planning of drug policy strategies, delivery of services or management of institutions delivering the services. For the stakeholders participating in the Frankfurt partnership this has so far not been an issue. Some practitioners met during visits had expressed reservations about involving ex-drug users in services since the proximity to substances and the drug scene were seen as putting them at a too high risk to relapse.
13. For the short term future the Drugs Department of the City of Frankfurt looks to a further consolidation of available services for drug users. One of the priorities is to increase the availability of heroin treatment following the successful trial phase. In the medium term different types of services will require further adaptation to evolving consumption patterns and drug scenes/cultures. Several practitioners expressed concern about the growing number of refugees with drug use related problems. This target group is often difficult to reach with the existing capacities and competences of staff. In addition a high level of reluctance to accept formal help, including emergency interventions, is observed among this target group. Based on a deeply rooted general fear of official organisations help offered is frequently initially rejected.
14. An increase of different ethnic target groups, due to the expansion of the Schengen space and a generally greater mobility within Europe and neighbouring regions, will require more qualified personnel with inter-cultural and language competences. There is a difficulty in hiring students and professionals from immigrant backgrounds. The wish to work more in social fields, as well as possibly different personal perspectives on drugs problems make it hard to recruit professionals from this background. Consequently practitioners expressed the need for more professional exchanges between countries and direct working contacts between frontline professionals in Europe.

15. While the present approach appears to be sufficiently flexible to meet and adapt to emerging changes, the general recruitment of staff to work in this field is becoming more challenging. Among areas of employment in the social field the drugs services find it increasingly difficult to recruit young professionals. 20 years ago prevailing youth cultures stipulated altruism and support of the vulnerable; at the same time drugs policies were based on the belief that you can help all drug users to live a drug free life. With the emergence of HIV/AIDS, new substances (eg.synthetic drugs), poly-drug use and a better understanding of addictions the focus of modern drugs policies has now shifted towards an emphasis on managing the situation rather than pursuing the utopia of drug free societies by eradicating the drug problem once and forever. This coupled with an overall culture that has moved more towards self-fulfilment and individualism might offer a starting point to explain that working on the frontline of drug-related problems is less attractive then it might have been previously.
16. The Pompidou Group and the EXASS Net would obviously be well placed to look into further possibilities to facilitate a more international exchange of experience and support methods for professionals to assist each other. Study visits and work exchange programmes were among the specific requests articulated by many professionals that were met during the visits. There was a general feeling that while there was a lot happening on different levels to support European integration, the needs of professionals working in the drugs field concerning the consequences of European integration and globalisation – in particular the consequences of increased mobility and migration- do not appear to be sufficiently recognised and met so far.

Conclusions

17. The format of visiting projects, initiatives and services at frontline level is still seen by participants as a viable and interesting way of working for the EXASS Net.
18. Future visits to partnerships could have a thematic focus on one or more of the following issues that have been identified by participants as being of high interest:
 - Dealing with cannabis consumption
 - Party drugs and risk reduction in club scenes
 - User involvement and participation
 - Migrants and drug use
 - Impact of policy decisions
19. Participants welcomed proposals for the following meetings:
 - 4th EXASS Net meeting (end of October 2008) in Moscow on services and interventions under the drug control strategy of the Federal Drugs Control Service of the Russian Federation.

5th EXASS Net meeting (spring 2009) in Budapest on youth drug cultures, party drugs and club scenes

6th EXASS Net meeting (autumn 2009) in Oslo on the role of outreach work in responses to drug problems

7th EXASS Net meeting (spring 2010) in Amsterdam on (1) user involvement, and (2) dealing with cannabis consumption

20. The Secretariat will follow up these proposals with the relevant EXASS Net members and keep all participants informed about developments.

21. The slides and video presentation will be made available by the colleagues from Frankfurt and disseminated by the Secretariat for their personal. The Secretariat will make inquiries as copy right issues related to any further dissemination of these materials.

22. A full report will be prepared by Johnny Connolly and disseminated to participants by the end of July 2008.

23. All participants of the 3rd EXASS Net meeting (a list of participants is included in appendix 2) express their sincere gratitude to the City of Frankfurt, the Mayor's Office, the Police Service of Frankfurt, the Prosecutor General's Office and in particular to all the professionals, drug workers and volunteers they had met and who so greatly contributed to the success of this meeting for all their support, contributions and hospitality offered.

Appendix 1

Development of the local drugs policy and consolidation of the drug user support services in the City of Frankfurt/Main, Germany

Until about 1988 no coordinated drugs policy was in existence on the level of municipal authorities. Following an initiative of the city's police commissioner the 'Monday Round' was established in 1988 and become the starting point and basis for the development of a coherent municipal drugs policy.

- 1988 Setting up of the 'Monday Round' by Lord Mayor Mr. Brück
 First methadone programme initiated by the city's Health Department involving 25 injecting drug users

- 1989 Creation of the City's Drugs Department
 Enlargement of the 'Monday Round' and establishment of the 'Friday Round' bringing together professionals

- 1989 – Setting up of 3 crisis centres in the area around the central railway station,
1992 Needle exchange and 'Night Bus' facility for women established
 Extension of service providers from initially 2 to 4
 Creation of the Office of an Ombuds Person
 Setting up of a drugs emergency hotline

- 1990 First 'Conference of European Cities in the centre of drug trade',
 Founding of ECDP,
 Establishment of specialised prevention unit in the city administration

- 1991 Rise in drug deaths to 147 (as compared to 31 in 1985)
 Up to 1000 injecting drug users on the open drug scene in the city park 'Taunus Anlage', 2/3 being non-locals

- 1991/92 Increase of overnight accommodation capacities for homeless drug user to 200 places,
 Needle exchange facilities available in all institutions run by the cities drug user support services,
 Initiation of a mobile needle exchange service,
 Capacity extension of the methadone-based drug assistance programme to over 700 places.

- 1992 Opening of the biggest low threshold institution in Europe called 'Eastside' providing substitution treatment, needle exchange, over night accommodation, medical services, counselling, food etc.
- Dissolution of the open drug scene in the city park 'Taunus Anlage' after the opening of 'Eastside'
- Introduction of substitution treatment dispensaries in Elbe Street, Mosel Street, Merian Square and Sachsenhausen and counselling for women (today there are 10 substitution treatment dispensary for the City's methadone programme)
- Creation of a shuttle bus service from the city centre to 'East side'
- Setting up of work projects
- Creation of substitution dispensary 'FriedA 24'
- Creation of the therapy centre 'Camille' for women in the town Königstein near Frankfurt with financial support from the City of Frankfurt.
- 1993 Creation of the mobile aid project 'Street- Junky' (paramedics and social workers contact and treat drug users in the streets)
- 1994 Opening of the first drug consumption room in Germany, 3 more are opened in the subsequent years, the last one 1996, Initiation of project 'Lichtblick' (for drug addicted parents and their children)
- 1996 Setting up of assisted-living units for people undergoing substitution treatment in Rotlint Street und Wittelsbacher Avenue,
Opening of 'Claire' (counselling office for drug dependent women)
Creation of the 'Frankfurter Workshop' (work training, employment service, further training),
Development of the park cleaning project in cooperation with the substitution dispensary 'FriedA 24',
Setting up of assisted-living units for people undergoing substitution treatment with advanced HIV infection (Eschenbachhaus),
Project 'Care and Treatment on the Farm'
- 1997 'Crack- Street – Project', an interdisciplinary outreach programme involving the Youth Authority, the Health Department, and the Drug Support Services of the City of Frankfurt, aimed at tackling the problem of increased crack consumption,
Anonymous on-line drug counselling service
Opening of drugs emergency room in Nidda Street (small medical emergency room for immediate on the spot care)
Initiation of the 'Alice-Project' (outreach prevention project in the techno and rave scene)
Opening of 'Franziskus House', a residential care home and hospice for people with AIDS in an advanced stage
- 2000 Day-time accommodation for crack users
Initiation of the campaign 'Check who is driving!'

Providing de-escalation training for staff working in the Drug Support Services

- 2002 Initiation of the work project 'Sweepers Fleet' to clean the city park and the area around the railway station
Initiation of conduction an annual drugs study
- 2003 Controlled heroin distribution in a special out-patient clinic
Consumption room and common room for crack users
21 drug deaths p.a; lowest level since the emergence of the drug problems in the City
- 2004 Initiation of the following projects:
'Fred' (early intervention, early detection of drug consumers)
'Halt – Hard on the Limit' (project for young alcohol consumers based on intensified street social work, case management in cooperation with law enforcement agencies),
Out-patient cocaine therapy set up,
Conducting of a hepatitis vaccination campaign
- 2006 Initiation of the cannabis campaign 'Be. U.!'

Appendix 2 – List of Participants

CROATIA

Mrs Lidija HRASTIC NOVACK
Assistance Head of Office
City office for health, labour, social protection and veterans
Trg Stjepana Radica 1
HR-10 000 Zagreb
Tel : +385 (1) 6101241 - Fax : +385 (1) 610 1502 –
Email : Lidija.hrastic-novak@zagreb.hr

Mrs Sanja OZIC
City of Zagreb
Advisor of Head of Office
City office for health, labour, social protection and veterans
Trg Stjepana Radica 1
HR-10 000 Zagreb
Tel : +385 (1) 610 1284 - Fax : - Email : sanja.ozic@zagreb.hr

GERMANY

Mr Albert KERN
Federal Ministry of Health
Office of the Federal Drug Commissioner
Desk Officer for the topics of Illicit Drugs
Friedrichstraße 108
D-10117 Berlin
Tel : +49 (30) 18 441 4716 - Fax : +49 (30) 18 441 4960 –
Email : albert.kern@bmg.bund.de

Mrs Kathleen ORDNUNG
Federal Ministry of Health
Narcotics Law, International Narcotic Drug Affairs
Heisbachstr. 18
D-53123 Bonn
Tel : +49 (228) 994 413 673 - Fax : +49 (228) 994 414 939
Email : kathleen.ordnung@bmg.bund.de

GERMANY - FRANKFURT

Mr Jürgen WEIMER
Drug Coordination Bureau
City of Frankfurt/Main
Walter Kolb Strasse 9-11
D - 60594 FRANKFURT MAIN
Tel : +49 (69) 21230120 - Fax : - Email : juergen.weimer@stadt-frankfurt.de

HUNGARY

Mr Péter PORTORO
Head of Department
Department for the National Co-ordination of Drug Affairs
Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour
Akadémia U. 3
H-1054 - BUDAPEST
Tel : +36 (1) 475 58 29 - Fax : +36 (1) 331 35 64 –
Email : portoro.peter@szmm.gov.hu

NETHERLANDS

Mr Eberhard SCHATZ
c/o Foundation Regenboog/AMOC
Stadhouderskade 159
NL-1074 BC Amsterdam
Tel : +31 (20) 672 11 92 - Fax : +31 (20) 671 96 94 –
Email : eschatz@amoc.demon.nl

NORWAY

Mr. Arne ANDRESEN
Rusmiddeletatens Kompetansesenter
Pilestredet 27
Mailbox 7104 St.Olavs plass
N-0130 OSLO
Tel : +47 (23) 42 71 32 - Fax : +47 (23) 42 79 49
Email : arne.andresen@rme.oslo.kommune.no

POLAND

Mr. Grzegorz KOT
Municipality of Krakow
Department of Social Services
uL. Stachowicza, 18
PL- 30-103 Krakow
Tel : +48 (12) 616 5008 - Fax : +48 (12) 616 5027 –
Email : grzegorz.kot@um.krakow.pl

Mr Mateusz PLOSKONKA
Assistant to the Deputy Mayor of the City of Krakow
Municipality of Krakow
Pl. Wszystkich Swietych 3/4
PL-31-004 Krakow
Tel : +48 (501) 33 94 91 - Fax : +48 (12) 616 12 15
Email : mateusz.ploskonka@um.krakow.pl

ROMANIA

Mr Dorel BUTUCA
Ministry of Administration and Interior,
Directorate for Drug Demand Reduction,
National Anti-Drug Agency,
Bd. Unirii Nr. 37

Absent

Bloc A4 parter sector 3
Bucharest
Tel : +40 (21) 318 44 00 - Fax : +40 (21) 316 67 27 –
Email : dorel.butuca@ana.gov.ro

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

Mrs Natasha PAVLOVSKAYA
National Research Centre on Addictions (N.R.C.A)
Russian Federation Ministry of Health
Malyi Mogiltsevsky Per., 3
RF-121921 - MOSCOW
Tel : +7 (495) 241 2511 - Fax : +7 (495) 241 0981 - Email : pavlovsky@mtu-net.ru

Mrs Olga POPOVA
Chief Inspector
Directorate for International Cooperation
Federal Drug Control Service of the Russian Federation
MOSCOW
Tel : +7 (495) 628 50 70 - Fax : +7 (495) 606 93 68 - Email : mkkn@gnk.gov.ru

SLOVENIA

Mr Milan KREK
Regional Institute of Public Health
Vojkovo nabrezje 4a
SI-6000 Koper
Tel : +386 (5) 663 08 00 - Fax : +386 (5) 663 08 08 - Email : milan.krek@zzv-kp.si

UKRAINE

Excused

Mrs Alla SHUT'
Zaporozhye Law Institute
Chief Psychologist
Severny Shosse 113
UKR-69006 - Zaporozhye
Tel : +380 (507) 575 052 - Email : alik80273@rambler.ru

UNITED KINGDOM

Miss Claire HARMAN
Drug Interventions Programme
Offender-Based Interventions Unit
Home Office, Floor 4
Fry Building
2 Marsham Street
London
UK-SW1P 4DF
Tel : +44 (207) 035 0519 - Email : claire.harman@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

Mr Michael FOWLER
HM Prison Service
Young Persons Substance Misuse Manager
Far Moor Lane

Stone Row head
Off Quernmore Road
Lancaster
UK-LA1 3QZ
Tel : +44 (7930) 639 687 - Email : Michael.fowler@hmps.gsi.gov.uk

Mr Mark HINDLE
Chair
Lancashire Drug & Alcohol Action Team
Preston Business Centre
Rooms 250-252
Walting Street Road
Fulwood
Preston
UK-PR2 8DY
Tel : +44 (1772) 647101 - Fax : +44 (1772) 220283
Email : karen.carey@centrallancashire.nhs.uk

Mrs Loretta JOHNSON
Team manager
NACRO
39 Houlsworth St
Reddish, Stockport
UK - SK5 6BU
Email : loretta.johnson@yahoo.co.uk

Ms Suzy RENSHAW
Lancashire Drug & Alcohol Action Team
Preston Business Centre
Rooms 250-252
Waitling Street Road
Fulwood
Preston
UK-PR2 8DY
Tel : +44 (1772) 647 116 - Fax : +44 (1772) 220 283
Email : suzy.renshaw@centrallancashire.nhs.uk

CANADA

Dr Eugene J. MCCANN
Dept of Geography
Simon Fraser University
888 University Lane
BURNABY BC-V5A 1S6
Tel : +1 (778) 782 4599 - Fax : - Email : emccann@sfu.ca

CONSULTANTS

M. Thierry CHARLOIS
Democracy, Cities and Drugs Project
European Forum for Urban Safety
38 rue Liancourt

F-75014 PARIS

France

Tel : +33 (0)140 64 49 00 - Fax : +33 (01) 40 64 49 10 –

Mobile : +33 (0)6 07 44 42 84 - Email : charlois@urbansecurity.org

Mr Johnny CONNOLLY

Alcohol & Drug Research unit, Health Research Board

42-47 Lower Mount Street

Knockman House

Dublin 2

Ireland

Tel : +353 16761176 - Fax : +353 16618567 - Email : jconnolly@hrb.ie

Mr. Teuvo PELTONIEMI

A-Clinic Foundation

Paasivuorenkatu 5 A

FIN - 00530 HELSINKI

Finland

Tel : +358 (9) 622 02 90 - Fax : +358 (9) 175 276 – Mobile : +358 (400) 412 838

Email : teuvo.peltoniemi@a-klinikka.fi

SECRETARIAT

POMPIDOU GROUP SECRETARIAT /

Council of Europe

F – 67075 Strasbourg Cedex

Fax : +333 88 41 27 85

pompidou.group@coe.int

www.coe.int

Dr Thomas KATTAU, Principal Administrator

Tel: +333 88 41 22 84 – Email : thomas.kattau@coe.int

Mrs Florence MANSONS, Administrative assistant

Tel: +333 88 41 38 42 – Email: florence.mansons@coe.int