Towards a coherent policy on psychoactive substances

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Motivation for changing from a differentiated approach towards a coherent one?

- Dissatisfaction with the results of previous policies
- Increase of poly-drug use and mixed consumption of legal and illegal substances
- New research finding on addictions patterns
- Trend towards evidence-based policies
- Overall trends in society concerning substance use
What is understood by ‘coherent drug policies’?

Coherence in policies is achieved when:
• different policies complement or support each other
• do not undermine one another or cancel each other out
• create synergies between different policies
Policy coherence can mean:

- Co-ordination of different policies
- Coordinated approaches to demand and supply reduction
- Coherence between research findings and policies
- Coherence between different policy levels
- Single policy approach on licit and illicit psychoactive substances
- Overarching policy on all types of addictions
Feasibility of policy coherence

Global level
• Applied by OECD and UN in the area of international development aid

European level:
• Pompidou Group: work programme 2011-2015 on coherent and integrated drug policies
• European Council adopted the European Policy Coherence on Development (PCD) in 2005
Relevance of coherent policies for psychoactive substances

- Parallels with other policy areas
- Implication in the political economy of globalisation
- Supply and encompass under-developed, developing and developed regions of the world
- Close link with other policy domains
- Infused with conflicting ideological, moral and cultural attitudes
Measuring policy coherence
Measuring policy coherence

Policy coherence markers (indicators):
1. Conceptualisation of the problems
2. Policy context
3. Legislative/regulatory framework
4. Strategic framework
5. Responses/interventions
6. Structures and resources
Putting coherent policy into effect
Putting coherent policy into effect

Common goals:
- Public health
- Public safety
- Human rights
Making coherence work
Making coherence work

Essentials to make coherence work:

• Seek to eliminate policy inconsistencies
• Identify opportunities for policy enhancement
• Develop mitigation policies to overcome the adverse effects of non-psychoactive-substances policies
• Ensure consistency in politics
• Set and prioritise objectives
• Co-ordinate policy and its implementation
• Monitor, analyse and report
• Build capacity and capability
• Heed to dynamics
Challenges in establishing coherent policies

- Public opinion
- Political ideologies
- Institutional cultures
- Structural incompatibilities
- Diverging professional interests
Opportunities in policy coherence

• Viable option to tackle poly-drug use
• More effective integration of services
• Effective continuity of care
• Providing an overall objective cooperation
• Less struggle over influence and resources
• Reduced overlaps and double work
• More synergies
• Integrating drug demand and supply reduction