

Dear ECAD members.

The year of 2020 will be remembered as a different year. The COVID-19 pandemic affected the European drug situation in various ways. Supply of drugs persisted while reports from the ground show that many local drug markets have been disrupted due to strict restrictions on mobility. One early lesson is that drug users are a doubly vulnerable group when treatment systems are affected by an external shock. ECADS work to promote evidence based primary drug prevention and sustainable long-term recovery have never been more important.

As for our work, 2020 has been difficult in the sense that nearly all travelling stopped, and it became a challenge to run conferences. This year Mayors Conference had to be cancelled and lectures and seminars had to be either cancelled or transformed into digital lectures.

During the Mayors Conference our plenary session and election of a new board should have been held. The current board is willing to continue until a new plenary session can be held.

The drug problems in our cities and societies are still there and the need for evidence based restrictive drug policies is still actual. ECAD is still an important voice for decision-makers in our municipalities, countries, EU and the UN. During 2020 ECAD has been active in the European Union civil society forum on drugs.

The work at the office has been reduced compared with the years before. It has been possible for our Secretary general to run some virtually speeches and participate in virtual meetings such as for instant:

- World drug day, 26th of June. ECAD gave an overview on the European perspective on drug markets in the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and what steps actors on drug markets takes to adapt to the new situation.
- OSCE Conference in Vienna (virtual) in October.
- Several lectures and information materials were recorded. Some were turned into movies and recording material to be used in schools and among municipal workers.

This year we also could welcome a new member city. City of Dnipro, Ukraine's fourth largest city joined Ecad the 21st of October.

We hope to be able to invite you all to the next "Mayors Conference" in the second half of 2021. We also plan to have a virtual seminar about the Islandic drug prevention model, Planet Youth. We believe Planet Youth to be one of the most successful evidence-based models for preventing drug addiction there is and plan to continue work to expand it.

Some member cities have not yet paid this year's member fee to ECAD. It is understandable but the costs are still there for us. The activity has been low this year, but the board together with the office will work hard to rise the activity next year. ECAD has an important mission in lobbying for a restrictive drug policy in Europe by presenting evidence-based knowledge on prevention, treatment and rehabilitation and to work for a drug free society. Our work has just begun.

With regards

Viggo Lütcherath

ECAD Chairperson

Heida Björg Hilmisdóttir

ECAD Vice Chairperson