

# Evaluation of the Croatian Drug Strategy

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# Introduction

1. Approach and scope
2. Methodology
3. Key findings
4. Some recommendations

# 1. Two-fold approach

- Assessment of stakeholders involved in drug policy implementation on the achievements and future priorities
- Review of the available data on the drug situation to get a picture how the drug problem and drug policy have developed in the period covered by the Drug Strategy.

# 1. Scope

- Evaluation meant as analysis of the Croatian National Drug Strategy 2006 – 2012
  - regarding its qualities as a policy document
  - regarding the process of its implementation.
- Aims:
  - to serve policy relevant information
  - to serve input for the new Croatian National Drug Strategy.

# 1. Answers to the following questions:

- Did the current Drug Strategy cover all relevant drug policy issues?
- To what degree have the objectives of the current National Drug Strategy been realised?
- Did the efforts put in the key areas of the current National Drug Strategy increase since 2006?
- What has been the influence of the current National Drug Strategy on the decrease/increase of these efforts.
- What were the strong and weak points of the implementation of the Action Plans?
- What changes can be observed in the drug situation during the implementation of the strategy?
- What are priorities to be addressed in the future National Drug Strategy?
- What are the opportunities and difficulties for these future plans?

## 2. Methods used (1)

Collecting and reviewing background literature:

- the National Drug Strategy of the Republic of Croatia (2006-2012)
- the Action Plan on drug abuse control for the period 2006-2009
- the Action Plan for the suppression of drugs abuse for the period 2009-2012
- the Croatian National Reports to the EMCDDA 2007, 2008, 2009 and 2010
- a Summary Report of the annual reports on the state of affairs of the implementation of the strategy produced by the Croatian Drug Office.

## 2. Methods used (2)

### Exploring stakeholders' views:

- Exploratory interviews with key stakeholders to get a better understanding of the actual policy making and implementation process and to collect further context information;
- A (web-based) survey among a wider group of stakeholders from the national and county level using a structured questionnaire to assess in general terms the view of people involved in the implementation of the Drug Strategy;
- Individual interviews with selected stakeholders / experts to clarify findings from the survey;
- Focus groups with selected stakeholders / experts to check if there is a consensus on the conclusions and recommendations for the future of our evaluation.

## 2. Exploratory interviews

- Group interviews with 21 stakeholders from all involved Ministries, from national institutes and NGOs
- Focusing on four questions:
  - The Drug Strategy: how do respondents judge it as a policy document, have stakeholders been involved in the making and implementation of it?
  - The achievements: what plans have been realized
  - The quality / impact of the achievements (this point also covered the process of implementation and the role of the Croatian Drug Office).
  - The future: priorities for the new Drug Strategy.



## 2. Web-based survey

- Sample of 365 respondents:
  - 35 representatives of governmental bodies on national level
  - 55 representatives of the NGO sector
  - 271 respondents from local / county level
  - 4 researchers
- The survey focused on the following questions:
  - Did the current Drug Strategy cover all relevant issues?
  - To what degree have the objectives of the current National Drug Strategy been realised?
  - Did the efforts put in the key areas of the current National Drug Strategy increase since 2006?
  - What has been the influence of the current National Drug Strategy on the decrease/increase of these efforts?
  - What are priorities to be addressed in the future National Drug Strategy?

## 2. Clarification interviews

- Semi-structured group interviews with 17 stakeholders from Ministries, national institutes and NGOs around the following clusters:
  - National policy level, coordination, monitoring/research/evaluation
  - County policy/coordination level
  - Prevention/education and treatment
  - Police/justice/prisons
  - NGO's, social re-integration, public awareness
- Focusing on clarification of questions and inconsistencies emerging from the first two stages.

## 2. Still to do:

- Focus Groups with selected stakeholders / experts
  - to discuss and check if there is consensus on the conclusions
  - to discuss and check if there is consensus on the recommendations for the future of our evaluation
- Finalising report

### 3. Key findings (1)

- Overall positive judgement
- 'Much has been achieved, still much has to be done'
- Drug strategy is seen as good, comprehensive document but too extensive
- Drug Strategy and the Action Plans important impulse for developing consistent drug policy
- Discrepancy: Quality of programmes judged as fairly good, doubts about their impact
  - from idealism to realism

### 3. Key findings (2)

- National Committee, the Office and the County Committees contributed a lot to **coordination** of drug policy. Unclear definition of power, responsibilities and mutual relationships
- Insufficient **communication and cooperation** between stakeholders and organisations on different levels (local, county national)
- **Treatment:** overall well developed, major weak points: quality assurance, treatment in prisons, rehabilitation after treatment
- **Prevention:** high priority, many projects developed, major weak points: unclear definition, lack of evidence-based projects

## Key findings (3)

- **Harm reduction** and **treatment and prevention in prisons** in need of improvement and wider implementation
- Much work done by **police and justice**. Difficult to get a clear picture, 'a separate component of the state system'
- **Monitoring** well developed, not enough **evaluation and research**

## 4. Some recommendations (1)

- The new strategy should be
  - less ambitious/shorter
  - but more concrete, defining clear priorities and giving clear directions
- Better cooperation and communication between stakeholders and organisations (on county and on national level and between both levels) to facilitate an exchange of experience and consensus between the stakeholders
- Improvement of quality of implemented measures/interventions:
  - effectiveness evaluation
  - use information on good practice as guidance
  - developing guidance documents (guidelines and protocols, quality standards)
  - assuring/facilitating that guidance documents are used (mandatory for receiving funding?)

## 4. Some recommendations (2)

- Improve cooperation between prison and community
- Increase capacity of staff especially in treatment and prevention services through specific training programmes (based on a needs assessment) and support multidisciplinary work in treatment and care;
- More human resources for treatment in the prison and in the community;
- More financial resources in most of the fields. Balance budgets and clearly earmark budgets for specific objectives.



# The evaluation team

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**Thank you for your  
attention**

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