



**PRESS RELEASE FOR
Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (CEECA) region**

**Most countries fail drug policy test according to new Index globally and in CEECA region
First-ever accountability tool assesses and ranks countries' drug policies against key UN-system recommendations**

Tuesday, November 16, 2021 (Vilnius, Lithuania) -- Norway, New Zealand, Portugal, the UK and Australia are the five leading countries on humane and health driven drug policies according to the inaugural edition of the [Global Drug Policy Index](#) released today by the Harm Reduction Consortium. Brazil, Uganda, Indonesia, Kenya, and Mexico are the five lowest-ranking countries.

However, Norway, despite topping the Index, still only managed a score of 74/100. And the median score across all 30 countries and dimensions is just 48/100.

"48 out of 100 is a drug policy fail in anyone's book," said **Ann Fordham**, Executive Director of the [International Drug Policy Consortium](#) which led on the development of the Index with the partners in the Harm Reduction Consortium.

"None of the countries assessed should feel good about their score on drug policy, because no country has reached a perfect score. Or anywhere near it. This Index highlights the huge room for improvement across the board."

For decades, tracking how well - or badly - governments are doing in drug policy has been an elusive endeavour. In no small part, this is because data collection efforts by both governments and the UN have been driven by the outdated and harmful political goal of achieving a 'drug-free society.'

Most governments continue to employ a repressive approach to drug control based on this skewed data, which in turns means they cannot be held accountable for the damage their policies inflict on the lives of so many people.

The success of drug policies has not been measured against health, development, and human rights outcomes, but instead has tended to prioritise indicators such as the numbers of people arrested or imprisoned for drug offences, the amount of drugs seized, or the number of hectares of drug crops eradicated.

The Global Drug Policy Index is the first-ever data-driven global analysis of drug policies and their implementation. It is composed of 75 indicators running across five broad dimensions of drug policy: criminal justice, extreme responses, health and harm reduction, access to internationally controlled medicines, and development.

"The Global Drug Policy Index is nothing short of a radical innovation," said **Helen Clark**, Chair of the Global Commission on Drug Policy and former Prime Minister of New Zealand.

"Good, accurate data is power, and it can help us end the 'war on drugs' sooner rather than later."

"What's clear from the results is that no government can be complacent," said **Julita Lemgruber**, former Director of the Prison System of the State of Rio de Janeiro. "Even in the highest-ranking countries, progress is sorely needed. Governments worldwide must abandon the idea of drug

policies as instruments of “war” and understand them as means to promote human rights and citizenship.”

Across the CEECA region, the five countries examined in this first version of the Index – Georgia (55/100), Hungary (50/100), Kyrgyzstan (50/100), North Macedonia (55/100) the Russian Federation (41/1100) – have all scored low. The goal of 100/100 is a minimum standard for an effective health response to drugs.

„The Index will be expanded in the future to other countries of the region, but the picture already is clearly one of disproportionate criminal justice responses, inequitable application of drug laws, and a lack of access to both harm reduction and medicines for pain control and palliative care. Compared to the United Nations standards and recommendations, this is not good enough” – summarising the situation in the region prof. **Michel Kazatchkine** and **Pavel Bem**, members of the Global Commission on Drug Policy from CEECA region.

The Index’s first iteration evaluates the performance of 30 countries covering all regions of the world and is illustrated by real life stories, including of people who use drugs, from around the world.

The Index’s results reflect that:

- **The militarised and law enforcement approach to drug control continues to prevail:** Some level of lethal use of force by military or police forces was reported in half of the countries surveyed, with widespread cases in Mexico and Brazil.
- **The disproportionate impact of drug control on marginalised people on the basis of gender, ethnicity and socio-economic status** was reported to some extent across all dimensions, and across all countries.
- **Drug law enforcement targets primarily nonviolent offences, and especially people who use drugs:** Only 8 out of the 30 countries surveyed have decriminalised drug use and possession, and out of those, only 3 managed to truly divert people away from the criminal justice system.
- **The funding gap for harm reduction remains highly concerning:** Only 5 out of 30 countries have allocated ‘adequate’ funding to harm reduction, and of those countries, funding is considered secure in only one (Norway).
- **There is a huge gap between government policies and their implementation on ensuring access to controlled medicines**, especially in countries like India, Indonesia, Mexico, and Senegal which score high on policy, but score 0/100 for actual availability for those in need.
- **Alternative development programmes in areas of illegal cultivation remains entrenched in interdiction and eradication**, with Colombia scoring particularly low (23/100) due to its militarised strategy focusing on forced eradication and the harmful use of aerial spraying.

NOTES TO THE EDITOR

- The results of the **Global Drug Policy Index 2021**, including its companion analytical report and real-life stories of individuals’ experiences with drug policies from across the globe, will be

available on Monday November 8 through an interactive web-tool accessible through this link:
www.globaldrugpolicyindex.net

- The Global Drug Policy Index is a project of the **Harm Reduction Consortium**, which includes the following partners: the European Network of People Who Use Drugs (EuroNPUD), the Eurasian Harm Reduction Association (EHRA), the Eurasian Network of People who Use Drugs (ENPUD), the Global Drug Policy Observatory (GDPO) / Swansea University, Harm Reduction International (HRI), the International Drug Policy Consortium (IDPC), the Middle East and North Africa Harm Reduction Association (MENAHRRA), the West African Drug Policy Network (WADPN), the Women and Harm Reduction International Network (WHRIN), and Youth RISE.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION:

Michael Kessler (English / Spanish)

GDPI Media Relations

Mob. +34 655 792 699

Email: michael.kessler@inton-media.com

Twitter: @mickessler

Marie Nougier (French/Spanish)

IDPC Head of Research and Communications

Mob: +44 7807 077 617

Email: mnougier@idpc.net

Twitter: @ marienougier

Ganna Dovbakh (Russian/English)

EHRA Executive Director

Mob: +37068887975

Email: anna@harmreductioneurasia.org

Skype: anna.dovbakh

FB: anna.dovbakh