



To: Executive Director Mr. Yury Fedotov

United Nations Office On Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
Vienna International Centre
Wagramer Strasse 5
A 1400 Vienna
Austria

21.09.2010,

Civil society organizations welcome your statement

Dear Mr. Fedotov,

The undersigned NGOs were among the first to express concern about the appointment of Russian representative as the Executive Director of the United Nation's Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). Recognizing the importance of the new Director's leadership in the fight and for human rights and health, we expressed concern that the appointment of a director from the Russian Federation, a country renowned for drug policy which exacerbates both human rights violations and the HIV epidemic would send the wrong message.

We are glad to see that the concerns of civil society did not go unnoticed by the leadership of the UN. We welcome your statement made on the day you took office that human rights and public health would be at the centre of your work. It is also laudable that you called for effective treatment instead of punishment for problem drug users and emphasized the need for the promotion of HIV prevention in the context of drug treatment policies.

We hope that as the Executive Director of UNODC, you will play an effective role in convincing governments, like that of the Russian Federation to take a new, humane approach to drug control. There are still many countries where the human rights of people who use drugs are often violated in the name of drug control; where prohibition has provoked violence; where so called drug treatment doesn't correspond to international evidence-based standards; where access to life-saving services such as opioid substitution treatment and needle and syringe distribution programs are denied; and where prisons are filled with non-violent drug offenders.

We, and other like-minded NGOs, are ready to support you in the efforts to reform drug policies. We look forward to seeing your promising words put into action.

Eurasian Harm Reduction Network (EHRN), Vilnius, Lithuania

Andrey Rylkov Foundation for Health and Social Justice, Moscow, Russia

Hungarian Civil Liberties Union (HCLU), Budapest, Hungary