

# DO NATIONAL HCV POLICIES IN THE EU ADDRESS TREATMENT AND CARE FOR PEOPLE WHO INJECT DRUGS?

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Disclosure of interest

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# Outline

1. Background
2. Methods
3. Results
4. Conclusions
5. References / Suggestions for further reading

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## Background

- Why are national hepatitis plans important?
  - An indicator of political commitment
  - Useful for advocacy by civil society
- WHO/Europe Action Plan – 2018 Milestone:
 

***“Costed and funded national hepatitis plan with clear targets or a viral hepatitis response plan in a broader health strategy or action plan”***
- When starting this project in early 2017, we began with a scoping review to identify recent or ongoing activities looking at the implementation of national viral hepatitis plans and access to HCV treatment for PWID in Europe
 

→ ... we found a lot!



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## Events held in 2017 where access to HCV care for PWID in Europe was discussed (*Not a complete list!*)

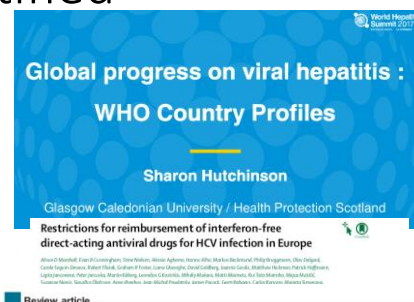
1. **HepHIV 2017 conference** (Jan 2017) [www.hiveurope.eu/Conferences/HepHIV2017](http://www.hiveurope.eu/Conferences/HepHIV2017)
2. **European Parliament** (March) "Friends of the Liver" MEP: **Challenges of HCV in Central & South Eastern Europe** [www.easl.eu](http://www.easl.eu)
3. **Regional CEECA Harm Reduction conference** (April)
4. **The HCV Community Summit & EASL Int Liver Congress** (April) [www.hepatitiscommunitysummit.eu](http://www.hepatitiscommunitysummit.eu)
5. **The 25<sup>th</sup> International Harm Reduction Conference** (May)
6. **Improving Outcomes in the Treatment of Opioid Dependence (IOTOD)** (May) [www.iotodeducation.com](http://www.iotodeducation.com)
7. **Launch of the ACHIEVE coalition** (June) [www.achievehepatitiselimination.eu](http://www.achievehepatitiselimination.eu)
8. **EMCDDA/ECDC Hepatitis week** (June) [www.emcdda.europa.eu/meetings/2017/drid](http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/meetings/2017/drid)
9. **IAS2017: 4<sup>th</sup> International HIV/Viral Hepatitis meeting** (July) [www.ias2017.org](http://www.ias2017.org)
10. **INHSU 2017** (September) [www.inhsu2017.com](http://www.inhsu2017.com)
11. **Central & Eastern European Hepatitis/HIV meeting** (September) [www.virology-education.com](http://www.virology-education.com)
12. **HCV Elimination Mini Policy Summits** (Romania, Portugal, Greece) by the Hepatitis B&C Public Policy Association (Sept/Oct/Nov) [www.hcvbrusselssummit.eu](http://www.hcvbrusselssummit.eu)
13. **Lisbon Addictions Conference** (Oct) [www.lisbonaddictions.eu](http://www.lisbonaddictions.eu)
14. **World Hepatitis Summit** (Nov) [www.worldhepatitissummit.org](http://www.worldhepatitissummit.org)
15. **International Viral Hepatitis Elimination Meeting (IVHEM)** (November) [www.virology-education.com](http://www.virology-education.com)

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## Other monitoring activities identified

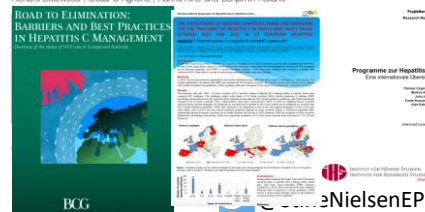
1. WHO 2017 global survey on National efforts towards hep elimination (not PWID focus) – data presented at WHS2017 and ILC2018
2. INHSU review of DAA restrictions in Europe (Marshall et al 2017)
3. The Correlation network 2013+2016 surveys on national HCV policies and access to HCV treatment for PWID in Europe (Maticic et al 2017)
4. The European Liver Patient Association Hep-CORE study 2016+2017 (Lazarus et al 2017) [20 EU countries]
5. Wright et al 2017: Readiness in 12 European countries to treat HCV in people with opioid disorder
6. Boston Consulting Group report 2017
  - Monitoring national responses in 10 countries
7. Czypionka et al report 2015 (5 EU countries)

*A full list of references at the end of this presentation*



**Are we ready to treat hepatitis C virus in individuals with opioid use disorder: assessment of readiness in European countries on the basis of an expert-generated model**

Nat Wright\*, Jens Plemer\*, Lorenzo Somaini\*, Carlos Roncero\*, Ivo Maremmani\*, Nicolas Simon\*, Peter Kraetzl\*, Richard Lilliebrock\*, Oscar D'Agnone\*, Harisu Aho and Benjamin Polanyi\*



## Objective

- To review if national HCV policies in the 30 EMCDDA countries (EU28+Norway & Turkey) promote or limit access to HCV treatment and care for people who inject drugs (PWID)

HCV policies defined as:

national strategies, programmes and action plans addressing HCV and/or HCV among PWID – including those integrated in broader health strategies/plans

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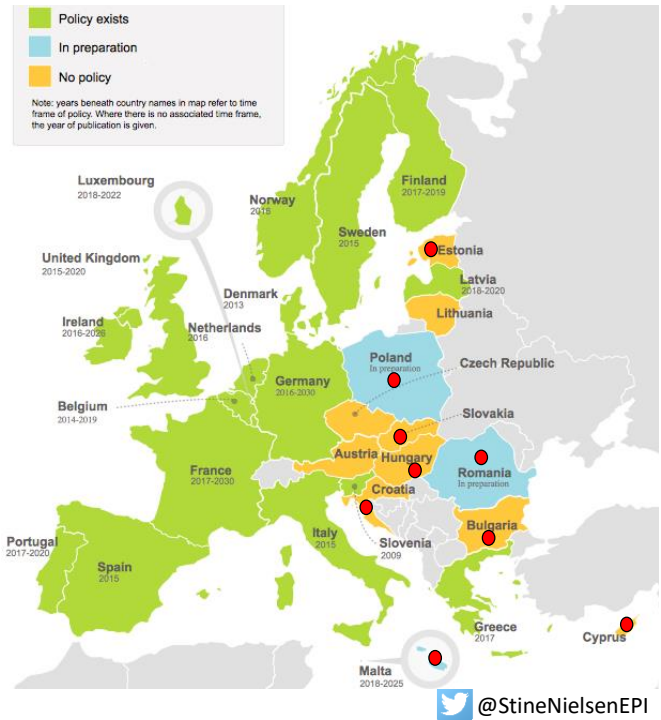
## Methods

- Initial scoping review of past or on-going efforts
- Between February-October 2017: targeted search in reports submitted by National Focal Points to the EMCDDA, published and grey literature, and relevant national websites
- Where no national HCV policy was identified, clinical guidelines were assessed
- Several rounds of interaction with the national experts in the EMCDDA network on drug-related infectious diseases (DRID)
- Analytical summaries for each country submitted in early 2018 to EMCDDA Focal Points for validation
- All countries except Turkey provided feedback (N=29 countries)

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# Results

- As of March 2018, 17 countries had official HCV policies inclusive of PWID
  - Large heterogeneity – ex DK & SE “only” guidelines on HCV among PWID.
  - Several policies without targets, monitoring or funding
- Malta, Romania & Poland have policies in preparation
- 12/17 national policies adopted or renewed since 2015
- In spring 2018, 9 EU countries excluded people currently using drugs from accessing HCV treatment




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- News
- About

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HCV policy landscape- update Spring 2018

HCV policies landscape in Europe

A compilation of national summaries and key-documents regarding HCV treatment and care for people who inject drugs from 28 EU countries and Norway

Spring 2018

### Country summaries

- Austria
- Belgium
- Bulgaria
- Croatia
- Cyprus
- Czech Republic
- Denmark
- Estonia
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Greece

### Hepatitis policy implementation by country

Note: the country summaries in this section are based on a study commissioned by the EMCDDA on viral hepatitis policies in Europe, which also contains additional background information.

**Austria**

**Summary**  
 No national strategy or action plan addressing hepatitis is available. There is no specialised viral hepatitis treatment programme targeting people with addictions or other risk groups. The document defining the rules for treatment of viral hepatitis by the National Health Insurance Fund limits the access of people with current alcohol and drug abuse to treatment (see below). Clients in opioid substitution programmes are only eligible for HCV treatment if a psychiatric assessment determines that they are stable and meet certain inclusion criteria. The review of DAA restrictions criteria in Europe performed on behalf of the International Network on Hepatitis in Substance Users (NIHSU) Network found that access to HCV treatment in Bulgaria required '12 month abstinence from drug and alcohol abuse' (Marshall et al 2018).

**HCV policy key document**  
 No specific document addressing national policy of HCV treatment and care for PWID

- 29 country summaries
- Links to key national documents and acknowledgement of the national experts providing input for each country
- <http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/topic-overviews/hepatitis-policy-en>

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## Conclusion

- In early 2018, still 9 EU countries who restrict access to HCV treatment for PWID
- Rapid increase in the number of countries with national HCV policies since 2015
- Large heterogeneity of national HCV policies available in Europe
  - Need for monitoring implementation efforts and funding available
  - National policy ≠ Action
- Future monitoring of progress towards HCV elimination in Europe to be done in collaboration between ECDC, EMCDDA and WHO/Europe (See Duffel et al 2017)

Duffell E, Hedrich D, Mardh O, Mozalevskis A. "Towards elimination of hepatitis B and C in European Union and European Economic Area countries: monitoring the World Health Organization's global health sector strategy core indicators and scaling up key interventions" [Euro Surveill.](#) 2017;22(9)

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## References / Further reading

1. Boston Consulting Group (Gore, Lazarus, Baptista Leite) 2017: "Road to Elimination: Barriers and Best Practices in Hepatitis C Management Overview of the status of HCV care in Europe and Australia"
2. Cypionka et al 2015 "Research report: Programme zur Hepatitis C – Eine Internationale Übersicht", Inst. for Advanced Studies, Vienna, Austria
3. ECDC 2017 "Technical report: Hepatitis B and C testing activities, needs, and priorities in the EU/EEA"
4. EMCDDA 2016 "Hepatitis C among drug users in Europe: Epidemiology, treatment and prevention"
5. Goldberg & Hutchinson 2014 "Hepatitis C: Setting Standards towards the Eradication of Infection and Disease as a serious Health Issue in the EU"
6. Hendrickx 2016 "Background document: VHPB meeting 10-11 March 2016 – Highlight underserved for screening, prevention and treatment of viral hepatitis B and C in Europe"
7. Lazarus et al 2017 "Restrictions on access to direct-acting antivirals for people who inject drugs: The European Hep-CORE study and the role of patient groups in monitoring national HCV responses" IJDP
8. Marshall et al 2017 "Restrictions for reimbursement of interferon-free direct-acting antiviral drugs for HCV infection in Europe" Lancet Gastro Hep
9. Maticic et al 2017 "Development of National Strategies, Plans and Guidelines for HCV Treatment in PWID Between 2013 and 2016 in 33 European Countries" INHSU2017 poster 77
10. Reimer et al 2005 "Guidelines for the Treatment of Hepatitis C Virus Infection in Injection Drug Users: Status Quo in the European Union Countries" Clinical Infectious Diseases
11. Spina et al 2014 "Policy responses to viral hepatitis B and C among people who inject drugs in Member States of the WHO European region: a sub-analysis of the WHO 2013 global hepatitis policy survey" BMC Infectious Diseases 2014
12. Wiessing et al 2014 "Hepatitis C Virus Infection Epidemiology among People Who Inject Drugs in Europe: A Systematic Review of Data for Scaling Up Treatment and Prevention" PLoS ONE
13. Wright et al 2017 "Are we ready to treat hepatitis C virus in individuals with opioid use disorder: assessment of readiness in European countries on the basis of an expert-generated model" European Journal of Gastroenterology and Hepatology
14. Wolfe et al 2015 "Human rights and access to hepatitis C treatment for people who inject drugs" IJDP

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