

INFORMATION DIGEST

AUGUST 2019



ENPUD
country news

IN MEMORY OF **ALENA ASAEVA**

On May 2 of this year, we lost Alena Asaeva. Alena was the founder and soul of the Eurasian network of people who use drugs, (ENPUD), an activist, colleague, friend and just a sensitive and very kind person.

She was principled in everything. The principle of Alena sometimes strained and angered the people around her. But this always happens with honest and principled people. Yes, it's not easy with them. But without such people, the world becomes unstable, and people lose faith in themselves.

Alena was needed by all of us. Therefore, so many words of love are addressed to her. Therefore, so many people are lost and upset so far. We all feel loss and emptiness.



IN MEMORY OF ALENA ASAEVA



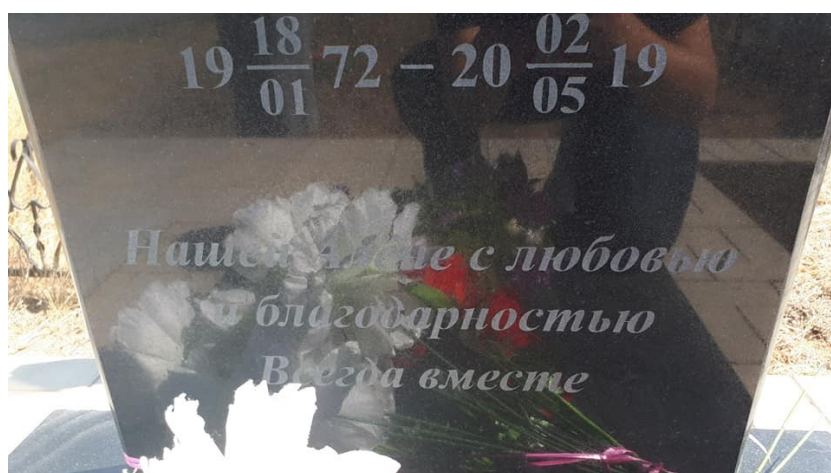
Alena lived as a righteous man. She defended and served what she believed. She experienced a lot of pain, paid for it with everything she could and what she had. And her death ...

This is a strange story. The highest award for an actor is death on stage. The highest award for Alena is to die at the International Harm Reduction Conference in Portugal. This is a sign of selectivity and recognition of what she did and who she was.

Thanks to you and your support, all organizational procedures have been completed; a monument has been erected on the grave of Alena. We visited Alena, told her the news, and sent greetings from all the ESLUN members.

Sleep, Alenka. We will do everything right. You will be proud of us - we promise!

IN MEMORY OF ALENA ASAEVA



AUGUST 31: INTERNATIONAL OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY

ENPUD: OFFICIAL POSITION

August 31, the international community celebrates an important date - International Overdose Awareness Day. This is a global event that aims to raise awareness of overdose worldwide.

On this day, we remember people who died from an overdose of drugs, and situations when we or our friends remained alive thanks to timely assistance. The appeal, which is the main theme of the International Overdose Awareness Day, is “Time to remember, time to act”.

This means that we must not only REMEMBER our loved ones and all those who died from overdoses, but also ACT, so that our friends no longer die from a drug overdose.

Today, repressive drug policies in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) region imply criminal liability for possession and, in some countries, for drug use. Criminalization drives people who use drugs into unsanitary and marginalized conditions, increasing the risk of contracting HIV and other diseases, as well as death from overdose. Criminalization also stops people from seeking medical attention in the event of an overdose of their friends or family members.

AUGUST 31: INTERNATIONAL OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY

Obviously, such a policy is not able to prevent drug overdoses and deaths. It only increases the risk of premature death from overdose and the acute consequences of drug use. Throughout the world, the problem continues to worsen due to the emergence of new synthetic drugs - fentanyl and carfentanil, which are many times stronger than heroin in their effects.

To change the situation of overdose in the EECA region, on August 31 activists of several countries held actions to attract the attention of the state and society to the problem of drug overdoses and possible ways to solve it, in particular, the availability of naloxone to drug users.

The main requirements of activists in our region:

- implementation of a consistent strategy to reduce overdose;
- introduction of programs that expand access to naloxone;
- the exclusion of naloxone from the list of prescription drugs;
- introduction of non-prescription nasal form of naloxone into the pharmacy chains.

ENPUD calls on all members of our network not to remain indifferent and to do everything possible to fulfill these requirements.

It's time to act!

MOLDOVA: QUESTIONS WITHOUT ANSWERS



In Balti, Moldova, on August 31, the community of people who use drugs and the Public Association “Youth for the Right to Life” (Balti branch) joined the International Overdose Awareness Day and urged everyone not to remain indifferent.

Activists recalled people who died from a drug overdose and situations when they survived thanks to timely assistance. Most of the dead could be saved if everyone had naloxone, a test to assess the quality of the substance used, if there was no stigma in society for people who use drugs, if there were places in the country for safe drug use, etc.

MOLDOVA: QUESTIONS WITHOUT ANSWERS



Criminalization stops people from seeking medical help in case of an overdose. To change the situation during the rally, activists taught people what to do in case of an overdose, distributed Naloxone, answered questions and advised.

The main goal of the rally was to draw the attention of officials and society to the problem of drug overdoses and possible solutions. This is not the end, the struggle continues.

UKRAINE: IN ACTION KILLS

On August 30, the action "Inaction kills!" was held near the walls of Parliament of Ukraine in Kiev. The organizers of the action is VOLNA (All-Ukrainian Association of People with Drug Addiction) with the financial support of the Alliance for Public Health. Activists staged a reanimation performance and conducted a mini-training on the basics of first aid in case of overdose.

"Today we train people to help with an overdose and urge the deputies of Parliament of Ukraine to pay attention to this problem. As representatives of the community of people living with drug addiction, we demand that in Ukraine, naloxone should be freely available at any pharmacy, and citizens should know the rules for helping with an overdose - this is the only way to save hundreds of lives", - said Oleg Dymaretskiy, director of VOLNA.

During the action, everyone had the opportunity to talk with representatives of VOLNA in the format of a "live book" - activists shared their own experience in overdose of opiates and psychostimulants, discussed the problem of overdose in prisons.

"This problem can affect any family, and we must remember that we are talking not only about an overdose of drugs, but also alcohol. The problem of overdose for us is the opportunity to state the need for systemic reforms in the state drug policy in general, to call on the new Parliament and the new Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine for changes. We continue to make our way to Europe, and drug policy should be based on progressive and scientifically sound principles", - said Anton Basenko, chairman of the board of VOLNA.

UKRAINE: INACTION KILLS



UKRAINE: INACTION KILLS



In 17 cities and regions of Ukraine, members of the VOLNA (All-Ukrainian Association of People with Drug Addiction) also held campaigns and flash mobs “Inaction kills” as part of an overdose awareness day: Poltava, Chernivtsi, Zaporozhye, Cherkasy, Zaporozhye, Odessa, Lugansk region, Kharkov, Kropyvnytsky, Zhytomyr, Dnipro, Lutsk and others.

UKRAINE: INACTION KILLS



KYRGYZSTAN: MEMORIAL IN MEMORY OF PEOPLE DIED FROM OVERDOSE



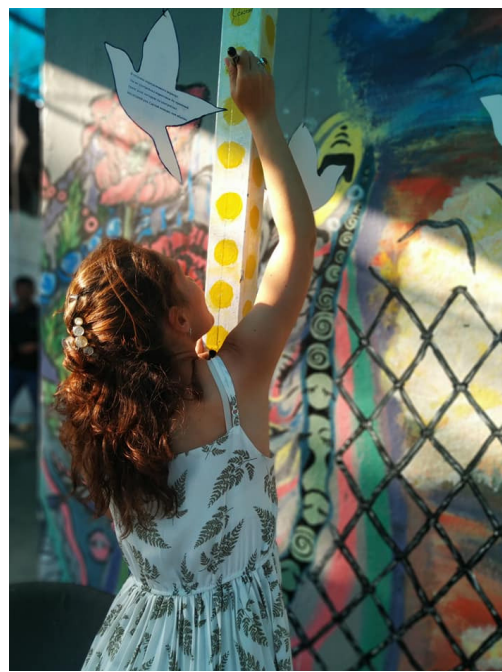
In Bishkek, activists of the Association "Harm Reduction Network" by August 31 painted a social dormitory where people live after prison, who are addicted to drugs, have HIV status. This is a house of social support, a house of hope, a house of peace and stability for many people.

Graffiti on the walls - a memory of those who died from an overdose and a reminder that this can be avoided. Many friends and loved ones are lost in this senseless drug war. These names are many. And after all, most of the deaths could have been avoided thanks to naloxone and first aid knowledge.

Symbolism of the memorial: poppies, eyes, sadness, pain, hands. The grid is our whole system. Repressive and cruel. Birds - souls who have come off the net, these are our friends who are not with us.

The memorial was made by: Dmitry Shvets, Denis Rakhmanin, Sergey Bessonov, Nazik Abylgazieva, Sveta Bondarenko, Elena Voronina, Alla Bessonova.

KYRGYZSTAN: MEMORIAL IN MEMORY OF PEOPLE DIED FROM OVERDOSE



GEORGIA: TREES OF LIFE



On August 31, GeNPUD (Georgian Network of People Who Use Drugs), the Georgian Harm Reduction Network, people who use drugs, family members of overdose victims joined International Overdose Awareness Day and planted cypress trees - symbols of eternity. Cypress trees, or trees of life - is the memory of those who died from an overdose because of repressive drug policy.

Trees were planted in four cities of Georgia: Ozurgeti, Kutaisi, Rustavi, Tbilisi. The campaign "Trees of Life" and the planting of cypress trees on August 31 was held for the 6th year in a row. Throughout the country over the years, more than 700 cypress trees have been planted.

RUSSIA: IROKEZ, HI



In August, Andrey Rylkov Foundation for Health and Social Justice (FAR), which is involved in harm reduction in Moscow, is 10 years old. 10 years ago, friends of activist Andrei Rylkov, or IROKEZ (his nick name), finally received permission from his dad to use his name in the name of the foundation. Andrey's father was ill for a very long time, so getting this permission was very difficult.

IROKEZ was a wildly cool man! He was a real junky. This was his lifestyle. He was such a person, with whom you can be proud of friendship and always remember him.

RUSSIA: IROKEZ, HI



IROKEZ was a real punk and anarchist. He refused to brush his teeth, adored the Einsturzende Neubauten group and hated when there was some inexplicable and unnecessary in a bad shit.

Therefore, when his friends began to die of AIDS, Iroquois inspired everyone around him and assembled the legendary activist group FrontAIDS (AIDS Front), such a Russian analogue of the American group Act-Up, combining the radical movement and direct methods of green action with HIV activism. At that time, Iroquois became the engine of the common struggle for access to HIV treatment in Russia.

Having learned about harm reduction, IROKEZ was a volunteer for the Médecins sans frontières, MSF, organization for many years. This organization made the first harm reduction program in Moscow. He taught his friends and friends of friends who use drugs how to protect their health and life, conducted training and walked every day to the street to chat with unfamiliar junkies, saving people from overdoses and so on.

RUSSIA: IROKEZ, HI

When harm reduction flourished in Russia, he founded an outreach workers' union to develop a profession and fight for rights together, worked in the self-organization of well draggers, etc.

We can talk for a long time about his merits as an activist and what he has done. The bottom line is that he always found the strength to invest not only in himself, but also in his community.

So it was very cool to name the foundation after IROKEZ! IROKEZ died many years ago, but with his name literally every day he helps to do what the Foundation does.

Amid growing dictatorship and the destruction of marginalized people, he, along with the FAR, continues to protect the health, freedom and dignity of his friends, relatives and his community in the broadest sense of the word. And the community of people who use drugs in Russia is the most marginalized, unprotected, hated and criminalized people.

FAR continues to work, no matter what, for 10 years. IROKEZ would be glad. Every day, FAR activists walk the streets, distribute syringes, help people solve some important issues and problems, reminding them that no matter how dark and impassable the night may seem, morning always comes!

KAZAKHSTAN: HISTORY OF LOVE AND LOSS



VALENTINA MANKIEVA, KAZAKHSTAN HARM REDUCTION NETWORK:

When people began to publish stories of their losses on the eve of August 31 - it all “broke” me. And I realized that I need to talk. The desire to write appeared immediately, but as soon as I sat down to write, I realized that I could not do it. All these two weeks, my heart was breaking harder than ever. And all these years, tears flow all the time, they do not end. And I understand that if I do not write, I will be very sorry afterwards ...

“God gave us love, with her like wings behind his back. And Margarita went crazy after the Master”, - as Basta sings.

I never dreamed of changing my life, because a long time ago they told me - that's it, you'll die soon. And the long years of waiting for death came, after five overdoses it became clear that, probably, still not fate yet ...

My Aslan, You helped me trust and change, believe in the best feelings that exist on this earth, gave me our girl Rumina.

KAZAKHSTAN: HISTORY OF LOVE AND LOSS

That day was especially warm and happy, so many photos and experiences left from him. And if I knew that You were near, not far, I would have gathered all the forces of this world, and You remained alive. Can I blame those people who left You, I don't know now (people are just people, and not everyone is allowed to be essentially human).

When I arrive at our house, I sit in the porch and try to understand how I didn't feel, didn't go out, didn't go up a floor, no one saw or heard, because I called for 11 hours without a break, but I didn't guess .

You took a large part of me, and who says that time heals - they just do not understand what they are talking about. I do not know a single person who would say unworthy of You. And how can I forgive myself that maybe I could change something ?! I can't find peace, My Aslan. I know that You are calm there, sometimes I see it in my dreams, where I feel invisibly Your spirit, but it doesn't make me feel better about it.

Rumina is a real Ingush girl: as strong in spirit and courageous, kind and sympathetic as You. All of You is in it, and it is a great blessing that I have it. You were the best father! And it seems that I'm not there, everything hung, everything is abstract and not lived.

Such a happy and not long journey together here on Earth. Such a long way to You and even longer without You, and if it is love, I will find You for sure ...

I thank you for our daughter, your wisdom and patience, soulfulness and fortitude, and that example, which men are.

Allah Almighty grants you a paradise, My Aslan. Amine.

TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF!



August 31 is an overdose awareness day.

This day is over, but the problem of overdose has not gone away.

This day is just a reason to be surprised that life is too fragile.

This day is an opportunity to remember the dead and to love and think about the living even more.

CONTACT INFORMATION



The digest was prepared by: Vitaliy Rabinchuk (Moldova), Koka Labartkava (Georgia), Valentina Mankieva (Kazakhstan), Anton Basenko (Ukraine), Aidana Fedosik (Russia), Anya Sarang (Russia).

ENPUD website: <http://enpud.net>

Facebook Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/ENPUD/>

The digest was prepared by: Alexander Levin, information manager of ENPUD (sasha.levin75@gmail.com)