

Pursuant to Article 45, paragraph 1 of the Law on Government (“Official Gazette of RS”, No 55/05, 71/05 – correction, 101/07, 65/08, 16/11, 68/12 – CC, 72/12, 7/14 – CC and 44/14),

The Government passes

## THE STRATEGY FOR THE PREVENTION OF DRUG ABUSE FOR THE PERIOD 2014-2021

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Strategy for the Prevention of Drug Abuse for the period 2014-2021 (hereinafter referred to as: Strategy) is the key document for solving the issues of drug abuse. It is harmonised with the national state of play regarding drugs and with the scientific findings on the issue of drugs, as well as with the current policies pursued by the European Union in this field. This Strategy defines a list of objectives to be achieved in the implementation of measures to be taken in the next period.

The Strategy is based on the principles of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, solidarity, rule of law and human rights. The aim of the Strategy is to ensure and enhance public health, to provide general welfare, both for individuals and the society, to ensure and enhance a high level of safety of the population, and to provide a balanced, integrative approach to the issue of drugs, based on evidence.

The Republic of Serbia is a signatory country of the United Nations Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs from 1961, which was amended by the Protocol from 1972, and then the Convention on Psychotropic Substances from 1971, and the Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychoactive Substances from 1988, which represent the foundation for the intervention of the UN in the field of drugs, and therefore, the cooperation with UN agencies and bodies which exists in the field of drug policy represents a single part of the national policy against drugs.

The Strategy was modelled on the EU Strategy for Drugs for the period 2013-2020 and its Action Plan for the period 2013-2016.

The Strategy takes into account the results of the mid-term assessment of the Strategy against Drugs in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2009-2013, implemented in July 2012 by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). It also includes the recommendations of the assessment of the Strategy implemented by the experts of the European Union within the Twinning Project (German-Czech Consortium): “Implementation of the Strategy against Drugs – components of the reduction of supply and demand”, in cooperation with the partners in the country.

## 2. STATE OF PLAY IN THE REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

According to the results of the National survey on life styles of citizens of the Republic of Serbia 2014 – substance use and gambling, the use of illicit drugs, at least once in the lifetime, was recorded in 8.0% of the total population, aged between 18 and 64 (10.8% of men and 5.2% women), with higher presence (12.8%) among younger adults between 18 and 34 years of age. The most commonly used illicit drug among the adults is cannabis (marijuana and hashish), which use once in the lifetime is recorded in 7.7% of the interviewees aged 18-64 (10.4% of men and 4.9% of women). The use of other illicit drugs is scarce, 1.6% of the interviewees (2.5% of the population aged 18-34) have used other illicit drugs. Medications from the group of sedatives and hypnotics in the last year were used by 22.4% of the interviewees (13.9% of men and 30.)% of women).<sup>1</sup>

According to the ESPAD survey, conducted in 2011 among the pupils aged 16, the total of 8.0% of the pupils have used some of the illicit drugs for at least once in the lifetime, and 7.0% have used marijuana at least once. In comparison with the ESPAD survey from 2008, there are no significant changes in the frequency of the substance use. The results of both of the ESPAD surveys show higher frequency of substance use among the young men in comparison with the young women regarding all substances, except from the sedatives without the recommendation of physicians. The young users of illicit drugs more often use more than one type of substances. Almost a half of pupils who have used marijuana, have also used some other legal or illicit substance, most often sedatives without the recommendation of physicians and alcohol. In comparison with the pupils from more than 30 European countries taking part in the survey in 2011, the sixteen-year olds have used marijuana and other illicit drugs in a lower percentage, while the sedatives without the recommendation of physicians were used in higher percentage comparing to the average value from all the countries.<sup>2</sup>

The National Office for HIV/AIDS at the Institute of Public Health of Serbia “Dr Milan Jovanović Batut” coordinated the survey in 2008 and 2011 regarding the assessment of the number of injecting drug users (IDU), using the multiplier method. According to the results of the conducted assessment in 2009, there were 30.383 IDUs aged between 15 and 59, with a possible range from 12.682 to 48.083 IDUs. The assessed number of users who inject drugs, based on these data, is 0.7% of the population aged between 15 and 59.<sup>2</sup>

Based on the data analysis on mortality related to the use of drugs, a decreasing number of deaths can be seen in the past five years, and the majority of these cases are related to opiates.

The data on infectious diseases related to the use of drugs in the Republic of Serbia come from the national registers for HIV and AIDS and from the bio-behavioural surveys (conducted in 2008 and 2010 and in 2012 among the injecting drug users). Since 1991, the percentage of IDUs among the newly diagnosed and reported cases of HIV infection has been falling over

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<sup>1</sup> National survey on life styles of citizens in Serbia 2014 – substance use and gambling. The Institute of Public Health of Serbia “Dr Milan Jovanović Batut”.

<sup>2</sup> Comiskey, C. Dempsey, O. And Snel, A. (2011), Prevalence of the population under higher risk from HIV infection in the Republic of Serbia, Institute of Public Health of Serbia “Dr Milan Jovanović Batut”

years. Based on the survey results, a high prevalence of the virus hepatitis C infection can be seen among the injecting drug users (more than 70% in Belgrade in 2008 and 2010), while the prevalence of HIV infection among the IDUs is less than 5%. The program of exchange of needles and syringes are available only in Belgrade, Niš, Novi Sad and Kragujevac, and they mostly depend on the external funding (The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria). The number of newly reached IDUs was increasing in the period between 2009 and 2012, but the scope of this program for IDUs is insufficient.

Ministry of Health, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Education, Institute of Public Health of Serbia “Dr Milan Jovanović Batut” (with the network of 23 institutes), Red Cross of Serbia, institutions for treatment of addiction diseases, local self-government units, international organisations, associations, etc. all participate in the field of prevention of drug abuse. However, the activities conducted in schools, in families and communities, are mostly within the scope of universal prevention. Selective and indicated prevention interventions, focusing on specific risk groups and individuals, are rarely implemented.

Treatment of drug addiction is available through the diagnostics and therapy consultations and counselling; both in-patient and out-patient treatment; relapse prevention (worsening of the illness) with pharmacology or without medications; programs of opioid substitution therapy; programs individual, group or family psychotherapy and psychosocial support and integration. Treatment of drug addiction is provided at all three levels of healthcare. Referent healthcare institutions for treatment of addiction diseases are located in four largest cities in the Republic of Serbia (Belgrade, Niš, Novi Sad and Kragujevac). In the institutions of secondary and tertiary healthcare, the number of in-patient treated persons within the diagnostic group F11 – F19 is decreasing and in 2012 it was 1.667. Among the persons treated for drug addiction the largest number is the opiates addicts.<sup>3</sup>

The treatment with the substitution therapy is available in healthcare institutions from primary to tertiary healthcare level. Based on the data of the National Office for HIV/AIDS, the number of substitution therapy users in 2012 was 2.200 (2.045 on methadone therapy and 155 on buprenorphine therapy).

Within the healthcare system in prisons, drug addicts have the access to the voluntary and confidential counselling and testing for HIV and hepatitis C, individual and group counselling on risky behaviour, as well as the methadone substitution therapy. On 31. December 2012, 112 persons were on the methadone substitution therapy in prisons. The number of drug addicts in prisons was approximately 5.000 in 2011 and 2012.

The situation on the illegal drug market in Serbia and the region has significantly changed in the recent couple of years. One of the reasons is the accession of the neighbouring countries – Republic of Bulgaria and Romania to the European Union, and the unilateral declaration of independence of the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija. These events have

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<sup>3</sup> Data of the Institute of Public Health of Serbia “Dr Milan Jovanović Batut”, Centre for Information and Biostatistics

significantly changed the direction for heroin smuggling used by organised crime groups. The direction for heroin smuggling transported to the Western European countries is towards the so called Schengen borders and towards the Republics of Bulgaria-Romania-Hungary in order to avoid reinforced control of passengers and goods at the borders of the Republic of Serbia.

Organised criminal groups of Serbian origin have been increasingly present on the intercontinental cocaine market in the recent years which smuggle from the Latin America to Europe. As for the Republic of Serbia, cocaine enters our territory in transit to Europe, and smaller amounts are intended for sale on the local market.

Marijuana is a narcotic drug which is still often found on the illegal market, and more recently the increasingly present marijuana is the changed marijuana type, the so called “skunk” or “super marijuana”. The current trends indicate that there is an increasing number of cases of in-door marijuana growing. In 2010 and early 2011, several locations of laboratories for “skunk” production were discovered, and in 2012 two laboratories for synthetic drugs production were discovered. Both laboratories were installed in primitive, the so called, kitchen conditions, with small production capacities for the local market.

In 2012, there were 4.775 identified cases of criminal offense related to drugs, and 3.992 criminal charges were initiated. In 2013, 5.642 criminal offenses were recorded related to drugs and 4.928 criminal charges were initiated.

In the period 2011-2013, the amount of the total seized drugs had a constant upward trend, while in 2013 the total of the seized drugs was 3.4 tons.<sup>4</sup>

### 3. ASSESSMENT OF THE STRATEGY AND THE ACTION PLAN FOR THE PERIOD 2009-2013

#### The mid-term assessment of the previous National Strategy against Drugs

In 2012, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime UNODC<sup>5</sup> supported the implementation of the mid-term assessment of the National Strategy against Drugs 2009-2013. The evaluation was focused on the assessment of the five criteria: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability, and it was conducted using the qualitative and quantitative methods and instruments which included the review of the documents, visits to the relevant institutions responsible for the implementation of the Strategy, interviews with the relevant stakeholders and internet surveys.

Based on the collected information, the conclusion is that a significant improvement has been made in achieving the objectives defined by the Strategy, and that the comprehensive approach to the problem of drug use encouraged the development of the capacities, enhancement

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<sup>4</sup> Data of the Ministry of Interior

<sup>5</sup> UNODC – United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

of service provision and strengthening of the legislation and institutional frameworks in the field of psychoactive substances. However, the analysis showed that the full achievement of the objectives of the Strategy requires the implementation of more targeted and better coordinated activities, and therefore the created recommendations referred primarily to the establishment of new coordination mechanism, improved cooperation with local self-government units and associations and the improvement of the legal framework as the basis for the national response to the issue of psychoactive substances use.

#### Final assessment of the Strategy against Drugs in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2009-2013

The final assessment of the Strategy against Drugs in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2009-2013 was conducted with the aim to show the relevance and effectiveness of the measures applied in the previous period and to provide a reliable basis and strategic guidelines for the creation of the new Strategy and the Action Plan for Drugs in the next period.

The assessment was conducted with the support of the experts from the European Union within the Twinning Project SR 10 IB JH 02”Implementation of the Strategy against Drugs (components of the reduction of supply and demand)”.

Final assessment was consisted of two parts:

1. The analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT<sup>6</sup> analysis) which, with the participation of a large number of domestic experts, was conducted in May 2013 for three fields of the Strategy: demand reduction (prevention, treatment, reintegration and damage reduction), supply reduction and coordination and monitoring;
2. The assessments of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy against Drugs in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2009-2013, which was conducted in the period October-November 2013, helped by the specially designed questionnaire including general questions on the implementation of the Action Plan, as well as the questions regarding the level and process of the implementation of each individual activity, to which the answers were given by representatives of all institutions competent for the implementation of the Action Plan.
3. The results of the SWOT analysis and the results of the Assessment of the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy against Drugs in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2009-2013 show that in the implementation of the activities from the Action Plan the following were identified:

- 1) As the most significant achievements:

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<sup>6</sup> SWOT/ Analysis of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Treats

- (1) Existence of the basic legal framework and the establishment of professional guidelines for treatment of drug addiction;
  - (2) Professionalism and motivation of the personnel working in the field of demand reduction, supply reduction, and coordination in the field of drugs;
  - (3) International cooperation, including the cooperation with the EMCDDA<sup>7</sup>
  - (4) Establishment of the multi-ministerial Commission for psychoactive controlled substances as the coordination body of the Government in 2011;
  - (5) Increase of the availability of the substitution therapy and introduction of new treatment models;
  - (6) Increased availability and development of damage reduction programs;
  - (7) Research realisation;
  - (8) Preparation and implementation of prevention programs.
- 2) As the most significant weaknesses:
- (1) Absence of the coordination body for daily communication in the scope of policy in the field of drugs and therefore the absence of the harmonisation and synergy between the activities and double activities and resources;
  - (2) Incomplete data collection system and the status analysis in the field of drugs;
  - (3) Absence of the system for reporting and the national monitoring centre for drugs and drug addiction;
  - (4) Incomplete legal framework (especially the absence of bylaws) and the absence of guidelines for the implementation of some of the activities planned in the Action Plan for the Implementation of the Strategy against Drugs in the Republic of Serbia for the period 2009-2013;
  - (5) Insufficiently developed activities in the early detection and interventions, rehabilitation, social reintegration and damage reduction;
  - (6) Insufficient coverage of treatment with the substitution therapy;
  - (7) Economic crisis and budget limits and lack of sustainable specific financial mechanism for funding individual programs;
  - (8) Absence of the continuous training for the employees working in the field of drug supply reduction.
  - (9)

The results of the final assessment have shown that in the next period a particular attention and additional efforts should be focused on the following:

- 1) Harmonisation of the legal framework with the regulations of the EU;
- 2) Establishment of the coordination body and coordination mechanism in order to improve the coordination activities, provide their synergy and prevent doubling of activities;

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<sup>7</sup> EMCDDA – European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction

- 3) Improvement of the coordination with associations;
- 4) Improvement of the activities in early detection and interventions, rehabilitation, social reintegration and damage reduction;
- 5) Improvement of training and education programs for the employees in all the institutions competent for the implementation of the Action Plan;
- 6) Improvement of the reporting system and the establishment of the national monitoring centre for drugs and drug addiction.

#### 4. GENERAL AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

##### General objectives

In order to protect individuals and society from health, social and economic risks from the damage caused by the use of drugs, as well as to protect individuals, society and property from the consequences of crime related to drugs and drug use, the general objectives of this Strategy for Drugs are structured within two main pillars – drug demand reduction and drug supply reduction.

Interventions in the field of drug demand reduction are focused on the following issues:

ensuring that the state is in charge of the issue of drugs also on the local and national level equally with other social, healthcare, safety and economic issues in the country, and, based on that, adopts necessary systematic measures;

- 1) Raising the awareness of the community on the issue of drug abuse and the need for its prevention, as well as the need of affirmation of health life styles;
- 2) Ensuring the coordination of different activities at local level and harmonisation of the coordination activities at the local level with those at the national level;
- 3) Ensuring different and high quality capacities and programs focused on the treatment of addiction, introducing different approaches in treatment of addiction diseases;
- 4) Encouragement of programs development which would contribute to the maintenance or reduction of the number of HIV infected persons, virus hepatitis, sexually transmitted diseases, tuberculosis and fatal consequences of drug overdose;
- 5) Ensuring the conditions which enable the extension of the institutional treatment programs in corrective and penal institutions;
- 6) Encouragement of the development of social protection programs for drug addicts, public institutions for rehabilitation and resocialisation of PAS users, therapeutic communities, and communes, civil society organisations, including the programs for damage reduction, which will prevent the social exclusion of addicts and discrimination. This equally refers to the programs and activities within the social care in prisons and corrective institutions;
- 7) Raising the awareness and improvement of skills of all involved entities working on the prevention of drug abuse, treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts, and the measures and programs focused on the damage reduction;

- 8) Encouragement of the development and implementation of preventive activities in this field and different programs focused on the drug demand reduction, especially the activities regarding the occurrence and expansion of new psychoactive substances and polytoxicomania.

Interventions in the field of drug supply reduction are focused on the following objectives:

- 1) Strengthening the activities focused against organised crime, illegal drug trade, money laundering and other forms of drug related crime;
- 2) Improvement of the cooperation between the police, customs and legal system within the country, in the region and international cooperation;
- 3) Improvement of the collection of information and analytical work on discovering criminal activities;
- 4) Improvement of the knowledge level among the judicial authorities;
- 5) Implementation of all available and creation of new measures for discovering the drug flow along the “Balkan route”.
- 6) Full establishment of the early recognition system and warning system for new synthetic drugs;
- 7) Strengthening of the control of precursors and cooperation in this field between the customs, police, producers and distributors of precursors for the purpose of monitoring the trade and use of precursors;
- 8) Intensifying and maintaining the cooperation with other countries from the region, in Europe and at the global level, as well as the cooperation with the international organisations.

#### Specific objectives

In addition to the aforementioned general objectives, the Strategy is focused on achieving the following specific objectives:

- 1) Ensuring the gradual functionality of the National contact point as a central part of the system for collection, integration and issuance of data and information from the field of drug monitoring, as well as reporting to the EMCDDA;
- 2) Provision of political and financial support for the realisation of the activities defined in the Action Plan 2014-2017, as well as the activities yet to be defined as priorities in future action plans at local and national level;
- 3) Encouraging the cooperation between different stakeholders, developing partner relations with civil society in all spheres regarding drugs, including the strengthening of the role of organisation associations;
- 4) Encouraging the training for all professionals working in this field and encouraging all the activities focused on the creation of conditions for development of different training programs at the national level;
- 5) Ensuring the assessment and the stable funding of the confirmed programs, including the mid-term assessment of the Strategy.

The Strategy defines five areas of operation of the drug policy:



- 1) Drug demand reduction;
- 2) Drug supply reduction;
- 3) Coordination;
- 4) International cooperation;
- 5) Research, monitoring and assessment.

## 5. DRUG DEMAND REDUCTION

Drug demand reduction is consisted of a number of equally important measures, including prevention (universal, selective and indicated), early detection and intervention, risk and damage reduction, rehabilitation and social reintegration and recovery. It is particularly important to pay attention to the promotion and affirmation of healthy habits and care for the young, as well as the prevention of HIV infection and other communicable diseases.

Drug addiction is a disease which can be prevented, controlled and treated.

Timely detection, early detection, preventive measures, better treatment of addiction, integration of the disease treatment in the program of public health and social service programs, can bring to the improvement of the situation. That includes solving the problem at its source – at the level of drug user. The treatment of the disease is an investment in health of the population. Since drug addiction is not only a health issue, but also a psychosocial issue, only comprehensive, organised, planned, integrated and continuous measures can bring results. The objective of the programs for damage reduction is to minimize health and social risks and harmful consequences rising from drug abuse. The implementation of programs of drug demand reduction must be organised at the local level, why it is important to include local authorities and to establish good communication and cooperation among the experts for addiction disease and decision makers.

For drug demand reduction the Strategy set the following objectives:

- 1) Improvement of the availability and effectiveness of measures for reduction of drug demand, promotion of the exchange of the best practice and development and implementation of quality standards in prevention (universal, selective and indicated), early detection and interventions, risk and damage reduction, treatment, rehabilitation, resocialisation and recovery;
- 2) Improvement of the availability and effectiveness of prevention programs in raising the awareness on the risks of the use of illicit drugs and other psychoactive substances. In that respect, the prevention measures should include early detection and interventions, promotion of health life styles and targeted prevention (selective and indicated);
- 3) Development of effective measures for demand reduction which can respond to the challenges such as: polytoxicomania, abuse of prescribed medications and new psychoactive substances;

- 4) Development of measures directed to the reduction of mortality related to drugs and infectious blood transmitted diseases (HIV and virus hepatitis C), as well as sexually transmitted diseases and tuberculosis;
- 5) Improvement of the availability and access and coverage with effective and different types of treatments both of opiate and non-opiate addicts;
- 6) Improvement of availability and effectiveness of measures for reduction of drug demand in prisons in order to reach the quality treatment of prisoners which is the same as in the civil society, and in accordance with the right to healthcare and human dignity contained in the European Convention on Human Rights and the EU Charter on Fundamental Rights;
- 7) Development of integrated models of rehabilitation and social support in order to improve the social reintegration and recovery after the treatment;
- 8) Development of efficient measures for reduction of drug demand which aim is to reduce or delay the beginning of use of drugs with a special attention on the vulnerable marginalised groups.

## 6. DRUG SUPPLY REDUCTION

Reduction of drug supply includes efficient and adequate measures for reduction of production, trade and distribution of drugs and prevention of illegal trade and use of precursors, i.e. substances which can be used in illegal production of narcotics and psychoactive substances, prevention of organised crime and “money laundering” gained in drug trafficking.

In order to have a successful implementation of measures for reduction of drug supply and efficient suppression of narcotic and precursor trafficking done by organised criminal groups, it is necessary to establish a mutual coordination and cooperation of all relevant state authorities, especially of Ministry of Health, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Justice and Public Administration.

Also, it is necessary to increase the safety in road traffic through the reduction of the number of accidents caused by drivers under the influence of narcotics. It is necessary to improve the conditions for storing the permanently seized amounts of narcotics and fully initiate the system for destruction of the seized drugs.

According to the aforementioned, it is necessary to clearly proscribe the procedure of destruction of the seized narcotics and to select public administration bodies (or public administration body) which are (which is) competent for destruction of the seized narcotics.

The efficient surveillance over the production and turnover of the substances which can be used for illegal production of narcotics and psychotropic substances, is an important element in prevention of illegal production of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and leads to the reduction of their supply. Since these substances are present in regular turnover and are used in chemical, pharmaceutical, cosmetic and similar industries, it is necessary to

undertake controls of products and turnover, including export and import, in accordance with legal norms, in order to prevent their illicit use. In order to achieve this, it is necessary to establish control over the production entities (raw material, technology), scientific and research institutions (raw material, laboratory equipment), import, export and turnover of precursors and equipment used. A special attention should be paid to detection of new illicit drugs on the market, as well as new precursors, expanding the existing list of narcotic drugs and precursors.

Penalty policy in the field of suppression of illegal possession, transport, production and provision of use of narcotic drugs is an integral part of the national policy in the field of drugs in the part related to the suppression and reduction of narcotic drugs use.

The development of the penalty policy and legislation in the field of narcotic drugs and precursors should be done in accordance with the accepted international standards and conventions of the United Nations.

Specific objectives in the field of reduction of drug supply are the following:

- 1) Reduction of the crime level in the field of drugs, especially organised crime;
- 2) Improvement of the communication and cooperation between the bodies or a body implementing the laws;
- 3) Establishment of special cooperation mechanism between the Police Directorate and Customs Administration;
- 4) Improvement of the control system for legal handling of drugs and precursors;
- 5) Improvement of the legal framework and practice of storage and destruction of drugs and precursors;
- 6) Increase of the capacity and improvement of competences of human resources working in the field of precursor control and drug supply reduction;
- 7) Launching the laboratory for categorisation of narcotic drugs;
- 8) Provision of proper equipment to the bodies and institutions implementing the laws;
- 9) Improvement of the cooperation with the relevant international organisations and agencies.

## 7. COORDINATION

Coordination of all relevant services, institutions and organisations at the national and local level, is a precondition for efficient and effective actions of the society in the policy regarding the field of drugs. The harmonisation of operational activities must be achieved horizontally and vertically.

The implementation of the Strategy requires a stable, multidisciplinary and integrated approach. This includes the coordination with other agencies of public administration within the policy in the field of drugs.

Specific objectives in the field of coordination are the following:

- 1) Establishment of the Office on Drugs and definition of coordination mechanisms;
- 2) Establishment and improvement of the coordination mechanisms with local self-governments;
- 3) Increase of the cooperation level with associations;
- 4) Support to the implementation of special financial mechanisms of the Action Plan.

## 8. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The global nature of the issues related to drugs requires regional, bilateral and multilateral approach why it is necessary to strengthen both the bilateral cooperation and the cooperation with international organisations and other organisations such as UNODC (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime), Commission on Narcotic Drugs – CND, International Narcotics Control Board – INCB, World Health Organisation, World Customs Organisation, Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe, INTERPOL, agencies of the European Union (Europol, Eurojust, EMCDDA). The Republic of Serbia endeavour to participate in the international activities in the field of suppression of drugs and consequences of drug use in order to actively participate in solving the problems related to the use and abuse of drugs, in the creation of the policy and professional approaches in that field and to improve the national system using the examples of good practice of other countries. The international cooperation brings also to a more efficient fight against criminal organisations, corruption and money laundering as well as the control of turnover of drugs and precursors.

The political and developmental international cooperation in the field of suppression of drug abuse should be based on the efficient implementation and improvement of a balanced approach to the issues of drugs and precursors, especially through the regional cooperation mechanisms which include all the countries through which certain smuggling directions run (Balkan route), identification of possible key partners, and the cooperation with international organisations and institutions and EU Member States.

International cooperation provides a multilateral form of the aligned and unified offer of various measures, while a direct cooperation with the EU Member States will be established within the accession to the European Union through the pre-accession programs and funds of the European Union.

General objectives in the field of international cooperation are the following:

- 1) Continuous harmonisation of the legislation of the Republic of Serbia with the acquis of the European Union;
- 2) Acceptance and implementation of all obligation towards the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA);
- 3) Regular and active participation in the work of the international bodies and agencies of the European Union in charge for the issue of drugs;

- 4) Strengthening of the regional cooperation, i.e. bilateral cooperation with the countries of special interest for Serbia, especially in the field of suppression of drugs and precursors smuggling through the strengthening of the cooperation with the relevant international organisations;
- 5) Encouragement of the more intensive involvement of Serbian experts in the international meetings and projects, with the aim to improve the national system, but also to promote Serbian experience and good practice at the international level.

Specific objectives in the field of international cooperation are the following:

- 1) Regular and timely fulfilment of obligations towards the international community and the European Union (EU and UN);
- 2) Participation in the international systems and projects, implemented in the field of drug demand reduction and its monitoring;
- 3) Ensure the advantages of the participation in the international systems and projects, implemented in the field of drug demand reduction and its monitoring;
- 4) Development of the regional cooperation at the level of local self-government for the purpose of exchange good practice and cooperation in the field of fight against drugs.

## 9. RESEARCH, MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

The assessments of the prevalence of the use of psychoactive substances among the young were done based on the last ESPAD research conducted in 2011.

In order to understand the issue of drug abuse it is necessary to conduct regular and extraordinary research. The research activities should be developed and financed from different sources, particularly with the support of the programs of the European Union to the candidate countries. What is particularly important is the participation in international research projects, standardised research projects on general population through interviews and research of risk groups, using the fast assessment method and qualitative methods.

Research in the field of addiction diseases needs to be conducted in different fields (education, healthcare, general population, etc.) in order to ensure a better understanding of the size and nature of issues related to drugs. It is important that the research results are used for the purpose of improving the measures for drug supply and demand reduction.

The relevant institutions and state authorities must create capacities for standardised collection of data and information in accordance with the type and nature of data collected in the healthcare system, police, customs, judiciary, social care system, prison system, scientific institutions, education system, and the results of their analyses should be used for the development of legislation and strategic or action plans.

In order to increase the capacities of the authorised institutions for the system for collection of data on drugs and drug addiction, a continuous cooperation with the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction will be established and maintained, as the European

agency for collection of data in this field. In that respect, it is necessary to establish the system for collection of information and data regarding drug abuse as a comprehensive tool for monitoring the situation on drugs in the country.

The objective of the National Monitoring Centre for Drugs is to collect, analyse, synthesize and interpret the data. As for the methods and concepts, standards for data collection should be applied, especially the five key epidemiological indicators for drugs developed by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA).

Five key indicators of the EMCDDA are the following: 1) prevalence and forms of drug use in general population, 2) prevalence and forms of problematic drug use, 3) drug-related infectious diseases (prevalence and incidence rate of HIV, hepatitis B and C among the intravenous drug users), 4) mortality rates related to drug abuse (special statistical registers of general population mortality, and the coherent mortality studies among drug users), 5) treatment demand (statistics from the treatment institutions).

In addition to the mentioned epidemiological, necessary indicators which require continuous collection of data according to the defined European standards for the assessment of the situation, trends and scope of the incidence of drug abuse refer to the following: criminality related to drug abuse; drug availability; availability of treatment in prisons; social exclusion related to drug abuse; various research; measures for solving the issues in the field of drugs; state policy in the field of drugs; national legislation; financial means allocated; occurrence of new synthetic psychoactive substance through the early warning system.

The objective and the function of the system for information and data on drugs according to the European standards is to ensure good quality and objective information for the creation of policies related to drugs and activities in accordance with the evidence, gathered and consolidated in the central point and data base in the National Monitoring Centre for Drugs. The information is submitted to the relevant national and international bodies and institutions, so that it could be comparative also at the international level, and serve for planning the measures and interventions in the country in order to improve and solve the problem related to drug abuse reduction.

## 10. SOURCE OF FINANCING

For the realisation of the objectives of this strategy, and in accordance with the Action Plan, financial resources are provided from the budget of the Republic of Serbia, autonomous province, towns and municipalities, in accordance with their obligations and competences.

## 11. ACTION PLAN

The first action plan for the implementation of this strategy was printed along with this strategy and represents its integral part.

The second action plan for the implementation of this strategy will be passed in the first quarter of 2018.

The action plan provides a detailed description of individual objectives and manners for achieving the defined objectives, concrete tasks of certain executors for the selected budget period based on the guidelines of the Strategy, and a more precise definition of individual objectives, competences and manners for their achievement, deadlines for the execution and assessment of necessary resources for the defined budget period.

## 12. FINAL PART

This strategy shall be published in the “Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia”.

05 No: 515-16742/2014

27 December 2014, Belgrade

G O V E R N M E N T

PRIME MINISTER

Aleksandar Vučić