



## **Drug and Alcohol Policy at CDN Events**

(as established by CDN EC on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2012)

### **Introduction**

CDN organizes youth events all around Eastern Europe. We are gathering young people willing to take active part in their societies, to learn and share, to support Green principles and be multiplicators in their respected environments. For many young people these events are the first opportunity to go abroad, to meet a significant number of young people from different cultures and backgrounds, to experience non formal education etc.

In order to achieve our aims we have to ensure an environment which respects diversity, which accommodates different life styles and which enables constructive debate and exchange of experience. We expect support from our participants in a form of tolerance and solidarity with the other participants, the organizers and the local community. Therefore alcohol and drug use and possession are very important issues which require our attention.

### **Legal boundaries and responsibilities**

Safety is one of our priorities. Our staff and organizational teams are investing lots of efforts and resources in ensuring compatibility of our events with relevant legal systems, with customs and culture of local communities. Still we acknowledge personal freedoms and responsibility of every individual – participants of our events.

CDN conducts its activities in countries of Eastern Europe. Majority of these countries have very strict laws and regulations when it comes to possession and use of Drugs and Alcohol. Although not all of our MO's or participants may agree with the current drug policies of (Eastern) European countries and have political debates on the topic that does not mean that CDN events are exempt from the countries legal system. These legal limitations are always explained in advance to our participants and we expect of all actors to respect them. In case of any problems in understanding, our responsible are always at disposal for additional consultations.

Most legal systems in Eastern Europe do not allow alcohol purchase to a person under 18 years and forbid possession and distribution of any drugs, while most of countries do not recognize personal use neither. Concrete measures, as said before, are to be explained in advance.





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Any violation of legal regulations is directly threatening the local organizers, the other participants and events themselves and seriously bring into question the future work of CDN as well as the local organizers.

### Cultural differences and respect of diversity

Despite a lack of comprehensive studies on the specificities of Eastern Europe regarding alcohol and drugs, there are still historical, cultural, political and economical aspects that very much affect the relation of young people to these issues.

Eastern Europe is a very diverse region. Alcohol is very much present in the culture of these countries and a part of everyday life, customs, ceremonies, natural medicine etc. On the other hand there are many taboos, institutionalized problems with alcoholism, gender boundaries and limitations. Also we should bear in mind that there is significant number of religious and cultural communities that do not use alcohol at all and have very negative approach towards it.

Drugs of almost any kind are highly taboo topic and approached from educational, cultural and legal system from much unified perspective of almost zero tolerance.

As having interculturality and one of the main aims but also using it as one of the main methods, CDN puts lots of efforts in creating an environment and atmosphere in which all of our participants can feel safe and comfortable. Therefore we urge for respect of the others' backgrounds and cultures, and plea for tolerance and solidarity with different life styles. We think that this is the most efficient way to create an atmosphere for everyone to open their minds, learn and (ex)change.

### Measures

CDN is governed by decisions of General Assembly and led by elected Executive Committee, supported by CDN Secretariat. In concrete projects preparational teams are part of decision making and execution of decisions. Local prep team and coordinators are consultative bodies.

All of above mentioned, are entitled to deal with respected issues in a matter that is in accordance with agreement of involved sides, aims of projects, stands and aims of CDN and are driven by common sense, enthusiasm and optimism.

CDN is not in a position to take any responsibility whatsoever when it comes to use or possession of alcohol or drugs at CDN events, and the responsible bodies might take measures they see appropriate on a case-to-case basis.

Legal actions are the last resort, still legal frame of host country and Belgium (where CDN is registered) are firm frames that we have to respect.





## **Conclusions**

CDN is an organization that works with young people and for young people. We are investing a lot of energy, time, and resources in order to ensure that our aims are accomplished, but also that we live in accordance with our aims. Therefore, we respect people's choices; we respect different cultures as well as individuality. Nevertheless, this also requires personal responsibility, solidarity and understanding. In the future events we will encourage debates on drug and alcohol use at youth events and raise it to a political and theoretical level because we believe that as Greens and as youth activists we should reflect on the social, economical and cultural impacts of alcohol and drugs use and production in our societies.

