

# Studying and informing about the drug situation in a federal state: the Belgian Focal Point on Drugs

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**SITUATION PART A.**  
**Belgium is a federal state**

Federal level

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| <p>3 Communities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Flemish Community</li> <li>•French Community</li> <li>•German Community</li> </ul> | <p>3 Regions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Flemish Region</li> <li>•Walloon Region</li> <li>•Brussels Capital Region</li> </ul> | <p>A complex distribution of authority and activities in the field of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Justice</li> <li>•Prevention</li> <li>•Treatment</li> <li>•Research</li> <li>•Other</li> </ul> |
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**SITUATION PART B.**  
**A lot of information has to be delivered**

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| <p><u>Format</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•National Report</li> <li>•Selected Standard Tables and Questionnaires</li> <li>•Early Warning System report</li> <li>•Reports on the key indicators</li> <li>•EWS information and EWS warnings</li> <li>•Country Report</li> <li>•Collaboration to the European Report</li> </ul> | <p>Information about 5 epidemiological themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Drug use in general population</li> <li>•Problem drug use</li> <li>•Drug-related infectious diseases</li> <li>•Drug-related mortality</li> <li>•Treatment demand</li> </ul> <p>Early Warning System, including also monitoring drugs in circulation</p> | <p><b>CONSEQUENCE.</b><br/><b>A large number of actors is involved</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Governmental Services</li> <li>•Sub-Focal Points related to Communities/Regions</li> <li>•European Monitoring Centre</li> <li>•Treatment services: in, out, LT, mental health</li> <li>•Prevention services, including harm reduction</li> <li>•Police</li> <li>•Laboratories</li> <li>•Hospitals</li> <li>•Drug users</li> </ul> |
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**1. SETTING OF FOCAL POINT: A RESEARCH INSTITUTE.**

**THE SCIENTIFIC INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

The National Focal Point is embedded in the national research institute on public health that has positive consequences

- Scientific independence: no censoring
- Not involved in policy making, delivers only useful information
- Specific knowledge on epidemiology of determinants and diseases
- Specific knowledge on research: staff are researchers

**2. NETWORK APPROACH.**

Network of collaboration over levels and domains  
Network of partners

versus

Central, top-down approach

- Win-win situations
- Shared responsibility for information and data collection and distribution

Data and information collection, analysis and distribution

**3. SPECIALISATION & SYNERGY.**  
Development of specific capabilities is essential:

- Research methods: questionnaire development, survey research, mortality analysis
- Statistical analysis
- Publication of results
- Epidemiology
- Networking

Aim of specialisation is to create synergy with other partners

**SUMMARY.**

The team members at the National Focal Point:

- Function in a complex national and European network
- Work within partnerships with mutual benefit
- Have an active approach towards research and distribution of information
- Have a regular output towards the national and European clients
- Aim for improving the scientific quality of their output