



# Navigating between health awareness and the law

Professor Kerstin Mey

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# Drugs in Society (EU perspective)

- A complex social and health phenomenon
- Potentially tremendous negative consequences, for drug users, their families and communities
- Huge costs for and harm to public health and safety, the environment and labour productivity
- Security threats linked to violence, crime and corruption.
- The illicit drugs market is one of the major sources of income for organised crime
- EU estimated yearly retail value of at least €30 billion
- Drug trafficking affects national stability and governance



# European Drugs Strategy 2021 – 2025

Common approach to address the security and health implications of drug trafficking and drug use

The EU approach is based on:

- 1. Evidence of what works and what does not work in terms of policy and measures**
2. Balance between drug supply reduction and drug demand reduction
- 3. Multidisciplinarity, given the cross-cutting nature of the drugs phenomenon**
- 4. Innovation and foresight, given the complexity of the drugs situation and market**
5. Respect for human rights, gender equality and health equity
- 6. Participation and involvement of civil society**



# European Drugs Strategy 2021 – 2025

## Three main policy areas:

- drug supply reduction
- drug demand reduction
- addressing drug-related harm

## Three cross-cutting themes in support of the policy areas:

- international cooperation
- research, innovation and foresight
- coordination, governance and implementation



The *European Drug Report 2023: Trends and Developments* presents the EMCDDA's latest analysis of the drug situation in Europe. Focusing on illicit drug use, related harms and drug supply, the report contains a comprehensive set of national data across these themes and key harm reduction interventions

# Citizens Assembly on Drug Use

## 36 Recommendations made, including

### For Government

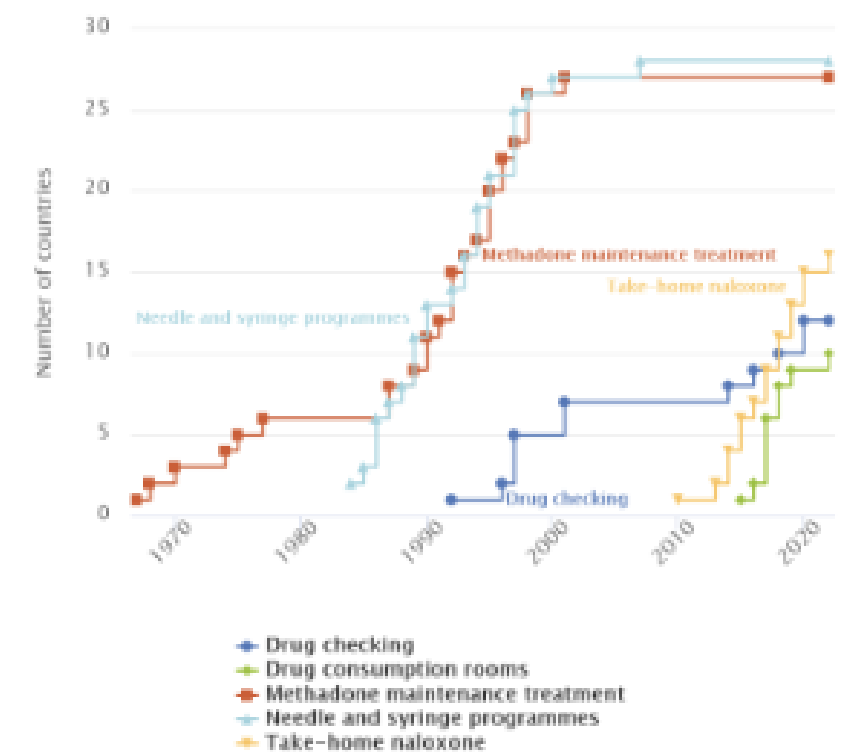
- 1.2 Introduce a 'Health in all Policies' approach to policy development.
- 3.3 Prioritise drugs misuse as a policy priority, as part of an overall socio-economic strategy.
- 3.4 Recognise that an effective national response to drugs-related issues requires whole of government policy coherence, operational cohesion and effective leadership.
- 3.7 Ensure effective stakeholder involvement in implementing the next iteration of the National Drugs Strategy.

### On Drugs policy

- 3.9. Policy design and implementation should be informed by service users and people who use drugs as well as family members of people affected by drugs, with provision of appropriate supports to enable this involvement

## Infographic. Number of European countries implementing harm reduction interventions, up to 2022

Figure. Number of European countries implementing harm reduction interventions, up to 2022



# Citizens Assembly on Drug Use

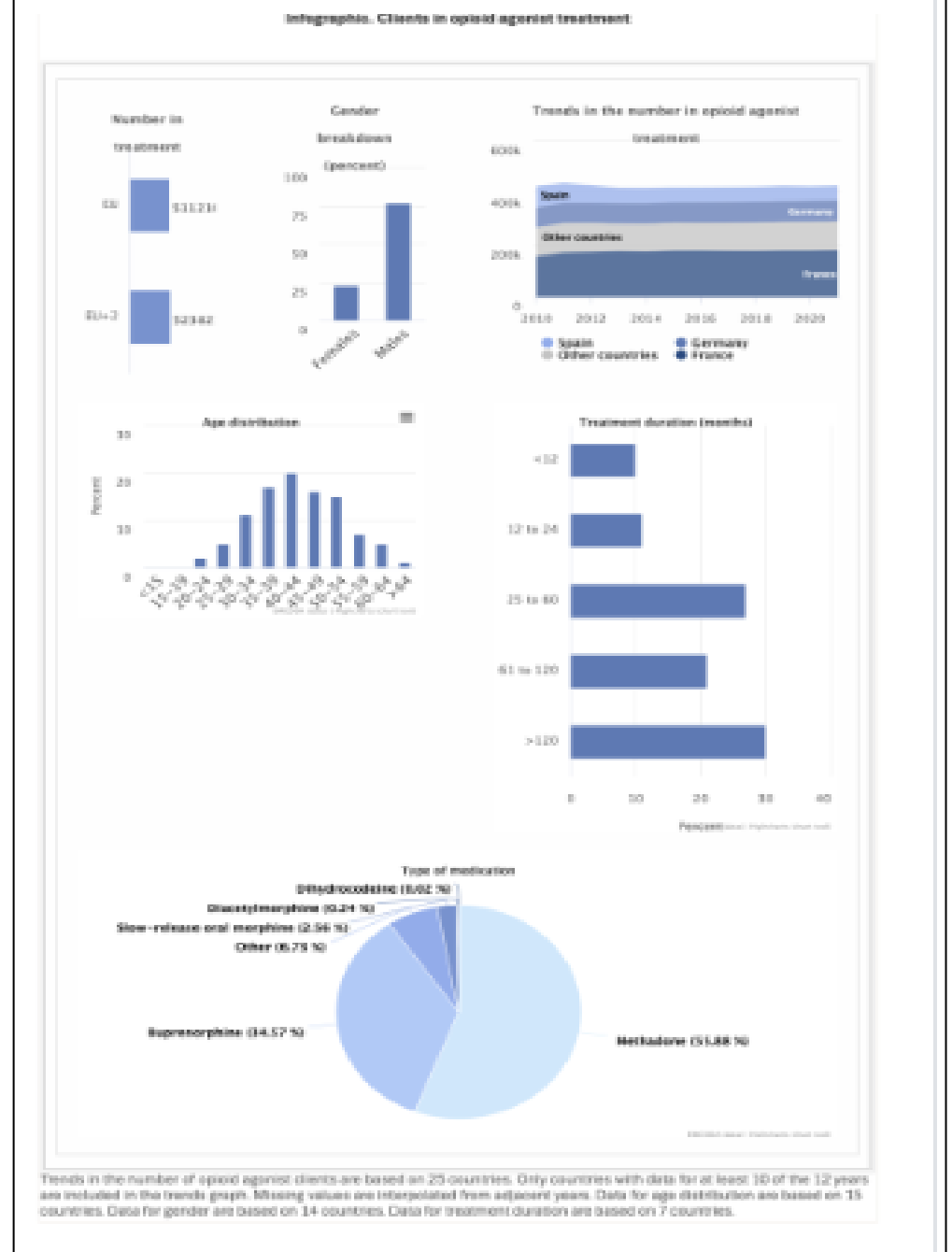
## On the National Drugs Strategy

**5.6 Use of evidence-based approaches to harm reduction, and take measures to reduce the barriers to implementing harm-reduction approaches without undue delay.**

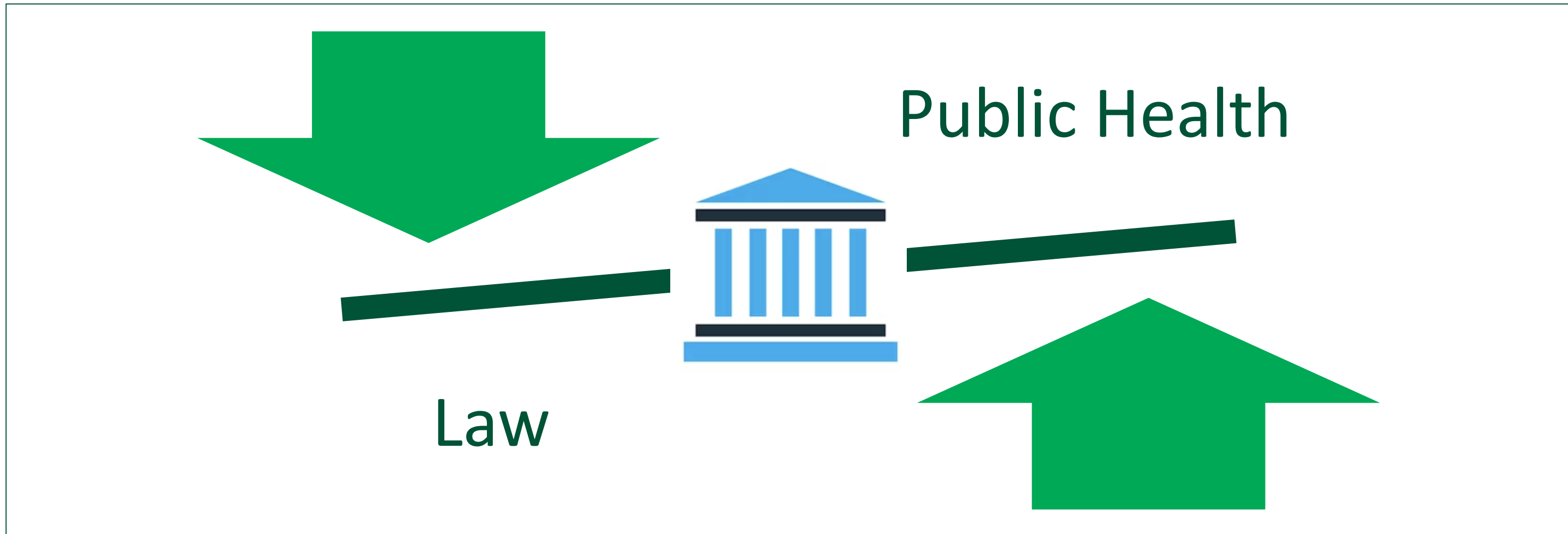
**6.3 Incentivise and promote evidence-based innovations in service design and delivery, prioritise the evaluation of pilot projects and emphasise the timely mainstreaming of best practice nationally and internationally.**

**6.4 Include a plan to strengthen the national research and data collection systems for drugs to inform evidence-based decision-making.**

## Infographic. Clients in opioid agonist treatment



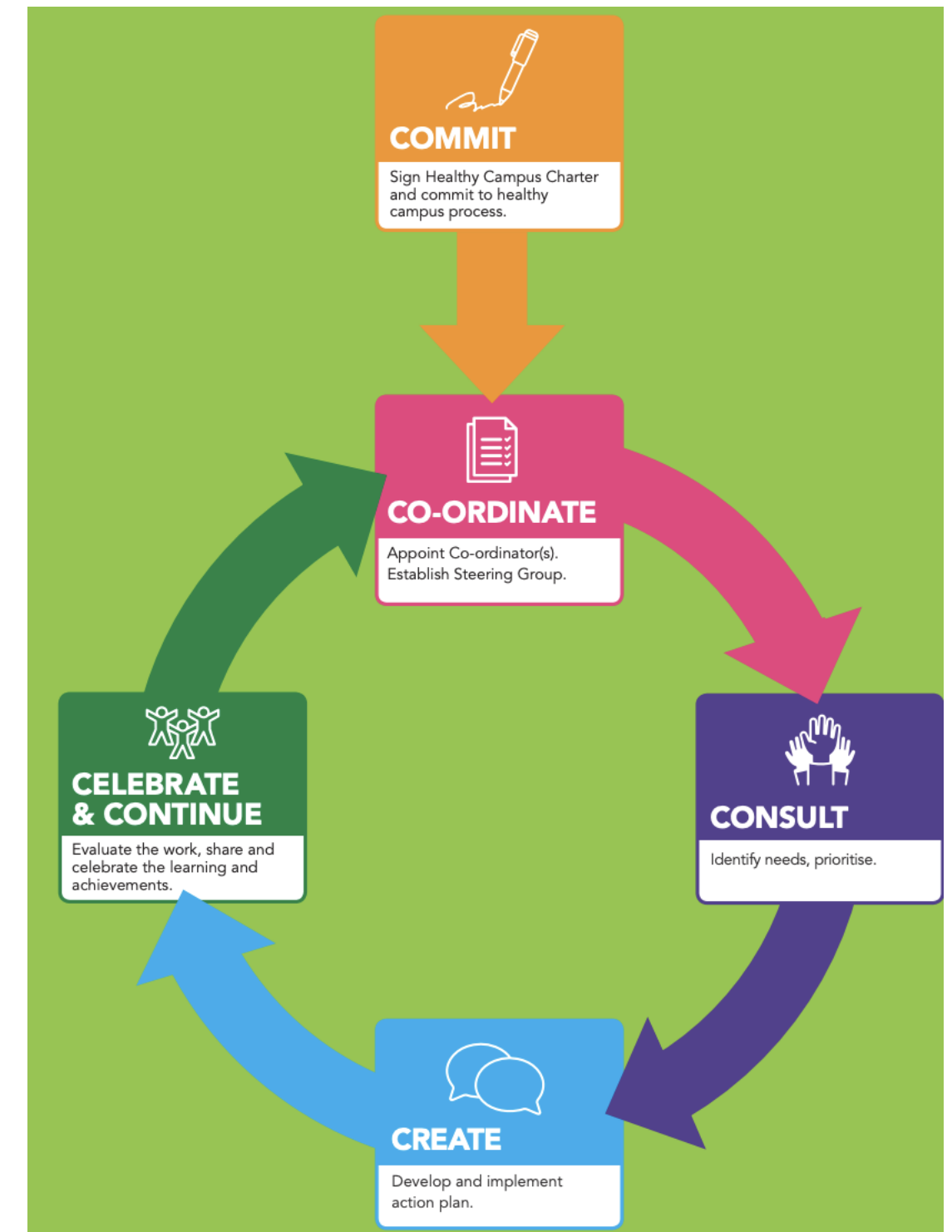
# Universities + Drugs



# HEA Higher Education Healthy Campus Charter and Framework

## Principles:

- **Participation** – Where student, staff and the wider campus community are actively engaged in deciding on and implementing health and wellbeing promotion actions.
- **Partnership** – Where trans-disciplinary collaborations and cross-sector partnerships are fostered to create connections between health, learning and the campus structure.
- **Evidence based** – Where formulation of policies and practices are guided by evidence, and where knowledge is created through action and research.
- **Sustainability** – Where health and wellbeing of the campus community is infused in the everyday policies, teaching and learning, and research and innovation.





# UL Healthy Campus – Addictive behaviours

- Promotion of health awareness and education
- **Harm reduction**
- Appointment of Substance Use and Gambling **Support Officer**
- **Framework** for Response to the Use of Illicit Substances within Higher Education,
- Development of **bespoke service for students** informed by evidence-based practices, informed by close consultation with students
- Innovative **prevention, education and harm reduction initiatives**
- **Collaborative research** to inform activities
- University Substance Misuse **Policy**



# Higher Education Research & Innovation Policy & Drivers for Change 2022-2023

Major national policy developments to better mobilise higher education research for public policy development were introduced

- Research & Innovation Strategy, **Impact 2030**
- Science Foundation Ireland: **Creating Our Future, Expert Committee Report, Key Recommendations, 2022**
- Establishment of a **new Evidence for Policy Unit** within the Department of Further, Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS)
- **Research & Innovation Bill, 2023**

**Intent to better link public research outputs with public policy formation, implementation and evaluation**



# OECD Report: Strengthening Policy Development in the Public Sector in Ireland, 2023

## Key messages:

- Need new policy **infrastructure and roles** across government and higher education
- **Strategic Foresight supports**, for policy planning, development and long-term policy issues
- New **training ecosystems** based on identification of capacity and capability needs
- **Engagement with citizens**, and a consistency of approach across sectors
- **Shared, open data systems**



# 2023 University of Limerick, Chair Campus Engage, IUA



## Focus on Enabling Engaged Research for Public Policy Partnerships

## **Irish Universities Association Researcher & Policy Maker Engagement Report, 2022**

**IUA, supported by the HEA,  
carried out a scoping exercise to  
better understand how higher  
education-based researchers and  
policy officials initiate and  
implement evidence for public  
policy projects.**



# IUA Scoping Report Recommendation:

## Create National Research for Policy National Brokerage Opportunities:

### Objectives:

- demonstrate the opportunity for government policy makers and higher education researchers to **work together to address societal challenges**.
  - Support policy officials to **draft and implement evidence informed policy**, based on the best available research evidence.
  - **Build networks with policy officials and researchers** for future opportunities.
1. March, 2023: **Youth Health & Well-being, DCEDIY**
  2. November, 2023: **Drugs Policy: Young People and Substance Use, Health Research Board.**



1

**Invest in infrastructure  
& roles**

2

**Change attitudes  
& culture**

3

**Build Capacity**

**T A K E**

**A C T I O N**

