

ON BEHALF OF THE FIRST FACULTY OF MEDICINE, CHARLES UNIVERSITY

Dear colleagues, it is a great honour for us to be the host of the conference 'Urban drug policy in the globalised world' and welcome you to Prague, a city well known for its historical and cultural traditions.

On behalf of the First Medical Faculty, Charles University, we would like to greet cordially all scientists, representatives of cities and governmental and non-governmental institutions and decision makers in the field of drug abuse.

The conference is co-organised by the Centre for Addictology of the Department of Psychiatry of our Faculty. Charles University is the oldest university north of the Alps and was founded by the Czech king and Holy Roman Emperor Charles IV on April 7th, 1348. The history of our medical faculty started during the same period. At the beginning of the 21st century we are among the pioneers in the complex education in addictology. Five years ago the first student of the new bachelor's study programme started their education. The bachelor's degree programme in Addictology in its combined form was launched as a pilot programme two years ago, and after the testing of the new model of tuition in common core subjects, the combined form of training will provide great potential for the other fields of study. Continuity in the process of education in all the above fields is provided and co-ordinated by experienced teaching staff. The management of the First Faculty of Medicine of Charles University tries to gradually achieve the goals of the "The Sorbonne Declaration" (ratified in 1998), and the "Bologna Declaration" (ratified in 1999). The need of society for the extension of non-medical health care education programmes results in heavy demands on the whole teaching staff, not only in the sphere of special educational processes but also as regards the co-ordination of both theoretical and, particularly, practical tuition. On the other hand, the interest in our alumni from potential employers in health care services is really pleasing. Equally pleasing is the fact that the students of non-medical programmes again held their own students' professional scientific conference. At this moment the Master's study programme of Addictology is to start, and we are now finalising the preparation of PhD programme in this multidisciplinary scientific field.

Our Centre for Addictology successfully communicates and cooperates with representatives of the government and

municipalities as a research and expert centre in our country. The research is oriented towards primary prevention and we also organise a screening programme in the at-risk population (homeless people, refugees, prisoners, etc.).

The priority of our colleagues is to disseminate educational activities and training programmes to Eastern European countries and former Soviet Union countries. This year we signed a contract in Georgia for a twinning programme and a summer school which was very well organised for our Georgian colleagues in Prague.

The aim of the Conference is to bring together anti-drug policy actors the municipal level, politicians and other crucial decision makers in the field of drug policies with clear overreach to national and international policies, the organisers planning and implementing drug interventions at the municipal level, and researchers who focus on urban drug interventions.

I believe it is highly beneficial that the experts from different continents will discuss the opportunities and limitations of drug policies not only on the urban level, but also other global aspects of drug scenes and their risks. The innovative interventions in prevention, treatment, and harm reduction and their monitoring, and evaluations of their impacts will be seriously discussed, together as they will have real life impact on future anti-drug policy strategies.

Dear Colleagues,

We hope that the conference will be stimulating for all the participants. We believe that it will take at least a short step towards explaining some problems associated with drug policy and that the Prague Declaration should define, in a consensual, understandable way, the basic principles of urban anti-drug policy.

I wish you a friendly atmosphere and, additionally, that you will enjoy exploring the beauty of Prague.

Prague, August 13th, 2010

Tomáš Zima

Dean of the First Faculty of Medicine, Charles University in Prague