

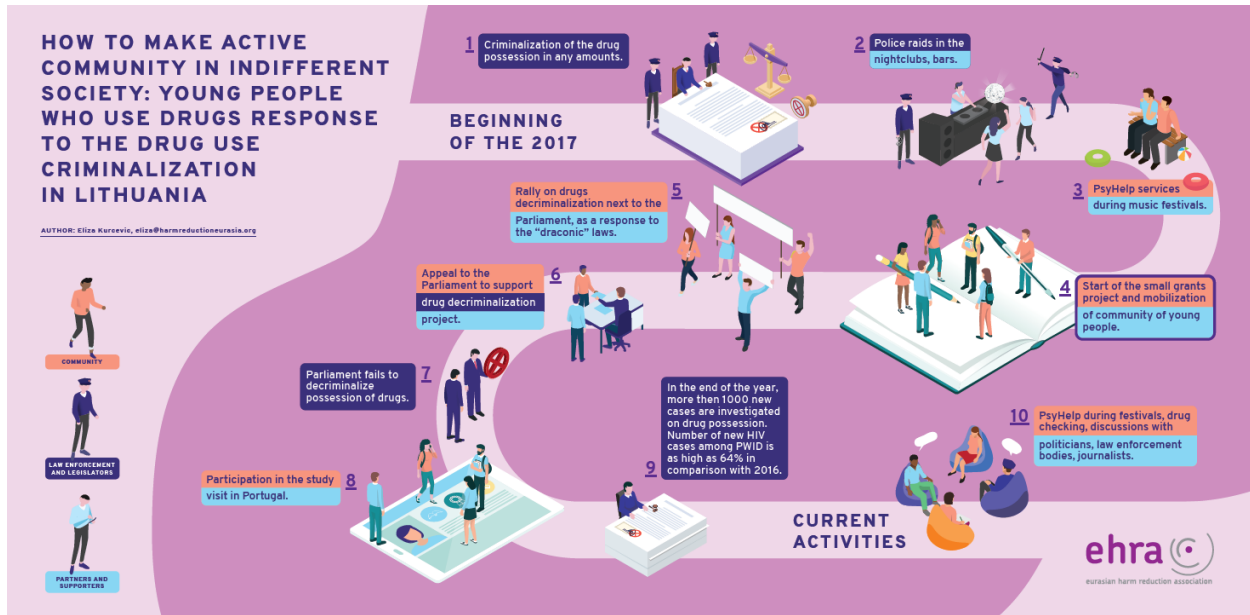
## Young Wave - Jauna Banga, Lithuania



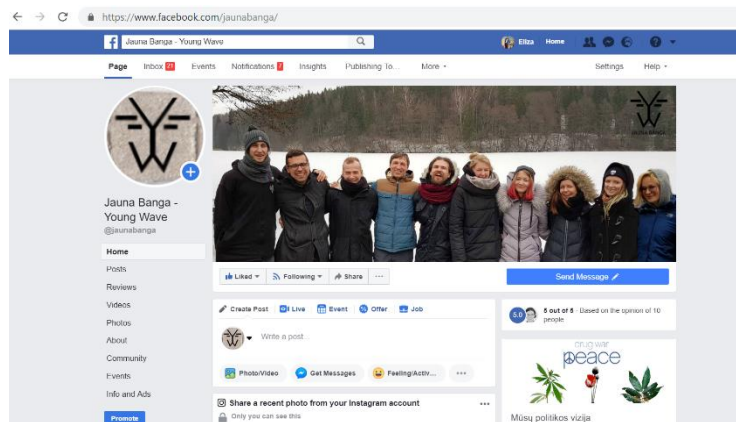
*In Lithuania, before 2017 the provision on the possession of the small amounts of the psychoactive substances was considered as a matter of the administrative liability by the Administrative Offences Code. But starting from the 1st of January, 2017, possession of the psychoactive substances (any amount) became regulated by the Criminal Code and considered as a crime or misdemeanor (criminal liability). In 2017, approx. **1,960** people got a criminal record, while in 2018 this number grew up by 17,7% (approx. **2,305** cases). In October 2018, the Parliament **legitimated cannabis derived medicines** (which will enter into power in May, 2019), and researches with all substances from the 1st list will be allowed. The end of 2018 was marked by the **approval of the National Programme on Drug, Tobacco and Alcohol Control and Consumption Prevention for 2018–2028**. The ten-years Programme includes the objectives to delay or reduce the use of psychoactive substances; to manage, through education of the public, the risks posed by psychoactive substance use; to ensure accessible, quality, personalised, economically sustainable and scientifically based system of addiction treatment, rehabilitation and reintegration services for people engaged in and/or dependent on harmful use of psychoactive substances; and to reduce physical and economic access to alcohol, tobacco products and tobacco related products in order to protect public and personal health.*

### Community response

- “Young Wave” has spoken about the [alarming situation with new cases of HIV and lack of medical care in prisons](#). The organization also presented an individual case, showing the impact of criminalization on life of people who use drugs.
- During AIDS2018 the poster “How to make active community in indifferent society: young people who use drugs response to the drug criminalization in Lithuania” was presented as a result of the small grant to “Young Wave”.



- The [first information platform](#) in Lithuania for sharing evidence-based information about drugs and harm reduction was created. People are discussing, asking for advice and getting the newest information about harm reduction and drug policy in the world, as well in Lithuania. Flyers about safe use of psychoactive substances made by "Young Wave" were banned and reported few times on Facebook as propaganda (even though flyers aim to minimize risks, related to the use of drugs).



- ["PsyHelp"](#) and harm reduction services were provided at two music festivals in 2018. Harm reduction services included: drug checking (reagent testing), distribution of drug paraphernalia (straws, gelatin capsules, etc.), distribution of condoms, water, information about safe use of the psychoactive substances, psychedelic peer support (PsyHelp). Collected feedback from those, who checked their drugs, helps "Young Wave" to evaluate the existing drug scene and also advocate for harm reduction services in nightlife settings.
- [Training for police "The role of police officers in strengthening public health"](#). Educational module was developed and will be used in the future law enforcement trainings by YPWUD organization "Young Wave". The training participants received scripts with the most important points of training (psychoactive substances and a positive response to their use; HIV and public health; professional health of police officers; the role of police officers in strengthening public health; human rights in police work). Connection with the Lithuanian Police School was established.

**Regional & National levels advocacy for progressive drug policy  
Within International Harm Reduction Consortium**

- “Young Wave” representative participated in study visit to Czech Republic, organized by EHRA and ENPUD.
- “Support. Don’t punish” campaign in Vilnius: The screening of movie and discussion with politicians, law enforcement representatives was organized in one of the bars of Vilnius.
- [Posters about safe drug use](#) were created and distributed during festivals, in the bars, clubs, pubs. Posters include information about psychedelics, stimulants, cannabis, MDMA.
- In 2018, “Young Wave” organized three trainings for Vilnius city bars/clubs on harm reduction in nightlife settings.



- Conference “Reform of the psychoactive substances: support, don’t punish” was organized in the Parliament of Lithuania. Speakers from Norway Parliament (Carl-Erik Grimstad), Czech Republic (Jindrich Voboril), Sakartvelo civil society “White Noise Movement” (David Subeliani) were invited and shared their insights on decriminalization and civil society role. [“Criminalization costs”](#) and [“Drug laws”](#) were presented during the conference (8508,15 Eur/per person/per year in prison; 33 309,99 Eur/per person/per 3 years, 11 months and 4 days - which is an average sentence for the possession of drugs in Lithuania). Situation with the criminalization was presented and showed, that ineffective system is destroying lives of thousands of people. Possession of the psychoactive substances is in the list of top 3 crimes, for which people have been punished (first is theft, second – road safety violations). The Global Commission on Drug Policy prepared video message to Lithuanian Parliament members, which was demonstrated during the event.



**8508,15 Eur.** – vieno kalinio išlaidymas/per metus

**33 309,99 Eur.** – kalinio išlaidymas per vidutinės atliekamos bausmės laikotarpį

**ehra**   
eurasian harm reduction association



**EHRA's Input.** EHRA co-organized conference “Reform of the psychoactive substances: support, don't punish” in the Lithuania Parliament, where “Criminalization costs” and “Drug Laws” were presented, and current situation and data on drug policy and criminalization in Lithuania was demonstrated.

Small grant from EHRA helped “Young Wave” to implement most of its activities: development of posters, printing, buying drug checking kits and other drug paraphernalia, bringing speakers to the conference. EHRA supported “Young Wave” in writing official letter to the Ministry of Health of Lithuania to dismiss AIDS Center Director Saulus Caplinskas from his position for the discriminatory replicas and comments, made against people who use drugs and LGBT community. EHRA supported “Young Wave” in community capacity building activities.

### Young Wave Impact

- More and more people are starting to follow informational platform of “Young Wave” and spread the information on evidence-based harm reduction approaches (approx. 1000 new followers per year);
- Nightlife events’ organizers (festivals, bars, clubs, pubs) are inviting “Young Wave” to organize trainings for the staff of the events on harm reduction and help/support for people who use psychoactive substances;
- “Young Wave” becomes one of the main actors in providing “PsyHelp” and harm reduction in the nightlife settings in Vilnius (at parties, big events);
- It’s the only organization, which is providing “PysHelp” and harm reduction services, based on peer-to-peer approach;
- “Young Wave” actions, such as Facebook posts about safe drug use, as well painting laying bodies on the ground with sentences, dedicated to the international overdose awareness day, were reported by public to law enforcement and Facebook admins, which means that it has triggered a reaction of society, and messages have reached the audience;
- The conference in the Parliament was widely discussed through all the media channels (in articles, publications, through the news reports on TV) and still continues to appear in media, as one of the key topics of 2019.



*The activities have been implemented thanks to supportive leadership and friendly mentorship of the [International Drug Policy Consortium](#) team, partnership support of members of [the International Harm Reduction Consortium](#) and thanks to financial resources for community needs and approach for reflecting (MEL) by [the Robert Carr civil society Networks Fund](#).*



*The EHRA [report about international activities](#) within the Consortium is here.*