



PRESS-RELEASE

A non-governmental organization from Russia receives the International Rolleston Award for an outstanding contribution to harm reduction at an international level

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At a Harm Reduction International Conference 2019 in Porto, Portugal, the Harm Reduction International has awarded its International Rolleston Award to a Russian NGO Andrey Rylkov Foundation for Health and social Justice (ARF). The award honors the work and contribution to the field of harm reduction at the international level.

This International Rolleston Award was first presented at the '3rd International Conference on the Reduction of Drug Related Harm' in Melbourne in 1992. At each International Harm Reduction Conference (every two years since 2011), it is given to an organisation, group or individual who has made an outstanding contribution to harm reduction from psychoactive substances at the international level. The award is named after Sir Humphrey Rolleston, President of the Royal College of Physicians who chaired the UK Departmental Committee on Morphine and Heroin Addiction.

Andrey Rylkov Foundation's mission is to promote and develop humane drug policy based on tolerance, protection of health, dignity and human rights. The Foundation activities focus on advocacy for better access to health care, including HIV prevention and treatment for people who use drugs. Currently, the HIV epidemic in Russia is one of the fastest growing in the world, and injecting drug users are most hit by the epidemic. The Russian government is internationally critiqued for its neglect of the epidemic and reluctance to introduce life-saving, evidence-based, low-cost prevention programs, such as needle and syringe programs and opiate substitution treatment which constitute, according to the World Health Organization, the core of HIV work among injecting drug users. In this context, ARF leads community effort in advocacy for effective HIV programming, and provides lifesaving HIV prevention services for drug users in Moscow.

"We are very proud to become the winner of the International Rolleston Award this year. This is a huge support and acknowledgement of the advocacy work we do in EECA region and Russia in particular to ensure the access of people who use drugs to the needed harm reduction services and to promote the humane drug policies", says Lena Remneva, the ARF case manager who received the award on behalf of the organization.

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