

ASUD France

*"Today we are supported
who once were our*

"ASUD is one of the oldest user groups in Europe, and probably the longest active network of people using drugs in the world.

The first words of the full name 'Auto Support et réduction des risques parmi les Usagers de Drogues' is self-support. That's what we are: a self-organisation of users and ex-users. We are a self-standing initiative and, although we spoke a lot on collaborations with professionals or other non-users, we keep stuck to our earlier roots of community activism.

We were formed in 1993 to fight against AIDS. France at that time was dealing with large populations of heroin users and large infection rates of AIDS. Even before the formal launch of the organisation we had a magazine ASUD with articles on drugs, consumption, health protection measures and drug policy. Today we have a website: www.asud.org.

Over the years ASUD has developed into a solid organisation with staff of a dozen employed, including 50 activists, and 3 local chapters. With strategic plans, representation in, for instance the French national commission on narcotics (Commission Nationale des Stupefiants), and more solid financing. We have been formally acknowledged by the government for representing people engaged in drug treatment.

One of our recent successes is the establishment of the virtual Rights of Drug Users Observatory (Observatoire du Droit des Usagers) on the website which allows users to report bad conditions of poor treatment, or an occurring situation of stigmatization. The Observatory has a monitoring,



*by the same people
opponents years ago"*

and a mediating and advocacy function. Over time many of our health arguments have been accepted. In the beginning we were on our own, standing for our own rights and lives. Later, we got supporters among doctors and among the influential social and political levels. Also nowadays we are even supported by people who once were our opponents in the earlier days.

France is still an ambivalent country on drug policy. On the one hand there is a wide and sophisticated network of harm reduction services such as OST services with buprenorphine and other treatment for

crack/cocaine use, and now, in drug trafficking with very high levels of violence. Guns, and the rising number of crimes and killings among young small level drug dealers and traffickers in Paris, and Marseilles is unlike what we have witnessed before in France. This new situation shows perfectly too how the total failure of global drugs prohibition and that all the countries, rich and poor are now involved in the bad effects of this choice."

ASUD

32 rue de Vitruve 75020, 75020 Paris, France

Tel : (00-33) 143 150 400

E-mail : contact@asud.org

people who use drugs. However there are also enormous numbers of drug arrests, increasing from a couple of thousand in the 70s to 160,000 drug consumers in 2012. Drug use has become a social issue. The lower class is still the most affected, especially among emigrants of the 2nd and 3rd generation who have been deeply effected by heroin, the AIDS epidemic,

