

## **What HR means to me**

For most drug users harm reduction – not abstinence – is the only chance to survive. HR relieves from the humiliating consequences of prohibition – at least those who have not been deterred. HR enables them to save their life and live it free of contempt and humiliation.

HR means to lead a constant fight against people's/society's need to reassure themselves of their superiority by stigmatizing those who deviate from normality.

Last but not least: HR forms a lively counterbalance to the exaggerated sense of duty and hostility to pleasure originating from puritan ideology.

HR supports people who do not want to suffocate in a puritan corset but who strive for a life with intense experiences, even if their attempts often ended in failure.

HR keeps up the best tradition of modern medicine: That is, apart from treating individual somatic and psychiatric diseases, keeping an eye on the social origins of these diseases and interfering with public discourse about social problems – with the full weight of medical authority behind it.

By fighting for HR, social workers, nurses and doctors lend their voice to those who otherwise do not have anything to say.

The quality of a democracy can be judged by the treatment of its weakest members. HR cares for the weakest. Therefore, the keeping up of the principles of HR is a touchstone for the implementation of freedom, equality and fraternity in a society. It shows clearly if the foundations of modern civilisation are still solid or if we are on shaky ground.

Jörg Gölz

Head of the German society for addiction medicine ( DGS e.V. )

(2008 ?)