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EUROPEAN FEDERATION CONDEMNS “INHUMAN, BRUTISH AND UNTHERAPEUTIC” PRACTICES IN SERBIAN DRUG REHABILITATION SERVICE.

PRESS RELEASE

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The European Federation of Therapeutic Communities (EFTC) moved swiftly today to condemn the violent practices apparently sanctioned within the Serbian rehabilitation service, Crna Reka. Rowdy Yates, Vice President of the EFTC – Europe’s largest and longest established network of drug-free rehabilitation providers - said today:

“I have worked in the addiction treatment field for more than 35 years and in that time I’ve seen some unpleasant and unhelpful practices masquerading as treatment. But this is simply appalling. The beating of vulnerable people in this way is inexcusable and to claim that this constitutes rehabilitative treatment is completely false. Such practices are inhuman, brutish and, actually, untherapeutic!”

The EFTC was moved to release a statement when numerous press reports carried the story of residents being beaten as part of their “treatment” and claimed that Crna Reka – a service run by Serbian Orthodox priest Branislav Peranovic – was a therapeutic community.

“It certainly isn’t a therapeutic community!” said Rowdy Yates. *“Therapeutic communities are a respected and well-established treatment method. Our expectation of our members is absolutely clear; violence, even the threat of violence, is not tolerated. Crna Reka is neither a therapeutic community nor is it a member of the EFTC”.*

Since the organisation posted a video of a resident being beaten with a spade, numerous individuals have expressed their horror but the EFTC is thought to be the first major treatment provider network to publicly condemn the practice.

The EFTC is shortly to host a major conference in the Netherlands and it is expected that a more formal statement will be issued at that time.

Rowdy Yates
Vice President (Teaching and Research).

NOTES FOR EDITORS

The EFTC was established in 1982 as a pan-European umbrella body for drug-free therapeutic communities. It is supported by the European Union (via its European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction), and by the World Health Organisation. The body is regarded as a respected voice of drug-free recovery and represents over 40 treatment providers in more than 25 European countries. EFTC Members work to a set of standards developed in conjunction with the Royal College of Psychiatrists (Community of Communities). The service standards can be downloaded from the Scottish Addiction Studies (SAS) Online Library.

Rowdy Yates is Vice-President of the EFTC and is a Senior Research Fellow with Scottish Addiction Studies, University of Stirling. He is the former Director of Lifeline Project one of the UK's largest and longest established drug treatment services. A former addict himself, he has worked in the addiction treatment field since 1971.

Useful websites

European Federation of Therapeutic Communities (EFTC):

<http://www.eftc-europe.com/>

EFTC Conference, Den Haag:

<http://www.eftc2009.eu/>

Scottish Addiction Studies:

<http://www.dass.stir.ac.uk/sections/showsection.php?id=4>

SAS Online Library:

<http://www.drugslibrary.stir.ac.uk/>

BBC News coverage of the beating:

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8063855.stm>