

Drug consumption room nowhere ?
Safe consumption sites everywhere :

the ESAR project

IRH 2025 – Gervan Le Bourhis



Context

France



French Harm Reduction

Key dates

80s/90s: HIV epidemic among drug users

1987: first Needle and Syringe Program by NGO

1995: Opioid Substitution Treatment (methadone programme and easy access to buprenorphine with GP)

2004: Harm reduction law with Harm Reduction centers founded by the government

2016: Drug Consumption Room (D.C.R) with an experimentation of 8 years

Anonymous

Free of charge



French context

Universal health system (free of charge)

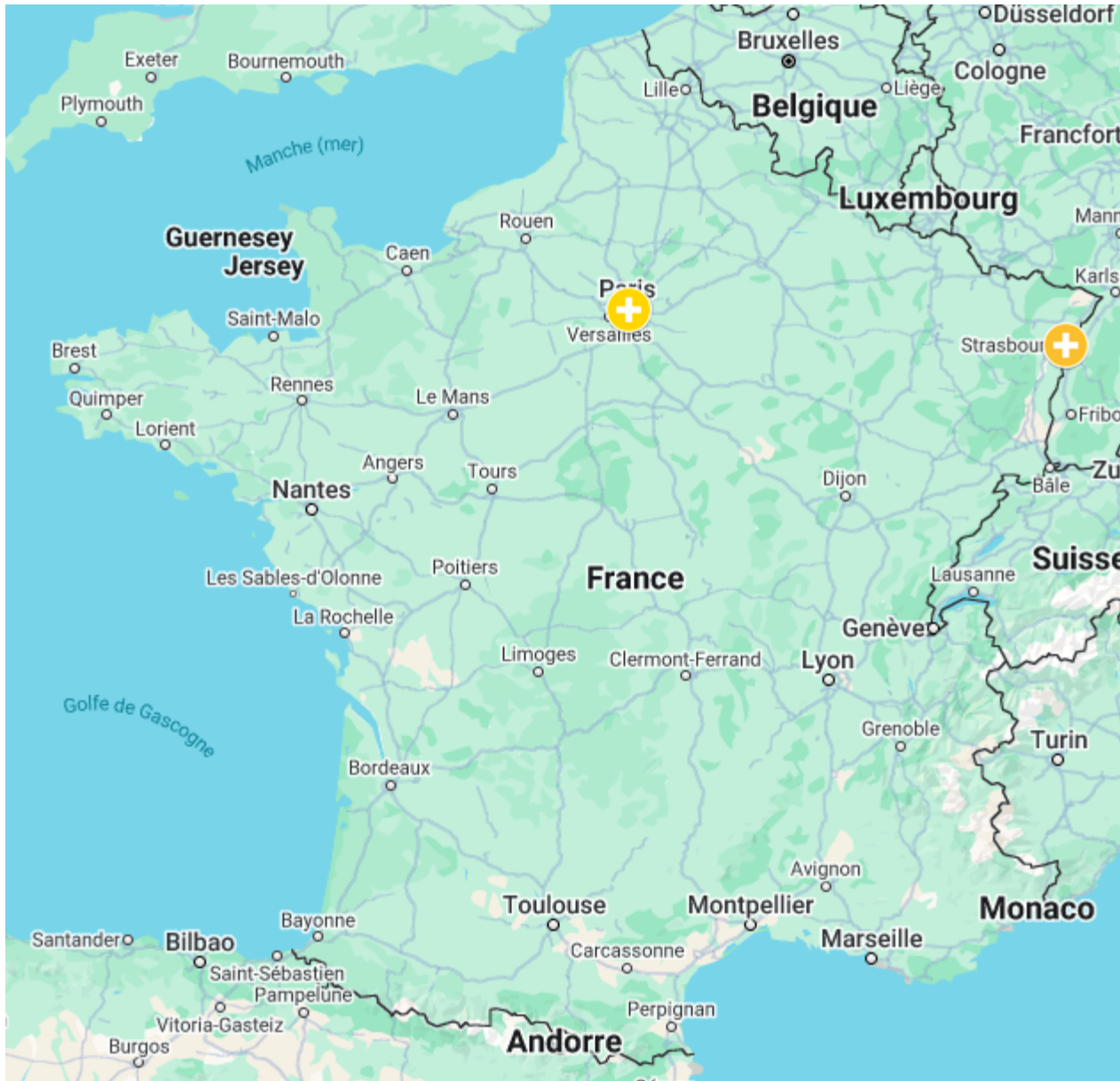
Low distribution of needles and syringes

High coverage of OST with a large access of specialized centers (CSAPA and CAARUD)

Last year prevalence

- Opioids: 0,3%

- Cocaïne: 2,7%



Drug Consumption Room in France

Opening of 2 Drug Consumption Room in 2016, none since !

Positive impact, acceptability and proven effectiveness (INSERM 2021, IGAS 2024)

Lack of political support

Blocking of several Drug Consumption Room projects in major cities



To compare with Europe

	Population	Number of DCR
Switzerland	9 millions	17
Netherlands	17 millions	31
Germany	83 millions	25
Belgium	12 millions	2
France	68 millions	2

National impulse by Fédération Addiction

Meeting about the status of Drug Consumption Room in 2023

Advocacy for existent and needed Drug Consumption Room throughout the country

+ **Commitment of 7 associations engaged in the experimentation**, reflecting a national momentum for expanding supervised consumption practices within harm reduction frameworks.

+ Promotion of alternative safe consumption sites inside existing Harm Reduction centers (one-year experiment)

+ Evaluative approach by a research laboratory



The ESAR Projet in Oppelia

A national program



Oppelia, A Committed Actor in Harm Reduction and Support

Our missions:

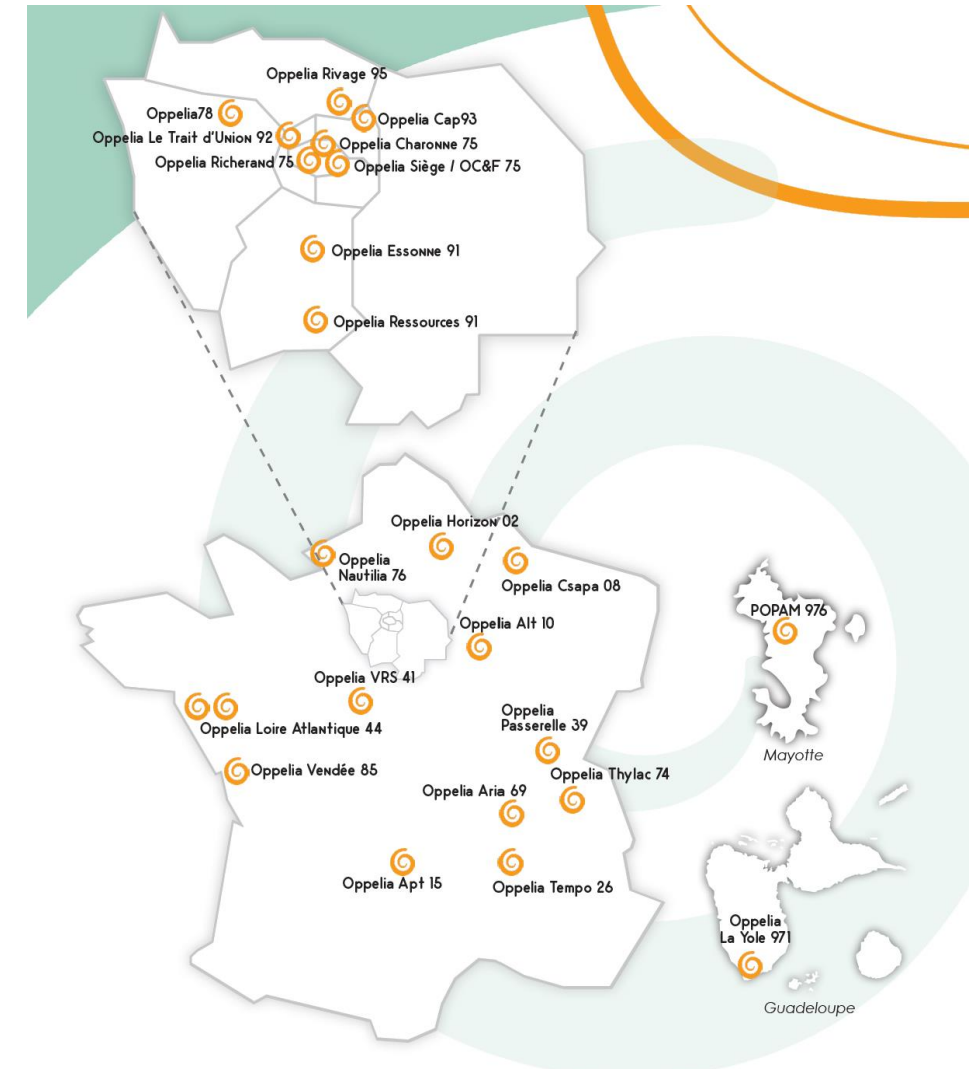
- ✓ Welcome and support individuals affected by addictive behaviors
- ✓ Develop harm reduction and prevention initiatives
- ✓ Ensure access to healthcare and rights for people in precarious situations
- ✓ Raise awareness and provide training for professionals and the general public

Our values:

- ◆ Comprehensive and humanistic approach
- ◆ Respect and non-judgment
- ◆ Inclusion and access to rights
- ◆ Innovation and field commitment

Key figures:

- 📍 Over 54 facilities in France
- 📍 36 600 beneficiaries supported each year
- 📍 860 professionals working in the field



Inventory

- Drug use (injection and smoking) inside our centers under unfit conditions, such as in toilets
- Drug use in dedicated places but safety is not really ensure
- Drug use in public spaces (parks, train station) as well as homeless shelters, parking lots, squats...
- Some centers offer interventions providing training and education about injection (AERLI)
- Consensus of field workers to develop harm reduction with supervised sites
- Acceptability of drug users that come to our centers



Goals of the ESAR project

- Ensure Harm Reduction for people who use drugs
- Reduce negative impacts on the society
- Reduce morbidity and mortality due to overdose
- Diversify aid approach
- Ensure dignity and inclusiveness of People Who Use Drugs
- Secure professionnels and preserve safe conditions (ex: risk of exposure of smoke due to crack inhalation)



Organization & Coordination

2 MANAGERS

- **Head of mission** (Gilles Penavayre)
- **Health Law Legal Expert** (Michael Balandier)

METHODOLOGY

Two-years project

- planning and training (first aids, overdose management, safe injection)
- experimentation



Legal analysis

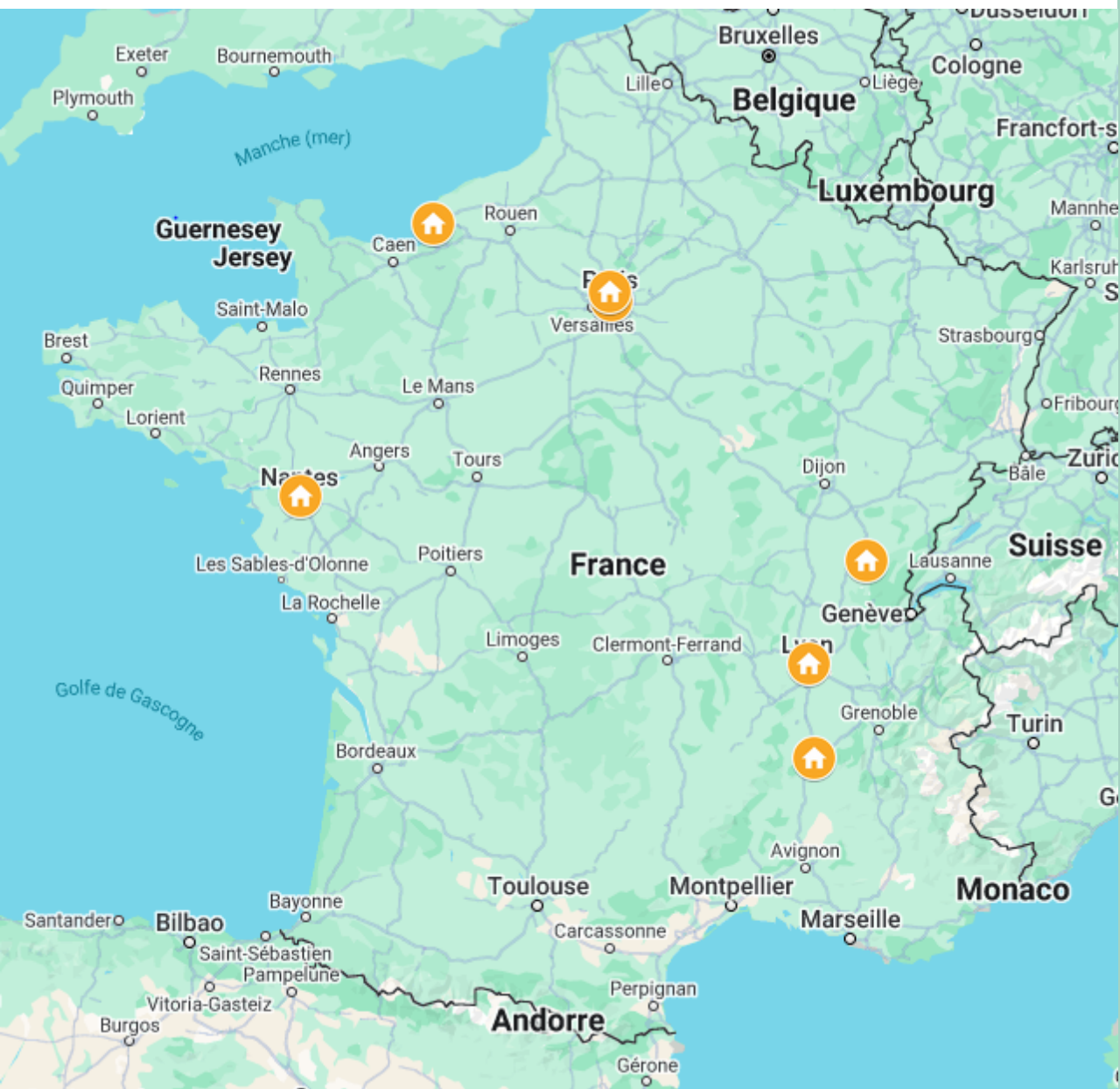


Field diagnosis (workers and People Who Use Drugs)



Framework document





7 pilot centers



OPPELIA
Addiction Santé Solidarité



Legal analysis

- **2004: Legislative recognition of the harm reduction policy**
- **2016: A new, much broader definition of harm reduction policy...**
...which specifically allows for:
"Promoting and supervising behaviors, actions, and procedures for risk prevention. Supervision consists of warning users about risky practices, supporting them, and providing advice on substance use [psychoactive or classified as narcotics] to prevent or reduce the risks of infection transmission and other health complications. It does not involve any active participation in the act of consumption."
- **Professionals acting in accordance with their harm reduction mission benefit** from legal immunity regarding offenses related to this mission.
- **Specialized Care Centers for Addiction Prevention and Treatment and Support and Harm Reduction Centers for Drug Users** have been granted jurisdiction over harm reduction, providing a legal basis for supervision spaces.



L'ESAR



Results

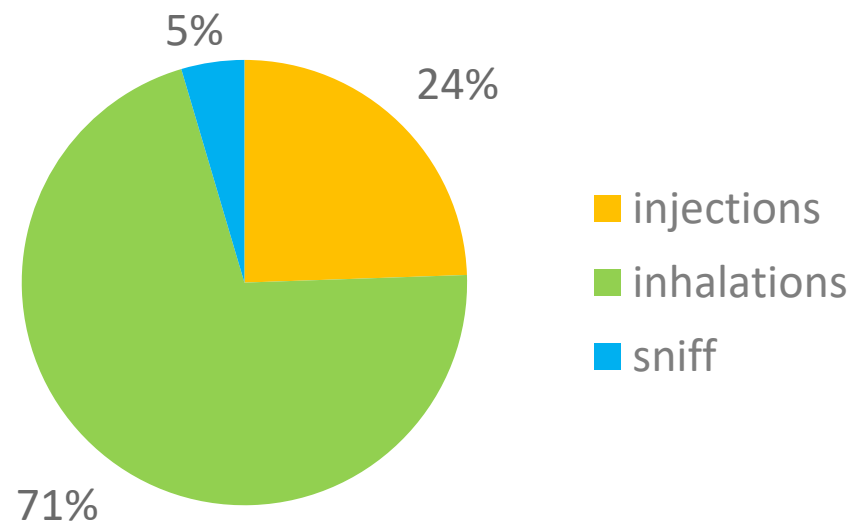
(after six months)

1 333 supervised acts

Active file	Injection	Smoking	Sniffing
240	326	946	61

One overdose reversed
with naloxone !

76% heroïn
11% nitazene



I am not alone, i can speak to professionals

*This allows you to consume your drug
in a clean space*

I feel secure

*I take more care of my consumption, we can
even analyze our drugs*

*Here, it's more peaceful and less stressful
than on the street.*

What it brings in terms of support ?

Numerous requests for addiction care

Increasing of blood screening

Requests of drug testing

Liberation of speech (thanks to small facilities)

Education on safe consumption



Thanks