

*Regulating the Distribution of Medical
Painkillers and Opioids*

Committee Guide

Special Conference



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1 Personal Introduction

Dear Delegates,

My name is Ruqaya Zaki and I'm delighted to be your chair for OLMUN 2020's Special Conference! It is a shame I do not get to see your hard work in real life, but I am sure your efforts will still get through the magic of digital communication.

I am eighteen years old and I am currently a senior in high school living in the Netherlands. I was born in Baghdad, Iraq but I spent pretty much almost all my life in the Netherlands. I have always had great interest in international affairs and public speaking, thus I have participated in several MUNs (under which OLMUN 2019 in the Security Council as the delegate of China), a MEP, chaired a MEP and organized a MUN as the Secretary General (ASMUN 2020). I am aiming to study Law next year at the University of Leiden in the Netherlands.

I really liked OLMUN 2019, so having the chance to chair for OLMUN 2020 was a no-brainer for me. This year things have gone differently than we might have all hoped, but I sincerely still hope that you will have fun with the online task and that you might even consider giving OLMUN 2021 a go! Stay safe, stay at home if you can, wash your hands and good luck with the online task!

I am looking forward to your work,
Ruqaya Zaki

Dear Delegates,

My name is Marlene Möller and I am happy to introduce myself as one of the Chairs of this year's Special Conference. I hope you are healthy and staying home.

Although I cannot meet you in real life I am thrilled to get to know you all.

I am seventeen years old and currently graduating from high school. My original plan was to live in Japan for a year studying Japanese but due to the ongoing pandemic this will not be happening. Now, I am hoping to start studying medicine at the University of Heidelberg this autumn. Besides my hobbies in quarantine, which are reading, playing instruments and walking my dog I also really enjoy crossfit, travelling and going out with my friends.

I have participated in a few MEPs, last year's OLMUN and chairing this committee together with Ruqaya is a great honor and responsibility for me. Considering the circumstances I hope you still have a lot of fun with OLMUN@home and I hope to see you at OLMUN 2021.

The current pandemic has probably led to many different thoughts, ideas and opinions in your minds on how societies should act, and politicians should run countries. I am very thrilled to learn and hear your ideas; let corona limit your social contacts but not your mind and thoughts!

Best,
Marlene Möller

2 Committee Introduction

The Special Conference (SpC) is a committee in which a huge variety of topics can be discussed. International issues that affect various fields are explored in this committee. Think about topics that put a light on class differences, corruption, racism, the environment and so much more. The problems at hand are of high urgency and international importance.

Because the topics in the SpC are so wide, different thinking frames are possible. This generates a pool of different perspectives and thus, different solutions.

3 Content

3.1 General Introduction

As we will not let the Corona Virus take away the OLMUN experience including meeting new people from all over the world and discussing current political topics, this year's OLMUN will be a whole new experience but please treat it like it is happening in real life. We will make the best of the situation and we are positive that we will accomplish a lot.

You will still be able to get in touch with people from all over the world, get to know different opinions and learn a lot for your future lives.

A lot of you might be annoyed with the one and only topic in politics being corona for the past weeks, but many of you are hopefully excited to talk and learn about many different important issues. However, Corona touches upon all of them in some way as we can see how countries deal with pandemics, how societies act and how much of an impact globalization really has. Focussing on the opioid epidemic, we can draw a clear connection to the corona pandemic, as one or two triggers have caused a worldwide crisis. This should be provoking thoughts in all of us. As much as corona restricts us from living the way we are used to, it teaches us so much more.



4 The Opioid Crisis

4.1 History

The drug abuse by the Nazi regime in the third reich and the opium wars in China are just examples for the severe impact drugs have on a whole nation. It is shocking how easily their addictive effects can be used to control and make use of people.

Even though the Opioid Crisis has multilateral causes, one powerful motivator has been the company Purdue Pharma, the producer of many opioid painkillers and in 1996 the developer of Oxycontin. Oxycontin was advertised by aggressive marketing campaigns that denied the high addiction potential of Oxycontin, leading to overdose and death. Doctors were pressed to prescribe Purdue Pharma Opioids and got awarded and paid for it. This pursuit of profit led to overprescribing as well as a drug dependency of people that started to go “doctor shopping”.

In 2007 the company pleaded guilty to misleading the public about Oxycontin’s risk of addiction and had to pay fines. But the opioid misuse and increasing overdoses couldn’t be stopped by that. Between 1991 and 2013, the number of annual opioid prescriptions in the U.S. increased from 76 million to 207 million. The public health, as well as the social and economic welfare got severely affected.

For a long time this epidemic was reduced to a uniquely American problem. It is obvious that in the times of globalization this crisis cannot be tackled nation per nation and a worldwide regulation is needed.

The Opioid crisis reached its peak in the last years. In 2016 and 2017 more than 130 people in the USA died every day from overdosing. Fentanyl, but mostly illicit analogues, are causing most of the overdosing deaths. Therefore one can distinguish between two waves of the crisis; on one hand the wave of prescription opioids and since 2011 the wave of illicit opioids.

4.2 Addictions and Deaths

The nature of opioid painkillers is that it simulates a euphoric light feeling while lessening moderate to severe pain. The painkillers interact with the nervous system and decrease feelings of pain. If taken correctly, the painkillers can ease the pain in a good way and have a positive effect. However, many prescribed users (roughly 21 to 29 percent) misuse these opioid drugs and end up addicted to the drug. They go from stable usage to dependence to complete abuse. Users who lose access to legitimate resources to get the narcotic often turn to heroin, cocaine, fentanyl or other illegal and dangerous drugs that are similar to the prescribed opioids. The initiation of heroin usage among prescribed opioid users is found to be 19 times greater than non-opioid users. People who use heroin regularly often build up a tolerance over time. This means that they crave for higher doses of the drug, which often leads to an overdose. In 2017 in the United States alone, more than 47,000 Americans died as a result of an opioid overdose (this includes prescribed opioids, heroin and fentanyl). In all over the world, around 450,000 people have died as a result of drug overdose in 2015. Of those deaths, roughly 118,000 people were associated with opioid use disorders.

4.3 Problems and Conflicts

- Rising incidences of neonatal abstinence syndromes. Every 15 minutes a baby in America is born suffering from Opioid withdrawal due to Opioid misuse and abuse during pregnancy.
- Stigmatizing of addicts - the Opioid crisis affects all social sectors.
- Increase in injection drugs leads to the spread of diseases like hepatitis C and HIV.
- The drug addiction does not stop with prohibiting the prescription, addicts mostly start doing illegal drugs often mixed with unknown and dangerous substances.
- The Opioid crisis leaves a projection screen for racist and xenophobic tendencies.

4.4 Possible Solutions

- Non-Opioid alternatives, such as cannabis containing products.
- Setting up a digital system/ intercontinental database to find out drug and disease history of patients.
- A framework of national legal systems to prevent diversion, abuse and trafficking and ensure the accessibility for all countries - for scientific and medical purposes.
- Strengthen the national control systems and domestic assessment mechanisms/ reinforce national and international efforts and further increase international cooperations like the WHO and the UN office on drugs and crime to regulate drug prescription and control new inventions.
- International standards, guidance and assistance for drug use therapies.
- Transparency and awareness campaigns.

5 Helpful Links & Further Research

Do not use only one single source. Diversion is important to find out useful and debatable points. Also, the more sources you use, the more you broaden your horizon on our topic. If your country has specific relations to other countries, which are also involved in this conflict, dive into their opinions too. Of course, not as deep as in your own country's opinion, but it is important to stay on top of everything. We hope this committee guide provides you with all important information. We are excited to meet you and wish you a successful preparation. If you have any questions or concerns don't hesitate to email us: ruqzaki@gmail.com , mollerleni@gmail.com

Wash your hands,
Ruqaya and Marlene

- [Prescription Opioids: What You Need to Know \(PDF, 1MB\) \(CDC\)](#)

- <https://news.un.org/en/story/2019/01/1031262>
- <https://undocs.org/A/RES/S-30/1>
- <https://www.nytimes.com/spotlight/opioid-epidemic>
- https://www.who.int/substance_abuse/information-sheet/en/
- <https://www.asam.org/docs/default-source/advocacy/opioid-addiction-disease-facts-figures.pdf>
- <https://www.drugabuse.gov/publications/drugfacts/heroin>
- <https://www.drugabuse.gov/drugs-abuse/opioids/opioid-overdose-crisis>
- <https://ghr.nlm.nih.gov/condition/opioid-addiction>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BXmyPsqkP44>
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nLrUHrpjd2o&has_verified=1
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9hOyjFyE3Ek>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mXL3F5HvCr8>