E S S D

European Society for Social Drug Research

37th Annual Conference

30th September – 2nd October 2026

in Vilnius / Lithuania

CALL FOR ABSTRACTS – EXTENDED DEADLINE

The European Society for Social Drug Research (ESSD) was founded in 1990 to promote social science approaches to drugs research, with special reference to the situation in Europe (http://www.essd-research.eu/). The society holds an annual conference providing scope for collaboration and co-operation among researchers working in the drugs field. We are excited to announce that the 2026 conference will be held in Vilnius in the traditional in-person conference format. We invite drug researchers to submit their abstracts and join us for an enriching and engaging event.

ABSTRACTS

ESSD members and other researchers who wish to attend the 37th Annual Conference are invited to **submit abstracts** of their conference papers **no later than 18th of May 2026**. Abstracts (see themes and details below) should be sent as a word file (following the 'abstract layout' guidelines set out below) to essd.vilnius@gmail.com. If you wish to attend the conference without giving a presentation, please inform us. For any correspondence, please, use the above e-mail address.

CONFERENCE FEE AND REGISTRATION

The **standard fee** is **200 euro**. Students (bachelor, master and PhD students) pay a **reduced rate** of **125 euro**. This fee is used to support and ensure publication of the annual ESSD book. (Because of rising costs for publishing due to our new policy of high-quality open access publishing, we have had to increase our conference fee.) You can find more information on the financial policy of the ESSD here: http://www.essd-research.eu/about.html.

Further details on conference registration will be announced via e-mail and at http://www.essd-research.eu after abstracts have been submitted and reviewed.

CONFERENCE VENUE

The annual ESSD conferences always take place in close collaboration with local organisers; this year's local organisers will be Linas Tavaras (Institute of Asian and Transcultural Studies, Faculty of Philosophy, Vilnius University) and Mindaugas Lankauskas (Institute of Sociology and Social Work, Faculty of Philosophy, Vilnius University).

The venue is Aula Parva Hall at Vilnius University, in the Old Town of Vilnius. The address is Universiteto St. 3, LT-01513 Vilnius. Further information regarding the conference venue, public transport, accommodation, etc., will be announced shortly via email and on http://www.essd-research.eu

DATE, START AND END TIMES

Wednesday, 30thSeptember 2026 at 9:00am EET – Friday, 2nd October 2026 at 14:00 pm EET.

CONFERENCE THEMES

Presentations should preferably include a European dimension (such as reporting on research or issues from more than one European country and comparisons between data from European studies), and/or theoretical analysis that draws inferences from the local to the global. Presentations restricted to the description of interventions or (local) policies will not be accepted. **Qualitative** studies are particularly welcome. Each presentation will last for 10-15 minutes, followed by ample time for jointly discussing the presentations of each session. The conference language is English.

Submitted abstracts should conform to one or more of the following **themes**:

1. HUMAN RIGHTS, HARM REDUCTION AND DRUGS

Impact of drug policies on human rights ● Access to drug services ● Human rights violations related to drugs ● Engagement of people who use drugs in drug policy ● Marginalised groups ● Stigma related to drugs ● Participatory engagement in services ● Peer-led interventions ● Harm reduction barriers to implementation ● Human rights in drug research ● Hidden stigma and harms

2. **DRUGS IN A TIME OF GLOBAL POLITICAL CHANGE**

Wars, drug use and drug markets ● Re-militarization of the war on drugs ● Populist and nationalist politics and drugs ● Threats to the global rules-based order and implications for drug policy ● Drugs and environmental harm

3. CHANGING DRUG POLICY APPROACHES AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS

Legal/policy changes and their impacts on drug situation ● Evolving cannabis policies ● Blurring boundaries between regulated substances, illicit drugs and new substances ● New risks associated with new policies and products ● Evaluation of drug policy approaches and regulatory frameworks ● Critical reflections on drug demand and supply interventions ● Comparative drug policy analysis ● Public health approaches and strategies in different cultural and social contexts ● Debates on drug decriminalisation, depenalisation and legalisation

4. DRUG MARKETS

Digital technologies and drug markets ● Emerging trends in drug concealment and distribution ● Global and local trends in drug markets ● Social supply ● Drug distribution and cultures of illicit drug markets ● Social and economic consequences of drug trafficking ● Impacts of supply control and law enforcement measures ● From “home-made” production and manufacturing to organised crime ● Methodological innovations in researching drug markets ● Grey markets, variably-legal markets and the interplay between legal and illegal markets ● Drug markets in prisons and other institutional settings ● Methodological innovations in drug market research

5. TRENDS IN DRUG USE

New drugs and emerging drug trends ● Societal and cultural context of the use of legal and illegal substances ● Poly-drug use ● Exploring drug use motivations ● Drug use related consequence ● Impacts of availability on drug use ● From analysing the prevalence of use towards studying the contexts and harms ● Methodological innovations in researching drug use ● The psychedelic renaissance ● Drug use subcultures ● Synthetic opioids ● Crack cocaine

ABSTRACT LAYOUT

1. Max. 1 A4 page
2. Theme (from the list on the previous page)
3. Title of the presentation
4. Author(s): name(s), qualification(s), job title(s) [*Where there are multiple authors, please make clear who will be the presenter(s)]

5. Contact details: full postal address, telephone, email address(es)
6. Keywords
7. Abstract (**not more than 300 words**), including objectives, methodology, significant results and conclusions
8. Funding sources
9. Technical equipment required for the presentation
10. Short bio **(maximum 100 words)**

Please note that final accepted abstracts will be published in a book of abstracts, shared with conference attendees, and made available on the ESSD website.

ABSTRACT REVIEW

Abstracts will be reviewed using the following criteria:

- Overall quality
- Relevance to the conference themes
- European dimension
- Theoretical reflections
- Added value with respect to earlier contributions at ESSD conferences

In general, not more than two presentations from members of the same institute or affiliation will be accepted. **Acceptance of papers will be communicated by 26th June 2026.**