



E.M.C.D.D.A.

European Monitoring Centre  
for Drugs and Drug Addiction

# DrugNet Europe

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## SYNTHETIC DRUG ALERT:

*EMCDDA warns national networks*

**On 11 July, the EMCDDA released an alert through the REITOX network regarding 'ecstasy' tablets and capsules containing very high doses of MDMA.<sup>1</sup> These had been detected in Belgium and France before the Summer.**

In some cases, more than 200 mg of MDMA had been found in the tablets, roughly twice the dose usually sold to users. The EMCDDA information sheet warned the REITOX Focal Points and their networks that the ingestion of one such tablet would be the equivalent of taking two 'normal' pills. It also indicated that the pills, if taken in over-

dose, could bring possible toxic effects including: hallucination; confusion; seizures; increase in body temperature; sweating; heart problems; coma; or death. The note cautioned users to be wary of taking any 'ecstasy' tablet, as the resultant effects were unpredictable.

On 19 July, the EMCDDA released a second alert through the REITOX network regarding the presence of parmethoxyamphetamine (PMA) in 'ecstasy' tablets carrying a Mitsubishi logo, seized in Denmark in June. PMA is a controlled substance under the 1971 United Nations Convention on Psycho-

tropic Substances and, when taken in overdose, may be more dangerous than MDMA. At doses from 60 mg, PMA can cause a sudden, large and potentially fatal rise in blood temperature, body temperature and blood pressure.

These preventive warnings released by the EMCDDA to national networks reveal the effectiveness of the early-warning system on new synthetic drugs (established under the 1997 Joint Action) in calling for rapid responses to the emergence of harmful substances in the European Union.

*Lena Westberg*

<sup>1</sup> 3,4-methylenedioxy-N-methylamphetamine (MDMA) is the main chemical compound of tablets sold as 'ecstasy'. Currently many 'ecstasy' tablets contain approximately 80–120 mg of MDMA per tablet, depending on the formulation, and may also contain other substances such as caffeine or amphetamine.

## 13<sup>th</sup> International AIDS Conference

**The 13<sup>th</sup> International AIDS Conference took place in Durban, South Africa, from 9–14 July. The conference was immersed in strong political discussions, among others concerning the low availability of treatment in developing countries, but also regarding long-established issues, such as whether HIV does in fact cause AIDS.**

Increased awareness of the first issue can be seen as a very important and positive development. However, discussion on the second is a dramatic setback for prevention and treatment, particularly in developing countries where myths and beliefs around AIDS already strongly hinder prevention efforts. Data from the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) indicate that AIDS is ravishing Africa, but is also still strongly increasing in many other parts of the world.

At the conference, injecting drug use received relatively little attention, despite it being the main mode of HIV transmission in Europe, Russia and the Newly Independent States, and many parts of Asia. This reflects a substantial lack of research funding for this area. However, excellent presentations were delivered on: harm reduction and HIV treatment in prisons; sexual transmission of the HIV virus by injecting drug users (IDUs); curbing epidemiological trends in IDUs; and substitution treatment for IDUs in developing countries.

New, and potentially important, techniques were presented at the event, such as rapid HIV tests and a testing algorithm to detect incident infections. Extremely worrying developments were once again reported from Russia where, among young people, a heroin epidemic, HIV and hepatitis C infection go hand-in-hand.

Further information on the conference may be found at <http://www.aids2000.com/>

## Global Research Network

**Prior to the AIDS conference, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the Global Research Network was held in Durban. This network (co-ordinated by the US National Institute on Drug Abuse and other organisations) is proving to be an important global forum and meeting point for researchers on HIV and hepatitis prevention in drug-using populations. High-quality studies were presented, among others, showing first evidence of increasing injecting drug use in Nigeria, a new threat adding to the already devastating AIDS epidemic in this, and many other, African countries.**

At the meeting, a global database was presented on interventions directed at HIV and hepatitis in IDUs, based on earlier work of the EMCDDA. The Centre presented work on measuring the coverage of interventions which may form an important additional tool to epidemiological surveillance of infectious diseases in IDUs.

*Lucas Wiessing*

## EMCDDA RELEASES TWO NEW SCIENTIFIC MONOGRAPHS

*This September, the EMCDDA releases two new editions in its Scientific Monograph series.*

### Qualitative research

**U**nderstanding and responding to drug use: the role of qualitative research (EMCDDA Scientific Monograph, No. 4), is the result of work undertaken by the Centre since 1996 to obtain a comprehensive overview of qualitative research on drugs in Europe.

One of the major objectives of the EMCDDA is to promote useful knowledge for developing rational policies and effective interventions in response to drug use and drug problems in Europe. Qualitative research focuses on the meanings, perceptions, processes and contexts of the 'world of drugs' and offers ways of understanding drug-use patterns and related responses. It can be an effective first step to generate hypotheses or identify issues that require more

extensive and systematic data collection. However, its main value is to complement quantitative data and statistical analyses by helping to reveal and interpret developments behind the statistics.

This new monograph highlights among others: the impact of qualitative research on policy-making; and the role of qualitative research in identifying new drug trends and contributing to the understanding of health risks associated with drug injecting. It also looks at the role of such research in exploring the relationship between heroin use and social exclusion and in helping to understand the development of illegal drug markets. An analysis of the evaluation of drug services is also made, revealing how qualitative assessment may lead to a deeper understanding of drug users, which, in turn, enables service planners to provide efficiently for their needs.

The monograph is designed to enhance understanding of drug use and responses to it, and to encourage a wider

appreciation of the contribution qualitative research can make.

See article by Richard Hartnoll on page 3 on the EMCDDA's future perspectives in the field of qualitative research.



### Improving evaluation

**E**valuation: a key tool for improving drug prevention (EMCDDA Scientific Monograph, No. 5) contains the papers presented at the second European conference on the evaluation of drug prevention, held in Strasbourg from 2–4 December 1999.

In addition to the conference papers, the volume includes the recommendations drawn up and adopted by the participants as the final outcome of the meeting.

This volume complements the EMCDDA's *Evaluating drug prevention in the European Union* (EMCDDA Scientific Monograph, No. 2) and represents a significant step forward in promoting co-operation in the con-

tinuous effort to improve drug-prevention strategies and their evaluation in Europe. A common question in drug prevention is 'What works?', and the chapters, each from its own specific angle, attempt to address this central question.

While the views expressed do not lead to a definitive answer, they do facilitate a better understanding of this complex field, which is one of the priorities of the European Union Action Plan on Drugs (2000–2004).

The monograph highlights recent progress and developments in evaluation, and provides examples of actions and instruments which have led to better practice. It also provides a forum in which different players share their experiences and adapt their knowledge to different national contexts.

It is hoped that the monograph will be both useful and stimulating for decision-makers and drug-prevention professionals alike.

**T**he EMCDDA's Scientific Monographs are specialised publications containing scientific papers prepared in the context of EMCDDA research studies, conferences and seminars. The series aims to ensure greater visibility for the agency as a scientific authority in the drugs field. Topics cover a wide range of issues from science, policy, theory and methods to practical cases and facts.

**Target groups: Specialists and practitioners in the drugs field, including scientists and academics (primary target); policy-makers and their advisors.**

## QUALITATIVE RESEARCH: DIRECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

**Q**ualitative research, pursued under various labels such as anthropology, ethnography or sociology, played an important and distinguished role within the social sciences throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the drugs field, however, only in very few countries, in Europe or elsewhere, is there anything resembling a significant tradition of qualitative research or a body of published studies. In many countries, little or almost no research has been carried out from a primarily qualitative perspective, and even where it has – for example, in the United States and the United Kingdom – this takes second place behind statistical, clinical or bio-medical research (Fountain and Griffiths, 1999).

Although there have been some modest attempts in Europe – and also in the US and Australia – to bring together qualitative researchers in the drugs field into more organised groups or networks, a critical mass has yet to be attained that allows this type of approach to achieve an adequate profile and recognition, either amongst the research community as a whole or amongst the users (and funders) of research. This is regrettable since qualitative research and analysis can offer rich insights into the meanings, perceptions, processes and contexts of the ‘world of drugs’. It can also provide ways of understanding drug use and responses to it that not only complement quantitative and statistical analyses but make a valuable contribution to them in their own right.

Much remains to be done if this critical mass is to be achieved and if the full potential and value of qualitative approaches for understanding the drug phenomenon, and societies’ responses to it, are to be realised. It is therefore essential that the achievements to date are consolidated and used as a foundation for further work.

The directions which the EMCDDA is trying to pursue fall under three broad headings:

- consolidating and strengthening the European infrastructure for the research community (information exchange, networking and development of resources for qualitative researchers);
- stimulating collaborative, comparative research on key themes (including the aim of linking research to interested practitioners and other key actors in the specific areas concerned); and
- promoting the interface between research and policy (strengthening the profile of qualitative research within policy and research agendas).

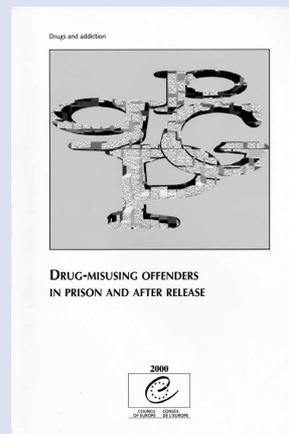
There is a need to raise the profile of qualitative research, not only in the policy domain, but also in the research, and especially the research-funding, domain. The first prerequisite for this is to have a product that is worth selling.

We trust that publications, such as the EMCDDA’s Scientific Monograph No. 4, and other volumes from researchers across Europe, will contribute to this goal. However, this in itself appears insufficient. Finding ways to achieve a critical mass of researchers and research, as well as to cross the often-invisible threshold of recognition, so that qualitative research is included in research and policy agendas, is a major challenge for the future.

**Richard Hartnoll**

Fountain, J. and Griffiths, P. (1999) ‘Synthesis of qualitative research on drug use in the European Union: report on an EMCDDA project’, *European Addiction Research*, 5, 4–20.

## BOOKSHELF



### *Drug-misusing offenders in prison and after release*

The Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe has published the proceedings of a seminar on drug-misusing offenders in prison and after release. The seminar, held late 1999, focused on: treatment modalities in the prison setting; harm-reduction strategies to reduce the transmission of blood-borne infections; drug testing and control of drug abuse in prisons; and links to aftercare in the community. Preparations for the seminar included: a survey of drug problems in prisons; assistance offered to drug-using prisoners; and aftercare policies and practice in 26 countries.

The publication contains the seminar’s main reports, presentations and conclusions. Many prisons today offer detoxification and drug-free units, but actions in this setting remain limited and ill-assessed. Drug testing is highlighted in the book as a controversial issue in prisons, being seen from a security and a treatment perspective. Aftercare is increasingly regarded as an important component of treatment offered to drug-using prisoners.

**Margareta Nilson**

**Published by:** The Co-operation Group to Combat Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in Drugs (Pompidou Group). • **Date:** March 2000. • **Language:** English and French. • **ISBN:** 92-871-4242-4 (English). **ISBN:** 92-371-4241-6 (French). *Les délinquants usagers de drogues en prison et après libération*. **Price:** EUR 14.48. • **Volumes may be ordered from:** Pompidou Group, Council of Europe F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex, France. Tel: ++ 33 3 88 41 29 87. Fax: ++ 33 3 88 41 27 85. E-mail: catherine.lamek@coe.int. Website: <http://www.pompidou.coe.int>

*The EMCDDA is responsible for the selection of materials for the Bookshelf and for the text presented. However, responsibility for the content of these materials and the opinions expressed therein lies with the authors themselves.*



## DRUGS-LEX

### National parliaments debate drug laws

**I**n many EU countries, the debate on the most effective ways of tackling drug abuse is high on the agenda. National parliaments, as the direct mirrors of citizens' concerns, strive to find new measures to address drug abuse in the general population. One of the issues attracting particular attention, is the need to provide new responses to individual drug consumption.

Developments in recent months have highlighted this need for new responses. On 6 July, the Portuguese Parliament adopted a revision to the existing drug law. This strengthens treatment and rehabilitation and foresees the depenalisation of the use and possession of drugs as a key factor in defining drug users as sick persons rather than criminals. (The law is yet to be implemented due to a legal formality, and a return to the parliament is expected).

One week earlier, the Dutch Parliament approved a resolution that, if endorsed by the government, would allow the cultivation of cannabis for the supply of coffee shops; at present illegal.

In Germany, on 28 June, the petition committee of the German Parliament, consisting of 29 members, supported the

petition of the 'Self-Help Group Cannabis as Medicine' in Berlin to allow the medical use of natural cannabis products and single cannabinoids.

The debate is also lively in the UK where, on 6 June, Members of Parliament signed a motion calling for the decriminalisation of cannabis use and the establishment of a controlled sale for consumption (such as in 'coffee shops'). This proposal found strong opposition in the rest of Westminster and among members of government.

A similar proposal is currently under consideration in Switzerland. The Swiss Federal Commission for Narcotics – an independent panel advising the government – is calling, along with some cantons, for the legalisation of the possession, sale and consumption of cannabis. The Federal Minister of Health has yet to decide on this issue and on what extent the proposal of the revised Federal Law on Narcotics will include the legalisation of possession and consumption (both accepted by a majority in the nationwide consultation procedure). For the production and sale of drugs, the introduction of a formula is being discussed, along the lines of that operating in the Netherlands (cannabis production and sale are, in

principle, illegal but the law is not enforced, allowing consumption in selected places such as 'coffee shops').

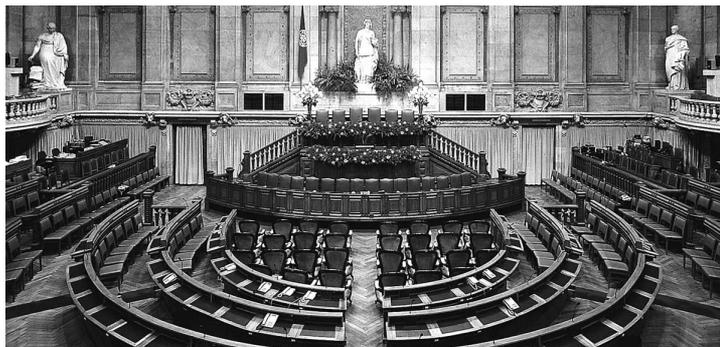
In May, the Scottish Executive suggested an increase of GBP 2 million (EUR 3.2 million) to provide better treatment for addicts and to look more at non-custodial alternatives for drug offenders.

Finally, in Belgium, the parliament will be holding a seminar on 15 September on the medical and recreative use of cannabis.

Despite these signals to reconsider controls on drug consumption and, in some cases, to foresee the controlled sale of soft drugs (mainly to avoid black market effects), many disagree with this tendency, arguing that 'relaxing laws' would send the wrong signals to European citizens.

The EMCDDA is working to provide more reliable data on the way in which drug addicts are handled by criminal-justice systems in the EU Member States. A comparative review of Member States' policies on this matter is expected to be available from the EMCDDA by the end of 2000.

*Danilo Ballotta*



*Assembly of the Republic, Portugal.*

### Sport against drugs

**A** European conference on 'Sport against drugs', took place in Rome from 5-6 July, under the auspices of the Italian Committee for Sport against Drugs, the European Olympic Committee and the Italian National Olympic Committee. The EMCDDA participated in the meeting and presented the work of the REITOX network and scientific bases for evaluating prevention.

Sport as a possible preventive factor against drug use was underlined at the conference, which benefited from the experience of many countries, including: Germany, Ireland, Italy, Russia, Spain and Turkey. However, as yet, there is no scientific evidence of a definite correlation between sport and drugs. Consequently, a number of activities were proposed for this field, including the need for: greater research into the topic; interventions to take into account validated pedagogical methods; and each prevention intervention to follow a structured methodology and evaluation of the final results.

The final declaration by the Italian Committee for Sport against Drugs proposed that a European Committee be established, composed of: the European Olympic Committee; the European Union; National Olympic Committees; and finally, as observers, representatives of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP). The main aim of this co-ordination group would be to assess initiatives and plan common interventions.

*Linda Montanari*

For further information, please contact: Senator Ignazio Pirastu. E-mail: [info@sportagainstdrugs.org](mailto:info@sportagainstdrugs.org)

## EMCDDA STUDY

### Demand-reduction services: roles, structures and co-operation

**I**n January 2000, the EMCDDA commissioned a preliminary study into the roles and structures of demand-reduction services in the European Union and co-operation between them (contractor: RAND Europe, The Netherlands). The study was designed as a methodological exercise to develop a data-collection tool for this highly complex area.

With this goal in mind, an interview protocol was developed and tested in three EU countries (France, Portugal and the United Kingdom) in which different drug-policy structures were represented. Approximately 25 interviews were carried out in these countries. The data-collection tool was developed in parallel so that questions asked and terminology

used made increasing sense to the interviewees.

A key finding of the study was that the interview protocol might itself be used as a tool to collect qualitative, but largely comparable, data. However, the study also concluded that this type of data collection is rather resource- and time-consuming, requiring the interviewer to have prior knowledge of a country's drug policy and language. Inexpensive data-collection methods, such as postal surveys or telephone interviews, would be inappropriate in this kind of study, due to the complexity of the field and the need for direct personal contact.

*Ulrik Solberg*

Further information on this study is available from [Ulrik.Solberg@emcdda.org](mailto:Ulrik.Solberg@emcdda.org)

### European Expert Group on Treatment Demand

**T**he EMCDDA's European Expert Group on Treatment Demand held its second meeting from 29–30 June in Lisbon. The group aims to improve the comparability, interpretation and policy usefulness of treatment information in the EU and includes national experts on drug-treatment-demand information from all EU Member States.

The group will play a key role in the implementation of the EMCDDA's key indicator on treatment demand, following a common European protocol 'The Joint EMCDDA/Pompidou Group Protocol for the Treatment Demand Indicator' ('TDI Protocol'). The final edited version of this protocol was launched via the EMCDDA's website on 29 June, during the meeting.

With the assistance of the German REITOX Focal Point (IFT), the EMCDDA conducted a field trial in 1999 for the implementation of the TDI Protocol. In Spring 2000, a more complete European data-collection exercise took place with the participation of most EU countries. The expert meeting reviewed the results of the second data-collection exercise and the methodological problems encountered in applying the protocol.

Several workshops examined some of these problems (e.g. streamlining EMCDDA treatment-data collection, improving data-collection instruments) and discussed potential uses of treatment data to design drug interventions and policies. A report carrying the results of the second European treatment data-collection process will be available in the Autumn. It will present a comparative overview and focused analyses on relevant current topics, such as the number and profile of cannabis or cocaine treatment clients.

*Julian Vicente*

### 8<sup>th</sup> British Prison Drug Workers' Conference: 'Over the Wall'

**A**round 400 participants attended the 8<sup>th</sup> British Prison Drug Workers' Conference, organised by Cranstoun Drug Services at Aston University, Birmingham, from 10–12 July. In addition to topics generated by the implementation of the UK Prison Service Drug Strategy, the conference held a special session entitled 'Europe meets', organised by the European Network of Drug and HIV/AIDS Services in Prison.

The conference proceedings will be published by Cranstoun Drug Services, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, Broadway House, 112–134 The Broadway, Wimbledon, London, SW19 1RL, UK. For further information please contact: Francesca Ambrosini at [fambrosini@cranstoun.org.uk](mailto:fambrosini@cranstoun.org.uk)

*Margareta Nilson*

### New financial regulation

**I**n the framework of the European Union's budgetary recasting, the European Commission proposed to the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament in July, a new financial regulation which also has implications for the EU decentralised agencies.

This new regulation would mean that the EMCDDA's operations would be more tightly directed and controlled by central institutions in Brussels.

*Paulo Branco*



**French Presidency:  
priorities in  
European Union  
drugs policy**

**O**pening the first Horizontal Drugs Group (HDG) meeting under the French Presidency on 17 July, Nicole Mastracci, French drug co-ordinator and chairperson of the group, presented the priorities of the Presidency and its work programme.

Ms Mastracci underlined France's will to help implement the EU Action Plan on Drugs (2000–2004) via the following measures.

- *Strengthened drug co-ordination instruments at European level, particularly among the EU Member States.* This will include the organisation of an inaugural meeting of the EU national drug co-ordinators and the European Commission in Paris on 29 September. Ms Mastracci also stated that the HDG would integrate, when appropriate, drug-related contributions from other Council working groups, particularly those devoted to health and drug trafficking.
- *Improved knowledge of the drugs phenomenon.* A questionnaire was distributed to the Member States by the Presidency in order to assess what is needed to furnish the EU with a common basis of scientific data on drugs and drug addiction. The possibility of linking national expert centres in the area of substance abuse will also be examined.
- *Improved detection and evaluation of psychoactive substances and their addictive properties.* In order to respond more effectively and quickly to the emergence of new products and combinations of substances, the Presidency proposed to reflect on procedures that would allow experts to detect newly emerging psychoactive products and addictive behaviours in good time and to evaluate their risks. Ways of strengthening the early-warning system under the 1997 Joint Action on New Synthetic Drugs would also be discussed. A European Conference will be held in Paris on 24 November to study problems and solutions regarding the diffusion, treatment and responses to emerging trends.

Alain Wallon



**EMCDDA  
STATUTORY  
BODIES**

*Management Board*

**A** series of recommendations on the medium-term perspectives of the EMCDDA's work programme, drawn up by an EMCDDA Management Board Working Group (Chairman: Sir Jack Stewart-Clark) will be one of the main agenda items at the 20<sup>th</sup> EMCDDA Management Board meeting from 6–8 September. The recommendations will form the basis of the Centre's 2001 work programme as well as its next three-year work programme (2001–2003). Both programmes will be fully examined by the Board.

Another discussion item on the agenda will be the internal reform plan for the EMCDDA, drawn up by Director, Georges Estievenart, following the results of the evaluation of the Centre by external consultants (1999–2000).

The key elements of the reform include priority setting in a new operational framework as well as new work methods. A new organisational structure is also foreseen for the Centre and specific strategies will be proposed concerning human resources, REITOX, communication and EU enlargement.

Finally, the Board will discuss: the EMCDDA and the EU enlargement strategy, prepared by an EMCDDA working group (Chairman: Marcel Reimen); the internal rules of the Management Board; and Iceland's candidature to participate in the activities of the Centre.

*Kathleen Hernalsteen*

See next edition of *DrugNet Europe* for full details. The next meeting of the Board will take place in January 2001.



**F O R U M**

*News on drugs from around the EU*

**T**he Mentor Foundation joined forces earlier this year with Interpol and Europe 2000 – an NGO set up to focus on the conditions and problems resulting from the scrapping of Europe's internal frontiers – to host its second major conference entitled 'Crime and Substance Abuse among Young People: A Factor of Increasing Insecurity'. The conference was designed to share ideas and information about the relationship between juvenile crime and substance abuse, to ensure that the issue of prevention is high on the international political agenda and to urge governments to commit more resources to prevention.

The conference report is now available from the Foundation.

*The Mentor Foundation is the only non-governmental organisation working on a global basis to prevent substance abuse among young people. Actively established in 1995 as an independently funded charity, Mentor seeks the optimal methods of achieving lasting and positive results in substance-abuse prevention. Mentor invests in innovative projects, works in partnership with others, and provides a forum for the positive exchange and cultural adaptation of promising programmes and ideas.*

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E-mail: secretariat@mentorfoundation.org

## REITOX National Reports: evaluation results

**I**n co-operation with the National Focal Points (NFPs), the EMCDDA launched an evaluation in May of the REITOX National Reports, in order to ensure the highest quality information. The evaluation exercise was undertaken according to several quality criteria and received positive reactions from the national centres.

In terms of the overall quality of the reports, the evaluation found that, despite substantial differences between countries, the quality of information collected by the NFPs was sufficiently high and complete to offer a sound overview of the drug situation in the European Union. The main problems identified related to methodological issues, such as data comparability and global coverage of new areas in methods and interventions (outcome evaluation, reliability, etc.).

The findings under the six evaluation headings were as follows:

**Validity:** Various methodologies are used by the NFPs to collect and process data. Information sources are indicated in the reports and data are, on the whole, consistent. Shortcomings relate to some methodologies (e.g. qualitative research) and information in specific fields (e.g. outcome evaluation).

**Reliability:** The National Reports generally respect guidelines provided by the EMCDDA. The main problem identified was the use by countries of different categories (e.g. age groups, drug profiles, etc.).

**Insight:** On average, the level of insight was found to be quite high due to NFPs' detailed knowledge of the country situation. Nevertheless, the level of interpretation was not always based on scientific evidence. Analyses relating to gender, age and other social aspects could be deeper.

**Efficiency:** Adherence to contractual aspects was considered good, although, in some countries, delays in providing information may jeopardise the global European overview.

**Acceptability:** The clarity and acceptability of the reports was found to be sufficiently high. In particular, the reports offered good examples of trends and patterns of use and detailed descriptions of different sub-groups (e.g. drug users groups, specific targets for interventions).

**Usefulness:** The majority of the reports were considered to be well presented and the information given responded to requirements. Nevertheless, in some cases, it was felt that greater efforts could be made to achieve greater homogeneity and clarity.

Linda Montanari



## SURFING

<http://www.qed.org.uk>

**T**he external website of the EMCDDA's Qualitative European Drug Research Network has recently been equipped with a search engine, enabling visitors to conduct full text searches of the site and to locate information more easily. The search engine also enables the website manager to count and map search queries.

For each EU Member State, the site offers:

- a directory of researchers;
- a bibliography;
- an inventory of current projects; and
- a profile of qualitative research in that country.

The site also furnishes workgroup reviews, seminar reports and a network journal.

The website is an essential tool for the network, which is fast developing into a dynamic and lively resource for understanding drug use and emerging drug trends.

Jane Fountain and Ulrik Solberg



## EMCDDA PUBLICATIONS

### New publications:

- *Understanding and responding to drug use: the role of qualitative research*, EMCDDA Scientific Monograph series, No. 4 (English).
- *Evaluation: a key tool for improving drug prevention*, EMCDDA Scientific Monograph series, No. 5 (English).
- *Annual report on the state of the drugs problem in the European Union – 2000* (all 11 official EU languages).



### Coming soon:

- *Reviewing current practice in drug-substitution treatment in the European Union*, EMCDDA Insights series, No. 3 (English).

Further information on all EMCDDA publications and details of how to order titles are available on the EMCDDA website at

<http://www.emcdda.org/publications/publications.shtml>.

A new series looking at the latest resources and projects from the REITOX National Focal Points

## Tendances

**T**endances is a publication launched in 1999 by the French Focal Point, the *Observatoire Français des Drogues et des Toxicomanies* (OFDT). Its aim is to provide decision-makers, well-informed professionals and researchers with a retrospective, prospective, regular and global view of trends in the consumption of psychoactive substances.

The publication takes the form of a four-page summary drawn up on the basis of studies and surveys. Following interest expressed recently by the OFDT's scientific committee, the publication will be open to external contributions by late 2000.

At present, between five and six issues are published every year. Back copies and subscription details are available on request from OFDT at: 105 rue Lafayette, 75010 Paris, France.

Jean-Michel Costes, OFDT

Tel: ++ 33 1 53 20 16 16. Fax: ++ 33 1 53 20 16 00.

E-mail at: [ofdt@ofdt.fr](mailto:ofdt@ofdt.fr).

Tendances can also be downloaded from:

<http://www.drogues.gouv.fr>.

All issues will be translated into English by the end of the year.

## Trend

**I**n September 1999, OFDT launched its TREND project (*Tendances Récentes et Nouvelles Drogues*) in the context of new measures adopted in the field of drug use in France as laid down in the 1999–2001 *Plan de lutte contre la drogue et de prévention des dépendances* (Plan against Drugs and for the Prevention of Drug Dependence).

In response to weaknesses in the national information system on drugs and drug addiction, the *Mission interministérielle de lutte contre la drogue et la toxicomanie* (the French interministerial co-ordinating body

responsible for drugs), called on OFDT to implement an observation system that would detect new trends in the use of psychoactive substances.

The project relies on a permanent network of observers positioned in 10 sites throughout France. Each site is composed of representatives who, due to their particular position, are able to offer different, yet complementary, viewpoints and observations.

Two settings have been researched so far: the 'party setting' (techno scene) which covers drug users in a recreational context; and the 'urban setting', largely relating to those in contact with treatment and shelter services. Trends revealed at the end of the first six months are as follows.

- In the party setting stimulants (ecstasy, speed, cocaine) and hallucinogenic substances (especially LSD) are dominant.
- In the urban setting, opiate use dominates. Nevertheless, there is a decrease in heroin consumption while the use of stimulants (cocaine and crack) is rising.

Jean-Michel Costes, OFDT



## EMCDDA Calendar

**6–8 September** — 20<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EMCDDA Management Board, Lisbon.

**8–9 September** — Meeting on the feasibility of youth media monitoring, Turin.

**13 September** — Visit to the EMCDDA of the Argentinean Ambassador to Portugal, Lisbon.

**22 September** — Visit to the EMCDDA of a Swedish delegation of the Ministry of Justice of Sweden, Lisbon.

**25–26 September** — Risk-assessment meeting on GHB and Ketamine, Lisbon.

**11–12 December** — 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EMCDDA Scientific Committee, Lisbon.

## Other Meetings

**11–14 September** — UNDCP training seminar of judges and prosecutors, Kromeritz, Czech Republic.

**21–22 September** — Expert meeting on young problem drug users, Amsterdam.

**21–23 September** — 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the European Society for Social Drug Research, Trinity College, Dublin.

**25–28 September** — OISIN conference on criminal analysis of anti-drug investigations, Rome.

**28 September** — Meeting of national drug co-ordinators, MILDT, Paris.

**28–29 September** — European expert meeting on valorisation and dissemination of information on drugs

and social exclusion, focusing on minorities, Lisbon.

**6–7 October** — First National Symposium on Women's Addiction, Madrid.

**12–13 October** — Pompidou Group Ministerial Conference, Sintra, Portugal.

**18–23 October** — Frankfurt Book Fair, Frankfurt.

**9–11 November** — ELISAD 2000 Meeting: Linking Together, Prague.

**10–11 November** — 5<sup>th</sup> International Hepatitis C Conference, Amsterdam.

## Selected EU Meetings

**21 September** — Horizontal Drugs Group, Brussels.

**10 October** — Horizontal Drugs Group, Brussels.