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E.M.C.D.D.A.
European Monitoring Centre
for Drugs and Drug Addiction

Ketamine and GHB concern grows in EU

Concern is growing in the European Union around the misuse of the two synthetic drugs ketamine and GHB. Both drugs underwent a formal risk assessment by the EMCDDA in 2000 and final reports on the substances were submitted to the Council of the EU and European Commission last October.

Ketamine is traditionally used as a veterinary anaesthetic. Recreationally, it is injected as a liquid or inhaled in powder form and goes by the street names of K, KitKat, cat valium, vitamin K and super K. Risks include loss of self-control which has had serious implications for driving. Ketamine is sometimes sold as ecstasy.

Legitimate uses of GHB, also an anaesthetic, include the treatment of alcohol withdrawal and burns. However, misuse of the drug poses significant risks to health, due to the narrow margin between a recreational dose (desired effects) and one leading to unconsciousness or irreversible coma. The drug is administered orally and, once dissolved, is difficult to detect, being colourless, odourless and relatively without taste. On the street, GHB has various labels including 'liquid ecstasy', 'easy lay', 'scoop' and 'fantasy'. The EMCDDA risk-assessment report on GHB expresses concerns about its surreptitious use in sexual assaults or 'date rape', although the extent of this is still unclear.

On 16 February, following consideration of the two risk-assessment reports and the opinion of the European Commission, the Council's Horizontal Working Party on Drugs forwarded its draft conclusions on the substances to the Committee of Permanent Representatives (COREPER) for adoption. In these, it recommends implementing monitoring measures for each substance until the end of 2001. This monitoring will begin following COREPER's approval. The EMCDDA and Europol will report on results by the end of the year.



Recreational use of ketamine and GHB to be closely monitored

International Narcotics Control Board launches Annual Report 2000

Treating social problems with drugs is becoming an acceptable habit, warns the INCB in its latest Annual Report

The growing consumption of psychotropic substances is the main topic of the latest *Annual Report* from the Vienna-based International Narcotics Control Board (INCB), released on 21 February. The UN body warns that the widespread overuse of such drugs is becoming a socially acceptable habit, especially in developed countries where controlled substances are readily used and prescribed to treat suffering from either psychological or social problems.

The Board points to loose regulation; unreliable information regarding medical needs; aggressive marketing techniques; and improper or unethical prescription practices as the main reasons for the oversupply of controlled substances such as benzodiazepines and amphetamine-type stimulants. Easy availability leads to over consumption of such substances either in the form of drug abuse or by fuelling a culture of drug-taking to deal with a variety of non-medical problems.

For more on this issue see 'Partners', page 5. For more on the report and the INCB see http://www.incb.org/e/ind_pres.htm

Drug situation

Key indicator on population surveys: experts assess progress

Improving comparability of data is a central task of the EMCDDA. To this end, the Centre is developing five key epidemiological indicators on the prevalence and health consequences of drug use (http://www.emcdda.org/activities/epidem_comparability.shtml).

An EMCDDA expert group on population surveys met in Lisbon from 8–10 February in the framework of the indicator: 'Prevalence and patterns of drug use among the general population – population surveys'. During the meeting, the EMCDDA presented an overview of work on this indicator to date, including the development of Key Indicator Draft Guidelines (¹). These consist of a set of common survey items, known as the European Model Questionnaire (EMQ), and methodological recommendations. The experts present also reported existing work at national level on population surveys.

The EMCDDA informed the meeting of the ongoing process by its Scientific Committee and Management Board to obtain endorsement of the draft guidelines at EU level. Most countries should be able to provide the information required by the EMQ, especially relating to standard prevalence measures. Several countries pointed to the need to expand the existing methodological recommendations, particularly with regard to sampling.

Finally, the advantages and methods of data archiving were presented, as was a proposal for a European Databank on Population Surveys. This databank would be a tool to deposit (on a voluntary basis) and properly document existing surveys and promote methodological improvements and analysis, thereby promoting the implementation of European common standards. It was proposed that a sub-group of experts from the main group play an advisory role for the scientifically sound use of the databank.

Julian Vicente

¹ In recent years, the EMCDDA and expert groups have developed standards for conducting population surveys that will improve comparability at EU level whilst taking account of existing national approaches, instruments and methods.

Improving comparability of data is a central task of the EMCDDA

The five EMCDDA key epidemiological indicators are:

- prevalence and patterns of drug use among the general population (population surveys);
- prevalence and patterns of problem drug use (statistical prevalence/incidence estimates and surveys among drug users);
- drug-related infectious diseases (prevalence rates of HIV, hepatitis B and C in injecting drug users);
- drug-related deaths and mortality of drug users (general population statistics and mortality cohort studies among drug users);
- demand for drug treatment (statistics from drug treatment centres).

Drugs and social exclusion: specific provisions for minorities?

An EMCDDA project to map available information on the relationship between drugs and social exclusion, focusing on minorities, was carried out by the University of Middlesex (UK) from September 1999 to November 2000.

Secondary data were collected mainly from the scientific literature and from a network of EU partners set up for the purpose of the study. This network gathered information on the various definitions of 'minorities' used in the EU Member States as well as socio-demographic and economic data regarding minority groups and their situation (social exclusion, drug use, drug-use patterns and consequences). Information regarding national policies on drugs and minorities was also collected, along with examples of relevant practical interventions.

It was found that concepts and definitions of minorities varied widely between EU



Countries rarely make specific provisions for minorities within their national drug strategy

countries. Consequently, the project leaders opted for a broad and pragmatic approach, covering in the study: assimilated minorities; nomadic and semi-nomadic minorities; 'visible' minorities; and recent arrivals (refugees, east Europeans, clandestine immigrants, etc.).

Information on drug use and its consequences within minority groups was found to be very scarce. One factor rendering data collection difficult was individuals' fear of being made scapegoats and thus further excluded.

The study reveals that countries rarely make specific provisions for minorities within their national drug strategy, yet some do run agencies targeting minority groups. As a result of anti-discriminatory policies, many countries opt for the implementation of drug agencies open to all social groups.

An executive summary of the project results will be downloadable from the EMCDDA website from April 2001.

Chloé Carpentier

Responses

EDDRA: concrete examples of good practice

In the course of 2000, some 60 new entries made their way into the Internet-accessible EDDRA database at <http://www.reitox.emcdda.org:8008/eddra> (1). These entries constitute examples of good practice, which will be highlighted in forthcoming editions of *Drugnet Europe*. Below we focus on the Austrian training programme 'Addiction prevention in early childhood' (2).

This prevention programme was triggered by recent findings in addiction research which demonstrated that certain behavioural patterns (which are markers for addiction structures) have their roots in early childhood. With these findings in mind, VIVID, the Addiction Prevention Centre of Styria, launched a training course for kindergarten teachers on this issue.

The objective of the training course was to disseminate primary prevention methods and to instruct kindergarten educators in how to integrate addiction prevention measures into the daily educational curriculum.

The results expected from the project included an increase in teachers' awareness of the pupils' strengths and weaknesses, and the strengthening of children's abilities as a key step in their sound personal development.

An evaluation of the training course results revealed that the kindergarten educators found the course to be of great benefit in raising their awareness of addiction risks for children. The evaluation also showed that the educators had become more conscious of the need to strengthen their pupils' self-confidence and were better equipped to respond specifically to their qualities and shortcomings.

Ulrik Solberg and Gregor Burkhart

¹ EDDRA: Exchange on drug demand-reduction action, a database of evaluated demand-reduction activities.

² For further information please contact: Karin Gugl Fortbildungslehrgang zur "Suchtvorbeugung im Kindesalter" für KindergartenpädagogInnen VIVID – Fachstelle für Suchtprävention Steiermark Hans-Sachs-Gasse 12/ II, 8010 Graz Tel: ++ 43 316 82 33 00/3 Fax: ++ 43 316 82 33 00/5 E-mail: vivid@stmk.volkshilfe.at <http://www.checkit.at/vivid>



**EMCDDA tools
in the field
of evaluation
are increasingly
requested by
international
users**

EMCDDA evaluation tools in vogue

EMCDDA tools in the field of evaluation are increasingly requested by international users.

The Anti-drug agency of Madrid (*Agencia antidroga de la Comunidad de Madrid*) is selecting instruments from the Evaluation Instruments Bank (http://www.emcdda.org/eib/databases_eib.shtml) in order to provide them to Spanish professionals in their own language.

The Mentor Foundation, an NGO set up to prevent substance abuse among young people and which funds prevention projects worldwide (<http://www.mentorfoundation.org>), has adopted the Centre's EDDRA offline-editing tool package as a means of defining and promoting minimal quality criteria for designing prevention programmes in a commonly understandable way.

This tool will be distributed on CD-ROM to projects receiving funding from the Foundation.

Gregor Burkhart

New guidelines for the evaluation of outreach work

The EMCDDA is about to launch a set of 'Guidelines for the evaluation of outreach work' as part of its effort to promote a culture of evaluation in the European Union. The guidelines, currently available in English, will be downloadable in March from the EMCDDA's website at <http://www.emcdda.org> or may be obtained from Gregor.Burkhart@emcdda.org.

A number of EU Member States (Italy, Portugal and Spain) have already expressed an interest in translating the guidelines into their respective language in a move to increase the utility of the resource among outreach practitioners in their countries.

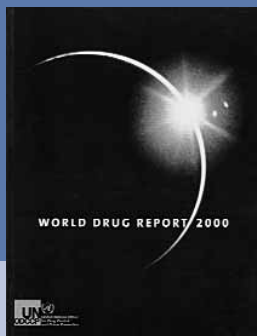
While designed to cater to the needs of outreach workers and their 'fluid' evaluation conditions and framework, the guidelines also provide a valuable complement to the EMCDDA *Guidelines for the evaluation of drug prevention*, published in 1998. As such, they have already been used in evaluation training sessions for prevention workers, introducing interesting perspectives on: how to involve stakeholders in evaluation; how to tailor evaluation to the needs of the client; how to promote evaluation as an empowerment tool for project staff; and how to use qualitative methods to draw a maximum of valuable information from street-work activities.

The guidelines will be published in the EMCDDA Manuals series in the course of 2001.

Gregor Burkhart

Bookshelf

World Drug Report 2000



For the first time in recent history, the global production of drugs such as heroin and cocaine is no longer growing but is showing signs of stabilisation and even decline. So says the *World Drug Report 2000*, released by the Vienna-based United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (ODCCP) in January this year.

Global coca leaf and cocaine manufacture continued to fall in 1999 by 7 % and was 20 % lower than in 1992–93. Illicit opium production, the raw material for the manufacture of morphine and heroin, declined in 2000 by at least 17 % and was some 15 % lower than in 1994. Progress is also being reported from the demand side, where there are signs of stabilisation or even decline in some of the main markets.

Illustrated with numerous maps, graphs, charts and tables, the report provides the reader with an insight into the realities of the complex issue and a comprehensive overview of progress made in recent years to counter it.

Published by: United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention
Date: January 2001 • **Languages:** English (other UN languages forthcoming)
ISBN: 92-1-101027-6 • **Price:** 25 USD/27.18 EURO plus postage
Order forms available at: http://www.undcp.org/world_drug_report.html
E-mail (Europe): unpubh@unog.ch
E-mail (Americas): publications@un.org

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.

Feature

Portuguese public debates new responses to drugs Internet plays key role

Portugal is presently in the full swing of a public debate surrounding possible new measures in drug harm reduction. The debate centres on a new government-proposed 'General framework on policies to prevent drug-related risks and reduce harms' ⁽¹⁾.

The framework foresees a series of socio-health initiatives including facilities such as: shelters for addicts; information and contact points; syringe-exchange programmes; and users' rooms. The decision by the Portuguese government to boost its harm-reduction policies follows the approval by the Parliament last year to decriminalise drug use, a move in which drug users were defined as persons in need of medical care rather than criminals ⁽²⁾.

On 5 February, the Portuguese National Focal Point, the *Instituto Português da Droga e da Toxicoddependência*, posted the draft framework on its website at <http://www.ipdt.pt> and opened up a forty-five day public debate around the proposal. Comments from the general public are invited by e-mail to comentarios@ipdt.pt until late March. The document will then be amended and the government will rule on whether to opt for: a decree-law (which may be adopted by the government alone); or a proposal for law (to go to Parliament for discussion).

One controversial topic that has received significant media attention in recent weeks has been that of users' rooms. In a public survey run by elements of the Portuguese media (*Público*, RTP, Antena 1), 47.5% of the 1 200 people interviewed were in favour of these facilities and 25.2% against. This response comes at a time when drugs are the most serious problem perceived by Portuguese society, ahead of crime, poverty, poor education and pollution. Around half of those in favour believed that such rooms would help decrease the transmission of infectious diseases, including AIDS and hepatitis C. Those against the proposal believed that such facilities would aggravate drug use and felt that the State should not increase expenditure on drugs.

The framework foresees that the users' rooms would be licensed by the IPDT and would function under local authorities or institutions. They would target heroin and cocaine users, be situated in traditional drug-use areas, and would offer syringes and water, but not drugs. Users would not receive assistance in injecting at these centres but medical assistance would be arranged where problems arise. The sale of drugs would be strictly prohibited.

At present three EU Member States operate users' rooms: Germany; the Netherlands and Spain. Luxembourg and Austria are currently considering the option.

Portuguese National Focal Point opens up 45-day public Internet debate on new harm-reduction proposal

Portuguese National Focal Point (IPDT)

For an update on the above, see next edition of *Drugnet Europe*.

¹ *Regime geral das políticas de prevenção de riscos e minimização de danos.*

² On 29 November 2000, the Portuguese Parliament adopted a revision to the existing drug law. This strengthens treatment and rehabilitation and foresees the decriminalisation of the use and possession for use of drugs. Drug use and possession for use remain illegal but are no longer punished as a crime but by alternative measures. The law will be implemented in June this year following the creation of the necessary supporting committees.

Enlargement EMCDDA welcomes Norway

On 1 January, the EMCDDA welcomed Norway into its fold, following a formal agreement for the country to participate in the Centre's activities and statutory bodies. The agreement, drawn up between Norway and the Council of the EU in 2000, was ratified last September, concluding negotiations initiated in 1999.

This is the first time for a 'third country' to be involved officially in the work of the Centre, a development that paves the way for the participation of the 13 Central and East European countries in the coming years. Integrating Norway into the EMCDDA's ongoing work programme presents both parties with a challenge, and provides the Centre with an excellent opportunity to prepare the ground for further enlargement.

A first co-ordination meeting will be held in late March involving the EMCDDA and Norwegian representatives of its Management Board, the Norwegian Focal Point (SIRUS) and the Norwegian Ministry of Social Affairs. The integration of SIRUS (National Institute for Alcohol and Drug Research) into the REITOX network is making good tracks and benefits from the support of the Danish and Swedish Focal Points.

Alexis Goosdeel

Partners Sensible use of benzodiazepines

'A contribution to the sensible use of benzodiazepines' was the title of a meeting organised by the Pompidou Group from 29–30 January. The meeting responded to a request by the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) in its *Annual Report 1999* for European countries to study the consumption, patterns and trends involving these drugs, with a view to detecting over-prescription or abuse. The participants aimed to assess and recommend measures to reduce demand and the harms related to these drugs.

Benzodiazepine prescription in Europe is 2–3 times higher than in any other world region. The most common pattern of 'problem' use is reported amongst patients who have been legally prescribed the drugs repeatedly over the years (predominantly females over 65). Non-medical use of benzodiazepines is reported mainly among heroin users where serious public health consequences are observed.

Over 30 benzodiazepines are covered by the 1971 UN Convention, although only a handful is associated with non-medical use. While there is little evidence of illicit production or large-scale smuggling of the drugs, irregularities such as inappropriate or falsified prescribing, diversion and theft are common.

**Benzodiazepine
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Demand-reduction and harm-reduction measures discussed at the meeting included: basic training and information for doctors and pharmacists; education for patients; and guidelines on accurate diagnosis and sensible prescribing, alternative therapies and the treatment of dependence. Several participants felt that imposing strict controls on all benzodiazepines would be counter-productive and could lead to illicit manufacturing, smuggling and deprivation of effective treatment for those most in need. The INCB *Annual Report 2000* also underlines the importance of this issue.

Richard Hartnoll

Drugs-Lex Belgium steps up pace against drugs

A 'Political note' released on 19 January in Belgium announces the national government's plan to tackle drugs with renewed energy. New political and legislative actions are foreseen to improve co-ordination of activities and efficiency of measures. The accent is placed on the need for:

- an integrated and global approach to drugs;
- evidence-based knowledge on drugs;
- assistance and rehabilitation of problem drug users;
- prevention of drug use and problem drug use; and
- concentration of efforts and resources on the repression of drug production and trafficking.

The note sets out concrete measures to implement these new principles. A Belgian Monitoring Centre on Drugs will be created to improve science, research and evaluation in the drugs field. A special unit will also be established to ensure co-ordinated action on drugs and to integrate the work of all those addressing the problem at federal and local level. On the prosecution of drug users, the note announces that a Royal Decree will be issued instructing prosecutors not to pursue individuals for personal possession of cannabis. The production,

supply, sale and ownership of larger quantities will still be actively prosecuted as will the 'problematic' use of cannabis. This new regulation will bring Belgium in line with Italy, Portugal and Spain, all of which have eased their regulations on the personal use of cannabis and/or other drugs.

**New political and
legislative
measures foreseen
to improve co-
ordination and
efficiency**

Danilo Ballotta

http://minsoc.fgov.be/cabinet/2001_01_19_note_politique_federale_drogues.htm

Reitox Cluster group meeting

Following visits by the EMCDDA in January to the Irish, Portuguese and Spanish National Focal Points (NFPs), a REITOX cluster group meeting for the three partners was held in Lisbon on 14 February. This was one of a series of cluster sessions on the topic of 'Data quality assurance and global networking improvement' being organised in 2001.

The focus of discussions was the process used by the NFPs to collect and analyse data to carry out their REITOX 'core tasks' (permanent tasks carried out by the NFPs under contract to the EMCDDA). A number of problems common to all three countries were identified during the visits and at the meeting. These included: lack of prioritisation of European tasks at NFP level; double counting in data collection; lack of terminological comparability between countries; and few quality controls in the data-collection process. Other problematic aspects related specifically to the national situation, such as the lack of variety of information sources in Portugal and regional complexity in Spain.

A number of recommendations were made to overcome these problems such as: the use of a 'key issues' feature in the REITOX *National Reports* as an instrument to help develop new information sources; and clear political support for scientific research in the field of drug addiction. With regard to the latter, the Portuguese Focal Point has recently signed a formal protocol with the Foundation for Research and Technology supporting drug research and promoting it to a central role in project evaluation.

*Linda Montanari and
Frédéric Denecker*

The Irish Focal Point was unable to attend the meeting.

Spotlight Portuguese National Focal Point Instituto Português da Droga e da Toxicodependência (IPDT)

The Portuguese National Focal Point, IPDT, has recently published the full draft text of the *Regime geral das políticas de prevenção de riscos e minimização de danos* (General framework on policies to prevent drug-related risks and reduce harms) also available on its website (see 'Feature', page 4).

The framework is prefaced by the Secretary of State of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Vitalino Canas, who outlines the key points of the document and calls for 'More health, more harm reduction and more security'. The framework is part of a series of new legal 'diplomas' aiming to implement the Portuguese national drug strategy, adopted in 1999. It foresees a series of socio-health initiatives including, among others, facilities such as: shelters for problem drug users; information and contact points; outreach work structures; and users' rooms.

Some of the innovative aspects of this new perspective include: the global and integrated approach to harm reduction; the active participation of municipalities and NGOs in this field; and the evaluation of all pilot projects implemented under this framework.

For further information please contact Maria Moreira, Instituto Português da Droga e da Toxicodependência (IPDT), Avenida João Crisóstomo, 14, P-1000-179 Lisbon. Tel.: ++ 351 21 310 41 00 Fax: ++ 351 21 310 41 90 <http://www.ipdt.pt>



REITOX meeting EU Action Plan on Drugs to provide benchmark for NFPs

The Heads of the REITOX Focal Points met in Lisbon from 14–16 February to attend the 21st REITOX meeting, chaired by the newly appointed REITOX Co-ordinator, Wolfgang Götz.

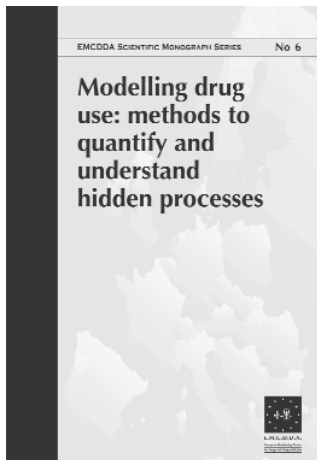
Four workshops were organised during the meeting, allowing the NFPs to participate actively on chosen topics. Two workshops allowed the Focal Points and the EMCDDA to initiate a benchmarking exercise related to the new targets set by the EU Action Plan on Drugs (2000–2004). These are directly linked to the new EMCDDA work programme structure. The issues discussed were 'reducing drug use and incidence of health consequences' (targets 1 and 2) and 'increasing the number of successfully treated addicts' (target 3).

A third workshop focused on the technical and content-related improvement of the REITOX private website, a technically advanced tool for easier and quicker information-flow between the EMCDDA and the NFPs. The fourth and final workshop allowed the NFPs to discuss in detail all problems and questions encountered in writing up their *National Reports* and to brainstorm on a common working methodology in this field. Also discussed was a pilot project on the early detection of new trends in global drug use.

An extraordinary REITOX meeting, related to the external evaluation of the Focal Points, is provisionally planned for June. The next meeting of the Heads of the Focal Points will take place in Lisbon from 24–26 October.

Frédéric Denecker and Linda Montanari

Products and services



Publications New Scientific Monograph

Just released from the EMCDDA is *Modelling drug use: methods to quantify and understand hidden processes* (EMCDDA Scientific Monograph No 6).

One of the central tasks of the EMCDDA is to analyse and make sense of data on drug use and its consequences in the EU in order to develop rational interventions and policies in response to drug problems. Mathematical and statistical (dynamic) modelling can be useful for these tasks. It can help handle and analyse complex information, enhance the interpretation of available but scarce data and increase the understanding of unobservable processes and relationships. It can also serve to describe the dynamics of drug use at a more abstract or aggregated (local, national, international) level.

This latest monograph from the Centre offers reviews on different aspects of modelling work in the drugs field by a network of modelling experts set up by the EMCDDA. The five sections of the monograph look at: What is modelling and how can it be used? Modelling drug use with available data; Modelling techniques and their uses; Modelling the health consequences of drug use; and Economic models.

In recent years, the drug field has been rapidly developing and opening up to disciplines including mathematics, statistics and economics. Data availability and quality are improving and the potential to use models to forecast future trends or to estimate hidden processes, such as initiation of drug use, has consequently been increasing.

The EMCDDA hopes that this monograph will play a significant role in stimulating the application of quantitative techniques to drugs data. With increasing work on improving data sources and increased understanding of the basic knowledge needed for sound policy-making, mathematical and statistical methods are an indispensable part of the array of tools available to understand and combat the problems caused by the use of drugs.

Coming soon

- *General report of activities 2000*. Available in English, French and German.
- *Injecting drug use, risk behaviour and qualitative research*, EMCDDA Insights No 4. Available in English.
- *Report on the risk assessment of GHB in the framework of the joint action on new synthetic drugs*. Available in English.
- *Report on the risk assessment of ketamine in the framework of the joint action on new synthetic drugs*. Available in 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>

Books for review

Are you a book reviewer working for a drug-specialised journal? If so, you may be interested in receiving copies of EMCDDA publications for review. For further information, please contact Kathryn.Robertson@emcdda.org

<http://www.emcdda.org>

Visit the EMCDDA's website and download:

- 'Illegal drug markets in Frankfurt and Milan', project report;
- EMCDDA work programmes 2001–2003 and 2001.

Resources Useful products in the campaign against drugs

Multimedia

The United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (ODCCP) provides films and videos on a non-commercial basis for training and educational purposes. The ODCCP Film and Video Archive contains videos dealing with drug control and crime prevention issues from 1980 to the present. To view the film and video catalogue see: <http://www.undcp.org/multimedia.html>

Websites

The Department of Public Health Sciences at the University of Toronto co-ordinates TeenNet, a project aiming to develop practical tools to engage young people in health promotion, using interactive technology. In the late 90s, it set up the site CyberIsle (<http://www.cyberisle.org>) to assist teens in addressing their physical, emotional and social health needs. In December 2000, it launched a new feature on CyberIsle: the Teen Clinic Online. This is a virtual health clinic where teenagers can access sensitive health information and chat with peers on topics such as drugs, family and sexuality.

Magazines

Sestante is the title of a magazine published in Italian by the *Osservatorio dipendenze patologiche Ausl Cesena-Forlì*. The magazine provides reflection, recommendations and analysis on a wide range of drug-related topics, including treatment and evaluation. The *Osservatorio* is one of 10 monitoring centres in the Emilia Romagna region and depends on the provincial health service.

For further information: Paolo Ugolini, *Sestante*, Via Marinelli 9, Cesena, Italy. Tel: ++ 39 0547 631536/21611. Fax: ++ 39 0547 21959.

Organisations wishing to publicise their newsletters, magazines, websites, CD-ROMs or any other resources are invited to contact Kathryn.Robertson@emcdda.org



Calendar 2001

EMCDDA meetings

- 19–22 March:** Visits to the Greek, Luxembourg and UK National Focal Points, concluding with a cluster meeting in London.
- 30 March:** Expert meeting to discuss and develop drug-related death standards for ICD-10, Paris.
- 2–5 April:** Visits to the Danish, Finnish, Norwegian and Swedish National Focal Points, concluding with a cluster meeting in Oslo.
- 20 April:** Meeting of the EMCDDA Bureau, Brussels.

External meetings

- 8–10 March:** European Conference on Drug Telephone Helplines, Berlin.
- 9–10 March:** Steering group meeting of the European Network of Drugs and HIV/AIDS Services in Prisons, London.
- 12 March:** Ad-hoc expert group on levacethyl-methadol (EMEA), London.
- 16–17 March:** 4th European Seminar on HIV and Hepatitis in Prison, Lisbon.
- 22 March:** 44th meeting of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, Vienna.
- 27–31 March:** 1st World Congress on Women's Mental Health, Berlin.
- 1–5 April:** 12th International Conference on the Reduction of Drug-related Harm, New Delhi.

EU meetings

- 8 March:** Meeting of EU national drugs coordinators, Stockholm.
- 9 March:** Horizontal Working Party on Drugs, Stockholm.
- 19 April:** Horizontal Working Party on Drugs, Brussels.
- 28 May:** Horizontal Working Party on Drugs, Brussels.
- 18 June:** Horizontal Working Party on Drugs, Brussels.

Statutory bodies

EMCDDA Bureau

approves action plans

The new six-person Bureau of the EMCDDA Management Board held its inaugural meeting in Lisbon on 14 February. During the meeting, the Bureau adopted a series of action plans for the implementation of the 2001–2003 work programme; the 2001 work programme; the human resources strategy; and the dissemination and communication strategy, all adopted by the Management Board from 10–12 January this year.

In adopting these action plans, the Bureau gave the green light to the array of projects to be carried out in 2001 (including related financial and human resources).

The Bureau also decided to address a letter to the 15 EU Member States requesting information on problems encountered in harmonising the EMCDDA's five key epidemiological indicators (see page 2).

It took further note of a working paper related to budgetary matters and the assessment of the impact of conclusions from the Council of the EU on information networking on emerging drug trends.

The next meeting of the Bureau will take place in Brussels on 20 April 2001.

Kathleen Hernalsteen

Following the reform of the EMCDDA, the Bureau of the Management Board has been enlarged from three to six members. On behalf of the Management Board, the Bureau decides on matters foreseen in the EMCDDA's financial regulation which are not reserved to the Board under the Centre's founding regulation. It also: makes adjustments to the work programmes previously adopted by the Board; prepares decisions of the Board; and offers support and advice to the Director.

German

Parliamentary visit

The Legal Affairs Committee of the German Parliament (*Rechtsausschuss des Deutschen Bundestages*) visited the EMCDDA on 27 February for an insight into the organisation, its institutional framework, objectives and activities. A specific presentation by EMCDDA staff members on 'Drugs in Europe: situation and legal measures', was followed by a general discussion.

The session formed part of a two-day information tour by the Committee to Portugal where it visited a variety of structures including the office of the Attorney General and the Constitutional Court.



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