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## Council launches new risk-assessment process

PMMA or para-methoxymethamphetamine (<sup>1</sup>), a non-scheduled substance with no legitimate medical use, has been singled out by the Council of the European Union for risk assessment under the Joint action on new synthetic drugs. This decision follows consideration by the Council's Horizontal Working Party on Drugs on 28 May of a joint progress report on the substance by the EMCDDA and Europol (<sup>2</sup>).

Tests on animals show that PMMA lacks amphetamine-like stimulant effects but is more potent than 'ecstasy' (MDMA). It is typically a designer drug of the MDMA family.

PMMA has been found in tablets combined with the scheduled substance para-methoxyamphetamine (PMA). The PMMA–PMA association became known to the authorities in the EU Member States in June 2000 when the Danish police arrested an individual in possession of 700 of these tablets bearing a Mitsubishi logo. The tablets were being sold as ecstasy.

Since that date, the two European agencies have monitored closely (via the early-warning system operating under the Joint action) the circumstances in which these tablets appear and are distributed in a number of Member States. PMMA and PMA have been found, mostly through seizures, in seven EU countries.

Within the European Union, the PMMA–PMA 'mix' has been associated with several deaths (for example in Denmark and Germany). Moreover, in Austria, PMA alone – a potent drug with amphetamine-like characteristics and potentially lethal effects – was linked to one death in 2000. During the period 1998–2000, PMA was also associated with a number of deaths in the United States (alone or with PMMA) and previously in Australia (alone or with MDMA).



*EMCDDA Scientific Committee to carry out risk assessment of PMMA under Joint action on new synthetic drugs*

## European Legal Database on Drugs goes live

**The ELDD is a user-friendly tool offering reliable and up-to-date information, analysis and trends data on national drug laws, regulations and their application**

On 26 June, International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Drug Trafficking, the EMCDDA launched on its website a new European Legal Database on Drugs (ELDD). The ELDD is a user-friendly tool offering reliable and up-to-date information, analysis and trends data on national drug laws, regulations and their application in the EU Member States and Norway. It provides a valuable service to national and European decision-makers, professionals and the media, presenting an overview of governments' responses to the drug problem through a variety of legal frameworks.

The ELDD contains legal texts in their original language covering four domains: demand; supply; money laundering; and precursors. It also

carries national country profiles and a comparative analysis section with data presented in texts, charts and tables. The database, still in progress, will be regularly updated by a network of 16 national legal correspondents set up in 2000 to participate in the project. It is hoped that in time the ELDD will become a recognised and authoritative information source for the consultation and analysis of drug laws and legislation.

# Drug situation

## Exploring injecting drug use and risk behaviour

Injecting is probably the main cause of health damage among drug users today. In Europe, drug injecting has been linked primarily to opiate users — particularly heroin addicts — although, in some Nordic countries, it is also common among heavy amphetamine users.

Despite its very low prevalence in general population terms, health damage to injecting drug users should nevertheless be considered, in some European countries, as a public health priority. Injecting is strongly related to fatal and non-fatal drug overdoses, as well as to the transmission of infectious diseases, such as hepatitis B, hepatitis C and HIV infection.

Studying drug injectors is no easy task, largely due to their hidden nature and small numbers. Classical epidemiological research has produced valuable, albeit patchy, information on injecting as a practice and on the degree of associated risk. However, there are fundamental issues about the users that need to be understood in order to better interpret and use quantitative data on the subject.

In a newly published study (see page 7), the EMCDDA explores the role of qualitative research in understanding the lived experiences, social meanings and contexts of injecting drug use and risk behaviour in the time of AIDS, based on the findings of an EMCDDA working group in 1999.

The study draws a series of conclusions in the area of intervention and research development. Among others, it underlines the potential of qualitative research in developing and ensuring the practical relevance of planned interventions. It also lists priority topics for future qualitative research, including the influence of gender and power on the risk behaviour of drug users and the factors influencing the individual risk management of overdose.

*Julian Vicente and Tim Rhodes*

Qualitative and anthropological research has proved to be a powerful tool in understanding drug use. The EMCDDA has been promoting the development of a network of qualitative researchers for several years and has commissioned a number of projects to create resources in this area. These include: a European bibliography; a research database; a specialised website (<http://www.qed.org.uk>) and a scientific monograph *Understanding and responding to drug use: the role of qualitative research*.



**EMCDDA explores the role of qualitative research in understanding the lived experiences, social meanings and contexts of injecting drug use and risk behaviour in the time of AIDS**

## Harm-reduction conference gains importance

Over 800 participants attended the 12<sup>th</sup> International conference on the reduction of drug-related harm which took place in New Delhi (India) from 1–5 April (<http://www.ihrcc-india2001.net>). The conference was considerably larger than in previous years and is now gaining reputation and relevance as HIV ravishes injecting drug users and the wider population in an increasing number of countries.

The concept of ‘risk environments’ was highlighted at the opening session, where speakers called for interventions focused on improving individual drug users’ circumstances (social, legal, economic, physical). Needle-exchange programmes now exist in many countries but there is still much room for improvement. Heroin prescription is feasible and increasing but implementation depends much on doctors’ attitudes.

Government support and funding were shown to be critical for maintaining effective harm-reduction measures. Participants underlined the role of supervised injection rooms in reducing risk behaviours as well as the impact of harm reduction generally on the use of alcohol, tobacco and medicinal drugs.

The need to measure prevention activities’ ‘coverage’ of injecting drug user populations was underscored as an important step towards gauging their effectiveness. Understanding and preventing initiation to injecting drug use, in addition to preventing its consequences, were also considered essential.

At the closing ceremony, the Indian Minister for Social Justice and Empowerment made a clear statement on the importance of complementing existing demand-reduction policies (drugs prevention and treatment), which are proving insufficient in many countries, with effective harm-reduction measures.

*Lucas Wiessing and Gerry Stimson*

# Responses

## Analysing drug prevention programmes in schools

In the framework of its ongoing project to examine primary prevention in schools, the EMCDDA has recently examined all 53 school programmes currently recorded in its EDDRA database.

These programmes were analysed by target group, objectives, theoretical models and indicators in order to obtain an indicative overview of school prevention in the European Union and to propose a method of classification.

The analysis revealed that most school programmes tend to be based on a combination of specific objectives such as promoting information and awareness; developing personal and social skills; and involving the community.

The majority of school programmes listed in the database target young people aged 8–19 but, in some countries (e.g. Austria, Finland, Germany, Spain and Sweden) interventions start earlier.

The 'life-skill' model (combining social and decision-making skills) is the most used theoretical model in 26 programmes examined. However, countries generally tend to combine this model with: peer approaches (based on influence and imitation); drug knowledge approaches; and an 'ecological-environmental' model (referring to macro-level or structural influences such as the school environment).

On the basis of these preliminary results, the EMCDDA drew up a questionnaire which is currently being e-mailed to the Reitox National Focal Points and specialists in the prevention field.

This tool will help gather information on a larger number of prevention programmes not yet listed in EDDRA and will enable the EMCDDA to obtain a more comparable picture of the state of the art of school programmes in the European Union.

*Lorena Crusellas*

([http://www.emcdda.org/databases/databases\\_eddra.shtml](http://www.emcdda.org/databases/databases_eddra.shtml))



**Most school programmes tend to be based on a combination of specific objectives such as promoting information and awareness; developing personal and social skills; and involving the community**

## Evaluation Instruments Bank speaks your language

When the EMCDDA's Evaluation Instruments Bank (EIB) was first made accessible to the public through the Internet in June 2000, it covered four languages: English, French, Italian and Spanish. Since the overall aim of the EIB is to promote an evaluation culture across Europe by facilitating access to evaluation instruments, these instruments had to be accessible in all official EU languages in order to maximise the usefulness and accessibility of the database.

Following the EIB's launch last year, a process of multilingual instrument-gathering took place so that, by early June 2001, the database boasted 12 languages (the 11 EU languages plus Norwegian). Although the EIB is now linguistically complete, some language categories only contain a few instruments. A future task will therefore be to expand the number of instruments, and the evaluation areas they cover, in those languages which are so far under-represented.

*Ulrik Solberg*

## Franciscan friars open low-threshold service in Dublin

A recent entry in the EMCDDA's EDDRA database records the experiences of a low-threshold service run by Franciscan friars in Dublin's inner city: The Merchant's Quay Project. Established in response to the growing number of drug users engaged in both injecting and sexual risk behaviour, the service has expanded rapidly in recent years and is now the largest needle-exchange programme in Ireland.

The programme, which operates on the assumption that the dynamics of everyday drug use can be modified, aims to provide drug injectors with the knowledge (information) and means (sterile injecting equipment) needed to alter risky drug use and sexual behaviour. Success depends on small behavioural changes in the everyday life of the drug users.

The project aims to refer individuals to appropriate drug treatment services and to promote hepatitis B vaccinations and HIV testing. An evaluation study where 370 of the 1 337 clients self-reported after three months, showed a reduction in the frequency of injecting and in the incidence of sharing as well as more hygienic injecting practices. Condom use increased to a lesser extent among the project's clients.

The project has proved successful in attracting drug users not previously in contact with drug treatment services. It has also attracted young drug users and female injectors. This EDDRA entry demonstrates that low-threshold services can be evaluated and that this can offer empirical evidence of success.

*Gregor Burkhart*

This article continues a series highlighting examples of good practice included in the EMCDDA's EDDRA database ([http://www.emcdda.org/databases/databases\\_eddra.shtml](http://www.emcdda.org/databases/databases_eddra.shtml))

## Bookshelf

### Ketamine: Dreams and Realities



*Ketamine: Dreams and Realities* offers a wealth of information on this anaesthetic and psychedelic substance, covering all aspects of the drug from its pharmacology to its use at raves.

The author presents a comprehensive review of the history of ketamine, explaining both what he sees are the benefits and risks of the drug. Part I of the book, 'The light within', looks at the effects for which the drug is taken in a non-medical context. Part II, 'The dark side' examines dependence, bad trips and other mental side effects of ketamine use, while also suggesting methods for treating ketamine-related problems. Part III 'Unity' explores how the 'dark' and 'light' sides of ketamine can be brought together for healing purposes and examines its use in psychotherapy.

This publication contains a wealth of practical harm-reduction information. It also elucidates for doctors, treatment providers and policy-makers the reasons why some make a fully-informed choice to use this drug.

**Published by:** Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (<http://www.maps.org>)

**Author:** Karl L.R Jansen, M.D., Ph.D.

**Date:** April 2001

**Language:** English

**ISBN:** 0-9660019-3-1

**Price:** \$14.95 (EUR 24.42)

**Volumes may be ordered from:**

<http://www.amazon.com>

*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

### Mediating the media: Improving the standard of reporting on drugs

It is almost impossible to open a British newspaper today without finding at least one drugs story. While some still carry headlines such as 'Actress loses nose to cocaine', a quick look at our press cuttings shows that, in recent years, more journalists have been asking more searching questions such as 'Are the drug laws working?' or 'If drugs are so bad, why do people use them?'

This improvement may reflect the fact that drug use has become increasingly widespread in our society and journalists themselves are therefore more likely to have been in contact with drug use and its various facets. More articles and programmes appear to be better researched, even though we still battle against the sensational coverage which remains a feature of some (mainly tabloid) newspapers.

DrugScope (the Reitox Focal Point in the UK) has earned a reputation among journalists as a reliable, independent source of information and comment on drug use, dealing with questions ranging from 'How many people use drugs?' to 'What do you think about the government's policy on...?' But DrugScope's press office is not just about giving journalists the facts or the quotes they need. While we understand that journalists and programme-makers need a good story, we feel that part of our work is to persuade journalists to dig a little deeper, move away from the stereotypes and to be informative, not simply sensational. Public perceptions can be shaped by media coverage, so it is important that journalists are encouraged to take a more balanced approach.

There are some vital and interesting issues that should be brought into the public arena to improve understanding and promote discussion, and which we highlight through press releases, magazines, newsletters and our website (<http://www.drugscope.org.uk>). Just providing information is not enough, which is why we talk stories through with journalists, explaining a little about the wider issues and trying to expand their perceptions of drug use.

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Access to objective and evidence-based information on drugs is vital in improving the knowledge we all have about this complex subject. Through efforts to influence and enhance the standards of drug reporting in the media, the public's knowledge can also be improved.

*Paula Woodward,  
Communications Officer, DrugScope*

(<sup>1</sup>) The UK National Focal Point, DrugScope, was formed in 2000 following the merger of two well-established UK drugs charities, the Institute for the Study of Drug Dependence (ISDD) and the Standing Conference on Drug Abuse (SCODA).

## Enlargement CEECs appoint National Focal Points

Six of the 10 candidate countries to the EU <sup>(1)</sup> have recently confirmed the appointment of a National Focal Point in their country. The EMCDDA has also received reports that three more (Bulgaria, Poland and Slovakia) are soon to follow suit.

The EMCDDA has been stimulating the nomination and appointment of Focal Points and their co-ordinators in these countries as one of the first steps in the Phare project on EMCDDA-CEEC co-operation, launched on 1 March. During the first three months of the project, the agency identified and approached the relevant high-level national authorities in each candidate country, encouraging them to act rapidly in establishing national centres.

The EMCDDA has also been urging greater involvement of the Reitox National Focal Points in the implementation of the co-operation project. Experts from Austria, France, Germany, Greece and the UK have already participated in the EMCDDA consultancy visits to Bulgaria, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, and are ready to participate in the joint work programme drawn up by the candidate countries and the EMCDDA.

*Alexis Goosdeel*

<sup>(1)</sup> Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and Romania.

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## Partners OAS anti-drug commission updates evaluation mechanism

The Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) ended its 29<sup>th</sup> regular session in Washington on 1 June, after considering and approving additional indicators to boost its Multilateral Evaluation Mechanism (MEM)<sup>(1)</sup>. This move was designed to bolster coverage of issues such as new developments in drug consumption, prevention and treatment, and to adapt the MEM to contemporary conditions.

Delegates discussed several subjects in the light of the Third Summit of the Americas, held in Quebec in April last year. At the Summit, Heads of State and Government had renewed their commitment to the full implementation of the 'Anti-Drug Strategy in the Hemisphere', based on the principles of shared responsibility, a comprehensive and balanced approach to drugs, and multi-lateral co-operation.

At the CICAD session, reports were presented, among others, on: the progress of the Inter-American Observatory on Drugs (<http://www.cicad.oas.org/en/Observatory/Purpose.htm>); and displacement. A definition of the latter was agreed by all participants, encompassing the displacement of people, production and illegal proceeds. The next regular session is expected to adopt a set of indicators concerning these different types of displacement. The EMCDDA attended the CICAD meeting as observer. The two agencies signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2000.

*Ignacio Vázquez Molini*

<sup>(1)</sup> The MEM is an evaluation framework established by CICAD in 1999 to strengthen mutual confidence, dialogue and co-operation between countries in the Americas. <http://www.cicad.oas.org/en/mem/AboutMEM.htm>. The CICAD is an agency of the Organisation of American States.

## Drugs-Lex

### Commission proposes measures to combat large-scale drug trafficking

On 23 May, the European Commission adopted a proposal for a 'framework decision'<sup>(1)</sup> to combat large-scale drug trafficking. The proposal, which comes in response to a request from the Tampere European Council in October 1999, targets the supply of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

This Commission initiative is part of a comprehensive anti-drugs strategy which seeks to strike a balance between measures to reduce demand and supply and to act against trafficking. The need for an all-embracing approach was restated at the Feira European Council in June 2000, which endorsed the European Union Action Plan on Drugs (2000-2004).

The Commission proposal lays down a common definition of drug trafficking based on the notions of acting 'for profit' and 'without authorisation'. The Commission also asks Member States to apply appropriate penalties commensurate with the gravity of the offence.

Another essential aspect of the proposal is a mechanism for evaluating implementation by Member States. Every five years, and for the first time before 30 June 2007, the Commission will produce an evaluation report for the Parliament and Council. This will enable the Commission to monitor the framework decision closely and to propose any amendments required.

Adoption of the framework decision by the Council, possibly in 2001, will be a clear demonstration of the European Union's determination to combat large-scale drug trafficking and the threat it causes for the health, safety and quality of life of the public, by providing a common approach on criminal-law matters and by reinforcing co-operation between Member States.

<sup>(1)</sup> Introduced by the Amsterdam Treaty Art. 34.b. Title VI. These decisions are instruments adopted for the purpose of approximation of the laws and regulations of the Member States in the area of Police and Judicial Co-operation in Criminal matters. They are binding upon the result to be achieved but leave to the national authorities the choice of form and methods. Framework decisions are adopted by unanimity.

## Reitox Cluster group meeting

The EMCDDA's Reitox co-ordination team met with the Focal Points of Greece, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom in London on 1 June, following bilateral meetings with the centres in their corresponding capitals during the previous week.

In addition to assessing how to improve data quality and the functioning of the Reitox network (the central theme of all cluster meetings), the four meetings assessed the feasibility and means of achieving EMCDDA objectives in line with the EU Action Plan on Drugs (2000–2004). The participants also brainstormed on future co-operation with the CEEC candidate countries.

The EMCDDA cluster exercise, launched at the end of 2000 in Brussels (involving the Belgian and Dutch Focal Points), will round up in September this year with a meeting hosted by the Norwegian Focal Point in Oslo (involving the Danish, Finnish Norwegian and Swedish Focal Points).

A global cluster meeting report and individual Focal Point reports, to be ready by the end of 2001, will offer recommendations and guidelines for improving data quality and the functioning of the network as well as a clear overview of the related situation at both national and EU level.

*Frédéric Denecker*

## Spotlight Austrian National Focal Point Österreichisches Bundesinstitut für Gesundheitswesen (ÖBIG) (Austrian Health Institute)

The concept of quality assurance is gaining increasing importance in the field of drugs and drug addiction. This is certainly true in Austria where, in recent years, a number of related activities have been developed, among them training programmes, evaluation and research initiatives and guidelines focusing on quality control of data and services. The Austrian National Focal Point has been involved in this work since 1998.

One of the main activities in Austria in the area of quality assurance has been the compilation of guidelines defining the criteria required for drug facilities to be officially recognised by the Federal Ministry for Social Security and Generations (FMSSG) according to the rules defined in Art. 15 of the Narcotic Substances Act (NSA). These guidelines include: standards for the qualifications, training and supervision of staff; criteria for a coherent description of the facility's therapeutic plan and working methods; and minimum guidelines regarding the services provided.

These guidelines were developed in 1999–2000 by a working group composed of experts from drug services as well as representatives of the Federal Government, the Austrian provinces and professional groups. The final draft guidelines – based on a consensus reached by the group – were submitted to the Ministry in autumn 2000 and subsequently forwarded to the drug co-ordinators and drug representatives at provincial level for review. Once an agreement is reached by the relevant decision-makers, these quality standards will be implemented throughout the country.



*Klarissa Guzei*

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Tel: ++ 43 1 51 56 11 60. Fax: ++ 43 1 513 84 72.  
E-mail: haas@oebig.at <http://www.oebig.at>

## New synthetic drugs: Technical workshop on early-warning system

A technical workshop focusing on the early-warning system of the Joint action on new synthetic drugs was held at the EMCDDA on 29 June. The purpose of the meeting, attended by the Reitox National Focal Points, was to examine ways to improve national systems for collecting and analysing information on new synthetic drugs and to enhance reporting and feedback.

## New US drug tsar

On 10 May, the Bush Administration nominated John P. Walters new US drug tsar or Director of the White House Office for National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP). For further information see <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov>

# Products and services



## Coming soon

- *Guidelines on the evaluation of outreach work*, EMCDDA Manuals series, No. 2. 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.

## Publications EMCDDA Insights No. 4

Newly released in the EMCDDA *Insights* series is *Injecting drug use, risk behaviour and qualitative research in the time of AIDS* (see article on page 2).

The publication examines injecting drug use and associated harms; qualitative methods in drugs research; the role of qualitative research; and understanding injecting and sexual risk behaviour.

A comprehensive reference section offers the reader a wealth of information on existing research in the field. The publication complements the EMCDDA's Scientific monograph No. 4, *Understanding and responding to drug use: the role of qualitative research* (2000).

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>

## 26 June: Centre participates in prevention village

This year, the EMCDDA commemorated International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Drug Trafficking by participating in the Aldeia da prevenção (Prevention village) organised by the *Instituto Português da Droga e da Toxicoddependência* (Portuguese National Focal Point). The initiative included a day-long programme of sporting and theatrical events, debates and exhibitions in Lisbon. The EMCDDA hosted a stand at the event where it launched its new European Legal Database on Drugs (ELDD). See [http://www.emcdda.org/infopoint/news\\_media.shtml](http://www.emcdda.org/infopoint/news_media.shtml)

## <http://www.emcdda.org>

The EMCDDA public website has been restructured so as to provide improved access to the Centre's work and findings on drugs. The redesign also reflects the new focus of the current work programmes (2001–2003 and 2001) and the recent internal reform of the agency. Information is presented thematically and can be accessed through seven entry points: InfoPoint; Situation of drug use; Responding to drug use; Policy and law; Partners; Links; and About the EMCDDA.

The Qualitative European Drug Research (QED) website has been integrated into the EMCDDA public website but can still be accessed via its original address (<http://www.qed.org.uk>). Qualitative research focuses on the meanings, perceptions, processes and contexts of the 'world of drugs' and offers ways of understanding drug-use patterns and responses. To date, the QED website has served to provide information on qualitative research in the EU, particularly, through three databases: Directory of researchers; Recent and current projects; and European bibliography. By integrating and developing the QED, the EMCDDA intends to exploit its potential to serve the needs of policy-makers, taking into account the EU Action Plan on Drugs (2000–2004).

*Rosemary de Sousa and Deborah Olszewski*

## Resources Useful products in the campaign against drugs

### Websites

<http://ipsnews.net> is the newly structured website from the global news agency Inter Press Service (IPS). The core of the new IPS site is its coverage of the events and global processes that affect the economic, social and political development of peoples and nations, especially in the south. Search the database for a wide array of drug stories from a different perspective.

### Resource packs

*Up to speed: drugs awareness for the family* is a new resource pack produced by the organisation Hope UK (a drug and alcohol education charity) for the Mother's Union (a Christian organisation promoting the well-being of families worldwide). The user-friendly pack contains a 60-minute drugs-awareness session which includes handouts and suggested activities. Designed for use by community and parenting groups, schools, church and youth organisations.

Contact: MU Enterprises. Tel: ++ 44 207 222 55 33.  
Fax: ++ 44 207 22 21 51.  
E-mail: [enterprises@themothersunion.org](mailto:enterprises@themothersunion.org)

### Conference

The first International harm reduction conference for Latin countries of South Europe and South America will take place in Barcelona from 14–16 November 2001. The conference will define country-specific situations regarding drug consumption, drug-related harms and types of intervention and will promote co-operation and networking.

Contact: Generalitat de Catalunya, Direcció General de Drogodependències i Sida, Barcelona, Spain.  
E-mail: [info@igia.org](mailto:info@igia.org) • <http://www.igia.org/clat>

**Organisations wishing to publicise their newsletters, magazines, websites, CD-ROMs or any other resources are invited to contact [Kathryn.Robertson@emcdda.org](mailto:Kathryn.Robertson@emcdda.org)**



## Calendar 2001

### EMCDDA meetings

- 9–10 July:** European expert meeting on the prevalence indicator, Lisbon.
- 5 September:** EMCDDA Bureau meeting, Lisbon.
- 5–7 September:** 22<sup>nd</sup> EMCDDA Management Board meeting, Lisbon.
- 14 September:** EMCDDA Scientific Committee sub-committee on risk assessment, Lisbon.
- September:** Reitox cluster meeting (Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden), Oslo.
- 29–31 October:** European expert meeting on the treatment demand indicator, Lisbon.

### External meetings

- 4–8 July:** German Drug Commission prevention meeting, Berlin.
- 12–15 August:** 2001 national HIV prevention conference, Atlanta, Georgia.
- 31 August–1 September:** European seminar on alternatives to imprisonment for drug dependent offenders, Cranstoun Drug Services and the European Network of Drug and HIV/AIDS Services in Prison, Hamburg.
- 2–6 September:** 44<sup>th</sup> International conference 'Science meets practice', International Council on Alcohol and Addiction, Heidelberg.
- 6–7 September:** International conference on 'Behavioural change in addictions: Where to now?', Centre for Alcohol and Drug Studies, University of Paisley, Scotland.
- 11–13 September:** International conference 'Mathematical Modelling and Statistical Analysis of Infectious Diseases' Cardiff University, School of Mathematics.
- 11–15 September:** 5<sup>th</sup> International colloquium on drug addictions, hepatitis and AIDS, Grasse, France.

### EU meetings

- 17 July:** Horizontal Working Party on Drugs, Brussels.
- 17 September:** Horizontal Working Party on Drugs, Brussels.

## Statutory bodies

### Bureau examines ambitious programme of events

The EMCDDA Bureau met in Brussels on 20 April and discussed an ambitious proposal for three annual EMCDDA events for the coming years. These include:

- promotional activities related to the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Drug Trafficking (26 June);
- an annual high-level EMCDDA conference; and
- the Europe-wide launch of the Centre's *Annual report*.

Also discussed were EMCDDA marketing approaches and a recently launched corporate identity project. Finally, issues including the ongoing external evaluation of the Reitox Focal Points, the UNDCP's reporting mechanisms and a study on drug co-ordination mechanisms in the EU Member States were examined.

*Kathleen Hernalsteen*

## Council launches new risk-assessment process

*Continued from page 1*

The risk assessment of PMMA, a task assigned to the EMCDDA by the Council under Article 4 of the Joint action, will be carried out under the auspices of an enlarged EMCDDA Scientific Committee in 2001.



This risk assessment will consider the effects of PMMA alone, or when combined with PMA in ecstasy-like tablets.

*Alain Wallon*

<sup>(1)</sup> PMMA is currently regulated by law in two EU Member States: Sweden and Germany. Not appearing on the Schedules to the United Nations Conventions ('non-scheduled substance') it is not subject to international controls, although it may be placed under control in individual countries.

<sup>(2)</sup> 'Europol-EMCDDA progress report on PMMA and PMA in accordance with Article 3 of the Joint action of 16 June 1997 concerning the information exchange, risk-assessment and control of new synthetic drugs'. For further information on the Joint action see [http://www.emcdda.org/activities/newsynth\\_jointaction.shtml](http://www.emcdda.org/activities/newsynth_jointaction.shtml)



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