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Treatment data offer new understanding of drug problem

Experts from over 20 countries in Europe, including six countries from Eastern Europe, met in Lisbon from 23–24 June for their annual meeting to examine the profiles and characteristics of people seeking treatment for drug problems.

Information of this kind is collected via the 'Treatment demand indicator' (TDI), one of the EMCDDA's longest established and most comprehensive tools for monitoring the drug problem. Knowing more about who is seeking treatment for drugs, and where, is a crucial measure of trends and prevalence in problem drug use. It also allows countries to assess the potential future need for drug treatment services.

Speaking on the eve of the meeting, EMCDDA Executive Director Georges Estievenart said: 'Data are now available from over 150,000 people across Europe demanding treatment every year for drug problems. This provides us with a powerful tool for planning responses as it helps us to understand the individual characteristics of these drug users, their drugs of choice and patterns of drug use – this is essential information'.

The significance of data on treatment demand is also attracting increasing international attention. The meeting provided a forum for European scientists to meet with their counterparts from the UN, the US and Canada, to focus on how best to improve the quality of data gathered in this area, share experiences and identify common trends in the global problem (see p. 2). It was also the first time that the new acceding countries to the EU, many of which have serious and developing drug problems, had the opportunity to join the EU treatment demand expert group.

The meeting concluded with an agreement on:

- ways to further develop and harmonise treatment data-collection mechanisms;
- the need to further analyse data by applying statistical techniques;
- ways to work together to identify and explain important emerging trends in problem drug use;
- a new project to develop a better understanding of the rising demands for treatment for cannabis-related problems.

Continued on page 2



Photo: PhotoDisc

Knowing more about who is seeking treatment for drugs, and where, is a crucial measure of trends and prevalence in problem drug use.

Management Board elections

The EMCDDA Management Board held its latest meeting in Lisbon from 2–4 July during which elections were held for a new Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board.

Mr Marcel Reimen (Luxembourg), first government counsellor at the Permanent Representation of Luxembourg to the EU in Brussels, was elected Chairman by 18 votes and 1 abstention. Mr Reimen, member of the Board since 1994, Vice-Chairman from 1998–2002, and acting Chairman since January 2003, will begin his three-year mandate in January 2004. During this period he will steer the EMCDDA through its next triennial work programme (2004–2006) and its enlargement to 10 new members in May 2004.

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Mr Ralf Löfstedt, Senior Advisor at the Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Sweden, was elected Vice-Chairman of the Board, by 17 votes and 2 abstentions, for the same three-year mandate.

Kathleen Hernalsteen

See news release at:
http://www.emcdda.eu.int/infopoint/news_media/newsrelease.cfm
For more on the Management Board see p. 8.

Drug situation

Treatment demand for cannabis use: international experts study recent trends

Scientists from international bodies, the US and Canada (1) met with European experts in Lisbon on 24 June in the context of the EMCDDA's annual meeting on treatment demand data (see p. 1). Discussions focused in particular on recent trends in the demand for treatment for cannabis use.

Some differences in cannabis use were noted between North America and Europe. While the drug is largely used in the form of marijuana (herb) in the US and Canada, in Europe, use is frequently reported in the form of marijuana and hashish (resin). However, many similarities are observed between the two regions: cannabis is the drug most tried by the public; and a small percentage of users report problems resulting in treatment requests.

Of the total number of clients demanding treatment for drug use, the proportion demanding treatment specifically for cannabis use is reported to be around 13–16% in both regions. Cannabis users also tend to show similar characteristics in North America and Europe, being mainly young men who start using the drug as adolescents (a significant percentage before the age of 15).

An increased trend in demand for treatment for cannabis use has been reported over the last 6–7 years in Europe, the US and Canada. Although clear explanations for this increase can not yet be drawn from existing data, influences may include: a rise in referrals from the criminal justice system; greater awareness-raising in the family and social networks; higher frequency of use; and potency of the drug (quantity of THC in the substance). These factors are currently being addressed in an ongoing project coordinated by the EMCDDA, to be concluded at the end of 2004.

A full report of the above meeting will be available on the EMCDDA website in October. http://www.emcdda.eu.int/situation/themes/demand_treatment.shtml

Linda Montanari

(1) Organisations represented at the meeting were: the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC); Office of National Drug Control Policy – Executive Office of the US President (ONDCP); Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA); and the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (CCSA).



Drugs research given boost under 6th EU Framework Programme

Research into drugs and drug addiction is to play a leading role in the 2003–2006 6th EU Framework Programme (FP6), the organisation's main instrument for the funding of research. This follows a recommendation from European scientists that drugs would be a suitable topic for exploration under the programme.

The programme strives for scientific excellence, improved competitiveness and innovation by promoting increased co-operation, greater complementarity and improved co-ordination between stakeholders. Its overall budget for the four-year period is € 17.5 billion (up 17% from the previous programme).

FP6 represents a quantum leap beyond the simple funding of projects. Among others, it has reduced the number of research priorities so as to focus better on a progressive integration of research activities. As a result, two new support instruments have been introduced: networks of excellence and integrated projects. These help EU activities achieve a greater impact and bring about a stronger structuring effect on research conducted in Europe.

Further to the above-mentioned interest expressed by the scientific community, drug research will be carried out under FP6, either through a network of excellence or an integrated project, in the light of proposals received through an ongoing Call for Proposals (closing date: 13 November 2003).

The specific aim of this research project will be to establish an integrated multidisciplinary European approach to addressing the mechanisms of drug addiction by focusing on:

- identifying genes involved in the development and mediation of addiction to various drugs (including nicotine, alcohol and polydrug exposure);
- functional genomics of newly identified genes; and
- developing and establishing suitable animal models of addiction.

Fergal Donnelly, European Commission, DG RTD

Further information on this Call for Proposals is available from: Philippe Cupers (Philippe.Cupers@cec.eu.int) or Juergen Sautler (Juergen.Sautler@cec.eu.int).

See also 'Studying the brain and combating diseases of the nervous system' <http://www.cordis.lu/lifescihealth/major/brain.htm>

Treatment data offer new understanding of drug problem Continued from page 1

Also explored at the meeting were ways to enhance the quality of data collected in treatment centres.

Discussions on methods to analyse treatment data led to the conclusion that client characteristics can be better understood if analysed according to 'client profiles' (defined according to the primary drug for which the user is seeking treatment). The example of cannabis users was cited due to the sharp increase in demand for treatment

for this drug in many European countries since 1996 (1).

Final documents on the meeting, including examples of client profiles, will be available on the EMCDDA website in October. http://www.emcdda.eu.int/situation/themes/demand_treatment.shtml

Linda Montanari

(1) Problem and regular use of cannabis among those seeking treatment will be a selected issue in the 2004 EMCDDA Annual report and the subject of a specific research project over the coming year.

Responses

Drug prevention for high-risk groups

Experts from 17 countries in Europe met at the EMCDDA from 26–28 June to explore the issue of drug prevention in vulnerable communities and high-risk groups. The meeting on ‘selective prevention’ explored drug prevention in the community and family, focusing in particular on young offenders, truants, ethnic groups and the socially disadvantaged.

‘Reaching forgotten groups of adolescents means intervening where risk is highest’, said EMCDDA Executive Director Georges Estievenart on the eve of the meeting. ‘These groups are often by-passed by prevention strategies in more traditional settings and a concerted effort is needed to get through to them effectively, responding to their specific needs’.

While the EMCDDA can now provide a rather comprehensive European overview of drug prevention in structured or formal settings, such as schools, information from more informal contexts remains patchy. In preparation for the meeting therefore, experts participated in an EMCDDA survey to help fill in the gaps. Their task was to map information nationally on drug prevention in informal settings in order to identify good practice, innovative actions and conceptual differences between countries. The survey covered family-based prevention; community-based prevention; and prevention within selected risk groups.

The meeting and survey results allowed the group to compare and contrast information on initiatives in these areas in order to present a more complete picture to European policy-makers. New information instruments were also developed in order to gather standardised information on these lesser known areas.

The information gathered on concepts and examples of good practice in drug prevention for high-risk groups and communities in the EU will culminate in an online publication on the EMCDDA website in the coming months.

Gregor Burkhardt



Photo: iTimeLife Picture

‘Reaching forgotten groups of adolescents means intervening where risk is highest... a concerted effort is needed to get through to them effectively, responding to their specific needs’

Drug control at European airports

The EMCDDA participated in the 2003 annual meeting of the Council of Europe’s Co-operation group of drug control services at European airports, held in Stockholm from 4–6 June. The meeting was opened by Mr Björn Fries, Swedish national drug co-ordinator.

This yearly meeting provides a unique forum for officials from customs authorities, police forces and international organisations to exchange information on the latest practices in drug monitoring and control.

Discussions focused on surveillance activities undertaken at European airports with data being presented on drug and cash seizures. Participants also discussed specific ongoing projects relating, among others, to information exchange in the areas of drug detection and passenger and freight profiling.

Ignacio Vázquez Molini

EDDRA: *Fix und Fertig*, Vienna

A recently updated entry in the EDDRA database focuses on *Fix und Fertig*: an Austrian socio-economic company established in Vienna in 1993 to help integrate drug users into the regular labour market. It offers two types of employment.

First of all, daily employment – in the form of postal dispatch work – offers clients a structured day away from the drug scene as well as a legal income. Demand for daily work is high: 18 daily workplaces were provided in 2002, although an average of 35 requests were received daily.

Secondly the project offers a one-year full-time contract in printing or painting and decorating. Over this period, clients develop new vocational and personal skills and are given intensive support to help them into regular employment. In 2002, on completion of the programme, 30% of clients entered regular employment, 24% were ‘job ready’ (with no available job) and 13% improved their life situation by entering therapy.

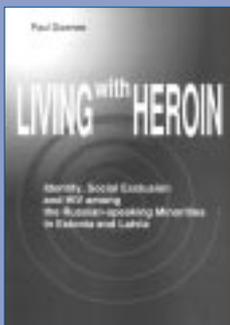
An evaluation of all Austrian socio-economic companies commissioned by the national Labour Market Service showed that clients of such organisations have 20% longer occupational periods (within the first three-year period of completing the programme) than clients who only participated in a training course.

Abigail David

For further information on this project, see http://eddra.emcdda.eu.int:8008/eddra/plsql/ShowQuest?Prog_ID=850

Bookshelf

Living with heroin



Living with heroin: identity, social exclusion and HIV among the Russian-speaking minorities in Estonia and Latvia explores the inner worlds of heroin addicts in these countries. Research is carried out through 27 interviews concerning addicts' attitudes to relationships, emotions, drug use, social policy issues and their own future. The interviews are examined from the perspective of individual identity and the social context of addiction levels in the Baltic States.

Highlighting the alarming scale of the HIV epidemic, the author looks at the Estonian and Latvian State integration programmes which propose educational reforms to phase-out Russian-speaking schools. On the basis of international psychological, educational and sociological research, the author argues that these programmes risk exacerbating a cycle of social marginalisation, early school drop-out rates, heroin addiction and HIV among Russian-speaking minorities.

Author: Dr Paul Downes, St. Patrick's College, Drumcondra, Dublin

Publisher: Legal Information Centre for Human Rights, Tallinn

Language: English

Date: May 2003

ISBN: 99-8594-104-7

Price: € 19

Ordering information: The Educational Disadvantage Centre, St. Patrick's College, Dublin 2, Ireland (edc@spd.dcu.ie).

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

Hepatitis C treatment guidelines for injecting drug users

Estimates of the number of persons with chronic hepatitis C (HCV) infection range from below 1% to up to 2.6% in the European Union, but with clear regional differences: e.g. 0.5% to 0.7% in Germany and 1.6% to 2.6% in Spain.

Within specific subgroups of injecting drug users (IDUs) (e.g. groups in treatment), much higher prevalence rates of between 40% and 90% have been reported, and prospective studies have shown that 60% to 85% of HCV-infected persons develop chronic infection⁽¹⁾. One recent study estimated the probability of patients with chronic HCV developing cirrhosis of the liver over a 30-year period to be 13% to 46% in men and 1% to 29% in women. These numbers imply a considerable increase in mortality and costs for the health system. Since 2001, treatment outcomes have improved with the introduction of antiviral combination therapy using the drugs ribavirin and pegylated interferon⁽²⁾. The treatment of HCV infection in injecting drug users is however subject to controversy and access to treatment might be low.

Reasons for withholding antiviral therapy may include:

- assumed poor adherence by IDUs;
- fear of side-effects; and
- the risk of re-infection.

While the 1999 guidelines of the European Association for the Study of Liver Disease recommended not to treat active IDUs, more recent consensus statements, developed in Austria in 2001, and in France in 2002, do not consider active injecting drug use per se as a contra-indication for antiviral therapy.

The treatment of HCV infection in injecting drug users is subject to controversy and access to treatment might be low



Photo: PhotoDisc

The 2002 US National Institutes of Health Consensus Conference recommended that decisions be taken on a case-by-case basis and that, within the decision-making process, the risk of failed treatment due to non-adherence should be traded off against the risk of non-treatment due to assumed non-adherence.

At a meeting in Lisbon from 28–29 July, the EMCDDA launched a study to analyse guidelines for the treatment of HCV infection applied in EU countries and Norway with regard to treatment accessibility for drug users. The study, to be carried out by an expert group, coordinated by the Centre for Interdisciplinary Addiction Research in Hamburg, will document what guidelines are currently in place and how far they facilitate access to treatment.

The consultant group is interested in hearing from interested experts and organisations that are active in this area at national level. It also welcomes information on treatment guidelines that are being applied or are under development nationally, as well as grey literature and data on access to treatment for injecting drug users.

Jens Reimer, Jürgen Lorenzen and Michael Krausz

Contact: reimer@uke.uni-hamburg.de • j.lorenzen@uke.uni-hamburg.de

⁽¹⁾ 2002 Annual report on the state of the drugs problem in the European Union and Norway, EMCDDA.

⁽²⁾ Pegylation describes a chemical process that makes a drug last longer in the body.

Enlargement

Reitox Academy training course

A Reitox Academy training course was held at the EMCDDA from 14–17 July on the topic 'National focal points and national drug information networks'.

The course was organised by the EMCDDA at the request of the European Commission (Directorate-General EuropeAid).

The course brought together professionals from Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia currently participating in the Southern Caucasus Anti-Drugs (SCAD) project funded by the European Commission's TACIS ⁽¹⁾ programme.

One of the key goals of the SCAD project is precisely to set up focal points and develop drug information systems nationally.

Also attending the course were staff from the Portuguese and Romanian focal points.

Trainers included experts from the 15 Member States and from acceding countries to the European Union, as well as EMCDDA staff members.

All participants acknowledged the quality and usefulness of the training received and asked the European Commission and the EMCDDA to continue providing scientific and methodological support of this kind in the future.

Alexis Goosdeel

⁽¹⁾ Technical Assistance to the Community of Independent States (former Soviet Union).

Partners

European Conference on drug use among young people



'Drug use among young people' will be the focus of a European Conference to be held in Malaga from 30–31 October under the auspices of: the European Parliament; the Spanish Government Delegation for the National Plan on Drugs; the Regional Government of Andalusia; the Malaga Town Council and the EMCDDA.

The conference will encourage an open discussion and exchange of expertise between some 130 policy-makers, scientists and experts in the drugs field from across Europe. In so doing, it will aim to identify information needs and priorities for formulating and evaluating drug policies targeting young people at European level.

The conference will analyse the extent and patterns of drug and alcohol use among young people in Europe and the interrelation between the use of these substances. In particular, it will explore risk factors that may explain why some groups of young people are more vulnerable to drug use and drug-related problems than others, as well as examples of interventions targeted at these groups. Attention will also be paid to the evaluation of policies and intervention strategies addressing young people.

The conference will assure a broad representation of key European players in the drugs field.

Joëlle Vanderawera and Julián Vicente

Drugs-Lex

Protection of young people in national drug policies

Studies show that around 3% of schoolchildren across Europe first experiment with marijuana before the age of 14. By the time they reach 15–16, this figure rises to 10–30%. The EU action plan on drugs (2000–2004) aims to 'reduce significantly, over five years, the prevalence of illicit drug use, as well as new recruitment to it, particularly among young users under 18 years of age'.

In this context, the EMCDDA is carrying out research into the strategic options and

legislative measures taken by countries to protect young people from drugs and drug addiction.

National drug strategies recently adopted by several EU countries reveal particular concerns about drug use among young people. Prevention seems to be the measure identified most to deter young people from combining illegal drugs and alcohol for recreational purposes. Some strategies also name the protection of vulnerable

groups of young people as a key objective.

With this in mind, a new EMCDDA study will look at legislation punishing adults who sell drugs to young people or use drugs in front of minors. It will also examine legal responses to young people using drugs, and to under-18-year-olds who deal in drugs for profit or distribute them among peers at parties.

Brendan Hughes

Spotlight

Spain reinvests funds seized from drug trafficking



On 29 May, Spain published a new law (No 17/2003) which will help divert proceeds seized from trafficking and other drug-related crimes and reinvest them in projects tackling supply and demand for drugs and boosting international cooperation. Proceeds and goods seized are held in a public fund which feeds a variety of organisations working in the drugs field.

The new law goes a step further than its predecessor of December 1995 (No 36/1995), by strengthening cooperation between judicial authorities working in this domain. This will be achieved via better communication on sentences related to seizures and the faster transfer of documentation needed for identifying and locating seized goods.

The main goals of the fund are:

- to finance drug-prevention and social-reinsertion and assistance programmes for drug addicts;
- to intensify and improve performance in the prevention, investigation, pursuit and control of crimes related to drug trafficking; and
- to strengthen international cooperation.

At least 50% of the fund's resources will be earmarked for programmes dedicated to drug-prevention, social-reinsertion and assistance. Beneficiaries of the fund will include Spanish organisations, public bodies and NGOs working in the drugs field. However, the new law broadens this group to include international and supranational entities and foreign governments.

In the period 1996 to July 2003, a total of € 37,600,558 was re-distributed and re-invested.

Ana Ballesteros

Reitox

Assessing new data reporting tools

In the context of the new data reporting system, adopted at the last meeting of the Heads of the Reitox focal points from 21–23 May in Athens, four new instruments have been proposed for the national data reporting exercise to the EMCDDA in 2004.

These instruments – two structured questionnaires and two standard tables – aim to monitor responses to drugs in the areas of: school-based prevention; treatment availability; harm-reduction measures to prevent infectious diseases; and syringe availability.

The EMCDDA launched a three-month evaluation of these tools in mid-June, during which eight volunteer countries assessed the relevance and feasibility of information requested. The remaining instruments to be developed under the reporting system will also be evaluated and will directly involve the national focal points.

The results of this evaluation, aimed at boosting the quality of information collected, will be discussed at the next meeting of the Heads of the Reitox focal points to be held from 11–13 November in Cagliari, Sardinia.

Linda Montanari

New synthetic drugs

Europol releases report on pills with a high concentration of MDMA



MDMA ('ecstasy') tablets are generally produced in very large quantities and are subsequently distributed globally in batches, often over a short period of time.

Through adequate international law-enforcement reporting, the Europol Ecstasy Logo System (EELS) identifies seizures of pills with similar logos or packaging in order to encourage case information exchange and forensic profiling, as appropriate, and to combat organised crime.

In June, the Europol Drugs Unit issued a report addressed to its law-enforcement partners, carrying data on seizures of large quantities of tablets containing high, and potentially dangerous, levels of MDMA (i.e. 100–197 mg) as well as information on the corresponding logos of pills seized. It should be noted that 197 mg of MDMA is more than twice the amount usually found in tablets sold as ecstasy (the average content being 75 mg per tablet). Therefore the ingestion of one such tablet would be equivalent to that of two 'normal' tablets, thus increasing the risk of overdose.

Although not strictly within the scope of the Joint action and its early-warning system on new synthetic drugs, the EMCDDA and Europol have both been monitoring this phenomenon and exchanging information. Relevant information has been provided to the EMCDDA recently by the Belgian and French national focal points.

The EMCDDA has alerted the Reitox network to this new report and its findings in order to increase knowledge at national level. Since releasing the document, Europol has received additional reports of seizures of other pills with comparatively high levels of MDMA (i.e. 97–132 mg) bearing different logos to those previously reported.

Roumen Sedefov and Europol Drugs Unit

Products and services

New publications



Publications catalogue

The EMCCDDA has recently released a publications catalogue promoting its latest titles in print.

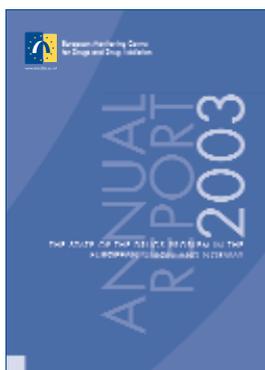
Every year the EMCCDDA produces a variety of publications, both online and offline, through which it conveys its research and key findings. This catalogue presents the EMCCDDA's recent offline (printed) publications which take the form of: annual reports on the drug phenomenon; specialised scientific and thematic volumes falling into four distinct series; bimonthly periodicals (*Drugnet Europe* and *Drugs in focus*); and a range of promotional literature.

Downloadable in English from <http://www.emcdda.eu.int/infopoint/publications.shtml>

Coming soon

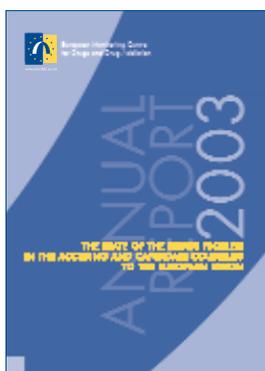
EMCCDDA 2003 *Annual reports*

The EMCCDDA will launch its 2003 *Annual reports* on 22 October in Strasbourg.



The *Annual report 2003: the state of the drugs problem in the European Union and Norway* (available in the 11 EU languages and Norwegian) presents overall trends on the drug situation and responses to it. Three selected issues of topical interest are also covered: drug and alcohol use among young people; social exclusion and reintegration; and public expenditure in the area of demand reduction.

As last year, an expanded online version of the report is being developed in 12 languages. This contains a wealth of additional material and statistics, in the form of graphics and tables, which complement and further illustrate the content of the report. Explanation on the methodology employed, as well as links to the data sources, reports and background documents used in assembling the report, may also be found (see <http://annualreport.emcdda.eu.int>).



The *Annual report 2003: the state of the drugs problem in the acceding and candidate countries to the European Union* (available in English) offers a comprehensive overview of the drug problem in these countries. It presents information on three selected issues: drug and alcohol use among young people; drug-related infectious diseases; and national drug strategies. The online version offers a special section with basic information on all acceding and candidate countries including drug-related links per country (see <http://candidates.emcdda.eu.int>).

Drugs in focus No 10

'Drug use amongst vulnerable young people', EMCCDDA *Drugs in focus* series (policy briefings), No 10.

This policy briefing will be launched during the European Conference on 'Drug use among young people' from 30–31 October in Malaga (see p. 5).

Downloadable in 12 languages from <http://www.emcdda.eu.int/infopoint/publications/focus.shtml>

Resources

Useful materials and events on the drugs issue



Findings now online

Findings is the world's only magazine devoted to evidence on the effectiveness of interventions to treat, prevent or reduce drug and alcohol problems. It is produced in Britain by a consortium of leading national charities.

Findings now has a dedicated website where visitors can download a sample copy or subscribe to the magazine. Core content takes the form of so-called 'Nuggets' or assessments of the latest evaluation studies selected for their relevance to current practice and policy priorities. Each is set in the context of earlier research and possible practice implications are explored. The website represents a major advance in the availability of evaluation information online.

<http://www.drugandalcoholfindings.org>
To regularly receive sample content, e-mail nuggets@drugandalcoholfindings.org with the subject line 'Subscribe'.

Drug Policy Alliance Biennial Conference

The US non-profit organisation, the Drug Policy Alliance, will hold its Biennial Conference from 5–8 November in New Jersey. Workshops will focus on: international drug policy; syringe exchange and harm reduction; drug courts; treatment versus incarceration; and the relationship between the war on terror and the war on drugs.

<http://www.drugpolicy.org/events/dpa2003>

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

Drugnet Europe is a bimonthly newsletter published by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), Lisbon. The newsletter is published six times a year in Spanish, German, English, French and Portuguese. Original language: English. Any item may be reproduced provided the source is acknowledged.

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Calendar 2003

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16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

EMCDDA meetings

- 11 September: EMCDDA Bureau and budgetary committee meeting, Brussels.
- 9–10 October: EU expert meeting 'Reduction of drug-related deaths – development of data-collection tools', Lisbon.
- 9–10 October: Reitox Academy training course on qualitative drugs research, Warsaw.
- 20–21 October: EU expert meeting 'Surveillance of drug-related HIV and hepatitis B/C', Lisbon.
- 21 October: Presentation of 2003 EMCDDA *Annual reports* to the European Parliament Committee for Citizens' Freedoms and Rights, Justice and Home Affairs, Strasbourg.
- 22 October: Press launch of the 2003 EMCDDA *Annual reports*, Strasbourg.
- 29 October: EMCDDA Bureau meeting, Malaga.
- 30–31 October: European Conference on 'Drug use among young people', Malaga.
- 3 November: Presentation of the 2004–2006 EMCDDA work programme and discussion on 2003 EMCDDA *Annual reports* at the European Parliament Committee for Citizens' Freedoms and Rights, Justice and Home Affairs, Brussels.
- 11–13 November: 28th Meeting of the Heads of the Reitox focal points, Cagliari, Italy.

External meetings

- 15–16 October: Interministerial conference, Pompidou Group, Strasbourg.

EU meetings

- 15 September: Horizontal working party on drugs, Brussels.
- 15 October: Horizontal working party on drugs, Brussels.
- 13–14 November: International conference 'Drugs, prevention and treatment: the European orientation', Italian Presidency, Cagliari.

Statutory bodies

Management Board focuses on new three-year work programme

The EMCDDA Management Board met in Lisbon from 2–4 July under the chairmanship of Mr Marcel Reimen (Luxembourg).

In addition to elections for a new Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board (see p. 1), the main focus of the meeting was the forthcoming EMCDDA three-year work programme (2004–2006). This work programme is set against a backdrop of political innovation and change, characterised by EU enlargement and a new EU strategy and action plan on drugs. The programme is therefore designed to be flexible so as to adapt to new challenges, priorities and a changing political landscape.

Key activities under the three-year programme are:

- monitoring and analysing data and improving data quality;
- detecting and synthesising new developments; and
- undertaking scientific and thematic analyses in line with emerging trends and policy interests.

The Board members congratulated the Centre on the quality of the document and submitted minor amendments. The Scientific Committee will also be consulted on the issue of assessing core data related to mental health associated with drug use. The final work programme, incorporating all comments, will be submitted for final approval to the Board at its next meeting in Lisbon from 14–16 January 2004.

The Board was also informed on the 'recasting' (overhaul) of the EMCDDA's founding regulation, the revision of the Joint action on new synthetic drugs and on forthcoming events planned for the Autumn: the launch of the 2003 *Annual reports* (22 October, Strasbourg) and the European Conference on 'Drug use among young people' (30–31 October, Malaga). Each new EU acceding country presented to the Board details on the implementation of its national focal point.

Kathleen Hernalsteen



The 2004–2006 EMCDDA work programme will be submitted for final approval to the Management Board at its next meeting in Lisbon from 14–16 January 2004.