Minutes

Meeting 49th meeting of the Scientific Committee

Date 14.11.2018

Venue EMCDDA (meeting room 107)

Present See participants list (Annex 1)

1. Adoption of the agenda

The Chair, Anne Line Bretteville-Jensen, welcomed the Scientific Committee members and the EMCDDA staff present at the 49th Scientific Committee meeting. Rainer Spanagel and Paul Dargan were excused. The agenda (Annex 2) was unanimously adopted.

2. Feedback from the Chair on the Management Board meeting and other meetings (for information)

The Chair provided feedback on the meetings she had attended as representative of the Scientific Committee since March 2018, including the Management Board meeting of 28–29 June 2018, where the external evaluation of the EMCDDA was discussed and a decision reached to launch a call for expressions of interest in membership of the Scientific Committee for the 2020-2022 mandate. More recently, all Scientific Committee members were invited to attend the extended Reitox week meeting, which focused on ‘futures’ (changes in patterns of drug supply and use, and their implications for monitoring) and took place on 13 November at the EMCDDA. The Chair congratulated the EMCDDA on the organisation of this event and emphasised the opportunity it represented for members of the Committee to reflect on future monitoring challenges and to interact with stakeholders such as the national focal points of the Reitox network and representatives of third countries.

The Chair also referred to upcoming meetings where she will represent the Scientific Committee: (1) the Horizontal Drugs Group’s Annual Dialogue on Research in Brussels, 29 November, where she will present the Scientific Committee’s contribution on research priorities; and (2) the next Management Board meeting, 13–14 December, where the Chair will present the Scientific Committee’s formal opinion on the EMCDDA programming document 2019-21, including the 2019 work programme (Annex 3). Before that meeting, the Chair of the Scientific Committee will participate in the regular annual meeting with EMCDDA Director Alexis Goosdeel, the Chair of the Management Board and the spokesperson of the Reitox network.

3. Feedback on the ongoing external evaluation of the EMCDDA (for information)

Paul Griffiths and Edith Hofer (DG HOME) updated the Scientific Committee on the process and timeline for the ongoing external evaluation, which will cover the EMCDDA’s activities during the period 2013-2018. The evaluation is not yet finalised, but a final report should be circulated to the members of the statutory bodies before the next Management Board meeting. Paul Griffiths and Edith Hofer further
mentioned the challenges presented by the tight timeline for the exercise and the positive preliminary general feedback received from the external evaluators. They particularly thanked the members of the Scientific Committee Committee for their active contributions to the evaluation exercise.

The European Commission will present the key conclusions of the external evaluation to the Management Board at their next meeting, on 13–14 December.

4. Address by and feedback to the Director (for information)

Alexis Goosdeel highlighted the importance that the key conclusions of the EMCDDA external evaluation will have for strategic planning and invited the Scientific Committee members to comment on the final report once they receive it. The Director reviewed and shared with the Scientific Committee the main milestones of the implementation of the EMCDDA Strategy 2025 and the agency’s main priorities for 2019, including a focus on digital transformation and how to better address the needs of our final customers, the impact of Brexit and of the European elections, the EMCDDA’s futures exercise and the Lisbon Addictions conference.

Turning to the international scene, the Director also reflected on the current challenges faced by the UN system, including discussions around UNODC reporting tools and the role of the EMCDDA as a unique regional monitoring centre. He further presented the main insights gained during his visit to the US, which was an opportunity to gain a better understanding of the challenges raised by cannabis policy changes.

The Scientific Committee congratulated the EMCDDA on its progress regarding the implementation of the Strategy 2025 and expressed concerns about the current budget constraints affecting the EMCDDA and the impact of accepting any additional tasks without the resources required for their implementation.

5. Research priorities: contributions to the Horizontal Drugs Group’s 2018 and 2019 Annual Dialogues on Research (for decision)

Maria Moreira presented the state of play with regard to the 2018 exercise and suggestions for changes for the 2019 exercise (Annex 4).

The Scientific Committee finalised its contribution to the Horizontal Drugs Group’s 2018 Annual Dialogue on Research (Annex 5), which will take place on 29 November, under Austrian Presidency (see also item 2 of the agenda). The EMCDDA will forward it to the Council and the Commission.

The 2019 exercise should be finalised during the next spring meeting. The Scientific Committee asked the EMCDDA to liaise with the Finnish Presidency (second half of 2019) to clarify as soon as possible what the expectations for the 2019 Annual Dialogue on Research are.


Maria Moreira updated the Scientific Committee on the 2018 EMCDDA scientific award process and submissions (Annex 6), and on the rules of procedure for the 2019 edition (Annex 7).

The five winners of the 2018 edition of the scientific award will be invited to present their work and receive the award at the Lisbon Addictions 2019 conference.

For the 2019 edition, the call for nominations for articles published in 2019 (either first online access date or print date) will be published in January 2019. The Scientific Committee suggested that the EMCDDA could contact or request members of the Scientific Committee to facilitate contact with a wider range of scientific journals than those currently targeted, to help increase the number of nominations in less well represented categories. The Scientific Committee further recommended that the EMCDDA look into the possibility of promoting open access to winning and shortlisted articles by uploading e-print author copies to the public website.
7. Update on main projects and outputs 2018 (for information)

Jane Mounteney updated the Scientific Committee on the work of the EMCDDA’s Public Health Unit (Annex 8). She highlighted the main products and projects, as well as priorities for the different sectors of the unit (trends and analysis, support to policy and support to practice). She reminded the Scientific Committee of the three current public health priorities for the EMCDDA: evidence-based drug prevention; infectious disease testing, in relation to which she focused on the Hepatitis C Initiative project; and prevention of drug-related deaths.

Ana Gallegos, on behalf of Roumen Sedefov, presented the work of the Risks to Public Safety and Security Unit (Annex 9) and its two sectors: action on new drugs, and markets, crime and supply reduction. She highlighted the preparatory work towards implementing the new Regulation (EU) 2017/2101 as regards information exchange on, and an early warning system and risk assessment procedure for, new psychoactive substances; the EMCDDA framework for a supply-side monitoring system; strategic partnerships with EU agencies, EU institutions and the UN system; and capacity-building exercises with candidate and potential candidate countries. She highlighted in particular the project EU4MD (EU for Monitoring Drugs), which will be a 3-year European Commission-funded project involving neighbouring countries.

Rosemary Martin de Sousa updated the Scientific Committee members on recent and forthcoming EMCDDA publications and outputs (Annex 10). She also highlighted web developments and multilingual projects.

8. Follow-up points (for information)

8.1 Futures: next steps

Paul Griffiths updated the Scientific Committee on the EMCDDA’s work on futures. He highlighted the major milestones of this exercise, such as the extended Reitox week meeting ‘Futures: changes in patterns of drug supply and use and their implications for monitoring’, convened on 13 November, and Lisbon Addictions 2019 (see also item 8.2), which will contribute to the preparation of a policy workshop in 2020.

8.2 Lisbon Addictions 2019: 23–25 October 2019

Maria informed the Scientific Committee that the call for abstracts for the Lisbon Addictions 2019 conference, ‘The future of addictions: new frontiers, policy, practice and science’, opened on 23 October 2018 with a deadline of 31 January 2019. She also mentioned the key dates and milestones (Annex 11).

Lisbon Addictions 2019 will play a crucial role in the EMCDDA’s futures project. The conference will pilot a scientific programme co-production approach with selected partners, and devote greater attention to poster sessions, showcase sessions and opportunities for networking, targeting early-stage career scientists in particular.

Futurize, a project co-financed by the European Commission, will take place in parallel with the conference. This project will involve organising a maximum of six round tables to discuss future scenarios; it will support the participation of a number of researchers and practitioners in the conference.

8.3 Timeline for feedback on the programming document 2020–22

The EMCDDA draft programming document 2020-22 will be made available to the Scientific Committee at the end of January. The formal opinion of the Scientific Committee on the document will be discussed at the 2019 spring meeting. The Scientific Committee called upon the EMCDDA to consider alternative ways of organising the spring meeting breakout sessions such that more value is extracted from the Scientific
Committee members’ expertise, and suggested a project, rather than a programming document, approach.

8.4 Selection of the Scientific Committee 2020-2022 and extended Scientific Committee

Maria Moreira informed the Scientific Committee that, pursuant to a decision of the Management Board at their 28–29 June 2018 meeting, a call for expression of interest (CEI) in membership of the Scientific Committee for the mandate 2020-2022 will be published in 2019, possibly in April. Maria Moreira described the selection and appointment process. The appointment of 15 scientists (plus 15 on a reserve list) will be made by the Management Board during their meeting in December 2019.

Michael Evans-Brown updated the Scientific Committee on the CEI for inclusion on the list of experts to be used by the EMCDDA Director to extend the EMCDDA Scientific Committee for the purposes of the assessment of the risks posed by new psychoactive substances, in accordance with Article 5c of the EMCDDA regulation. A CEI will be launched in parallel with the Scientific Committee CEI and a pre-selection panel will assess the eligible applications and propose a list of scientists to be approved by the Director and endorsed by the Management Board in December 2019.

9. AOB

The dates for the 2019 meetings were confirmed and will take place on 9–11 April (the 50th meeting) and 19–21 November (the 51st meeting). The Vice-chair, Catherine Comiskey, will contact the members of the Scientific Committee after the meeting to discuss options for celebrating the 50th meeting.

Annexes

Annex 1 – Participants list
Annex 2 – Agenda (SciCom/01.1/49)
Annex 3 – Formal opinion of the Scientific Committee on the EMCDDA 2019–21 programming document, including the 2019 work programme (SciCom/02/49)
Annex 4 – Scientific Committee’s contribution to the HDG’s Annual Dialogue on Research (presentation by Maria Moreira) (SciCom/05.1/49)
Annex 5 – Contribution from the EMCDDA Scientific Committee on drug-related research priorities for the HDG’s Annual Dialogue on Research (Brussels, November 2018) (SciCom/05/49)
Annex 6 – Scientific award: rules of procedure for the 2019 edition (presentation by Maria Moreira) (SciCom/06.1/49)
Annex 7 – Scientific award: rules of procedure for the 2019 edition (SciCom/06/49)
Annex 8 – Update on EMCDDA Public Health Unit (presentation by Jane Mounteney) (SciCom/07.1/49)
Annex 9 – Update on EMCDDA Risks to Public Safety and Security Unit (presentation by Ana Gallegos) (SciCom/07.2/49)
Annex 10 – Update on EMCDDA publications and outputs (presentation by Rosemary Martin de Sousa) (SciCom/07.3/49)
Annex 11 – Lisbon Addictions 2019 (presentation by Maria Moreira) (SciCom/07.3/49)