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Drugnet Europe

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In this issue...

- 2** 15 years of drug monitoring in Europe: conference highlights
- 3** 'Messages that click': new European study on Internet-based drug treatment
- 4** ESPAD, a crucial window onto adolescent substance use
- 5** EMCDDA and Europol step up cooperation
- 6** World drug policy: priorities for the next decade
- 7** New EMCDDA products and services
- 8** EMCDDA to move to new premises

15 years of drug monitoring in Europe

Experts and policymakers gathering in Lisbon for an EMCDDA conference from 6–8 May, underlined the need for rapid and innovative responses to Europe's changing drugs problem. Commemorating 15 years of monitoring Europe's drug phenomenon, the event was dedicated to 'Identifying Europe's information needs for effective drug policy'. This edition of *Drugnet Europe* brings you the conference highlights (see pp. 2–3).

Some 350 policymakers, researchers and practitioners from Europe, North America and Australia, considered the major challenges arising from today's drug situation and the type of information required to respond to it in future. They also took stock of past achievements. These included the creation of the Reitox network, the extensive regional monitoring system which now provides comparable drug information from some 30 countries, and the European early-warning system, which detects new and potentially threatening drugs entering the illicit market.

Speaking at the closing session, EMCDDA Director Wolfgang Götz said: 'This conference has demonstrated that Europe is a formidable laboratory of ideas and experiences and an extraordinary reservoir of people and talents. By bringing these together, the meeting has helped us take stock of the progress made, which is considerable, but also identify the tasks that lie ahead of us. As such, it has been an important milestone in monitoring and responding to drugs in Europe.'

The conference was inaugurated by Prime Minister of Portugal, José Sócrates, who underlined the fact that the EMCDDA, seated in Lisbon, had contributed greatly to the development and maturity of the national drug policy, which he considered both 'just and successful'.

Guest of honour at the closing session was President of Portugal, Aníbal Cavaco Silva, who declared: 'Drug addiction is a disease. As such, we have to prevent it and treat it. Drug dependence is not, as no disease will ever be, a purely individual issue. It is the result of an unhappy union of predisposition and vulnerability, associated with the context of supply and opportunity. It is a product of people, of places and of moments.'

Continued on page 8



President of Portugal, Aníbal Cavaco Silva, at the closing session.

Photo: © Luis Filipe Catarino, Presidência da República Portuguesa.

Identifying Europe's information needs for effective drug policy

2009 represents a watershed year for drug policy, both in Europe and globally. Many European countries are currently updating or launching new national strategies or action plans, a new EU drugs action plan has been launched for 2009–12, and, at UN level, a Political declaration and Plan of action for the next decade were adopted in March (see p. 6).

The EMCDDA has been reporting on the drug situation in Europe since the mid-1990s and, since then, both the drugs problem and how Member States respond to it have evolved considerably. During this period, a commitment to evidence-based policymaking has been accompanied by a steady growth in the amount and quality of information available to facilitate and support the policy debate.

The EMCDDA conference, 'Identifying Europe's information needs for effective drug policy', explored four themes: policy, practice, trends and horizons. It provided an opportunity to:

- take stock of progress in European drug policy and the EMCDDA's role in this;
- identify and consider future key issues for the drug situation in Europe; and
- propose how these issues may impact on information needs.

Providing a platform for networking and the exchange of expertise, the conference strengthened links between the EMCDDA and leading experts in the drugs field. The results of these rich discussions will now feed into the future activities of the EMCDDA and its partners and lay the foundations for more effective monitoring of the drug situation in Europe.

15 years

April–June

2009

Conference highlights

EMCDDA 15 years

This edition of *Drugnet Europe* presents highlights of the EMCDDA conference. Speakers' presentations, abstracts, bio notes and photographs can be accessed through the conference website. News releases setting the scene and reporting on the results are also available. A report summarising the proceedings is now under preparation and will be available in the coming weeks. This will recommend concrete steps for taking forward the findings of the conference.

www.emcdda.europa.eu/events/2009/conference
www.emcdda.europa.eu/about/press/news-releases



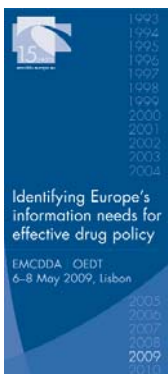
Left to right: EMCDDA Director Wolfgang Götz, Prime Minister of Portugal José Sócrates, EMCDDA Chairman Marcel Reimen.

Photos: © David Calderira

15 years

Policy Timely information for rapid solutions

Policymakers not only need a sound and relevant knowledge base on drugs but also information that allows them to implement rapid solutions. This was among the conclusions of the 'Policy' session at the conference, which explored current and future information needs for policymaking.



The EMCDDA was called on to enhance reporting practices and inform policy processes through timely, targeted and solution-oriented information. Also recommended was the further development of methods and tools to: analyse and evaluate drug policy; provide comparative analyses of policies and laws; and monitor supply reduction issues.

There is now a strong commitment in Europe to evidence-driven drug policies. A greater cohesion also exists at European level in the way in which countries address the drugs issue. Of today's 27 EU Member States, 26 now have a national drug policy document, compared with 10 of them in 1995. These are increasingly structured along the lines of the EU drugs action plan.

Practice A growing understanding of what works

Over the last 15 years, Europe has seen a substantial increase in the provision, effectiveness and diversification of prevention, treatment, harm reduction and social reintegration interventions. Although sound information is now seen as the basis for targeting interventions and evaluating their impact, translating knowledge into actions remains challenging. Commenting on the issue, Director Wolfgang Götz said: 'A clear message from this conference is that we have a growing understanding of what works in the drugs field. We now need to make the most of this knowledge to ensure that comprehensive and effective services become available for those with drug problems across the EU.'

Highlighted by participants in the 'Practice' session was the need to: improve data sources and research in this area and develop novel approaches for non-opiate and polydrug users. The EMCDDA was called on to develop further its tools for data collection in the fields of supply reduction and criminal justice and to strengthen its role as a platform for knowledge exchange. Better use of expert networks and the development of the best practice portal were cited in this regard.

Trends Mapping Europe's cannabis market

New estimates released at the conference show that some 1 750 tonnes of cannabis are consumed in the EU and Norway every year, according to an EMCDDA-funded study, undertaken by the French national focal point (*Observatoire français des drogues et des toxicomanies*). The study, which maps Europe's changing cannabis market, reveals that this total volume of cannabis consumed could equate to a retail value of EUR 9.6 billion. Scheduled for release later this year, the study reports on changes in cannabis supply and demand, including increased domestic production in the EU and the market shares and potencies of different cannabis products.

Horizons Monitoring drugs in a technological age

New scientific findings that increase our understanding of the mechanisms behind drug use and addiction were presented at the conference in the session on 'Horizons'. Issues explored included technological developments in biomedicine, wastewater analysis and genetic and brain research. During the session, participants proposed that the EMCDDA strengthen its dialogue with the European research community and boost its efforts to review and disseminate emerging research findings. They also underlined the need to adjust monitoring tools regularly to keep them on target.

Conference highlights

Practice 'Messages that click' — new study on Internet-based drug treatment

The Internet today greatly facilitates the marketing opportunities of drug producers, however it is also becoming a key medium for communicating information in the field of public health. In a new European study released at the conference, *Internet-based drug treatment interventions: best practice and applications in EU Member States*, the EMCDDA provides a state-of-the-art review of this innovative approach, which is already showing some promising results (see p. 7). The study was showcased at the conference during the 'Practice' session in a presentation 'Internet-based interventions — messages that click' (speaker: P. Tossman).

'Twenty years ago, it would have been hard to imagine that drug treatment could be provided via an electronic channel without direct personal contact between the therapist and the drug user', states the study. 'Even today, the idea of Internet-based treatment for drug dependence provokes debate among professionals and the public'. The aim of the study, the latest edition in the EMCDDA's Insights series, is to provide European decision-makers, health experts and the general public with timely information on the state of development of this new approach. Internet-based methods are currently cited in many national drug strategies, although mainly in relation to communicating prevention messages.

The report focuses on four Internet-based drug treatment interventions (DTIs) for treating cannabis disorders. The DTIs identified — from Germany, the Netherlands and the UK



Photo: istockphoto

Internet-based drug treatment: a complementary resource in the field of drug therapy

— are the outcome of a literature and Internet research for relevant interventions and of a questionnaire to the Reitox national focal points. Three of the DTIs selected are counsellor-guided and one a fully automated self-help programme. All target young adults and adolescents and are based on cognitive behavioural therapy.

According to the report, Internet-based DTIs can bring a number of advantages, such as linking with young people early in their drug-using careers who are not reached by any other channel. With their drug use falling somewhere between experimental and problematic, these socially-integrated users may feel ill-at-ease at traditional drug treatment centres which largely target drug injectors. DTIs could also offer specialised

services in rural areas which are far from (generally urban) drug treatment centres. Other strengths highlighted in the report include the ability of DTIs to ensure: around-the-clock assistance; confidentiality; and support for a larger number of clients than reached through treatment centres. Also promising is that approaches can be transferred at low cost between countries and across languages. Among the disadvantages of DTIs mentioned in the study is their inability to assess other dependencies or mental health problems (comorbidity).

In March 2008, around 60 % of the EU population was estimated to be using the Internet, representing more than 290 million web users. Not surprisingly then, in recent years, Internet-based interventions have been developed for the treatment of a variety of health problems (e.g. alcohol dependence, smoking, insomnia). While Internet-based e-medicine is still in its infancy, evaluated programmes are beginning to emerge.

The report concludes that DTIs 'do not aim to, and cannot fully, substitute traditional face-to-face treatment, which provides not only verbal but also non-verbal channels of communication'. However, it adds that preliminary evidence points to the efficacy of such programmes as a complementary resource in the field of drug therapy: 'Internet-based treatment could become an additional large-scale option used to avoid, reduce or treat drug problems and drug dependence'.

Roland Simon

Trends Detecting new drugs coming our way

The European drug problem today differs greatly from the situation in the early 1990s when the EMCDDA began its work. The problem of heroin remains, but cocaine and cannabis play a different role than they did in the past. Polydrug use and new psychoactive substances present an additional challenge, as does the misuse of prescription medicines. While Europe has developed its drug monitoring capacity considerably, it now needs to provide a window on a more

diverse phenomenon. This was the challenge addressed during the 'Trends' session.

'New drugs coming our way — what are they and how to detect them?', was one of the questions posed (speaker: L. King). Experts discussed the implications of the over 90 new substances reported to the EMCDDA and Europol since 1997 through the European early-warning system. Among the substances presented was 'Spice',

monitored through the system since 2008. Although a blend of plant or herbal materials, often marketed as air freshener, participants heard how recent tests had shown some samples to contain synthetic cannabinoids (e.g. JWH-018) which mimic the effects of Δ^9 -THC, the primary active ingredient in cannabis. The event reviewed the level of preparedness in Europe to new developments of this kind and the potential implications for public health.

Bookshelf

2008 INCB Annual report



Criminal organisations often pose as fictitious companies to obtain the chemicals they need to manufacture illicit drugs. In its 2008 *Annual report*, released in Vienna on 19 February, the International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) warned of these new channels of diversion, particularly in relation to ephedrine and pseudoephedrine, the chemicals used in the manufacture of amphetamine-type stimulants, such as methamphetamine, amphetamine and MDMA (ecstasy).

According to the INCB, traffickers place orders with legitimate trading companies, using falsified authorisations, to import pharmaceuticals containing ephedrine and pseudoephedrine into countries where controls over chemicals are lax or non-existent. In 2008, African countries imported significant quantities of these substances, exceeding their yearly medical and scientific requirements. The INCB urges governments to pay close attention to commercial transactions of precursor chemicals, as traffickers continue to exploit the loopholes in international trade to obtain these raw materials.

Publisher: United Nations Publications (INCB)

Languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish.

Date: 19 February 2009 • **Price:** USD 30

ISBN: 978-92-1-148232-4

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Downloadable: www.incb.org

Ordering information: <https://unp.un.org>
Sales No. E.09.XI.1 — E/INCB/2008/1

Press kit: www.incb.org/pdf/annual-report/2008/en/Press_kit_en.pdf

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

ESPAD, a crucial window onto adolescent substance use

Use of illicit drugs among 15–16-year-old school students, appears to have stabilised or slightly fallen, according to the latest European study of this group published by ESPAD on 26 March. The report, which follows a 2007 survey conducted in 35 European countries, also reveals a decrease in last-month rates of cigarette smoking among school students. However, it sounds the alarm over clear rises in the group's 'heavy episodic drinking', and the narrowing gender gap in this behaviour.

This is the fourth data-collection wave conducted by the ESPAD project, with multinational surveys carried out in 1995, 1999, 2003 and 2007. Over 100 000 school students took part in the latest survey. Of the countries participating, 25 were EU Member States. The *2007 ESPAD report: substance use among students in 35 European countries*, available in English, is complemented by a multilingual summary produced with the support of the EMCDDA (see p. 7).

'Information collected by the ESPAD project offers us a crucial window onto country differences and changes in adolescent substance use in Europe today', said EMCDDA Director Wolfgang Götz. 'It also provides us with valuable insights into adolescent perceptions about the associated risks and availability of the various substances'.

According to the report, an average 61 % of school students surveyed in 2007 had consumed alcohol in the past month. And 43 % reported 'heavy episodic drinking' (five drinks or more per occasion) in the past 30 days. Increases in this behaviour were particularly visible among girls between the 2003 and 2007 surveys, with an increase from 35 % to 42 %. While in the 1995 survey this drinking pattern was on average more common among boys than girls, the gap had diminished substantially by 2007. Some 29 % of those surveyed had smoked cigarettes in the past month. The overall trend in last-month cigarette smoking in the participating countries is one of a decrease or stabilisation. Average prevalence rates in last-month smoking dropped by seven percentage points between the 1999 and 2007 surveys, and the earlier gender gap has now vanished.

The vast majority of the students surveyed in 2007, and who had ever tried an illicit drug, had used cannabis. Lifetime cannabis use was reported by 19 % of the students and last-month use by an average 7 %. ESPAD data show that, overall, the increase in illicit drug use (mainly cannabis) between 1995 and 2003, had come to a halt, if not a decrease, in 2007. In 2007, some 7 % had tried in their lifetime one or more other illicit drug (ecstasy, amphetamines, hallucinogens, cocaine, crack, heroin), although considerable differences existed between countries.

The EMCDDA is currently coordinating a data-collection project in countries of the Western Balkans in the framework of the European Commission's CARDS programme (Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation). In 2008, the project helped countries carry out an ESPAD survey, the results of which will be published this year.

Full ESPAD report — www.espad.org/espad-reports

Summary — www.emcdda.europa.eu/html.cfm/index77163EN.html

Thematic webpage — www.emcdda.europa.eu/themes/young-people

News release No 1/2009 — www.emcdda.europa.eu/about/press/news-releases



Photo: istockphoto

ESPAD — valuable insights into adolescent perceptions of the risks and availability of substances

Partners

EMCDDA and Europol step up cooperation

The EMCDDA and Europol stepped up their cooperation on drugs and crime on 16 March by approving a series of collaborative activities for the period 2009–12. The action was taken in the framework of a 'Cooperation Agreement' signed by the organisations in Brussels on 19 November 2001 (1).

At a ceremony in the Hague, EMCDDA Director Wolfgang Götz and outgoing Europol Director Max-Peter Ratzel signed an addendum to an earlier pledge which foresaw joint activities from 2005–08. Each objective listed in the new agreement (2009–12) is accompanied by specific actions, indicators and a timeframe to facilitate the implementation and monitoring of the cooperation (see also p. 7). This latest cooperation cycle takes into account recent developments at EU level. It foresees joint activities in relation to the: EU drugs action plan (e.g. a joint presentation on the state of the drugs problem in Europe); exchange of strategic information (e.g. on drug seizures, prices); and implementation of the 2005 Council Decision (e.g. information exchange, risk assessments).

(1) See Fact sheet No 3/2009
www.emcdda.europa.eu/about/press/factsheets/2009

Action on new drugs

EMCDDA–Europol annual report

Since 2005, the EMCDDA and Europol have been required to produce an annual report to the European Parliament, Council and the Commission on the implementation of the 2005 Council Decision on the information exchange, risk assessment and control of new psychoactive substances (1). The 2008 report was formally submitted to the institutions on 16 March and was released to the public one month later.

According to the report, 13 new psychoactive substances were officially notified in the EU in 2008 to the EMCDDA and Europol through the early-warning system (EWS) established by the Council Decision. The majority of these were stimulants, similar to those listed in Schedules I and II of the 1971 UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances.

Key developments highlighted in the report include the completion and adoption in 2008 of new *Guidelines for the risk assessment of new psychoactive substances*, following work undertaken by the EMCDDA's Scientific Committee. Also noteworthy were findings that the smoking mixture known, and monitored through the EWS, as 'Spice', was not always the innocuous herbal product it purported to be. Some samples were found to contain synthetic cannabinoids (e.g. JWH-018) that mimic the effects of Δ^9 -THC. Follow-up information on two piperazine derivatives covered in last year's report (mCPP and BZP) was also provided.

Finally, the report reviews some of the challenges that the information exchange mechanism may encounter in the coming years. These relate to identifying, monitoring and understanding the nature of various uncommon chemicals and plant or herbal materials which increasingly appear as 'research chemicals', 'herbal highs' or 'legal highs' on the Internet and European drug markets. The report concludes that the EWS has high reporting capabilities, but despite its speed and capacity to triangulate information from different sources, it does not have a mandate or means to anticipate and research the future market by actively purchasing, synthesising and studying new compounds.

Roumen Sedefov

(1) www.emcdda.europa.eu/drug-situation/new-drugs

Women's voices

Experiences and perceptions of women facing drug problems

A collection of narratives from women facing drug-related problems in Europe was released by the EMCDDA to mark International Women's Day on 8 March. It is estimated that around one in four drug users entering treatment is female, and that women account for one in five drug-related deaths. Yet most drug services today are designed with male drug users in mind, as they remain the predominant client group.

Epidemiological studies routinely collect quantitative data on gender differences in drug use (e.g. prevalence, mortality), but far less is published on the qualitative aspects of female drug problems. In this optic, the review — *Women's voices* — presents quotations gleaned from

interviews with women in eight countries. Through these testimonies, the report illustrates how qualitative research can provide glimpses into the experiences and perceptions of women facing drug issues that statistics alone cannot provide.

It is widely recognised that drug policy and programme effectiveness are enhanced when gender differences are acknowledged and the needs of both sexes addressed. The quotations, selected from grey literature (e.g. research studies, government reports) focus mainly on women in their role as mothers, sex workers or prisoners, and on their vulnerabilities related to physical and sexual abuse. The testimonies gathered do



not claim to represent the situation of all drug-using women in Europe. They do, however, illustrate an overarching theme: the struggle that female drug users face in fulfilling their social roles and the need for holistic interventions for female drug users.

See Fact sheet No 2/2009
www.emcdda.europa.eu/about/press/factsheets/2009 and thematic webpage on women and drugs
www.emcdda.europa.eu/themes/women.

Spotlight

Community agencies: your partners in accession



Photo: istockphoto

'Community agencies: your partners in accession' will be the focus of a conference to be hosted by the EMCDDA in Lisbon from 25–27 November, financed by the European Commission's Instrument of Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) ⁽¹⁾ ⁽²⁾. Operated by the EC Directorate-General for Enlargement, the IPA is the instrument through which funding is channelled to candidate and potential candidate countries to the EU in areas such as institution-building and regional development.

The purpose of the event will be to raise awareness and exchange information on how candidate and potential candidate countries to the EU can participate in the work of the agencies. Speakers will present to participants the mechanisms and procedures for membership of the agencies and explain the added value of technical assistance projects designed to prepare their participation in the agencies' work. Participants will be given the opportunity to propose how the agencies could be more useful to candidate and potential candidate countries to the EU. During the two-day conference, an exhibition will be organised showcasing the achievements of Community agencies in developing technical assistance with IPA beneficiaries.

The conference will bring together: Community agencies and representatives of ministries from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia — Kosovo under UNSC Resolution 1244/99 — and Turkey. Also attending will be representatives of the EU Member States and European Commission.

Cécile Martel

⁽¹⁾ For more on the agencies, see http://europa.eu/agencies/index_en.htm

⁽²⁾ For more on the IPA, see http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/how-does-it-work/financial-assistance/instrument-pre-accession_en.htm

International

World drug policy: priorities for the next decade

The effectiveness of global drug control was the focus of the 52nd session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), which met in Vienna from 11–20 March. The meeting assessed progress made in the decade following the 1998 UN General Assembly Special Session on drugs (UNGASS), which set 10-year targets to reduce the global supply of, and demand for, illicit drugs. The high point of the Vienna meeting was the adoption of a new Political declaration and Plan of action on world drug policy for the next decade ⁽¹⁾.

The Political declaration describes the world drugs problem as a 'common and shared responsibility' requiring 'effective and increased international cooperation' and a 'balanced approach' to supply and demand reduction strategies. The declaration also reaffirms the commitment of UN Member States to 'universal access to comprehensive drug abuse prevention programmes' and to 'treatment, care and related support services' in line with the international drug control conventions and national legislation.

Evaluation and evidence play an increasingly important role in drug policy and featured prominently in discussions. On this point, the declaration acknowledges the need for 'indicators and instruments for the collection and analysis of accurate, reliable and comparable data on all relevant aspects of the world drug problem'. It also calls on the CND to enhance and develop, where appropriate, new indicators and instruments.



Photo: istockphoto

A mid-term review of countries' implementation of the new Political declaration and Plan of action is scheduled for 2014

The EMCDDA participated actively in the UNGASS review process in 2008. In particular it contributed to an EU position paper, took part in UN working groups on supply and demand reduction, and prepared a 10-year review of drug strategies and drug demand reduction interventions in Europe. During the conference, at the request of EU Member States and the European Commission, the EMCDDA provided facts and methodological inputs to working groups and discussions.

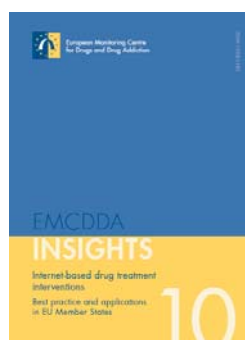
The Plan of action adopted at the event is built around six areas: (1) reducing drug abuse and dependence through a comprehensive approach; (2) reducing the illicit supply of drugs; (3) controlling precursors and amphetamine-type stimulants; (4) promoting international cooperation to eradicate the illicit cultivation of crops and provide alternative development; (5) countering money-laundering; and (6) enhancing judicial cooperation.

A mid-term review of countries' implementation of the new Political declaration and Plan of action is scheduled for 2014. The EMCDDA will provide inputs from a European perspective during this review to improve global data collection and enhance understanding of the world drugs problem through robust and methodologically sound information.

Klaudia Palczak

⁽¹⁾ Adopted at the high-level segment (ministerial level) on 12 March. See UNODC news releases at: www.unodc.org/unodc/en/press/releases/2009-03.04.html www.unodc.org/unodc/en/press/releases/2009-11.03.html

Products and services



Internet-based drug treatment

In the latest edition of its Insights series entitled *Internet-based drug treatment interventions: best practice and applications in EU Member States*, the EMCDDA provides timely information on the state of development of this new approach. While Internet-based drug treatment is still in its infancy, healthcare professionals may consider it in future as a complementary tool for responding to drug problems (see article, p. 3).

Available in English at www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/insights

Summary of the 2007 ESPAD report



The *2007 ESPAD report: substance use among students in 35 European countries*, available in English (see p. 4), has been complemented by a multilingual summary produced with the support of the EMCDDA. The EMCDDA includes ESPAD data in its annual reporting on the drug situation and the two bodies work closely together under a cooperation framework signed in 2007. One of the aims of this accord is to broaden access to the information and expertise gathered by the project. The summary presents key results from the 2007 survey as well as findings on long-term trends.

Downloadable in various languages from www.emcdda.europa.eu/html.cfm/index77163EN.html

EMCDDA–Europol cooperation



The EMCDDA and Europol committed in March to a number of collaborative activities for the period 2009–12 (see p. 5). Among these is an EMCDDA–Europol joint publication series covering key aspects of European drug markets. A promotional flyer is now available. The first edition in the series will be *Methamphetamine — a European Union perspective in the global context* (late June).

The promotional flyer is available in English at: www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/brochures

The series will be available at www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/illicitdrugs

EMCDDA presentation flyer



Independent, science-based information is a vital resource to help Europe understand the nature of its drug problems and better respond to them. It was on this premise, and in the face of an escalating drug phenomenon, that the EMCDDA was established in 1993. This new presentation flyer, published to celebrate the EMCDDA's 15 years of drug monitoring, provides a brief overview of the agency's mission and activities.

Currently available in English — coming soon in an additional 20 EU languages plus Croatian, Norwegian, Russian and Turkish www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/brochures

Resources

Useful materials or events on the drugs issue



International day against drug abuse and illicit trafficking

UNODC's ongoing campaign 'Do drugs control your life?', launched on 26 June 2007, will focus this year on health and security. The goals of the three-year campaign include: raising awareness of the major problem that illicit drugs represent to society; inspiring the public; and mobilising support for drug control.

For more, see www.unodc.org/unodc/en/about-unodc/26June.html

www.unodc.org/unodc/en/about-unodc/campaigns.html

Prison Health Protection 2009

'What works' in the prevention and control of major communicable diseases in prisons will be the topic of an international conference to be held in Madrid from 29–31 October. The event is organised by the Spanish Ministry of Health and Consumer Affairs and Ministry of Justice, in cooperation with key national and international partners. Among the partners are WHO/Europe, the Pompidou Group, the EMCDDA and UNODC.

Conference sessions will cover: the prevention and control in prison of infections (e.g. HIV, viral hepatitis, tuberculosis); drug treatment; harm reduction and mental health. Examples of prison health monitoring and data collection will be presented and discussed in a workshop to which contributions are welcome (deadline for abstracts: 20 July 2009).

For more on the event and submitting abstracts, see www.prisonhealthconference2009.com www.prisonhealthconference2009.com/index.php?idpa_guina=7&idioma=ang

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

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Calendar 2009

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15
16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31

EMCDDA meetings

- 6–8 May: EMCDDA conference, 'Identifying Europe's information needs for effective drug policy', Lisbon.
- 19–20 May: EMCDDA expert meeting on wholesale drug prices, Lisbon.
- 27–29 May: Reitox heads of focal point meeting, Prague.
- 4–5 June: 9th annual meeting of the European early-warning system network, Lisbon.
- 15–16 June: EMCDDA Scientific Committee meeting, Lisbon.
- 23–24 June: EMCDDA expert meeting on the key indicator 'Prevalence and patterns of drug use among the general population', Lisbon.
- 26 June: EMCDDA diplomatic event marking 'International day against drug abuse and illicit trafficking', Lisbon.
- 1–3 July: EMCDDA Management Board meeting, Lisbon.

External meetings

- 1–3 July: CLAT 5, Latin conference on harm reduction, Oporto (www.clat5.org/portal/maintenance.php).

EU meetings

- 25 June: Horizontal working party on drugs, Brussels.
- 26 June: Launch of the European Action on Drugs (EAD), Brussels.
- 24–25 September: 'Bridging the knowledge gap in the field of illicit drugs', European Commission conference, Brussels.

15 years of drug monitoring in Europe

Continued from page 1

For this reason, tackling drugs is a clear example of the need to join forces to act simultaneously on several fronts'.

The creation of the EMCDDA in 1993 symbolised a major political decision to build drug-related policies on scientific and technical findings. Independent, science-based information is now seen as a key resource to help Europe understand the nature of its drug problems.

On this topic, Francisco Fonseca Morillo, Director at the Directorate-General for Justice, Freedom and Security at the European Commission said: 'We are convinced that evidence-based drug policies are the way forward, not only for Europe but also for the rest of the world'.

Addressing the conference at the opening session, Chairman and long-serving member of the EMCDDA Management Board, Marcel Reimen paid tribute to the agency: 'You have succeeded in supporting policymaking on drugs. While political convergence within the great EU family is still progressing, there is now a clear convergence regarding the utility of reliable and comparable drug data, thanks to the work of the EMCDDA'.

emcdda.europa.eu

15 years

EMCDDA to move to new premises

The EMCDDA would like to inform readers of *Drugnet Europe* that it will be moving to new premises this summer. The new building forms part of a larger European complex shared with the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) and the Jacques



Photo: N. Pombeiro, EMCDDA

Delors European Information Centre (Portuguese Ministry of Foreign Affairs). The move follows the signing in April of a lease agreement with owner of the complex, the Lisbon Port Authority. Since 1995, the EMCDDA has been housed at the *Palacete Mascarenhas*, inaugurated on 26 September that year by Anita Gradin, then European Commissioner and António Vitorino, then Chairman of the European Parliament Committee for Civil Liberties and Internal Affairs. Further details on the new building will be given in the next edition of *Drugnet Europe*. The future contact details will be as follows: EMCDDA, Avenida da Ribeira das Naus, 1149-045 Lisbon, Portugal. Tel. (351) 211 21 02 00.

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