



FACT SHEET from the EU drugs agency in Lisbon

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING SIGNED TODAY

EU drugs agency signs accord with Ukrainian Ministry of Health

(28.1.2010, LISBON) The European Union and Ukraine will share information on drugs more systematically in future, thanks to a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in Kiev today between the **EU drugs agency (EMCDDA)** and the **Ukrainian Ministry of Health**. The signatories were the **Ukrainian Minister of Health Vasyl Mykhailovych Knyazevich** and **EMCDDA Director Wolfgang Götz**. The Head of the EU's Delegation to Ukraine, **Ambassador José Manuel Pinto Teixeira**, also took part in the signing ceremony.

The accord is the fruit of bilateral talks initiated in Lisbon in 2006 between the EU drugs agency and the Ukrainian authorities, and follows a series of working meetings and diplomatic visits. The **EMCDDA** Management Board adopted the MoU at its meeting in Lisbon in December 2009 on the eve of that year's **EU-Ukraine Summit** (4 December, Kiev).

The **Ukrainian Medical and Monitoring Centre on Drugs and Alcohol (UMMCDA)** of the Ministry of Health has been appointed the national centre to collect and analyse data on the Ukrainian drug and alcohol situation. The new agreement establishes cooperation between the **EMCDDA** and the Ukrainian competent bodies (particularly the **UMMCDA**) in the collection, processing and dissemination of drug information.

The MoU, signed for an initial period of five years, will help the parties develop joint methods of monitoring illicit drug use. It also allows for a regular exchange of information on new drug types and psychotropic substances appearing on the illicit drug market, as well as the technologies used in their production. Under the agreement, the **EMCDDA** will facilitate training and the exchange of experts and scientific research results (e.g. related to illicit drug trafficking, monitoring the drug situation and other issues of mutual interest).

Ukraine is a priority partner country within the European Neighbourhood Policy and is a member of the Eastern Partnership. Since the EU enlargement of May 2004, the EU and Ukraine have shared a common border and, as direct neighbours, face common challenges. Among these are the fight against illegal cross-border activities, including organised crime, terrorism and drug trafficking. Ukrainian seaports, roads and railways continue to be used by criminal groups, as part of the 'Northern route', to smuggle drugs from Afghanistan into Western Europe.

Commenting on the MoU, **Wolfgang Götz** said: 'Today's accord lays the foundation for a new working relationship between the EMCDDA and its Ukrainian counterparts and is an important step towards building an evidence base on the Ukrainian drug situation in the European context. In turn, this will present us with a more complete overview of Europe's drug phenomenon and facilitate sound policymaking in the field. We look forward with enthusiasm to working with our Ukrainian partners on the broad range of issues which characterise our drug problems today'.

Notes:

Full text of the Memorandum of Understanding available at <http://www.emcdda.europa.eu>

European Neighbourhood Policy: http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/fsj/external/neighbourhood/fsj_external_neighbourhood_en.htm

Eastern Partnership: http://ec.europa.eu/external_relations/eastern/index_en.htm

Revised EU-Ukraine action plan on Freedom, Security and Justice:

http://ec.europa.eu/world/enp/pdf/action_plans/ukraine_enp_ap_jls-rev_en.pdf