



# News release

from the EU drugs agency in Lisbon

## INTERNATIONAL SYMPOSIUM ON DRUG-IMPAIRED DRIVING

### International experts to meet in Lisbon to address drugs and road safety

(18.10.2017, LISBON) What are the most practical and accurate methods for testing drivers for drug use? Do changes in cannabis legislation impact on drivers' behaviour? How to educate the public on cannabis-impaired driving? These are among the questions being addressed at the **Third international symposium on drug-impaired driving** to be held in Lisbon on 23 October <sup>(1)</sup>.

The event, taking place on the eve of **Lisbon Addictions 2017** <sup>(2)</sup>, is a collaborative initiative of the **EU drugs agency (EMCDDA)**, the **Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA)**, the **US National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)** and the **New Zealand Drug Foundation**.

The symposium will bring together international experts in the field who have contributed to advances in drug detection technology, innovations in prevention, and drug driving policy. The event will offer participants the opportunity to share lessons learned, showcase new research and identify gaps in knowledge.

Recent changes in cannabis policy in various parts of the world will be in special focus at the event, along with their implications for drug-impaired driving. Guest speakers from the **United States** (Colorado, Washington State) and **Canada** will share their experiences in this fast-moving policy area <sup>(3)</sup>.

The event will be organised around four panel sessions, exploring:

- contemporary challenges for regulatory models;
- advances in drug testing, screening and detection;
- changes in cannabis policy: implications for impaired driving; and
- future perspectives for research and monitoring.

In some parts of the world, the prevalence of drug-impaired driving has begun to rival that of alcohol-impaired driving. This has resulted in a greater focus on the ability to detect drug-impaired drivers using roadside screening tools. Many countries are working towards laws that establish maximum permissible blood-drug limits. As in the case with alcohol, these laws would mean that any driver 'over the limit' would be committing an offence and there would be no need to prove physical impairment.

The outcome of the symposium will be a report for policymakers answering some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on this issue. A session at the **Lisbon Addictions 2017** conference will also be dedicated to drugs and driving, delivering feedback from the international symposium <sup>(4)</sup>.

#### Notes

<sup>(1)</sup> For more, see [www.emcdda.europa.eu/meetings/2017/3rd-symposium-drug-impaired-driving](http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/meetings/2017/3rd-symposium-drug-impaired-driving). The first symposium was held in Canada (2011) and the second in New Zealand (2014). The event will be held at the Lisbon Congress Centre. Entry to the symposium is free of charge, but on a first come, first served basis. Prior registration is required.

<sup>(2)</sup> Full Lisbon Addictions 2017 programme available at [www.lisbonaddictions.eu/lisbon-addictions-2017](http://www.lisbonaddictions.eu/lisbon-addictions-2017)

<sup>(3)</sup> For more, see 'Cannabis policy: status and recent developments' [www.emcdda.europa.eu/topics/cannabis-policy\\_en](http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/topics/cannabis-policy_en)

<sup>(4)</sup> Structured session 12: 'Cannabis and driving' — Tuesday 24 October (14.30–16.00), see Lisbon Addictions 2017 programme [www.lisbonaddictions.eu/lisbon-addictions-2017](http://www.lisbonaddictions.eu/lisbon-addictions-2017)