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A year in review

Highlights from the EMCDDA's General report of activities

Introduction

This leaflet is a brief summary of the work of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) in 2011, with a focus on key topics from the year. Based in Lisbon, this decentralised European agency is the hub of reliable, robust data on the drugs situation in Europe and responses to it. Here, we provide the essence and spirit of our *General report of activities* (1). Produced annually, this progress report is an account of the agency's achievements for those interested in an overview of what we do, and how we do it. For further information on the agency and details on its work, please visit our website at: www.emcdda.europa.eu.

The EMCDDA at a glance

Operational since 1995 and located in Lisbon

Director: Wolfgang Götz

103 regular staff members

A network of 30 focal points gathering data in as many countries

A budget for 2011 of just over EUR 15.8 million

It is with great pleasure that I present this first edition of our new publication: 'A year in review'. As the EU drugs agency, the EMCDDA reports on current trends, hot topics and key events in the drugs field through many channels. Our team of both in-house professionals and experts in the Member States provide insight and analysis to policymakers, practitioners, the media and the general public. 2011 was a productive year: I hope this leaflet will give you a taste of the range and diversity of activities we carried out during that period.

Wolfgang Götz
Director

Monitoring the drugs situation

Data collection and analysis lie at the heart of the EMCDDA's work. In 2011, the agency devoted considerable attention to improving the quality and reliability of the data it collects and analyses.

As well as improving the nature of its data, the agency also started to develop new data collection and analysis strategies in relation to treatment and prisons. This work will ultimately help paint a clearer picture of the situation in these two areas at European level.

As per every year, the main results of our monitoring activities featured in our flagship publication, the *Annual report on the state of*

the drugs problem in Europe, released in November. Available in 22 languages, this publication presented the latest data available on the drugs phenomenon in Europe, and was complemented by shorter, more in-depth reports ('Selected issues'), on the following topics: the cost of financing drug treatment services; mortality linked to drug consumption; and guidelines for treating drug dependence. The whole package was backed up by over 400 online tables and graphs of statistics. By the end of the year, the EMCDDA had distributed nearly 17 000 copies of the report throughout the Member States

and the website registered 17 285 downloads.

Another development in 2011 was the EMCDDA's first step to develop jointly with the European Commission indicators on drug markets, drug-related crime and drug supply reduction. Following a conference on this theme in 2010, follow-up activities included establishing working groups involving key partners (Reitox focal points, professionals, Europol, the European Police College (CEPOL), the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), to name but a few) to develop the methodology for drafting such indicators. This is work in progress, and will continue in 2012.

(1) Available at: www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/general-report-of-activities/2011

Alerting and anticipating

One of the EMCDDA's key roles is to keep a finger on the pulse, alerting the authorities to new drugs when they arrive on the ever-changing market, as well as to emerging trends. To this end, it manages along with its sister agency Europol an early warning system, made up of partners in the Member States from the Reitox network. In terms of new substances appearing on the illegal drugs market, 49 substances were notified during the year and this information was shared with the EU Member States, Europol, the European Medicines Agency and the European Commission.

Also in the area of new drugs, the agency co-organised and hosted the First International Multidisciplinary Forum on New Drugs in May. This event brought together over 100 experts from around the world to take stock of current trends in new drugs, anticipate future challenges and identify common points of concern as a starting point for future actions.

In 2011, following the alarm on an increased number of HIV infections among injecting drug users in Greece and Romania, a joint ECDC and EMCDDA risk assessment was conducted on this issue which shared the information available broadly with experts in the field of drug-related infectious diseases.

The agency stepped up its efforts to identify new trends, by holding a 'trendspotter' meeting on the theme of heroin in October, in response to the heroin drought witnessed in some European countries. Similarly, meetings took place on how analysing wastewater in cities can act as a means to assess drug consumption patterns. Work continues in both of these areas.



The EMCDDA's information centre

Informing policy

Along with monitoring and early warning activities, the agency continued to support drug policy dialogue at European level by providing technical expertise and information on a regular basis to the various EU institutions (European Parliament, Council and Commission), as well as to policymakers located in the Member States.

For the second year in a row, the agency's Director presented the *Annual report on the state of the drugs problem in Europe* to the Ministers for Home Affairs at a Council meeting and at the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee of the European Parliament. The agency also received requests to present the report at special events organised in 14 Member States and Norway.

The EMCDDA contributed to the external evaluation of the EU's 2005–12 drugs strategy and its associated action plans by providing a comprehensive trend report on drug problems and drug-related responses in Europe since 2004. Furthermore, the agency provided expertise to the European Commission and European Council, namely by

drafting various briefing notes for EU Commissioners, such as Cecilia Malmström (the EMCDDA's reporting Commissioner) and Viviane Reding, the Commissioner responsible for the Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship portfolio.

From a range of activities and reports linked to policy and emerging trends, we should mention here the launch of a new series ('Drug policy profiles') that presents the main characteristics of national drug policies on a country-by-country basis. The first edition in the series on Portugal was released on 23 June, and more countries are planned for 2012. Two policy briefings were prepared in 2011: one on new psychoactive substances and the other on 'khat' ⁽²⁾, published in 25 languages and filled with essential information and insight on these topics. The agency prepared a *Report on the risk assessment of mephedrone in the framework of the Council Decision on new psychoactive substances* which presented the summary findings and conclusions of the risk assessment on this drug carried out in 2010 by the EMCDDA's extended Scientific Committee and additional experts ⁽³⁾.

⁽²⁾ Available at: www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/searchresults?action=list&type=PUBLICATIONS&SERIES_PUB=w7

⁽³⁾ Available at: www.emcdda.europa.eu/html.cfm/index116639EN.html

Working in partnership

The EMCDDA cannot work in isolation: in order to perform its tasks effectively it must actively engage with other partners working in the drugs field. 2011 was a year particularly rich in terms of collaborative ventures. For example, the agency published a highly-successful joint publication called *Prevention and control of infectious diseases among people who inject drugs* with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control based in Stockholm. This has since been translated into several EU and non-EU languages⁽⁴⁾. Similarly, the agency stepped up its collaboration with the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD), hosting the project's annual meeting and signing a joint statement strengthening collaboration between the two.

Our ongoing cooperation with Europol led to the publication of a report entitled *Amphetamine: a European Union perspective in the global context*, the third in this joint series.

In order to enhance its links with academia and training in its local context, the agency also signed an agreement to organise a summer school on the complex policy challenges that Europe faces in the field of drugs with the Instituto Superior das Ciências do Trabalho e da Empresa, in Lisbon. The course, developed for both students and

professionals, will take place in July 2012 (for more details, see: www.emcdda.europa.eu/events/summerschool2012).

In its role as a catalyst for quality in scientific publishing, the EMCDDA launched a new initiative in 2011, its Scientific Paper Award. From over 50 submitted articles published in peer-reviewed scientific journals the previous year, five winners were selected by a judging panel made up of members of the agency's Scientific Committee and selected staff members. The winners were honoured at an awards ceremony in the agency's home town.

Last but not least, the EMCDDA is involved in partnerships that reach beyond the frontiers of the European Union. In 2011, the agency continued to provide technical assistance to one acceding country (Croatia), to candidate (Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Turkey) and potential candidate countries (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo⁽⁵⁾). Various outputs were prepared within this collaboration as part of an ongoing project funded by the European Commission, including country overviews, information maps, national action plans and Reitox academies. The agency will continue to develop

such activities in order to prepare these countries for their full participation in the work of the EMCDDA.

Our relations with European Neighbourhood Policy countries, located to the east and south of the European Union, also continued to develop in 2011. Implementation of the Memoranda of Understanding signed with Ukraine and Russia continued over the period and the agency also received a request from Moldova to sign a similar agreement in order to develop closer relations.



⁽⁴⁾ Available at: www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/ecdc-emcdda-guidance

⁽⁵⁾ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the International Court of Justice Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Reitox network

The EMCDDA would not be complete without Reitox, the European information network on drugs and drug addiction. This network comprises national drug monitoring centres or 'focal points' in the EU Member States plus Croatia, Turkey, Norway and the European Commission. These bodies are the main information interface between the EMCDDA and its Member States. As such, they provide national drug information to the agency for EU-level analysis and play the role of EMCDDA 'ambassadors' at home.

Reitox focal points: www.emcdda.europa.eu/about/partners/reitox-network

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Cais do Sodré, 1249-289 Lisbon, Portugal

Tel. (351) 211 21 02 00 • Fax (351) 218 13 17 11

info@emcdda.europa.eu • www.emcdda.europa.eu • twitter.com/emcdda • www.facebook.com/emcdda

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Dynamic and diverse communication

The EMCDDA takes pride in communicating complex scientific data and information to a range of audiences, tailoring its outputs accordingly. In 2011, the agency produced a total of 32 English-language printed or online publications, along with various translated versions, as well as 39 scientific articles written or co-authored by its staff. In order to disseminate widely the results of the EMCDDA's work, staff also attended conferences and specialised events worldwide during the course of the year. The agency's quarterly newsletter *Drugnet Europe* continued to act as a key communication channel for reaching our stakeholders. The agency's website – the backbone to all communication – was constantly updated and improved and social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter continued to grow in terms of volume and traffic, with the

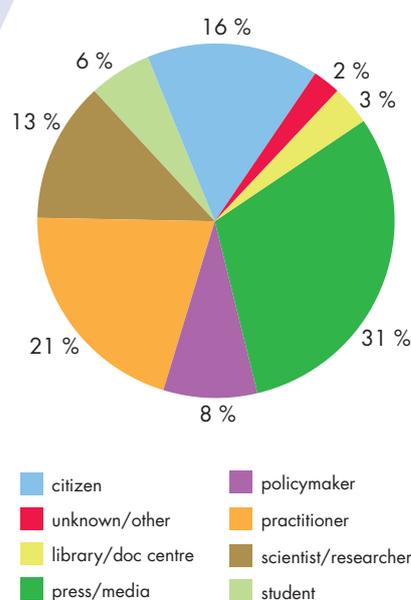
agency registering 700 new Twitter followers during the year.

One special output of note in 2011 was a manual for practitioners working in the field of drug prevention. The *European drug prevention quality standards manual* (available at: www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/manuals/prevention-standards) was released in December, and officially launched at the second International Conference of the European Society for Prevention. Prepared in collaboration with the Prevention Standards Partnership, this practical tool complements more formal studies and reports the agency prepares on this topic.

Media relations are vital to communicating the work of the agency and journalists are essential partners in relaying our messages. In 2011, the press office received around 170 requests from journalists keen to learn more about the

EMCDDA's activities. The *Annual report* launch alone generated an estimated 1 900 news items in over 60 countries.

Public information ad hoc requests received in 2011



Governance

The EMCDDA strives for sound management. In 2011, the agency received a report from the European Court of Auditors free from any recommendations for corrective

measures. This report, along with the EMCDDA's performance in the execution of its 2011 budget, confirmed the effective and efficient management of resources.

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www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications

www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications
Our publications at your fingertips

Browse EMCDDA information by theme

www.emcdda.europa.eu/themes

Staff awards

The 2011 International Collaborative Prevention Research award was presented to Dr Gregor Burkhardt for his 'outstanding contribution to advancing the field of prevention science'.



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