



A year in review

Highlights from the EMCDDA's
General Report of Activities

2014

If I had to sum up how 2014 marked the EMCDDA, I would say that it was a time of rising to growing challenges.

In a year when over 100 new drugs appeared on the European market, many of our core resources were dedicated to providing rapid responses and quickly gathering vital evidence for action on these substances.

At the same time, we remained vigilant to the threats posed by more established drugs. Experience has taught us that, despite positive developments in recent years, the health and social harms associated with the use of these drugs remain a key concern across the European Union.

Finally, 2014 was also a year of budget cuts. This meant that we had to meet the demands imposed by the drug situation and its impact on European citizens whilst finding new ways of rationalising operations, both inside the agency and with our partners in the Member States.

It would therefore be fair to say that 2014 was an exceptional year for the EMCDDA, which despite many challenges managed to stand firm in its role as the reference point on drugs in Europe. This was also my tenth year as Director, and I am very proud of my team's accomplishments.

Wolfgang Götz, Director

Introduction

This leaflet provides insight into the work of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), drawing content from its *General Report of Activities for 2014* ⁽¹⁾. A decentralised European agency based in Lisbon, the EMCDDA is the hub of credible, robust data on the European drug situation and responses to it. Our annual progress report provides an overview of the Centre's achievements for the period concerned, for those interested in what we do and how we do it. For further information on the agency, please visit our website or follow us via social media. ■

⁽¹⁾ Available at: emcdda.europa.eu/publications/gra/2014

The EMCDDA: 2014 figures

55 key outputs, in a range of languages

21 articles authored or co-authored by EMCDDA staff published in scientific journals

Active involvement in more than 300 conferences and technical meetings

A budget of just over EUR 15.6 million. By 31 December, 99.6 % of this budget had been committed

Monitoring the drug situation

The EMCDDA collects, manages and analyses the data provided by the Reitox national focal points in 30 countries — the 28 European Union (EU) Member States, Turkey and Norway. The information gathered through this collective effort underpins the outputs we produce each year.

On 27 May, the EMCDDA launched its flagship publication, the 2014 *European Drug Report* (EDR), at a press conference in Lisbon. The event opened with a video message from the European Commissioner for Home Affairs, Cecilia Malmström. In her message, the Commissioner expressed her concerns at how drugs consumed in Europe today appear to be increasingly damaging to the health of their users.

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'This annual analysis from the EMCDDA provides us with a critically important window on Europe's evolving drugs problem ... It is essential that we use these data to ensure that the response by European authorities keeps pace with the evolving challenges we face.'

The EDR package is an interlinked range of multimedia products, with the *Trends and developments* report at its centre. In 2014, this was supplemented by six online interactive analyses (*Perspectives on drugs*) on the injection of synthetic cathinones; new developments in Europe's cannabis market; advances in Internet-based treatment; responses for methamphetamine users; treatment for cocaine dependence; and wastewater analysis. National data, in an easy-to-use format, featured in the *Data and statistics* component of the package and to accompany the whole were 30 detailed country overviews.

In 2014, the Centre produced a wide range of thematic publications. In the area of drug treatment, this included an in-depth review on the role of therapeutic communities and an overview of the options for residential treatment in Europe. These were complemented by a series of evidence reviews on issues including strategies for opioid substitution treatment during pregnancy; treatment for cocaine dependence; and multidimensional family therapy for adolescent drug users. Further evidence on the effectiveness of interventions, including a new module on partygoers, featured on the EMCDDA's Best practice portal, which was revamped and launched in October.

For our audiences of professionals and policymakers, we provided analyses on the harms associated with the use of opioids, amphetamines and cocaine, and the

emergency health consequences of cocaine use.

To mark the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking on 26 June, the EMCDDA released an updated version of its in-depth topical review on drugs and driving.

In 2014, the Centre also published 15 outputs related to the implementation of the Council Decision on new psychoactive substances (NPS). This high figure is a reflection of the significant developments which took place over the course of the year in the new drugs area (see later section *Alerting and anticipating*).

Similarly, the agency progressed in developing key indicators in the areas of drug markets, drug-related crime and drug supply reduction. During the year, and in close cooperation with the Member States, the European Commission and Europol, revised reporting instruments were finalised for drug seizures, drug law offences and drug production facilities. ■

Working in partnership

In order to carry out its tasks and reach its objectives, the EMCDDA relies on expert networks and on other EU and international partners. At EU level, priority is given to serving the institutions (the European Parliament, the Council of the EU and the European Commission) and the Member States.

The EMCDDA provided ongoing technical support to the EU institutions during the year on issues such as NPS (a major policy concern), harm reduction and minimum quality standards for demand reduction interventions.

The agency also shared its expertise within several EU-funded projects. For example, the EMCDDA became a collaborating partner and member of the advisory group of the Joint Action on Reducing Alcohol-Related Harm (RARHA) project. The Centre also further enhanced its cooperation with the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD).

Cooperation with the Member States is a vital component of the EMCDDA's activities. The agency's monitoring systems rely on the information provided by 30 reporting countries, which include the 28 Member States. Every year, this takes the form of regular contact and technical support. In 2014, the EMCDDA was invited to provide input to a number of events organised by national authorities. These included several hearings and panel reviews at the Swedish Government on drug-related deaths, and at the British Home Office on NPS. The agency also received visits from several high-level delegations from Denmark, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Norway and Portugal.

Our achievements in 2014 hinged on the close partnership the agency maintains with the Reitox national focal points (for more information, see emcdda.europa.eu/about/partners/reitox-network). A key development during the year was the completion of a major EMCDDA–Reitox project to revise the national reporting system. This determines how Member States provide data to the agency in order to build an overall picture of Europe's drug phenomenon. The new package will match priorities and resources and better address the information needs of European and national stakeholders while ensuring efficiency and reducing the reporting burden.

Other essential partners are EU agencies. The year was rich in joint activities and events. Cooperation was particularly fruitful with Europol, for example on the Early Warning System on new drugs and as a contributor to the EU policy cycle for organised and serious international crime 2013–17. Work with the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) focused on joint interventions in harm reduction and we collaborated with the European Medicines Agency on the implementation of EU pharmacovigilance legislation. Our cooperation with the

Best practice portal



What works?



What doesn't work?

emcdda.europa.eu/best-practice



Signature of Memorandum of Understanding between the EMCDDA and Eurojust on 15 July in The Hague: Director Wolfgang Götz and the President of Eurojust, Michèle Coninx

European Police College centred on their law enforcement training programme, and we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Eurojust in July. Operational synergies were further pursued with our neighbour in Lisbon, the European Maritime Safety Agency. This practice was hailed by the European Commission as a 'pioneering' approach, which sets an 'example that other EU agencies should look at'.

Cooperation with international organisations was also strengthened, in particular with the World Health Organization, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission under the Organization of American States and the Pompidou Group.

In terms of cooperation with third countries, 2014 marked the successful completion of the technical assistance project with pre-accession countries (IPA 4) started in 2012 ⁽²⁾. This project builds drug monitoring capacity in several candidate and potential candidate countries. Furthermore, the EMCDDA embarked on a new two-year technical cooperation project within the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) ⁽³⁾. This European Commission funded project is designed to boost the

⁽²⁾ The countries covered by IPA are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Kosovo (as defined by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244/1999), Montenegro, Serbia and Turkey.

⁽³⁾ ENP covers the following countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine in Eastern Europe, and Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria and Tunisia in the Middle East and North Africa.

capacity of ENP partner countries to react to the challenges posed by the drug phenomenon.

As an information agency, disseminating knowledge is central to the EMCDDA's remit. This means producing reports, online content and tools for our audiences to use. But this also means carrying out training and capacity-building activities. During the year, the Centre organised several training programmes, including our third summer school, 'Drugs in Europe: demand, supply and public policies', co-organised with the Instituto Superior das Ciências do Trabalho e da Empresa — Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (ISCTE-IUL). The training course attracted 28 students from around the world.

Furthermore, the agency's Reitox Academies training programme has been an important vehicle for building capacity for drug monitoring in Member States, candidate and potential candidate countries, and ENP countries. Within this framework, cooperation continued with the College of Europe in Bruges and Charles University in Prague, and we ran two training courses for experts from ENP countries. In addition, the EMCDDA helped organise six Reitox Academies for EU Member States, candidate and potential candidate countries, and ENP partner countries, covering topics such as prevention, drug laws, drug supply indicators, public expenditure, harm reduction in prisons and evaluation of national strategies.

Sharing experiences and knowledge also occurs through network development and management. The EMCDDA relies on various groups of experts from a range of disciplines who bring national knowledge to the agency's European drug information and analysis systems. The interaction with these networks is regular, and culminates in several annual expert meetings in Lisbon. These have become, over the years, valuable pools of excellence. ■

Alerting and anticipating

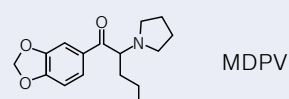
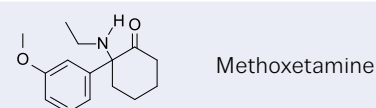
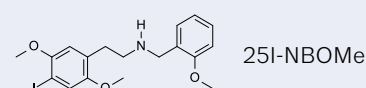
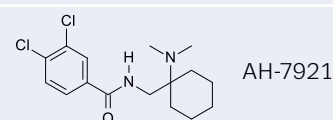
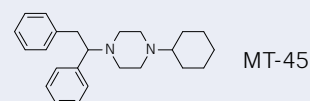
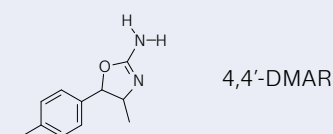
The demands on the EU Early Warning System on new drugs, implemented by the EMCDDA together with Europol and partners in the Member States, were higher

than ever in 2014: 101 NPS were reported for the first time within the EU, which represents a 25 % increase on 2013 (81 NPS) and confirms the steep progression that started in 2010.

Monitoring new trends was vital for the agency in 2014. The results of the 2013 trendspotter study on methamphetamine in Europe were published and a new case study, on Internet drug markets in Europe, was undertaken. This culminated in an expert meeting which brought together leading specialists in IT, research and monitoring, and law enforcement.

In the area of harm reduction, both ECDC and the EMCDDA continued to collaborate closely on how to detect and respond to outbreaks of HIV among people who inject drugs, to help strengthen Member State capacity to monitor and prevent further HIV infections in this population group. The two agencies took part in a joint assessment mission to Latvia at the invitation of the Latvian Government. The mission set out to review the status of HIV and hepatitis surveillance, prevention and control measures with country experts and health service providers, with a view to proposing actions for strengthening local services. ■

6 risk assessments in 2014



Celebrating excellence in scientific writing

On 25 November, the EMCDDA held its fourth annual scientific paper award ceremony. This year, prizes were presented to four lead authors for their outstanding articles on a range of drug-related issues by the Chair of the agency's Scientific Committee, Gerhard Bühringer. The growing number of nominations for the award from all over Europe reaffirms its high reputation and the role of the EMCDDA and its Scientific Committee in promoting research around this important issue.

700 non-fatal intoxications, the Council asked the agency's extended Scientific Committee to carry out six risk assessments. This is twice the number of risk assessments requested during the entire preceding four-year period. By the end of the year, four of the assessed substances were subject to control measures and criminal penalties throughout the EU and their manufacturing and marketing became illegal.

The EMCDDA launched several short reports during the year, on topics including public expenditure on drug law offenders at European level, the challenges of financing drug policy in Europe in the wake of the economic recession, and drug policy profiles on Austria and Poland ⁽⁴⁾. ■



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Informing policy

In 2014, the EMCDDA continued to support drug policy dialogue at EU level by providing expertise and technical information to the European Parliament, the Council of the EU and the European Commission.

Mr Götz presented the EDR to the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs of the European Parliament and to the European Ministers for Justice and Home Affairs.

As already mentioned, the agency provided input to the EU policy cycle for organised and serious international crime 2013–17 within the Council's Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security. This included a threat assessment exercise conducted by the EMCDDA with Europol.

In terms of policy issues linked to NPS, following over 200 deaths and more than

Dynamic and diverse communication

The EMCDDA continues to refine the manner in which it communicates its results and the range of channels it uses to do so. These channels include the web, online publications and print products, events and conferences, media relations activities, audiovisual material and social media.

The main outputs over the period included 55 products, along with a complementary set of online tools and web-based resources. The website is the agency's primary means of communicating with all target audiences and is the key to reinforcing the agency's profile as the primary source of drug information in Europe. Improvements in 2014 included

⁽⁴⁾ All available at: emccda.europa.eu/publications

the new presentation of the data and statistics in the EDR, the development of an interactive interface for displaying data on NPS and the new version of the Best practice portal.

The EMCDDA has also invested more time in social media communications and has produced several videos to promote its results, whilst maintaining news releases to mark the launch of key products. In addition, 21 scientific articles were published over the same period in well-established journals.

Furthermore, in 2014, EMCDDA staff participated in some 300 international conferences and technical and scientific meetings. The agency also disseminated findings from its work to over 400 visitors to our offices, including policymakers, scientists and researchers, practitioners and European citizens. ■

Lisbon Addictions 2015
 First European conference on addictive behaviours and dependencies

GOVERNMENT OF PORTUGAL | SICAD | Addiction | European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction | ISAJE International Society of Addiction Journal Editors

For more information on this new, international event which will take place in September, visit <http://www.lisbonaddictions.eu>

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