FACT SHEET from the EU drugs agency in Lisbon

2012 NIDA INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE
EU drugs agency Scientific director awarded for excellence in international leadership

(8.6.2012, LISBON) EMCDDA Scientific director, Paul Griffiths, M.Sc., has been selected as a winner of the 2012 United States National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) International Program Awards of Excellence (1). The annual awards, which celebrate achievements in mentoring, collaborative research and international leadership, will be presented on 9 June. The ceremony will be held during the 2012 NIDA International Forum, taking place in Palm Springs (CA), where the EMCDDA and NIDA are co-hosting the Second interdisciplinary forum on new and emerging psychoactive substances (2).

Mr Griffiths will receive the Award for Excellence in International Leadership which recognises drug abuse researchers who have made significant contributions to international collaborative research and/or capacity building outside the United States and who have helped improve scientific understanding of drug abuse and addiction.

Mr Griffiths joined the EMCDDA nearly a decade ago and became Scientific director in 2010. Throughout his tenure, he has supervised a commendable increase in the scope and scientific sophistication of the agency’s work. Mr Griffiths and the agency’s staff now monitor all aspects of drug use in Europe, maintain a network of European drug information centres, and, with Europol, operate an EU early-warning system on new psychoactive substances.

‘The 2012 Awards of Excellence winners are dedicated and experienced leaders in the international effort to advance drug abuse research and training. This year’s winners have helped to prepare international scientists to work together across international borders and to lead the way for key scientific breakthroughs’, says Director of the NIDA International Program, Steven W. Gust, Ph.D.

He adds: ‘Mr Griffiths has made a tremendous contribution toward improving systems to monitor drug abuse trends and standardising statistical records, greatly improving the data base for drug programme and policy decisions’.

Before joining the EMCDDA, Mr Griffiths worked at the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), where he revised the primary UN instrument for collecting information on the drug situation. He also developed and implemented the UN global assessment programme, which created drug information systems in Africa, the Caribbean, Central Asia, and Latin America. Collaborating with the Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe, he made similar contributions to the countries of the former Soviet Union. His work with others on a large and diverse portfolio of research projects in the UK coalesced in the formation of the National Addiction Centre.

EMCDDA Director Wolfgang Götz says: ‘Paul Griffiths has made a dynamic and inspiring contribution to monitoring and analysing the drugs problem, to boosting scientific standards and to making the EMCDDA today’s reference point on drugs in Europe. Along with his colleagues at the agency, I congratulate him wholeheartedly on this award’.

The 2012 Award for Excellence in Mentoring went to Clyde B. McCoy, Ph.D., of the Department of Epidemiology and Public Health at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine.

(1) For more on the awards, see: www.international.drugabuse.gov/information/intl_forum_excellence.html