



# News release

from the EU drugs agency in Lisbon

## EMCDDA COOPERATION WITH ALBANIA

### EU drugs agency and the Republic of Albania strengthen their cooperation

(13.3.2019, VIENNA) The **EU drugs agency (EMCDDA)** and **Albania** will cooperate more actively on monitoring the drug phenomenon in future, thanks to a Working Arrangement being concluded today in Vienna <sup>(1)</sup>. The agreement is being signed by **EMCDDA Director Alexis Goosdeel** and by the Albanian Deputy Minister of the Interior **Besfort Lamallari** and Deputy Minister of Health and Social Protection **Mira Rakacolli** in the presence of **Dimitris Avramopoulos**, European Commissioner responsible for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship. The signing ceremony takes place at the Delegation of the European Union to the International Organisations in Vienna and is hosted by EU Ambassador **Didier Lenoir**.

The Working Arrangement originates in a request from the Albanian Ministry of the Interior to the **EMCDDA Director** in 2017 and follows the seal of approval of the **European Commission** and **EMCDDA** Management Board. While the agency has signed similar agreements with other third countries, this is the first request of its kind from the Western Balkans. The new agreement provides for the exchange of expertise between the entities concerned and will contribute to developing drug data-collection and reporting capacity in the country.

The **EMCDDA** began its cooperation with Albania in 2007 in the framework of EU-funded technical assistance projects designed to prepare Western Balkan countries for accession to the EU (and for participation in the work of the **EMCDDA** and its **Reitox** network) <sup>(2)</sup><sup>(3)</sup>. The **EMCDDA** and Albania are currently working together to consolidate Albania's capacity to monitor the drug phenomenon through the use of evidence-based tools and knowledge built and promoted within the EU. They also exchange data on new psychoactive substances as well as expertise on establishing a national early-warning system.

While no formal national drug observatory has yet been established in Albania, along the lines of a Reitox national focal point, the **EMCDDA** has developed close working relations with the Ministry of the Interior and with the Institute of Public Health of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection. This cooperation led to the financing of the first national general population survey on drugs in Albania in 2014 as well as the production of a *Country Drug Report* in 2017 following **EMCDDA** guidelines <sup>(4)</sup>. Albania is one of six candidate and potential candidate countries to the EU currently receiving assistance under the **EMCDDA IPA6 project**, which kicked off in July 2017 and will run until June 2019 <sup>(5)</sup>.

<sup>(1)</sup> For more, see [www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/2019/1/emcdda-albania-strengthen-cooperation\\_en](http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/2019/1/emcdda-albania-strengthen-cooperation_en) and [www.emcdda.europa.eu/about/partners/albania\\_en](http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/about/partners/albania_en). The ceremony takes place at the Delegation of the EU to the International Organisations in Vienna at 17.00 CET ([https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/vienna-international-organisations\\_en](https://eeas.europa.eu/delegations/vienna-international-organisations_en)). Negotiations on the draft agreement were concluded in Tirana in October 2018. See news item: [www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/2018/emcdda-and-republic-albania-strengthen-their-cooperation\\_en](http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/2018/emcdda-and-republic-albania-strengthen-their-cooperation_en)

<sup>(2)</sup> See *Drugnet Europe* No 60, page 6 [www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/drugnet/60\\_en](http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/drugnet/60_en)

<sup>(3)</sup> Reitox network [www.emcdda.europa.eu/about/partners/reitox-network](http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/about/partners/reitox-network)

<sup>(4)</sup> Survey of substance use among general population in Albania, 2014 [www.emcdda.europa.eu/drugs-library/survey-substance-use-among-general-population-albania-2014\\_en](http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/drugs-library/survey-substance-use-among-general-population-albania-2014_en)  
[www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/country-drug-reports/2017/albania](http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/country-drug-reports/2017/albania)

<sup>(5)</sup> IPA6 [www.emcdda.europa.eu/about/partners/cc/ipa6\\_en](http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/about/partners/cc/ipa6_en)