



News release

from the EU drugs agency in Lisbon

EUROPEAN COMMISSIONER YLVA JOHANSSON VISITS EU DRUGS AGENCY IN LISBON

Commissioner Johansson acknowledges value of EMCDDA analysis in informing drug policy

(12.04.2021, LISBON) **European Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva Johansson** paid her first visit to the **European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA)** today during a day of events relating to the fight against organised crime. **EMCDDA Director Alexis Goosdeel** welcomed the **Commissioner** to the agency for talks on its current priorities and challenges.

As Commissioner for Home Affairs, **Ylva Johansson** is responsible for the EU drugs portfolio, overseeing implementation of the new [EU drugs strategy 2021–2025](#), adopted by the Council of the EU in December 2020. The new strategy, which sets out the political framework and priorities for the EU's drug policy over the next five years, will be accompanied by an action plan presenting concrete measures to achieve these priorities. This plan is currently under preparation and is expected to be adopted under the Portuguese Presidency of the EU in June.

Before arriving at the agency, the **Commissioner** spoke at the launch of the [Europol 2021 Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment \(SOCTA\)](#) report, to which the **EMCDDA** contributed.

Underlining the value of the **EMCDDA** as provider of independent, scientific evidence on the drug phenomenon, **Commissioner Johansson** said: 'The drug market in the EU is estimated at a minimum of EUR 30 billion per year. We need the EMCDDA's analysis for informed decision-making on drug policies. EMCDDA data show that the availability and purity of drugs are on the rise. This causes more problems for drug users and leads to deaths. On my first visit to the EMCDDA, I received the most recent picture of the EU drug phenomenon and discussed how to take the agency's important work forward.'

EMCDDA Director Alexis Goosdeel expressed the agency's full support for the EU drugs strategy and its commitment to the European balanced approach, addressing both the health and security threats posed by illicit drugs. He said: 'Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, availability across all drug types has remained high and the economic repercussions of the crisis may see some in our communities becoming more vulnerable to drug problems and drug market involvement. This has raised the stakes, underscoring the importance of protecting EU citizens from drug-related harms. The strength of the agency will lie in its agility and capacity to adapt rapidly to new realities in the future.'

This week the **EMCDDA** forms part of the **EU delegation** at the 64th session of the [UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs](#) (Vienna, 12–16 April 2021). **Alexis Goosdeel** will be speaking at side events on the [COVID-19 pandemic and its influence on the world drug problem: New challenges and prospects](#) (12 April) and on the [EU drugs strategy](#) (13 April) where he will reflect on 'How to address the complexity of drugs in a post-COVID world.'

Following the visit to the agency, the **Commissioner** proceeded to the **Maritime Analysis and Operation Centre – Narcotics (MAOC-N)** to discuss practical cooperation to fight drugs trafficking by sea and air.