



# Message from the Director

from the EU drugs agency in Lisbon



## New EMCDDA work programme prepares agency for significant changes ahead

(24.02.2023) I am delighted to announce today the publication of the latest EMCDDA work programme, which outlines our activities for 2023–2025 <sup>(1)</sup>. This period promises to be very exciting for the organisation as the EU institutions negotiate a new regulation that will transform us into the European Union Drugs Agency (EUDA) in 2024. The EUDA will be a completely new agency, with a broadened mandate, better equipped to strengthen the EU's preparedness related to illicit drugs.

This new programming period will also mark the end of the [EMCDDA Strategy 2025](#), which has guided our work since 2016. At a time when Europe is facing increasing health and security threats, we will reflect on how the strategy has helped us support the EU's response to these pressures. In addition, we will continue to develop the strategy's customer-centric and digitally-enabled business model approach, designed to deliver new services and products in line with our audiences' evolving needs.

On this note, our three flagship products are undergoing significant change. These are now configured in a digital, modular, accessible and mobile-friendly format, making it easier than ever to explore, share and re-use underlying data, all the while improving their scientific rigour <sup>(2)</sup>. And, on the much-debated issue of cannabis policy, we will be providing new resources in 2023 designed to assist decision-makers and planners with cannabis policy development and evaluation in their own countries.

The European drugs problem is increasingly linked to, and influenced by, global developments, underlining the need to identify trends occurring outside the EU. This year, we will intensify our cooperation with the Western Balkans, European Neighbourhood Policy area, Georgia, Latin America and the Caribbean through our technical cooperation projects ([IPA8](#), [EU4MD II](#); [EMCDDA4GE](#) and [COPOLAD](#)).

However, we are operating in an external environment which is increasingly unpredictable. War continues to ravage through Ukraine, at the EU borders. In Europe and elsewhere, economic recession is looming, threatening social and political stability. The wide availability of all kinds of drugs puts enormous pressure on the market, which is constantly looking for new users, and increased consumption for existing users. And COVID-19 has brought greater innovation in drug supply and new vulnerability to drug use.

Under these circumstances, it is critical that the agency remains agile and prepared to 'change gears' smoothly but quickly, depending on the circumstances. This will include streamlining processes with new technology, and above all, building a true innovation-driven culture. Strengthening our foresight capacity will also be essential to our ability to navigate uncertainty and support national and EU drug policy.

The successful transformation of the EMCDDA into the new EU Drugs Agency will only be possible with my dedicated team and our committed partners, old and new. Enhancing our partnerships, promoting co-production and pursuing stakeholder engagement will be crucial to our work as we expand our monitoring, boost EU preparedness and help develop competence for better interventions in the drugs field.

<sup>(1)</sup> [EMCDDA Single Programming Document 2023–2025](#) (available in English).

<sup>(2)</sup> [Health and social responses to drug problems: a European guide](#); [EU Drug Markets: In-depth analysis](#) and [European Drug Report 2023 \(June 2023\)](#).