



A year in review

Highlights from the EMCDDA's
General Report of Activities

2013

As I reflect on the overall mood at the EMCDDA in 2013, I would say it was one of resilience. Faced with a constantly changing European drug situation, the Centre's staff had to perform more tasks with fewer resources, continually improving systems and finding ways of working more efficiently. New psychoactive substances appeared at a prolific rate and more established drugs still represented a heavy social burden. Several thousand young Europeans died following drug use in 2013, and many more died from the indirect consequences of taking drugs; but they are just the tip of the iceberg. The information provided by the EMCDDA, along with its monitoring and alert functions, feeds into actions to prevent this from happening.

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 2013 ⁽¹⁾. A decentralised European agency based in Lisbon, the

⁽¹⁾ emcdda.europa.eu/publications/gra/2013

EMCDDA is the hub of credible, robust data on the European drug situation and responds 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 on Twitter and Facebook. ■

The EMCDDA: 2013 figures

41 key outputs (online and printed), in a range of EU and non-EU languages

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

Active involvement in 277 external events, conferences and technical meetings

13 videos with around 12 000 views, 270 tweets and retweets, 1 871 'likes' on Facebook

Budget: EUR 16.3 million. By 31 December, 99.74 % of this budget had been committed

Monitoring the drug situation

The work of the EMCDDA is built on the core tasks of collecting, managing and analysing the data provided by the Reitox national focal points (NFPs) in 30 countries — the 28 European Union (EU) Member States, Turkey and Norway. The findings gathered through this collective effort form the basis for our outputs during the year.

The first *EU drug markets report: a strategic analysis*, produced jointly by the EMCDDA and Europol, was launched in Brussels by Commissioner Cecilia Malmström and the directors of the two agencies ⁽²⁾. An essential reference tool for law enforcement professionals,

⁽²⁾ emcdda.europa.eu/publications/joint-publications/drug-markets

polymakers, the academic community and the general public, the report combines the EMCDDA's ongoing monitoring and analysis of the drug phenomenon with Europol's strategic and operational understanding of trends and developments in organised crime.

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1

Another innovation in 2013 was the press launch on 28 May of a reshaped version of our annual overview of the European drug situation, now called the *European Drug Report* (EDR). This fresh information package was more timely, interactive and interlinked than its predecessor. The launch event opened with a video message from Commissioner Malmström. In her video, the Commissioner expressed concern at the increasingly complex stimulant market.

'...we need reliable data to define robust and updated policies: the European Drug Report and its valuable information will serve as a reference for policymakers, specialists and practitioners working with drug-related issues.'

The EDR package, made up of complementary elements in an easy-to-use format, makes full use of the data and analyses prepared by the EMCDDA.

It includes the *Trends and developments report* — a top-level overview of the drug phenomenon in Europe ⁽³⁾; a new series of online analyses on specific topics called *Perspectives on drugs*; national data in Country overviews; the Statistical bulletin; and Health and social responses profiles.

Established expert networks were further consolidated in 2013, in a range of areas including epidemiological key indicators, prevention, treatment and best practice, laws, and new drugs and trends. New networks, such as the EMCDDA Reference Group on drug supply and the expert network of forensic scientists, were created. The drug supply group met for the first time to set the practical framework for its operations and to discuss the main challenges it faces.

In the area of demand reduction responses, 2013 was productive and we released seven new outputs, including an Insights report providing a critical review of existing addiction theories, called *Models of addiction* ⁽⁴⁾. Significant advances were made in the area of best practice, including the drafting of several scientific articles and online analyses, along with the development of the agency's Best practice portal ⁽⁵⁾.

In 2013, the agency also made progress in developing key indicators in the areas of drug markets, drug-related crime and drug supply reduction. Priority was given to developing sub-indicators on drug seizures and on drug production facilities. A paper was released on Europe's specialised drug police units ('drug squads') ⁽⁶⁾. ■

Working in partnership

Pursuing successful partnerships and seeking synergies help promote efficiency. In 2013, we continued to develop our activities with a range of partners, including EU institutions and agencies, international organisations, Member States and third countries, and renowned academic institutions.

Collaboration with EU agencies was strengthened, in particular with Europol, the European Police College (CEPOL), Eurojust, the Fundamental Rights Agency, the European Medicines Agency (EMA), the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the Consumers, Health and Food Executive Agency, while operational synergies were sought with the European Maritime Safety Agency.

Cooperation with candidate and potential candidate countries continued within the framework of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) technical assistance project started in 2012 concerning Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Kosovo ⁽⁷⁾, Montenegro and Serbia. Project work to date received excellent results in an external evaluation carried out in 2013, with top marks ('very good') for four out of the six criteria monitored (relevance, quality of design, efficiency and impact).

In 2013, the EMCDDA was awarded funding of EUR 450 000 for a new, two-year technical assistance project in European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) countries. The project, called 'Towards a gradual improvement of ENP partner countries capacity to monitor and to meet drug-related challenges', aims to strengthen the capacity of selected ENP partner countries (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Israel, Moldova, Morocco and Ukraine) to react to new challenges and developments in the drug situation in their respective countries. Implementation will start in 2014.

Disseminating scientific knowledge is vital for the EMCDDA. This can be achieved through collaboration with academic



Elements from the EDR package

⁽³⁾ emcdda.europa.eu/publications/edr/trends-developments/2013

⁽⁴⁾ emcdda.europa.eu/publications/insights/models-addiction

⁽⁵⁾ emcdda.europa.eu/best-practice

⁽⁶⁾ emcdda.europa.eu/publications/emcdda-papers/drug-squads

⁽⁷⁾ This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244/99 and the International Court of Justice Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.



Group photo from the Reitox Academy held in Bruges in February

initiatives, as illustrated by our training projects. Following the partnership launched in 2012 between the Instituto Superior das Ciências do Trabalho e da Empresa — Instituto Universitário de Lisboa (ISCTE-IUL) and the EMCDDA, the second edition of the summer school called 'Drugs in Europe: supply, demand and public policies' took place in July 2013, with 28 students attending.

Two other training initiatives were developed as part of the Reitox Academies programme in our IPA project: the Academy on 'The European Union, the EU drugs

policy and the enlargement process under the Lisbon Treaty', implemented jointly with the College of Europe in Bruges, and the training course on 'Contemporary approaches in drug monitoring', organised with the First Faculty of Medicine of Charles University in Prague. The latter was adapted and repeated in Lisbon, bringing together experts and heads of national drug observatories from Latin American and Caribbean countries.

We should add here that our achievements in 2013 hinged on the close partnership the agency maintains with experts working across Europe, and in particular the Reitox NFPs. An important priority during the year was the review of the system for reporting national data on the drug situation. In the future, this revised system will allow both the EMCDDA and the NFPs to better address the information needs of European and national stakeholders while rationalising resources. In addition, the second Reitox week for network member countries and third countries took place in May. ■



About Reitox...

Reitox is the European information network on drugs and drug addiction. It started working in 1995 and is now made up of 30 partners, including the EU Member States plus Turkey and Norway, along with the European Commission. The abbreviation 'Reitox' comes from the French *Réseau Européen d'Information sur les Drogues et les Toxicomanies*. Members of the Reitox network are designated national institutions or agencies responsible for data collection and reporting on drugs and drug addiction and help promote the work of the EMCDDA at country level. These institutions are called 'national focal points' or 'national drug observatories'.

Alerting and anticipating

The EU Early Warning System on new drugs (EWS), implemented by the EMCDDA together with Europol and partners in the Member States, met serious demands in 2013 as the number of new psychoactive substances (NPS) arriving on the market continued the upward trend started in previous years (81 NPS formally notified, representing an increase of nearly 300 % from figures reported in 2009). Sixteen public-health-related alerts were also issued.

The annual meeting of the Reitox EWS network was organised in conjunction with the Europol second law enforcement meeting on NPS, and followed by the Third international multidisciplinary forum on new drugs, which attracted 130 participants from around the world. The EMCDDA was also co-organiser of the Second international conference on novel psychoactive substances. This brought together 250 researchers and practitioners in the NPS field.

Monitoring new developments was a focus of our work in 2013. The EMCDDA launched a trendspotter study on methamphetamine in Europe and a related expert meeting. The conference 'Testing the waters: first international multidisciplinary conference on detecting illicit drugs in wastewater' was a high point. This was organised with the SEWPROF project⁽⁶⁾ and brought together 90 experts from 20 countries on a topic that is receiving increasing attention in the EU.

Both the 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 regional HIV risk assessment exercise, followed by the publication of a joint risk assessment report. ■

⁽⁶⁾ Sewage profiling at the community level (SEWPROF) is a research project funded by the European Commission, Marie Curie Actions, Seventh Framework Programme, Initial Training Network.

Informing policy

In 2013, 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 *EU drug markets report* and the EDR to the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) of the European Parliament. He also presented the EDR to the European Ministers for Justice and Home Affairs.

The agency provided input to the preparation of the EU drugs action plan 2013–16, adopted in June, and the EU policy cycle for organised and serious international crime 2013–17 within the Council's Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security (COSI). In 2013, we fulfilled tasks under the operational action plan for 2012–13, namely in the field of synthetic drugs, and helped define the priorities for the next policy cycle. Furthermore, the EMCDDA contributed to the Council Conclusions on improving the monitoring of drug supply in the EU, adopted at the Economic and Financial Affairs Council meeting of 15 November in Brussels.

In terms of policy issues linked to NPS, at the Council's request the EMCDDA's Scientific Committee carried out a risk assessment of 5-(2-aminopropyl)indole (5-IT). Data collection exercises were launched with the EWS network on four new substances and EMCDDA–Europol Joint Reports were prepared and submitted to the European Commission, the Council of the EU and the EMA.

The EMCDDA launched several short reports during the year, including papers on

drug supply reduction and internal security policies in the EU, drug policy advocacy organisations in Europe, and a drug policy profile on Ireland ⁽⁹⁾. ■

Dynamic and diverse communication

October 2013 marked two decades since the EMCDDA's founding Regulation (Council Regulation (EEC) No 302/93) came into effect. Over the years, the agency has established strong and credible mechanisms for the regular, sustained monitoring of developments in the European drugs field, along with rapid responses to new trends and substances. A central challenge we face today as we look to the future is to continue to deliver high-quality analyses on established topics while developing our work in other strategically important areas, with diminished resources.

The EMCDDA continues to improve and extend its communication outputs. Activities in 2013 were guided by the integrated communication strategy adopted in 2012, where communication activities are inextricably linked to the agency's scientific and technical work.



Some of the videos released in 2013

⁽⁹⁾ All available at emcdda.europa.eu/publications



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The agency's main outputs to its audiences over the period included a complementary set of online tools and web-based resources, along with 41 products. The website is increasingly the preferred channel for disseminating all of our outputs. 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, 34 scientific articles were published over the same period in well-established journals.

Furthermore, in 2013 EMCDDA staff participated in 277 international conferences, technical and scientific meetings. The agency also disseminated findings from its work to over 260 visitors to our offices, including policymakers, scientists and researchers, practitioners and European citizens. ■

Scientific distinction

Three publications produced by the EMCDDA were nominated among the 'Notable Government Documents of 2012' by the American Library Association. These were the *EU drug markets report: a strategic analysis* and two Insights reports on *Cannabis production and markets in Europe* and *New heroin-assisted treatment: recent evidence and current practices of supervised injectable heroin treatment in Europe and beyond*. This accolade brought further recognition for the scientific excellence of the agency's work.

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