

July–September 2015

In this issue: New technical report on estimating trends in injecting drug use | EMCDDA: 20 years of monitoring | Memorandum of Understanding with Armenia | EMCDDA launches IPA 5 project with the Western Balkans | New EMCDDA products and services | Selection procedure for new EMCDDA Director

91

Europe's cities offer valuable observation window on new drug trends



Report shows how some European cities are now developing drug strategies of their own.

Drug problems often emerge, and are most acutely felt, in urban environments, making Europe's cities a valuable observation window on new drug trends. In a new report — released ahead of International day against drug abuse and illicit trafficking (26 June) — the EMCDDA looks at drugs in cities across Europe, revealing how some cities are developing drug strategies of their own ⁽¹⁾.

The European Union is one of the most urbanised areas in the world and its

cities are set to become more densely populated. Currently 73 % of the EU's population resides in cities and this is projected to increase to 82 % (or 30 million new residents) by 2050.

The new EMCDDA analysis, *Drugs policy and the city in Europe*, shows how modern cities play host to a diverse set of drug using populations and related health, social and security problems. The report identifies 10 European capitals with a dedicated drug strategy: Berlin, Bucharest, Copenhagen, Helsinki, Lisbon, Madrid, Prague, Stockholm, Vienna and Warsaw.

Commenting, EMCDDA Director Wolfgang Götz said: 'As European cities expand and change, we see the drug problems found in them also evolving. It is within cities that new problems first become visible and we increasingly see innovative policies and measures developing. I believe there is considerable

scope for European cities to share their experiences and to learn from each other in this challenging policy area.'

The report focuses on four topics: urban spaces and drug use; businesses and recreational drug use; city-level drug policies; and coordinating and funding city-level policies.

'Today, data on drug use at city level are gathered from a variety of sources, with new information emerging from frontline services, hospital emergency departments and wastewater analysis networks,' explains Götz. 'This allows us to gain a more up-to-date view of the state of drug problems at this level and to evaluate the effectiveness of drug policies and responses'.

Eoghan Quigley

⁽¹⁾ For more, see www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/2015/5/international-drugs-day

Countdown to Lisbon Addictions 2015

The first European conference on addictive behaviours and dependencies — Lisbon Addictions 2015 — opens in the Portuguese capital on 23 September ⁽¹⁾. Hosted by the Portuguese General-Directorate for Intervention on Addictive Behaviours and Dependencies (SICAD), the event is held in collaboration with: the scientific journal *Addiction*; the International Society of Addiction Journal Editors (ISAJE); and the EMCDDA.

The conference — which had already reached its maximum capacity of 500 participants three months ahead of its opening — is designed to appeal to a multi-disciplinary audience and showcase leading European addiction research. Its varied programme includes: 16 keynote speeches; some 200 oral presentations; around 140 rapid communications and a week-long array of satellite meetings, side-events and sponsored sessions

kicking off on 21 September (see pp. 2 and 8). Collaborative partners — including international and national organisations and European research projects — will contribute to the scientific excellence of the event ⁽²⁾.

Maria Moreira and Renate Hochwieser

⁽¹⁾ www.lisbonaddictions.eu

⁽²⁾ www.lisbonaddictions.eu/start#sponsors

DRUG SITUATION

INJECTING DRUG USE

New technical report on estimating trends in injecting drug use in Europe

Although psychoactive drugs can be administered by many routes — orally, injected, smoked or snorted — drug injection generates by far the most serious health problems related to psychoactive drug use, including blood-borne infections (e.g. HIV) and drug overdose.

Studying drug users recruited into drug treatment centres can contribute to a better understanding of trends in this behaviour. A new EMCDDA technical report, published in June, presents an analysis of treatment demand data from 2000 to 2011 and describes drug injection trends across 30 countries (28 EU, Turkey and Norway)⁽¹⁾.

The report illustrates how current drug injection among people admitted to drug treatment services in Europe decreased in the period studied. The decline was most pronounced around 2008–09 although, in some western European countries, it began earlier (2001–02). While the percentage of current drug injectors admitted to treatment was 34 % in 2000, by 2011 it had fallen to 15 %. Heroin remains the drug most frequently associated with injecting, yet the report reveals how drug injectors are now more likely to be using stimulants than in the past.

Potential explanatory factors for the declining trend in injecting include: a decrease in the incidence of heroin epidemics; changes in the route of administration (from injecting to sniffing or snorting); the impact of harm reduction measures; and an increased awareness of drug injection risks, particularly in the wake of HIV epidemics.

Despite the reported decline, injecting remains a major contributor to the global burden of disease attributable to illicit drug use, calling for targeted interventions in the areas of prevention, treatment and harm reduction.

Linda Montanari, Ana Sarasa, Gregorio Barrio, Julián Vicente

⁽¹⁾ For more, see www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/technical-reports/trends-in-injecting-drug-use

LISBON ADDICTIONS 2015

EMCDDA side event

On 23 September, the EMCDDA will be organising at Lisbon Addictions 2015 a special event showcasing the work of the agency. Staff will be present to highlight key achievements of the agency's first 20 years of monitoring and to describe current projects and priorities.

This hands-on session will include thematic corners where visitors can explore the agency's activities through interactive resources.

For more, see www.emcdda.europa.eu

KEY INDICATORS

EMCDDA technical conference: 20 years of monitoring



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Milestone event commemorates the EMCDDA's 20 years of monitoring.

Understanding the dynamics, nature and scale of drug use in Europe, including lessons learnt and challenges for the future, will be the thrust of an EMCDDA technical conference being held in Lisbon from 21–22 September⁽¹⁾. The event, organised ahead of Lisbon Addictions 2015, commemorates the agency's 20 years of monitoring the drug situation in Europe (see p. 4).

Building on national efforts and formative European-level activities, the EMCDDA has worked for the last two decades to improve the monitoring of Europe's drug problems. A core element of this work has been the development of key epidemiological indicators (KI), supported by expert groups⁽²⁾.

This technical conference will bring together over 180 experts from across the globe including representatives of: the five KI expert networks; the Reitox focal points; other technical domains covered by the agency and the EMCDDA. The event will further the agency's ongoing efforts to inspire cross-discipline, multi-indicator analyses of the drugs problem and the sharing of perspectives from different technical domains.

A packed two-day agenda will feature over 70 interventions, eight sessions and 11 workshops. Issues covered will include: maximising the value of information collected; incorporating new tools and topics; and ensuring that the European drug monitoring system remains fit for purpose in the face of new challenges. The final workshop will focus on 'Making monitoring speak louder to policy and more clearly to inform best practice'.

The conference aims to reflect on past successes but also to be forward-looking. Key issues to help the EMCDDA better achieve its aims include: increased data quality and comparability; improved timeliness; better identification of emerging trends; faster and more sensitive monitoring approaches; and the integration of traditional and new monitoring methods (e.g. wastewater analysis, internet surveys). The ultimate aim of this milestone event will be to contribute to reducing drug-related harms through better informed and faster evaluated policies.

Julián Vicente and Roland Simon
on behalf of the conference working group

⁽¹⁾ For more, see www.emcdda.europa.eu

⁽²⁾ www.emcdda.europa.eu/activities/key-indicators

RESPONSES

ADDICTIONS

EMCDDA contributes to key reference work on addiction treatment

Addiction is an increasingly recognised global public health issue.

Addiction is an increasingly recognised global public health issue and a growing number of medical specialties, social science training programmes and professional associations are now incorporating the issue into their training and continuing education curricula.

30 countries around the world and is promoted by the International Society of Addiction Medicine (ISAM)(²).

This comprehensive work, which covers drugs and alcohol, behavioural addictions and co-morbidities, includes state-of-the-art chapters by EMCDDA authors on: prevention (G. Burkhart and R. Simon); best practice and quality standards (M. Ferri and P. Griffiths); and harm reduction (D. Hedrich and R. Hartnoll). In four volumes (2 500 pages), the publication covers an array of themes, ranging from basic sciences to pharmacotherapies and behavioural approaches and social therapies to the systems approach of addiction treatment.

The textbook provides specialists, policymakers, the media, patients and professionals with an interest in addiction with a sound background to the understanding of addiction treatment.

Nady el-Guebal, Giuseppe Carrà, Marc Galanter (editors)

The recently-published *Textbook of addiction treatment: international perspectives* is a compendium of the core knowledge in this expanding field (¹). Bringing together the latest from the neurobiological as well as epidemiological and socio-cultural arena, it is authored by some 280 scientists from over

(¹) www.springer.com/cn/book/9788847053212

(²) www.isamweb.org

KEY INDICATORS

DRID expert meeting update

Highlights of presentations and discussions at the 2015 EMCDDA expert meeting on drug-related infectious diseases (DRID) will be released in the coming weeks, offering up-to-date insights on drug injecting, its health consequences and DRID service development in Europe. The report will add to a range of resources already available on this year's meeting, which took place from 15–16 June in Lisbon (¹).

The annual DRID expert meeting is the European platform for discussion on the drug-related infectious disease situation in Europe and related responses. The 2015 meeting kicked off with a summary of the most recent trends and updates in this area. Particular focus was placed on: updating the regional assessment of HIV risk and response; hepatitis C infections and treatment; botulism and other bacterial infections; emerging risks related to the injection of stimulants (including new psychoactive substances) and drug-related health issues among prison populations. This year, over 40 national experts from 33 countries attended the event, as well as two EMCDDA European partners (European Commission, WHO–Europe).

Isabelle Giraudon

(¹) The following resources are available: expert presentations, supporting documents, national abstracts, agenda, participant list www.emcdda.europa.eu/expert-meetings/2015/drid-drid

CITIES

Berlin cannabis treatment facility celebrates 30 years

One of the most prominent facilities in Berlin for providing treatment for cannabis-related disorders — *Therapieladen* — celebrated its 30th anniversary in the German capital on 8 June. Some 300 experts, therapists and policymakers met at the Berlin City Hall to mark the occasion at a conference entitled 'Cannabis future: beyond ideology' (¹). Among the dignitaries attending the event were: German national drug coordinator and member of the EMCDDA Management Board Marlene Mortler; drug coordinator of the federal state of Berlin Christine Köhler-Azara; and key decision-makers from the Berlin region.

The presentations, which can now be downloaded from the conference website, represented a broad range of disciplines including neuroscience and epidemiology. Historical aspects of cannabis use and treatment were also covered, as well as recent treatment evidence and legal developments. The EMCDDA provided an update on cannabis use and related problems, cannabis-related offences and treatment provision in the EU Member States. The ensuing discussions touched on recent trends, attitudes and debates around the legal status of cannabis in different parts of Europe and the world.

Berlin is one of the 10 European capitals recently identified by the EMCDDA as having a dedicated drug strategy (see p. 1).

Roland Simon

(¹) For more, see www.therapieladen.de/projekte_fachtagungen.php

BOOKSHELF

World Drug Report 2015



On 26 June, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) released the *World Drug Report 2015*. The report presents a comprehensive overview of the latest developments in the world's illicit drug markets, focusing on the production, trafficking and use of the main drug types, along with related health consequences. Chapter 1 presents a trend analysis of illicit drug markets, while Chapter 2 is dedicated to the issue of alternative development.

Launching the report on International day against drug abuse and illicit trafficking, UNODC Executive Director Yury Fedotov stressed that more work needed to be done to understand and address drug dependence as a chronic health condition which requires long-term, sustained treatment and care. 'There is no quick and simple remedy for drug dependence' and we need to invest in long-term, medical evidence-based solutions', he said.

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Executive summary: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish

www.unodc.org/documents/wdr2015/WDR15_ExSum.pdf

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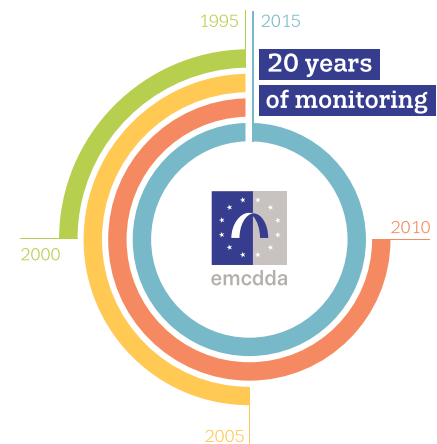
Further details: www.unodc.org/documents/wdr2015/World_Drug_Report_2015.pdf

The EMCDDA is responsible for the selection of materials for the Bookshelf and for the text presented. However, responsibility for the content of these materials and the opinions expressed therein lies with the authors themselves.

FEATURE

EMCDDA: 20 years of monitoring

This year, the EMCDDA commemorates 20 years of monitoring the drugs problem in Europe. Over the last two decades, much has changed in the extent and nature of the phenomenon. In 1995, when the agency embarked on its mission^(†), the EU was in the midst of a heroin epidemic, with drug policy largely driven by HIV transmission and AIDS-related and overdose deaths. In 2015, the policy drivers have diversified and the complexity of the drugs problem has increased, with many of the substances monitored today virtually unknown when the agency was first established.



As we reflect on the achievements of our first 20 years, we also reflect on our deeper and broader understanding of Europe's drug situation and responses to it. Today, the agency can talk with confidence on drug problems evolving across the Union — from the Atlantic to the Russian border — and can inform policy discussions and effective responses at national, regional and local level.

Over the years, the EMCDDA has supported the development of Europe-wide surveillance systems, to carry out regular and sustained monitoring of developments in the drugs field, as well as early-warning mechanisms to ensure rapid responses to new substances. It is an imposing feat that the fledgling monitoring instruments established 20 years ago have now matured into a comprehensive European system recognised worldwide. These successes have been dependent on close collaboration with our European, national and international partners, in particular the EU institutions and the Reitox network of focal points.

At the heart of the EMCDDA's work have been efforts to improve the comparability of drug information across Europe and to devise the standards, methods and tools required to achieve this. These include the agency's five key indicators, allowing EU countries to describe in a 'common language' the extent and effects of drug use and its consequences. To deepen insight and increase the timeliness of information, the agency has broadened its repertoire of monitoring methods in recent years by employing internet monitoring, wastewater analysis and trendspotter methodology to assess new trends and patterns of use.

In the first half of this year, the agency released its 20th annual overview of the drugs problem in its *European Drug Report 2015: Trends and Developments*. In September, the 20-year theme will again be taken up at a technical conference where EMCDDA expert groups will explore the dynamics, nature and scale of drug use in Europe and reflect on future priorities (see p. 2).

A central challenge for the EMCDDA today is to continue to deliver high-quality analyses on established topics while, at the same time, extending its work in less developed but strategically important areas, in a limited-resource environment. As drug-related threats develop, our monitoring systems must evolve to keep pace with these changes and produce robust information for decision-making.

Over the past two decades, European drug policy has gradually become more evidence based. The EU and its Member States have been particularly successful in introducing their unifying values — freedom, democracy and human rights — into drug policy. Looking ahead to the 2016 United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Drugs (UNGASS), I believe that the EU can bring 'more Europe' into world drugs policy and let science and objective information inform the political debate.

Wolfgang Götz, EMCDDA Director

^(†) The EMCDDA was formally established in 1993 but became fully operational in 1995. For more, see www.emcdda.europa.eu/about/mission

INTERNATIONAL

MoU with National Security Council of Armenia

The European Union and Armenia will cooperate more actively on monitoring the drugs problem in future, thanks to a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed on 16 July in Yerevan between the EMCDDA and the National Security Council of Armenia (NSC)⁽¹⁾. The agreement was signed by EMCDDA Director Wolfgang Götz and NSC Chief of staff, Aram Tananyan.

Armenia — a country of the European Neighbourhood Policy area — submitted a formal request for cooperation with the EMCDDA in 2013. This led to a green light from the EMCDDA Management Board in July that year for the agency to negotiate the MoU with the NSC. The new accord — signed for an initial period of five years and sealing cooperation between the two partners — will be implemented through a joint work programme to be updated every three years. This programme will include steps to enhance the partners' monitoring and knowledge base on the drug situation and responses to it, particularly through harmonising key indicators in areas of both supply and demand.

This cooperation takes place within the EMCDDA's mandate for cooperation with third (non-EU) countries in consultation with its Management Board and the European Commission.

Cécile Martel

⁽¹⁾ For more, see Fact sheet No 6/2015 at www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/home

AWARD

Staff member recognised by Cyprus Anti-drugs Council

Alexis Goosdeel, EMCDDA Head of unit for Reitox and international cooperation, travelled to Nicosia on International day against drug abuse and illicit trafficking (26 June) to receive an award from the Cyprus national drug coordination authority (the Cyprus Anti-drugs Council)⁽¹⁾. The award recognises Mr Goosdeel's valuable contribution to the work of the Council since 2001 and his involvement in establishing the national drug monitoring centre in Cyprus (the Reitox national focal point — EKTEPN)⁽²⁾.

The event took the form of an official ceremony at the Palace of the Presidency of the Republic of Cyprus in the presence of Dr Philippos Patsalis, Minister of Health — representing the President of the Republic of Cyprus — and Dr Chrysanthos Georgiou, Chair of the Cyprus Anti-drugs Council.

Over the years, Mr Goosdeel has offered valuable advice in Cyprus on issues of drug monitoring and related systems and has participated in several events in the country to launch the EMCDDA's annual reports and Cyprus' national reports. His knowledge of the Greek language has also greatly facilitated relations with the EMCDDA's Cypriot partners.

Neoklis Georgiades, Head of the Cyprus national focal point

⁽¹⁾ Cyprus Anti-drugs Council: www.ask.org.cy/index.php/el/page/home

⁽²⁾ Cyprus national focal point: www.ask.org.cy/en/page/ektepn

DRUGS-LEX

Innovative legal responses to new psychoactive substances

Innovative legal responses to new psychoactive substances (NPS) is the focus of a new EMCDDA report launched on International day against drug abuse and illicit trafficking (26 June)⁽¹⁾. In response to the growing challenges posed by NPS today, countries across Europe are developing a range of policy measures to reduce the supply, use and harms relating to these substances. Among these measures are laws intended to prohibit several aspects of the trade.

Three broad groups of legal responses to NPS can be identified: use of existing laws focusing on consumer or health protection or on medicines; modification of existing drug laws; and the development of innovative new laws to address the issue.

This brief 14-page analysis focuses on the third group, with a close-up on how different European countries are developing innovative legislative responses to the rapidly evolving NPS market, which challenges public health and drug policy. In 2014, 101 NPS were reported to the EU Early Warning System for the first time.

The report includes a country-by-country summary of the key elements of innovative laws, which include: the definition of a new psychoactive substance (noting any criteria of psychoactivity, abuse or harmfulness); mechanisms used to assess and control a new psychoactive substance; whether a control measure is temporary or permanent; the agency responsible for enforcement; and the penalties possible.

The analysis describes how countries are often forced to act by the speed at which NPS appear, balancing the precautionary principle of rapid control against the credibility and enforceability of the criminal law, which is not always backed by evidence of harm to public health.

The report states that lessons may be learned from observing the evolution of legislation in different countries and seeing how some responses may be later adapted according to subsequent findings.

⁽¹⁾ *New psychoactive substances in Europe: Innovative legal responses* — www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/2015/innovative-laws

SPOTLIGHT



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European drugs summer school

The University Institute of Lisbon (ISCTE–IUL) and the EMCDDA teamed up again from 29 June to 10 July to hold the fourth European drugs summer school (EDSS): ‘Illicit drugs in Europe: demand, supply and public policies’⁽¹⁾. The summer school brought to Lisbon a record 38 academics and professionals from Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America and North America, four of whom received scholarships from ISCTE–IUL and the US National Institute on Drug Abuse.

A distinguished line-up of keynote speakers addressed the students, including: Professor Robert West, Editor-in-chief of the journal *Addiction* (University College London); Professor Henrique Barros (University of Porto); David A. Tyree (US Drug Enforcement Administration) and Owen Bowden-Jones (Imperial College London). A debate on drug policy from a national and European perspective included the participation of the Portuguese National Drug Coordinator, João Goulão and the EMCDDA’s Danilo Ballotta.

Two study visits were also arranged, offering students the opportunity to boost their knowledge of the Portuguese drug policy. The first of these was to Lisbon’s main treatment centre, ‘Taipas’, where the students conversed with health carers and visited inpatient and outpatient facilities. The second brought them to one of Portugal’s Commissions for the Dissuasion of Drug Abuse.

Under its 2016–18 work programme, the EMCDDA will invest in additional training activities in line with a new integrated training strategy.

Marica Ferri

⁽¹⁾ For more, see www.drugsummerschool.cies.iscte-iul.pt/np4/home

PARTNERS

EMCDDA launches IPA 5 project with the Western Balkans

Over the next two years, the EMCDDA will continue to prepare candidate and potential candidate countries to the European Union for future participation in the work of the agency⁽¹⁾. This will be carried out through a new technical cooperation project, launched on 1 July, with beneficiary countries of the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance (IPA).

Under the new project (IPA 5), the EMCDDA will:

- consolidate cooperation with each IPA beneficiary at institutional level;
- foster scientific cooperation in data collection, analysis and interpretation;
- develop, expand and promote the added value of the cooperation.

During IPA 5, the EMCDDA will: organise national and regional training activities; facilitate countries’ attendance at EU expert meetings and support the drafting of a national report of the drug situation in each of the countries. Each IPA beneficiary has nominated a Head of

focal point or a national correspondent for this project who will act as the EMCDDA’s counterpart in organising activities nationally.

The EMCDDA will continue to prepare IPA beneficiary countries for future participation in its work

The European Commission’s IPA programme is designed to help candidate countries and potential candidate countries in their efforts to meet accession criteria, to align with EU policies and standards and to foster socio-economic development.

Cécile Martel

⁽¹⁾ The IPA 5 beneficiaries are: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo*, Montenegro and Serbia. (* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence).

NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES

Annual meeting of the Reitox EWS network

The latest developments in the field of new psychoactive substances (NPS) in Europe were discussed at the 15th annual meeting of the Reitox Early Warning System (EWS) network, held in Lisbon from 8–9 June⁽¹⁾. Participants included the national representatives of the EWS network, Europol, the European Medicines Agency, the European Commission and UNODC.

The meeting opened with a summary of the findings of the *EMCDDA–Europol 2014 Annual Report on the implementation of Council Decision 2005/387/JHA* (see p. 7)⁽²⁾. The report highlights that the growth of the market in new psychoactive substances will continue to pose challenges for public health and drug policy in the coming years, particularly relating to the speed at which NPS appear (two substances every week), their open sale and the lack of information on their effects and harms.

The meeting also provided a forum to discuss: the complex and dynamic nature of the European NPS market and the increasing connection with the illicit drugs market; the need to identify serious adverse events at an early stage and the role of poison centres in spotting emerging problems with NPS; and the relevance of public health alerts as a response to those harms. Innovative national legal responses to the challenges presented to public health and drug policy by the rapidly evolving market for NPS were also discussed (see *Drugs-Lex*, p. 5)⁽³⁾.

Ana Gallegos

⁽¹⁾ www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/2015/early-warning-system-meeting

⁽²⁾ www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/implementation-reports/2014

⁽³⁾ www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/2015/innovative-laws

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

General Report of Activities 2014



The EMCDDA *General Report of Activities* is a statutory publication providing a detailed progress report of the agency's achievements over a 12-month period. The 2014 edition describes how the EMCDDA implemented its annual work programme, highlighting the key results of the year. The structure of the report mirrors that of the annual work programme and is designed to facilitate the cross-checking of results against expected outcomes. In so doing, the report provides a strong management tool for the agency and is a useful resource for those seeking information on the EMCDDA's work.

Available in English at: www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/gra/2014

EVENTS



Overdose awareness conference

Preventing, and raising awareness on, overdose deaths is the topic of a two-day conference opening in Bergen on 31 August (Overdose Awareness Day). Employees of treatment facilities and user organisations in Norway, as well as international researchers, will offer their insights on Day 1, including reflections on Norway's overdose prevention strategy (see *Drugnet Europe* No 89). Day 2, an international research conference supported by the EMCDDA, entitled 'ThINC Bergen 2015', will focus on rescuing overdose victims with naloxone nasal spray. This is currently being tested in a Norwegian pilot project (Bergen, Oslo) and is being increasingly used internationally.

For more, see <http://stoppoverdoser.no/conference-on-overdose-awareness/>

ISAM congress 2015

The 17th International Society of Addiction Medicine (ISAM) congress will take place from 5–8 October in Dundee. Over 100 leading experts in the field of addiction medicine will gather at the event, which enjoys the support of international partners, including the World Health Organization and the EMCDDA as well as the US National Institute on Drug Abuse. The title of the event is 'Addiction: from biology to recovery — Translating research evidence to improve clinical practice and community resilience'. The scientific programme offers workshops on: addiction mechanisms; comorbid mental and/or physical health issues and substance misuse; health inequalities; alcohol and drug policies; HIV and co-occurring infections; undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in addiction medicine and innovative treatment interventions.

For more, see <http://isamdundee2015.com>

A year in review 2014



A year in review 2014 is a four-page publication providing the highlights of the latest *General Report of Activities*. It shows how the agency worked with limited resources to meet increasing information needs and released a broad range of products on Europe's evolving drug situation. The year 2014 is described as an exceptional year for the agency which, despite many challenges, managed to 'stand firm in its role of reference point on drugs in Europe'.

Available in English at: www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/gra/2014-highlights

Drugs policy and the city in Europe



Illicit drug problems and responses, and the many forms they may take in the city environment, are explored in this latest edition of EMCDDA Papers. Entitled *Drugs policy and the city in Europe*, this new analysis shows how modern cities play host to a diverse set of drug using populations and related health, social and security problems (see p. 1).

Available in English at: www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/emcdda-papers/drug-policy-and-the-city

EMCDDA–Europol 2014 Annual Report

This report presents the key activities performed by the EMCDDA and Europol in 2014 in support of the implementation of Council Decision 2005/387/JHA on the information exchange, risk assessment and control of new psychoactive substances. Among others, it covers the number of: new psychoactive substances notified, joint reports produced, risk assessments conducted and public-health alerts issued.

Available in English at: www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/implementation-reports/2014

The *European Drug Report 2015: Trends and Developments* is now available in HTML format. This new online version features interactive charts and maps and uses a fully-responsive design that adapts to the viewing device.

Available in English at: www.emcdda.europa.eu/edr2015

EMCDDA meetings

8–9 September:	EMCDDA legal correspondents meeting, Lisbon.
9 September:	EMCDDA Budget Committee and Executive Committee meetings, Lisbon.
9–11 September:	51 st EMCDDA Management Board meeting, Lisbon.
21–22 September:	EMCDDA technical conference: 20 years of monitoring, Lisbon.
23 September:	EMCDDA side event at Lisbon Addictions 2015, Lisbon.
23 September:	EMCDDA scientific paper award ceremony, Lisbon.

External meetings

28 July:	World Hepatitis Day (www.who.int/campaigns/hepatitis-day/2015/event/en).
13–16 September:	51 st Congress of the European Societies of Toxicology (Eurotox), 'Bridging sciences for safety' (www.eurotox2015.com), Porto.
23–25 September:	European conference on addictive behaviours and dependencies, Lisbon.
5–8 October:	International Society of Addiction Medicine 2015, annual congress, Dundee (http://isamdundee2015.com).
18–21 October:	24 th International Harm Reduction Conference, Kuala Lumpur (www.ihra.net).

EU meetings

3–4 September:	Horizontal working party on drugs, Luxembourg Presidency, Brussels.
4 September:	Dialogue EU–Western Balkans, Brussels.
28–29 September:	National drug coordinators' meeting, Luxembourg.
7–8 October:	Horizontal working party on drugs, Brussels.
8 October:	Dialogue EU–Russia, Brussels.

Selection procedure for new EMCDDA Director

On 23 January 2015, a new vacancy notice for the post of EMCDDA Director was published in the *Official Journal of the European Union*. This followed a decision by the EMCDDA Management Board in December 2014 to close the first selection procedure (initiated in October 2013), after the European Commission had ruled not to establish a final list of candidates. In the interest of the agency and to ensure continuity of its executive management in the interim, the mandate of current Director Wolfgang Götz (expiry: 30 April) was extended until the arrival of a successor.

The selection procedure begins with a panel drawing up a first list of candidates on the basis of their merits, according to the criteria set in the vacancy notice. These candidates are subsequently called for an interview with the Commission's Consultative Committee on Appointments where they undergo testing by an assessment centre run by external recruitment consultants. In the ensuing phase, shortlisted candidates are interviewed by the relevant European Commissioners.

A final list of candidates adopted by the College of Commissioners in July will be proposed to the EMCDDA Management Board meeting in Lisbon from 9–11 September. These candidates will be invited for interviews by the Management Board on 10 September 2015, leading to a candidate being selected by a two-thirds majority.

Before being formally appointed by the Management Board, the selected candidate will be invited to make a statement before the European Parliament and to answer questions put by members of the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee.

Monika Blum

2015 EMCDDA scientific paper award

Among the side events at Lisbon Addictions 2015 will be the 2015 EMCDDA scientific paper award ceremony, which will take place on 23 September at the conference venue. Inaugurated in 2011, this initiative celebrates scientific writing and distinguishes high-quality research in the field of illicit drugs. The award will acknowledge five winners selected from a list of 50 nominations.

For more, see www.emcdda.europa.eu/activities/scientific-paper-award

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EMCDDA, Praça Europa 1, Cais do Sodré, 1249-289 Lisbon, Portugal
Tel. (351) 211 21 02 00 | Fax (351) 211 21 03 80
info@emcdda.europa.eu | emcdda.europa.eu
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