



A year in review

Highlights from the EMCDDA's General Report of Activities

2012

Welcome to the second edition of *A year in review*. 2012 was a year of challenges: the agency needed to work harder with limited resources in order to meet increasing information needs, both in Europe and beyond. We took up the challenge and released a broad range of incisive outputs focusing on Europe's constantly evolving drug situation. We also completed several projects which will help improve our analysis and the quality of the data we collect in the years to come.

Wolfgang Götz, Director

The EMCDDA: 2012 figures

41 key publications in a range of languages

Active involvement in 263 events, conferences and technical meetings

73 new psychoactive substances identified and 23 public health alerts issued through the EU early warning system network

Budget: EUR 16.31 million.
By 31 December: 99.74 % of the annual budget had been committed

Introduction

This leaflet provides an overview of the work of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), as presented in our General Report of Activities⁽¹⁾, with a spotlight on key topics and events. A decentralised European agency based in Lisbon, the EMCDDA is the hub of reliable, robust data on the European drugs situation and responses to it. Our annual progress report provides an overview of our achievements over a set period, for those interested in what we do and how we do it. For further information on the agency, please visit our website at: emcdda.europa.eu ■

⁽¹⁾ Available at: emcdda.europa.eu/publications/general-report-of-activities/2012

Monitoring the drugs situation

One of the EMCDDA's core tasks is to collect, manage and analyse data provided by our focal points in 30 countries (European Union (EU) Member States plus Croatia, Turkey and Norway). The findings gathered through this collective effort — along with expert meetings on epidemiological key indicators where national information is shared — form the basis for the agency's main outputs each year.

On 15 November, we were honoured to welcome Commissioner Malmström to our offices in Lisbon to mark the launch of our *Annual report on the state of the drugs*

problem in Europe⁽¹⁾ and associated products. Published in 22 languages, the report was complemented by an online Statistical bulletin of over 400 tables and graphs and in-depth reports (Selected issues) on drug-related concerns in relation to pregnancy, childcare and the family, and prisons. Commenting on the report, Commissioner Malmström said:

'This new analysis from the EMCDDA is particularly welcome as it highlights the drug problems we share across the European Union and informs the work we are currently undertaking to strengthen Europe's strategic and operational approach to drug trafficking and use.'

Demand reduction was high on the agenda last year. We produced several thematic publications (e.g. on heroin-assisted treatment and the social reintegration and employment of drug users) and launched new online tools (including harm reduction profiles covering 30 countries) on responses to drug use in Europe. Two monitoring instruments developed in 2012 will lead to better harmonised data on treatment and drug use in prison in the years to come.

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⁽¹⁾ Available at: emcdda.europa.eu/publications/annual-report/2012

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Significant progress was made in developing key indicators on drug supply. The second European conference on the topic, held in Lisbon and co-organised by the European Commission and the EMCDDA with support from Europol, provided experts with a forum to discuss how to better monitor drugs coming into Europe as part of global efforts to control the production, sale and consumption of illicit substances.

We released a landmark review of cannabis production and markets in Europe ⁽¹⁾, describing in detail the cannabis supply chain from cultivation to consumption, along with an estimate of the size of the EU cannabis market. Moreover, the agency commissioned a demonstration project to explore how wastewater analysis can help estimate population drug consumption in 19 European cities.

Another key activity was the drafting of an innovative joint report with Europol on EU drug markets — prepared at the request of Commissioner Malmström. A 2013 release and the first of its kind, the report focuses on painting a coherent and holistic picture of developments in the EU for stakeholders, including law enforcement, prevention and academic communities. ■

⁽¹⁾ Available at: emcdda.europa.eu/publications/insights/cannabis-market

Working in partnership

Partnership lies at the heart of our work. The EMCDDA can only react in a timely manner to the rapidly-evolving European drug situation through strong links with key partners. We nurture collaboration with many organisations, including EU institutions and other EU agencies.

2012 was a busy year for inter-agency collaboration. Existing work programmes and agreements with Europol, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), and CEPOL (the European Police College) ran their course, and an amended working agreement was signed with the European Medicines Agency (EMA). The EMCDDA started negotiations for a Memorandum of Understanding with Eurojust. We held the first exchange programme for senior law enforcement officers with CEPOL.

Promoting the monitoring model we use with third countries is capital. For example, the agency obtained funding from the IPA (Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance) programme to run a technical assistance project with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Kosovo ⁽¹⁾, Montenegro and Serbia from 2012–14. This will prepare the countries for collaborating with us in the future. Our Director also signed a Memorandum

of Understanding with the authorities of the Republic of Moldova.

Relations with the scientific, research and academic communities were strengthened throughout the year. Initiatives here included the ceremony for our second Scientific paper award, the hosting of the annual meeting of the International Society of Addiction Journal Editors (ISAJE), and the graduation ceremony for the European Masters in Drug and Alcohol Studies (EMDAS).

The EMCDDA and the United States National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) co-organised the second interdisciplinary forum on new and emerging psychoactive substances in Palm Springs. This event brought together over 300 leading US, European and international experts from 72 countries to take stock of the new drugs phenomenon from a global perspective.

Work with the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD) continued, with the EMCDDA publishing the summary of the 2011 ESPAD report in 25 languages ⁽²⁾.

Last but not least, we must underline our ongoing cooperation with the Reitox network of national focal points: the agency's main data providers and a vital source of knowledge and expertise on drugs issues at national level. Work flourished in 2012, for example with our first 'Reitox week', gathering representatives from the network's 30 countries, as well as some IPA and European Neighbourhood Policy countries ⁽³⁾, in order to foster knowledge and share experience. Representatives of the Reitox network were invited to attend various expert and coordination meetings throughout the year. ■

⁽¹⁾ 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.

⁽²⁾ Available at: emcdda.europa.eu/publications/joint-publications/2011-espad

⁽³⁾ ENP countries: Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Palestine, Syria, Tunisia and Ukraine.



Dr Traute Demirakca and Dr Johanna Gripenberg, two winners of the EMCDDA Scientific paper award, with Scientific Director Paul Griffiths and Director Wolfgang Gotz at the award ceremony.

Alerting and anticipating

The EU early warning system (EWS) implemented by the EMCDDA, Europol and partners in the Member States was particularly active in 2012: 73 new substances were identified, nearly 50% more than in 2011. Twenty-three public health alerts were also issued. To support this work, we organised annual meetings of EWS experts from a broad range of disciplines.

Requests from Member States and institutional partners were handled by the EMCDDA's rapid response team. For example, with sister agency ECDC, we reacted to the outbreaks of newly-detected HIV infections in people who inject drugs in Greece and Romania with a fact-finding mission, expert meetings, reports on the situation in each country and by providing targeted support.

Today's rapidly evolving drug situation in Europe means that identifying and monitoring new trends are central to the work of the agency. In this respect we organised an expert meeting to discuss the abuse of fentanyl (powerful synthetic opioids), followed by the publication of a trendspotter study on the topic⁽¹⁾. ■

⁽¹⁾ Available at: emcdda.europa.eu/scientific-studies/2012/trendspotters-report



Source: Simon D. Brandt, Liverpool John Moores University.

In 2012, the list of substances reported was dominated by 30 synthetic cannabinoid which mimic the effects of cannabis. The product shown is one example. It contains various combinations of synthetic cannabinoids, however these are not declared on the packaging.

Informing policy

We continued to support drug policy dialogue at EU level by providing expertise to the European Parliament, the Council of the EU and the European Commission, along with policymakers in the Member States. Mr Götz presented our *Annual report on the state of the drugs problem in Europe* to the European Ministers for Justice and the European Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE committee).

The EMCDDA took part in the implementation of the first EU Policy Cycle for organised and serious international crime launched by the Standing Committee on operational cooperation and internal security (COSI) for 2012–13. The agency contributed to the definition and implementation of several activities

under the Operational Action Plan (OAP) on the synthetic drugs priority.

In terms of policy issues linked to new drugs, data-collection exercises were launched with the EWS network on two new psychoactive substances. A Joint Report on 4-methylamphetamine (4-MA), was prepared with Europol. On the basis of this report, the Council of the European Union asked for a formal risk assessment of the substance. Consequently, in March 2013, the decision was taken to submit the drug to control measures throughout Europe. A Joint Report on 5-(2-aminopropyl) indole (5-IT) was also prepared.

The agency produced a trend report for the evaluation of the 2005–12 EU drugs strategy and was a key member of the Steering Committee managing the

evaluation process (strategy and action plans).

To support national policymakers, we produced the briefing paper *Drug demand reduction: global evidence for local actions* in 25 languages⁽¹⁾. ■

⁽¹⁾ Available at: emcdda.europa.eu/publications/drugs-in-focus/best-practice





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Dynamic and diverse communication

A new, integrated communication strategy was prepared in a drive to improve even further the EMCDDA's publications and contact with its key audiences. As the European hub for data on drugs, the agency communicates in a variety of styles and formats, increasingly online and via social media. The strategy was endorsed by the Management Board in July. It sets the overall guidelines and tone for all future communication activities, outlining the core values that underpin our work: relevance, quality, efficiency, transparency and consistency. Evolving to meet the changing needs of our audiences is essential in order to remain relevant and credible.

We released 41 key products and a range of new online tools and web-based resources over the period, and 23 scientific articles were published. Twitter and Facebook grew as dissemination channels. Over 200 visitors came to the agency's headquarters: such visits highlight the EMCDDA's role as the reference point on drugs in Europe.

In order to enhance the communication of results to our target audiences, we organised a summer school on 'Drugs in Europe: supply, demand and public policies', in collaboration with the *Instituto Superior das Ciências do Trabalho e da Empresa—Instituto Universitário de Lisboa* (ISCTE–IUL). The course attracted 32 students from 12 European countries, with a professional or academic interest in the field of drugs. Trainers for the course came from both the EMCDDA and ISCTE–IUL. The success of this first course means we will hold a second session, in July 2013⁽¹⁾.

The media are vital relays for all of our activities. We continued to foster relations with journalists, providing a wealth of media-friendly information. In the course of the year, we produced 13 news releases and 10 fact sheets, and the press office handled some 170 requests from the media. The EMCDDA made 232 Facebook posts/entries and 168 tweets and retweets. ■

⁽¹⁾ Summer school website: drugsummerschool.cies.iscte-iul.pt/np4/home

Governance and management

The Management Board adopted a new triennial strategy and work programme for 2013–15. This builds on the progress already made in improving our use of resources, as highlighted in the recent external evaluation of the agency, and contains three core commitments for the agency's future work: providing a relevant, timely and responsive analysis of the drug situation, anticipating future issues and problems; delivering efficiency and ensuring maximum value, and; ensuring we communicate and deliver in a customer-oriented manner.

'...the information provided by the EMCDDA has helped with the development of effective policymaking at the EU and Member State levels to combat the drugs problem.'

External evaluation report of the EMCDDA, Centre for Strategy & Evaluation Services, Sevenoaks, UK. June 2012

Staff award

Our Scientific Director, Paul Griffiths, received the Award for Excellence in International Leadership from NIDA. This recognises researchers who have made significant contributions to international collaborative research and/or capacity building outside the United States or who have helped improve scientific understanding of drug abuse and addiction.

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