



PRESS RELEASE

European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction

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*Declaration from the EMCDDA on the occasion of the
UN International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Drug Trafficking – 26 June 1998.*

EMCDDA to follow up on UN Drug Summit at EU level

The Lisbon-based European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) will follow up at European Union level the goals set by the recent UN 'Drugs Summit' in New York, pledges Executive Director of the Centre, Georges Estievenart. Marking 26 June, **International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Drug Trafficking**, Estievenart recalls proposals from the Summit and outlines the Centre's role for the future:

'The United Nations has now approved a strategic plan for the next ten years and its implementation will require much effort on all levels. The very first step is to develop an adequate information strategy capable of delivering guidelines and relevant data on emerging trends in drug consumption and trafficking. The EMCDDA is endeavouring to reach this goal at European Union level.

'The first two editions of the agency's *Annual Report on the State of the Drugs Problem in the European Union* and the setting up of a European Early-warning System on New Synthetic Drugs are key instruments in this information strategy. Such a strategy will improve understanding of the drug problem and lead to better assessment of good practice and more appropriate strategies in Europe for reducing the demand for drugs and the consequences of their abuse'.

The EMCDDA's *Annual Report*, published every Autumn, provides policy-makers, practitioners, the media and general public with an overview of the drug situation in the European Union. It covers, among others, epidemiology, demand reduction, national policies and the cost effectiveness of anti-drug strategies. This year the *Report* will broaden its scope geographically to include data from the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs) and thematically to provide further analysis of the 'social costs' of drugs.

The Early-warning System on New Synthetic Drugs is a mechanism set up under the terms of a Joint Action formally adopted in Brussels by the Council of the European Union on 16 June 1997. This Joint Action assigns a key role to the EMCDDA in detecting and assessing new synthetic drugs in the European Union. In this framework, the UK Presidency formally requested the Centre in February 1998 to carry out a risk assessment of the new synthetic drug, MBDB. The findings were presented on 20 May to the Horizontal Drugs Group of the Council of the European Union and a progress report on the implementation of the Joint Action submitted to the European Council meeting in Cardiff on 15–16 June.

The EMCDDA, which was represented at the Drug Summit in New York, fully endorsed the 'Guiding Principles of Drug Demand Reduction' and the recognition of the need for a proper assessment of the demand for drugs in all countries and regions of the world, a step being taken at European level by the EMCDDA as the EU specialised agency working on drugs.

The Lisbon-based EMCDDA, which became operational in 1995, embarked on its second Three-year Work Programme (1998–2000) in January this year. The challenges to be met by the Centre in the months and years to come will include: working towards the full implementation of the Joint Action on New Synthetic Drugs; developing epidemiological and demand-reduction information systems; evaluating and comparing policy instruments; closer contacts with the CEECs; and the emergence of an agreed set of common indicators on the drugs problem throughout the European Union. Regular information on the achievements and goals of the EMCDDA may be found on a bimonthly basis in the EMCDDA newsletter DrugNet Europe or on its web site.

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