



PRESS RELEASE

European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction

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US Drug Tsar to visit EMCDDA for US–EU Drug Forum

The Director of the US White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), General Barry R. McCaffrey, will visit Lisbon on 17 July to participate in an unprecedented United States–European Union Drug Forum at the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA).

The Drug Forum, involving some 30 high-level US and European officials, will describe the state of the drug problem on both sides of the Atlantic; examine US and EU drug strategies; and discuss mutual US–EU drug policy perspectives. Taking place outside any formal framework, the Forum will allow free discussion on, and comparison of, different situations and approaches to drug issues. The event is expected to lead to innovative ideas for US–EU co-operation on drugs and more intensive and regular co-operation between the US and the EU on drug-related matters.

Participants from the European Union will include: Bernard Kouchner (F), Secretary of State for Health; Eric Tomas (B), Minister of Public Health in the Brussels Region (B); Hedy D'Ancona (NL), Chairperson of the Committee on Civil Liberties and Internal Affairs of the European Parliament; Sir Jack Stewart-Clark (UK), Member of the European Parliament; Gustaaf Borchardt (NL), Director at the Task Force 'Justice and Home Affairs', Secretariat General of the European Commission; Pierre Defraigne (B), Director of the European Commission responsible for North–South relations; Marianne da Costa de Moraes (A), Chairperson of the CODROG Group of the Council of the European Union; Sandeep Chawla (IN), Senior Research Co-ordinator, the United Nations International Drug Control Programme; Willy Bruggeman (B), Deputy Co-ordinator of EUROPOL, Franz-J. Bindert (D), Chairman of the EMCDDA Management Board and Marcel Reimen (L) Vice-Chairman. The US delegation will include General McCaffrey, other senior ONDCP officials and A. Vernon Weaver, United States Ambassador to the European Union.

Commenting on the Forum, Mr Bindert, said: 'America and Europe are different in many ways. At present, as the importance of the EMCDDA grows as an information centre and an international partner in the field of drugs, it is particularly important to take trans-Atlantic dialogue on the subject a step forward. It is therefore with great pleasure that the EMCDDA welcomes this opportunity to provide a forum for an exchange of experience at such a high level'.

EMCDDA Director Georges Estievenart said: 'The comparison of experiences, situations, responses and ideas between US and the EU on the global drug problem is an essential element in the international effort to curb the consumption, trafficking and production of drugs. A way to achieve this comparison is to provide new opportunities for free discussion with no formal agenda or conclusions between high-level officials and personalities. This is the purpose of this first informal US–EU Drug Forum'.

The objectives of General McCaffrey's first fact-finding European tour are to: visit the UNDCP and review its initiatives; learn more about European drug control; expand US–European dialogue and co-operation involving illicit drug issues; and explain publicly the goals and objectives of the US 1998 Drug Control Strategy. The eight-day trip, covering seven cities, will allow McCaffrey to witness first hand treatment and prevention programmes. General McCaffrey will meet with Portuguese Drug Minister, José Sócrates on the morning of 17 July.

Programme 17 July: A 15-minute press photo opportunity will be given at the EMCDDA at 13.45 THE US–EU DRUG FORUM IS CLOSED TO THE PRESS

A PRESS CONFERENCE WILL BE GIVEN AT 17H30 AT THE EMCDDA

For further information on General McCaffrey's visit, please contact: Alfred Head or Ana do Carmo at the US Embassy, Lisbon. Tel: (351 1) 770 2443. Fax: (351 1) 727 6791/727 3300.

For more details on the ONDCP: <http://www.whitehousedrugpolicy.gov/>

For further information on the US–EU Drug Forum, please contact K. Robertson at the EMCDDA.

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