



# **PRESS RELEASE**

**European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction**

15 July 1999, Lisbon

## **Commissioner Gradin to meet national drug co-ordinators at EMCDDA**

Anita Gradin, European Commissioner responsible for Justice and Home Affairs, will visit the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) on 16 July to present the recent Draft European Action Plan to Combat Drugs (2000–2004). The draft Action Plan was tabled by the European Commission in a communication to the Council of the European Union and Parliament on 26 May and has been welcomed by the EMCDDA for its innovative ideas.<sup>1</sup>

Gradin's presentation will set the scene at an informal EMCDDA Drugs Forum attended by senior drug officials from the EU Member States. Delegates will include the national drug co-ordinators of France, Germany, Greece and Portugal: Nicole Maestracci, Christa Nickels, Meni Malliori and Alexandre Rosa respectively. The UK will be represented by deputy Anti-drugs Co-ordinator, Mike Trace, and Spain by Camilo Vazquez of the Government delegation to the *Plan Nacional sobre Drogas*. Also attending will be current Chairman of the Horizontal Drugs Group of the Council of the European Union, Matti Bäckman (Finland) and Ambassador Irene Freudenschuss-Reichl, Permanent Representative of Austria to the UN in Vienna. In total 12 of the 15 EU countries will be represented.

Commenting on the draft Action Plan in Brussels on 26 May, Gradin said: 'The starting point for the Action Plan is that every individual Member State is responsible for the fight against drugs in its own territory, based on the principles of the three United Nations Conventions on drugs, ratified by all Member States. The ambition at EU level is to support and co-ordinate certain efforts in areas where the Union can bring added value'. The proposed Plan is expected to be adopted during the Finnish presidency later this year following debates within and between the Council and Parliament.

The national representatives will look at prospects presented by the draft Plan and will exchange views on: the evaluation of activities and performance indicators; information on the drug phenomenon and harmonised epidemiological indicators; national and European co-ordination; and integrating research into the fight against drugs.

Recently re-elected EMCDDA Director, Georges Estievenart will highlight the potential contribution of the EMCDDA to the implementation of the Action Plan, especially via the series of harmonised epidemiological indicators of drug use it is developing.<sup>2</sup> He will also comment on the Centre's involvement in early-warning and risk-assessment procedures related to new synthetic drugs with particular reference to a recently adopted EMCDDA 'Report on the Risk Assessment of 4-MTA in the Framework of the Joint Action on New Synthetic Drugs'.

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**THE SESSION WILL BE CLOSED TO THE PRESS. A FINAL PRESS RELEASE WILL BE ISSUED ON 16 JULY SUMMARISING THE SESSION'S CONCLUSIONS.**

<sup>1</sup> See press release 24 June, 'New draft European Action Plan to Combat Drugs: Promising news for the EMCDDA, says Director'. <http://www.emcdda.org>

<sup>2</sup> These indicators cover: demand for treatment by drug users; mortality and causes of death among drug users; the incidence of infectious diseases among drug addicts; drug use in the general population; and prevalence estimates of problem drug use.