



# **PRESS RELEASE**

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

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## **EMCDDA and Pompidou Group to unite against drugs**

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) formally establishing co-operation between the Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe and the Lisbon-based European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) will be concluded at a ceremony in Strasbourg today. The agreement will be signed at the Council of Europe headquarters by the recently appointed Secretary-General of the organisation, Mr. Walter Schwimmer, and the recently re-elected Director of the EMCDDA, Mr. Georges Estievenart.

The Memorandum will help enhance the exchange of information and expertise between the two bodies and improve the co-ordination and planning of their respective work programmes, thereby avoiding duplication of effort. More specifically, the MOU will unite the organisations in their efforts to: improve the collection and analysis of data; develop and promote data-comparison methods; enhance the dissemination of information; achieve optimal use of available information; enhance reports; and ensure the most effective use of resources.

Commenting on the agreement, Georges Estievenart stated: 'The signing of this Memorandum further strengthens the close co-operation already existing between the two bodies. Furthermore, it will make a real difference to the pan-European campaign against drugs by drawing on the efforts and mechanisms established by both the European Union and the Council of Europe. The Memorandum will significantly increase the efficiency and visibility of action in the drugs field at the eve of the new millennium in the perspective of an enlarged and united Europe'.

The EMCDDA, a drug information agency set up in 1993 in the context of the European Union, provides European decision-makers with 'objective, reliable and comparable information' on drugs and drug addiction on the basis of which they may take appropriate action. The information produced by the Centre may constitute the seed in European Commission proposals to the Council of the European Union which, if adopted, become binding legislation in all 15 EU Member States. (This was recently the case when an EMCDDA risk-assessment report on the new synthetic drug 4-MTA led to a Council decision to submit the substance to control measures and criminal penalties in the EU).

Mr. Christopher Luckett, Head of the Pompidou Group secretariat, reaffirmed that: 'Signature of this agreement, which strengthens and deepens co-operation between two of Europe's major anti-drug abuse bodies, will further improve the availability of reliable information on drug issues for politicians and grass-roots workers in the EU and in the wider democratic area of the Council of Europe'.

The Pompidou Group, an intergovernmental drugs forum established in 1971, operates in the framework of the Strasbourg-based pan-European organisation, the Council of Europe. The Group, which adopts a multi-disciplinary approach to combating drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking, promotes and supports the formulation and application of national drug policies and programmes in 31 of the 41 Council of Europe Member States. Discussions within the Group may lead to the adoption of European Conventions such as the 'Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime' or to the publication of manuals and other resource materials. The Group also co-ordinates training and assistance programmes for professionals and administrators in countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

The Memorandum of Understanding, drawn up in accordance with the statutes of the Council of Europe and the founding regulation of the EMCDDA, will be reviewed in 2001.

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