



NEWS RELEASE from the EU drugs agency in Lisbon

EU DRUGS AGENCY MANAGEMENT BOARD ELECTIONS

Board members elect new EMCDDA Chairman: Marcel Reimen, Luxembourg

(3.7.2003, LISBON) The **EU drugs agency's** Management Board convened for a three-day meeting in Lisbon today, kicking off with elections for a new Chairman of the Board.

Mr Marcel Reimen (Luxembourg), first government counsellor at the Permanent Representation of Luxembourg to the EU in Brussels, was elected Chairman by 18 votes and 1 abstention.

Mr Reimen, Vice-Chairman of the agency from 1998–2002, and member of the Board since 1994, assures the Chair of the Board during the period January–December this year, following the premature departure of former Chairman Mike Trace (UK).

In January 2004, Mr Reimen begins a three-year mandate, during which he will steer the **EMCDDA** through its next triennial work programme (2004–2006) and its enlargement to 10 new members in May 2004.

Commenting on his appointment, Mr Reimen said: 'The most significant forthcoming challenge is that of enlargement. One example speaks for itself: in the year 2000, for an EU population of 380 million inhabitants, there were 300,000 substitution treatment places in facilities across the Member States. By contrast, in the new acceding countries, only 6,000 such places existed for a global population of 100 million inhabitants. Other shorter term challenges are the revision of the **EMCDDA** founding regulation and the need for new premises.'

Ten new countries attend as observers

One of the highlights of this week's meeting is the participation of the 10 **EU** acceding countries as observers: Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia.

As of May 2004, each of these countries will appoint two representatives to the Management Board – one member and one deputy – with full participation and voting rights.

Items of particular interest to the acceding countries on this week's agenda relate to talks on the draft 2004–2006 **EMCDDA** work programme, which will have a direct impact on their national drug activities and the work of their national focal points.

Although the **EMCDDA** will admit these 10 new members in May 2004, enlargement will not end there. The three remaining candidate countries (Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey) are expected to become members of the agency before the end of the accession process (i.e. once official negotiations between the Commission and the three countries are concluded).

The Management Board is the **EMCDDA's** main decision-making body. The Board consists of one representative from each **EU** Member State, two European Commission representatives, and two delegates from the European Parliament. Norway and three international organisations enjoy observer status on the Board.