



NEWS RELEASE from the EU drugs agency in Lisbon

VICE-PRESIDENT OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION AT EMCDDA

Agency offers vital tools for informing drug policy, says Frattini

(23.9.2005, LISBON) **Vice-President of the European Commission Franco Frattini** paid his first visit to the **EU drugs agency (EMCDDA)** today, as part of a two-day round of meetings in Lisbon, taking in the Ministries of the Interior, Justice and Foreign Affairs, and the European Commission representation in Portugal.

As **European Commissioner for Justice, Freedom and Security**, Mr Frattini is responsible for the EU drugs portfolio, particularly overseeing implementation of the 2005–2012 EU drugs strategy and its associated action plans (2005–2008 and 2009–2012). The current action plan, adopted in June this year, aims to significantly reduce the prevalence of drug use among the EU population and to reduce the social harm and health damage caused by the use of, and trade in, illicit drugs.

Meeting with **EMCDDA Chairman Marcel Reimen** (Luxembourg), **Director Wolfgang Götz** and the agency's 80 staff members, Mr Frattini underlined the central role of the EMCDDA as information provider on drugs and reference point for policy-makers. He also acknowledged the agency's invaluable contribution to the Commission's evaluation of the EU drug strategies and action plans.

'Sound information and research on drugs are vital tools for designing and informing drug policy and evaluating results', said the Commissioner. 'The EU now has up to 2 million dependent drug users and the use of drugs among young people is at historically high levels. Drugs are also one of the main concerns of European citizens today and a major threat to the security and health of our society. Never before has there been such a need for evidence-based drug strategies. The EMCDDA is the EU body established to provide this very evidence'.

During talks at the agency, the Vice-President also spoke on the Hague Programme, adopted by the European Council in 2004, which aims to further freedom, security and justice in Europe over the period 2005–2010. A 10-point action plan, designed to implement the programme, and approved by the Council in June this year, cites the EU drugs strategy as an integral component.

At the close of the meeting **Director Wolfgang Götz** said: 'The drug phenomenon is both a complex and emotive issue and we need to be guided through its many facets by an impartial and scientifically rigorous analysis of the problem. Across Europe we now share a common experience of the harm that drugs can cause, both to those who use them and to the societies in which they live. We must now match this common experience with a common understanding of the problem, based on a firm foundation of knowledge and objective monitoring'.

Notes

EU drugs strategy 2005–2012

<http://www.emcdda.eu.int/?nnodeID=6790>

EU drugs action plan 2005–2008

<http://www.emcdda.eu.int/?nnodeID=10360>

The Hague Programme and action plan

http://europa.eu.int/comm/justice_home/doc_hague_programme_en.pdf

http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/justice_home/news/information_dossiers/the_hague_priorities/doc/com_2005_184_en.pdf
