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Drugnet Europe

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100

New European guide on responding to drugs

How to respond to the problems of older heroin users? How to tackle deaths from highly potent fentanils? How to prevent harms from drug and alcohol use in festivals and clubs? These are among the questions explored in a new European guide released by the EMCDDA on 24 October ([1]). Drawing on insights from 30 countries, *Health and social responses to drug problems: a European guide* presents the agency's first overview of actions and interventions currently available to address the consequences of illicit drug use. It is designed to benefit those approaching drug problems from a public health planning perspective as well as frontline workers and practitioners.

Drug use today presents us with a complex and ever-shifting set of problems and a wide diversity of programmes exists to address differing needs and objectives. The new guide provides practical guidance on how responses in the drugs area can be better conceived, targeted and delivered, furnishing the building blocks for developing, and successfully implementing, interventions.

EMCDDA Director Alexis Goosdeel said: 'The EMCDDA is committed to assisting policymakers and practitioners in planning and delivering policies and programmes that contribute to a healthier and more secure Europe. This innovative new guide surveys some of the main public health challenges in the drugs field today and provides a map with which to navigate the various stages of designing, targeting and implementing effective responses. To remain relevant, those involved in responding to drug problems must be prepared to adapt, innovate and develop new partnerships. This practical guide equips them with the tools to respond to the drug problems of today, but also to prepare for those of tomorrow'.

The guide views health and social responses to drug problems from the three perspectives of responding to: problems associated with different types of drug and patterns of use; the needs of different groups (e.g. women, young people, migrants, ageing drug users); and problems in different settings (e.g. prisons, nightlife, festivals, schools, workplace, local communities).

Goosdeel: 'This practical guide offers the tools to respond to the drug problems of today, but also to prepare for those of tomorrow'.

Designed as an initial reference point, the publication includes summaries and user-friendly signposting and acts as a gateway to a wide range of online resources (see p. 7).

Nicola Singleton

([1]) For more, see www.emcdda.europa.eu/responses-guide

Evidence-based responses gain ground

'Evidence-based responses appear to be steadily gaining ground in Europe, and within the current financial climate, there appears to be greater interest than ever in ensuring that scarce health resources are well spent', says the new European guide. It underlines the importance of understanding what evidence exists to support a specific intervention, and how to use it. Here it provides 'evidence ratings' for the different actions explored, but stresses that what works in one group or setting may fail in a different context.

A key message emerging from the guide is that using evidence is an 'ongoing process' and that it is essential to develop the knowledge base through collaboration in research, monitoring and the sharing of best practice. The guide links to the EMCDDA Best practice portal, which contains a wide range of resources, including a new 'Xchange' registry (see p. 7).

Drug problems often interact or co-exist with other health and social problems. The guide therefore also underscores the value of drug services forming partnerships with other areas (e.g. sexual and mental health care, housing services) to improve effectiveness and efficiency. 'Effective cooperation between services is essential to meeting the complex health and social needs of many of those with drug problems', states the guide.

SPOTLIGHT

EMCDDA scientific award winners 2017

Winners of the 2017 EMCDDA scientific award gathered in Lisbon on 25 October for the seventh annual award ceremony hosted by the agency ([1]). The acclaimed writers received a non-monetary prize and presented their articles during Lisbon Addictions 2017 ([2]).

The prize, inaugurated in 2011 by the EMCDDA and its Scientific Committee, celebrates scientific writing and distinguishes high-quality research in the field of illicit drugs. This year, close to 50 papers were nominated by members of the agency's Scientific Committee, the Reitox national focal points, drug research societies with a European focus, peer-reviewed scientific journals and by EMCDDA staff.

The four winners (primary authors) were: Annelies Cannaert, Pharm. D. (Belgium), Professor Frederik L. Altice MD (United States); Melvin Soudijn, PhD (The Netherlands) and Mascha Nuijten, PhD (The Netherlands).

Chair of the EMCDDA Scientific Committee Dr Anne Line Breteville-Jensen said: 'New scientific developments can broaden the EMCDDA's understanding of the drugs phenomenon, helping it to innovate and keep pace with new challenges and threats. The EMCDDA scientific award allows us to showcase major advancements in the field of drugs and addictions and maintain an ongoing dialogue with the research and scientific community across the EU. The agency and its Scientific Committee congratulate the winners and applaud their robust contributions, both to our knowledge base as well as to policy and practice.'

Maria Moreira

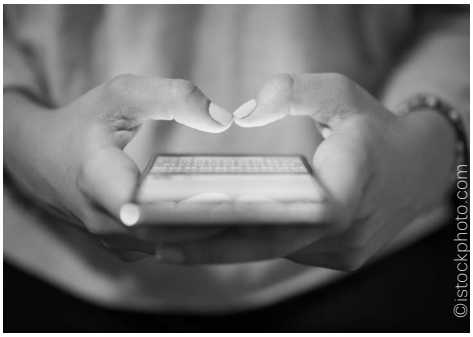
([1]) For details on the winning papers, see www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/2017/10/scientific-award-2017_en

([2]) For more, see www.lisbonaddictions.eu/lisbon-addictions-2017

RESPONSES GUIDE

NEW TECHNOLOGIES

Harnessing the potential of new technologies



M-health involves delivering e-health interventions using mobile phones and similar devices.

The internet, social networking apps, new payment technologies and encryption software are changing the way in which drugs can be bought and sold. These changes not only affect drug markets and consumption patterns but also offer new opportunities for health and social responses. 'To remain relevant, those involved in responding to drug problems will need to … harness the potential of new technologies to support the better delivery of prevention, treatment and harm reduction initiatives', affirms the new European guide. A spotlight is placed on e-health interventions, including m-health apps, which can use digital technologies to provide harm-reduction advice, train treatment professionals and reach out to vulnerable young people who may be reluctant to engage with formal services.

DRUG-RELATED HARMS

Opportunities and gaps

The guide reviews progress to date in preventing and reducing drug-related harms (e.g. via opioid substitution treatment) but highlights areas where opportunities exist for further improvement. Hepatitis C infections account for a considerable share of drug-related health costs in Europe but chances to eradicate the disease exist with the emergence of new treatments. Here it highlights the benefits of better coordination between drug and specialist liver services to guarantee adequate treatment coverage.

Risk factors associated with fatal overdoses are now well known and there have been some notable advances in life-saving interventions (e.g. take-home naloxone). However, the increasing number of overdose deaths in Europe suggests a need to expand the provision of these, and other, interventions which reduce the risk of opioid-related deaths.

ADAPTING TO CHANGE

Flexible responses needed

New policy perspectives and changing drug problems bring fresh challenges for European drug responses. As highlighted in the guide, flexibility is needed: '…modern drug problems can change quickly and have the potential to overwhelm existing drug policies and response models'. Recent challenges include the rapid emergence of new psychoactive substances, such as highly potent opioids and synthetic cannabinoids. As more new substances enter the market, toxicological and forensic capacity must also be improved as part of the frontline response.

Against the contemporary backdrop of socio-demographic and economic change, the guide explores the potential vulnerability of migrants and asylum seekers to drug problems and the need for services which recognise diversity and build trust. Recent changes in the regulatory framework for cannabis occurring in parts of the Americas are also generating interest among policymakers and the public in Europe and there is a growing interest, in both regions, in exploiting the therapeutic potential of cannabis-based medicines. Developments in the cannabis policy area may have knock-on effects for prevention, treatment and harm reduction responses to this drug, and valuable lessons may be learnt from innovations outside Europe.

For more on these topics, see news release in 24 languages:
www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/2017/13/emcdda-publishes-responses-guide_en

CONFERENCES

ADDICTIONS

Lisbon Addictions 2017

Leading international experts in the field of addiction science met in Lisbon from 24–26 October for the Second European conference on addictive behaviours and dependencies ([1]). More than 1 200 participants attended the high-level event, which brought together researchers, practitioners and policy experts from over 70 countries. Latest scientific evidence in the area was discussed and challenges relating to illicit drugs, alcohol, tobacco, gambling, the internet and other addictive behaviours explored.

During the three-day conference, close to 500 presentations were delivered, over 200 posters exhibited and more than 20 lectures offered by internationally renowned researchers and professionals ([2]). Prominent partners contributing to the scientific excellence of the event featured national bodies as well as European and international organisations. A novelty at this year's conference were sessions targeted at young researchers. These were developed under the EC-funded TWIST project (Training WIth Stakeholders), which supported the involvement of early-stage professionals at the conference ([3]). The Third European conference on addictive behaviours and dependencies will take place in Lisbon from 23–25 October 2019.

Renate Hochwieser and Maria Moreira

([1]) For more, see www.lisbonaddictions.eu

([2]) Selected presentations from Lisbon Addictions 2017 will be available soon on the conference website.

([3]) For more, see www.twist-train.eu

WASTEWATER

Testing the waters

Leading European and international experts met in Lisbon from 26–27 October to review the state of the art of the rapidly developing scientific area of wastewater-based epidemiology. They gathered at 'Testing the waters 2017', the Third international conference on wastewater analysis, organised by the Sewage analysis CORe group — Europe (SCORE) and the EMCDDA. The conference took place during Lisbon Addictions 2017 ([1]).

One of the main objectives of the conference was to bridge the fields of wastewater-based epidemiology and more established drug epidemiology and examine the current applications and future perspectives for this innovative drug monitoring approach. At the conference, participants presented case studies and explored novel uses of wastewater analysis, including the forensic side of wastewater-based drug epidemiology and the estimation of medicine misuse.

During the event, the organisers awarded prizes for: 'Best poster' to Lisa Benaglia, Switzerland (Assessing the representativeness of a population equivalent: case of ammonium) and 'Best paper' to Jack Rice, United Kingdom (Quantitative proteomics for molecular diagnostics of public health: the quest for biomarkers of infectious disease).

Renate Hochwieser and Liesbeth Vandam

([1]) For more, see www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/2017/12/testing-water-conference_en and http://score-cost.eu/network-activities/meetings/ttw2017/

DRIVING

Third international symposium on drug-impaired driving

Do changes in cannabis legislation impact on drivers' behaviour?

What are the most practical and accurate methods for testing drivers for drug use? Do changes in cannabis legislation impact on drivers' behaviour? How to educate the public on cannabis-impaired driving? These were among the questions addressed at the Third international symposium on drug-impaired driving, held in Lisbon on 23 October ([1]). The event, which took place on the eve of Lisbon Addictions 2017, was a collaborative initiative of the EMCDDA, the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (CCSA), the US National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA international programme) and the New Zealand Drug Foundation.

The symposium focused on recent changes in cannabis policy in various parts of the world and their implications for drug-impaired driving. Guest speakers from Canada, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, the UK and the US shared their experiences in this fast-moving policy area, as did speakers from the World Health Organization (WHO), the Global Road Safety Partnership and the International Council on Alcohol, Drugs and Traffic Safety.

Presenters agreed that, with more of the population now having access to cannabis (whether for recreational or medical purposes), drug-impaired driving has become an increasingly relevant issue. To date, basic roadside behaviour tests (e.g. walking straight) and biological sample tests (e.g. breathalysers, oral fluid tests) accurately identify impairment by alcohol but, so far, are less accurate for cannabis.

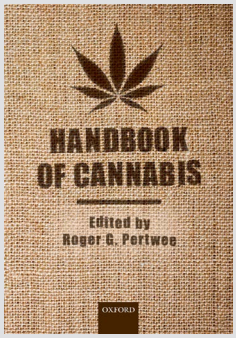
Speakers presented survey results indicating that cannabis users do not always believe that their driving is impaired after taking the drug and emphasised that necessary measures need to be implemented to increase testing and dissuade such drivers. Lawmakers may have to choose a 'least-worst' option now but be ready to adjust it in line with future research findings. A range of responses and penalties may be necessary to dissuade driving after taking cannabis, with options varying according to whether the goal is road safety or cannabis control. Based on the findings of the symposium, work has now started on a report for policymakers answering some Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on this issue, scheduled to be published early in 2018.

Brendan Hughes and Liesbeth Vandam

([1]) For more, see www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/2017/9/symposium-drug-impaired-driving_en

BOOKSHELF

Handbook of cannabis



The *Handbook of cannabis* is a comprehensive collection of medical and scientific research, bringing together contributions from leading experts from around the world.

Divided into six parts, the book covers a wide array of topics including: the history and regulation of the drug; cannabis cultivation (including selective breeding); pharmacological aspects; and how the drug is absorbed and metabolised by the body. It also looks at the rapidly growing group of synthetic cannabinoids, currently used as 'legal highs', and presents clinical data on medical cannabis. The final section of the book addresses recreational cannabis use and examines harm reduction strategies and public education.

Looking to the future, the handbook explores the potential for clinical applications (of the 100 known phytocannabinoids that have been identified in the plant, only 12 have been investigated pharmacologically). Each chapter is written by a group of one or more authors recognised internationally as an established expert in that topic. The book provides a detailed overview of the science, culture and therapeutic potential of Europe's most widely used illicit drug.

Editor: Pertwee, R.G.
Publisher: Oxford University Press (OUP)
Language: English
ISBN: 978-01-9879-260-4
Ordering information: https://global.oup.com/academic/product/handbook-of-cannabis-9780198792604?cc=us&lang=en&

The EMCDDA is responsible for the selection of materials for the Bookshelf and for the text presented. However, responsibility for the content of these materials and the opinions expressed therein lies with the authors themselves.

FEATURE

Drugs and the darknet: a growing threat to health and security

Illicit trade on darknet markets is one sign of the increasingly complex nature of transnational organised crime in the European Union. Darknet markets — also known as cryptomarkets — provide a largely anonymous platform for trading in a range of illicit goods and services. Although modest when compared to the overall drug market, drug sales on the darknet are significant and appear to be expanding — now being estimated to account for around two thirds of all darknet market activity. This development poses a growing threat to the health and security of citizens and communities across the EU.

Darknet markets provide a largely anonymous platform for trading in a range of illicit goods and services.

In a new report launched by the EMCDDA and Europol on 28 November — *Drugs and the darknet: perspectives for enforcement, research and policy* — the agencies present the current understanding of the functioning of darknet markets, outline potential counter-measures for policymakers and law-enforcement professionals and recommend areas for further monitoring and research.

Drugs are estimated to account for around two thirds of all darknet market activity

In the report, the EMCDDA and Europol have combined the latest available data, identified knowledge gaps and outlined strategies to reduce criminal opportunities in the darknet ecosystem. Innovation in criminal activity in this area represents a challenge to established law-enforcement practice and, if operational capacity is to keep pace, responses must be developed that are equally innovative and technologically informed. The new report contributes to this objective by providing the conceptual framework necessary for understanding the phenomenon, accompanied by an EU-focused analysis of drug supply on darknet markets and a review of the challenges and the possible opportunities for law enforcement.

The release of the report is timely, following the recent takedown in July 2017 of Alphabay and Hansa, two of the largest darknet markets. Yet, despite this positive achievement, those involved in the online trade in drugs appear to be resilient to law-enforcement disruption and quick to adapt and develop new strategies and business models to reduce the risk of detection.

According to the report, market disruption needs to form part of a broader, more integrated set of measures implemented within an overall strategy to address the drug market in the darknet. Engagement with the information technology industry will be a key factor.

European-level cooperation and coordination are likely to be critically important for an effective response in this area. The insights provided by this new report will make an important contribution to informing and preparing Europe's response to the growing threat posed by darknet drug sales.

The online trade in illicit goods and services was recognised as a key threat to the safety of EU citizens in the 2017 EU Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (SOCTA) and is being tackled as part of the coordinated response to serious and organised crime set out in the EU Policy cycle for organised and serious international crime (2018–2021). The analysis presented in the report is therefore forward-looking, as the challenges in this area are constantly evolving.

([1]) For more, see www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/joint-publications/drugs-and-the-darknet and www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/home_en

PARTNERS

JHA agency directors meet in Lisbon

The EMCDDA's chairmanship of the Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) agencies' network is drawing to a close ([1]). On 28 November, the EMCDDA hosted a meeting of the network's directors to take stock of the JHA work programme achievements in 2017 and the way forward in 2018. The high-level event brought together Dimitris Avramopoulos, European Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship; the JHA agency directors and key stakeholders in the network.

During the meeting, the participants discussed opportunities for enhanced inter-agency cooperation to support the EU institutions and Member States in responding to Europe's challenges in the dynamic, and constantly evolving fields, of migration and security.

The network was deemed to have played an important role in improving the management of the EU external borders, fighting organised crime and counteracting terrorism and cybercrime. The network examined links between migration, security and health issues and put the spotlight on the increased role of the internet and the use of cyberspace for criminal purposes.

As in previous years, technical support provided by the JHA agencies to the implementation of the European Agenda on Migration and to the European Agenda on Security remained at the heart of the network's activities. Several meetings took place during the year bringing together the expertise of all nine agencies and identifying priority areas of work in analytical and operational fields, training, external relations and ICT.

The network's achievements in 2017 will be presented to the Council's Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security (COSI) and the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) of the European Parliament. EIGE will chair the JHA agencies' network in 2018, followed by Europol in 2019.

Klaudia Palczak, Renate De Neve and Leen Gijbels

([1]) For more, see www.emcdda.europa.eu/about/partners/jha

INTERNATIONAL

New accord with Swiss FOPH

Europe's regional monitoring system on drugs has been enriched, thanks to a new working arrangement signed in Lisbon on 12 September between the EMCDDA and the Federal Office of Public Health of Switzerland (FOPH). The signatories were Alexis Goosdeel, EMCDDA Director and Pascal Strupler, Director of the FOPH ([1]).

The new arrangement is in line with the EMCDDA Strategy 2025, which stresses that the agency should develop its services in partnership with national, European and international actors working in the drugs field in order to fulfil its role as the leading EU provider of evidence on drugs ([2]).

The working arrangement was endorsed by the EMCDDA Management Board in June 2017, following consultation with the European Commission. It takes place within the agency's mandate for cooperation with third (non-EU) countries and will be implemented through a joint work programme.

The agreement includes steps to enhance the knowledge base on the drug situation and responses to it, through cooperation in the area of data-collection methodology and through data sharing in key areas (e.g. demand and demand reduction, supply and supply reduction, legal aspects and policy models). It also allows the two bodies to exchange experience on health and social responses to drug problems (e.g. harm reduction, social integration and preventing communicable diseases), a topic in the spotlight in the EMCDDA's first European guide on the issue (see p. 1). Finally, the accord pays special attention to the exchange of expertise in the area of new psychoactive substances (NPS).

Cécile Martel

([1]) For more, see www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/2017/fs8/swiss_working-arrangement_en

([2]) See p. 17 www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/work-programmes-and-strategies/strategy-2025_en

DRUG POLICY

EMCDDA launches new online resources to support drug policy evaluation

Evaluation is essential for effective policymaking, helping to ensure that policies and programmes have the desired effect, provide value for money and do not bring negative unintended consequences. The value of evaluation has been recognised in all EU drug strategies and in the strategies of many EU Member States. On 10 October, the EMCDDA launched a new package of online resources designed to inform and support those considering, or involved in, drug policy evaluation ([1]).

The new web area provides access to a wide range of materials, including *Evaluating drug policy: a seven-step guide to support the commissioning and managing of evaluations*. A timeline of EU drug strategies and action plans and their evaluation (1990–2017) is also presented, along with an overview of national drug strategy evaluation in 30 countries up to 2016 (EU 28, Turkey and Norway). The web area, which links to additional resources, is targeted at EU and national drug policymakers and planners as well as researchers and professionals working in the drugs field.

Evaluating drug policy is a challenging task. The EMCDDA supports the European Commission in its evaluations of the EU drug strategies and action plans. It is also increasingly called upon to assist governments in evaluating national drug strategies. The new resources reflect the aims of the EMCDDA Strategy 2025, which promises to provide the agency's customers with tailored products and services to help them achieve their goals (including evaluating policies and strategies).

Nicola Singleton, Danilo Ballotta and Eoghan Quigley

([1]) For more, see www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/topic-overviews/policy-evaluation_en and www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/2017/fs9/drug-policy-evaluation_en

HIGHLIGHTS

Expert meeting results

From 18–21 September, the EMCDDA brought together experts from some 40 countries for its annual expert meetings on the Treatment Demand Indicator (TDI) and Drug-Related Deaths (DRD)([1]). TDI and DRD are two of the five key epidemiological indicators on which the EMCDDA bases its analysis of trends and developments in the EU drug situation. These indicators are also essential for any analysis of the impact of responses and policies.

Opioids, mainly heroin, still represent the main reason for entering drug treatment, although most clients use multiple substances. The TDI meeting discussed how an ageing cohort of drug patients, with complex health and social needs, now poses a challenge for drug treatment services. Drug patients often suffer from psychiatric comorbidity, demanding that mental health and substance use disorders be tackled at the same time.

The DRD experts explored signs of an increase in the number of fatalities compared to last year, with particular attention being given to the monitoring of overdose deaths through special mortality registries and to improving forensic toxicology practices and comparability. Central to the discussions were widespread responses to reduce drug deaths (from mainstream opioid substitution treatment to take-home naloxone programmes and drug consumption rooms). Valuable opinions were also shared on coding and on national statistics.

Linda Montanari and Isabelle Giraudon

([1]) For more, see:
www.emcdda.europa.eu/meetings/2017/tdi
www.emcdda.europa.eu/meetings/2017/drd

NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES

Acryloylfentanyl and furanylfentanyl to be placed under control across the EU

On 25 September and 15 November respectively, the EU reacted to serious concerns over the use of the synthetic opioids acryloylfentanyl and furanylfentanyl by deciding to subject them to 'control measures' throughout the Union ([1]). Following publication of the decisions in the *Official Journal of the European Union*, Member States will have one year to introduce the controls into national legislation.

The implementing decisions of the Council of the EU were adopted in the final stage of the three-step legal procedure designed to respond to potentially threatening new psychoactive substances (NPS) available on the market ([2])([3]). The substances in question — structurally related to fentanyl — have been raising health concerns in Europe after harmful effects related to their use were reported by the Member States through the EU Early Warning System (EWS).

The decisions are based on the findings of formal risk assessments of the drugs, conducted by the extended EMCDDA Scientific Committee on 22 February and 23 May respectively ([4]). At the time of risk assessment, acryloylfentanyl had been detected in six EU Member States and 47 deaths associated with the substance had been reported by three EU countries. Twenty three deaths associated with furanylfentanyl were reported by six EU countries. It was concluded that the high potency of the substances constitutes a serious risk of acute toxicity through respiratory depression.

Rachel Christie, Ana Gallegos and Roumen Sedefov

([1]) *N*-(1-phenethylpiperidin-4-yl)-*N*-phenylacrylamide (acryloylfentanyl) and *N*-phenyl-*N*-[1-(2-phenylethyl) piperidin-4-yl]furan-2-carboxamide (furanylfentanyl).
For more, see www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/2017/8/acryloylfentanyl-under-control-across-eu_en and www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/2017/15/council-implementing-decision-control-furanylfentanyl_en

([2]) Council Decision 2005/387/JHA: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32005D0387:EN:HTML

([3]) www.emcdda.europa.eu/activities/action-on-new-drugs

([4]) Risk assessment reports to be published in the coming months (in English) at www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/risk-assessments

Nine risk assessments in 2017

In 2017, the EMCDDA has carried out nine risk assessments on new psychoactive substances (NPS)([1]). In addition to the two new synthetic opioids acryloylfentanyl and furanylfentanyl — risk assessed in February and May respectively — a further seven substances were risk assessed early in November. Of these, four were synthetic cannabinoid receptor agonists (AB-CHMINACA, ADB-CHMINACA, CUMYL-4CN-BINACA, 5F-MDMB-PINACA) and three were fentanils (4F-iBF, carfentanil and THF-F). The need for these assessments reflects the growing harms caused by these two groups of substances within Europe over the past few years.

Michael Evans-Brown and Rachel Christie

([1]) For more, see www.emcdda.europa.eu/activities/action-on-new-drugs

A faster response to NPS

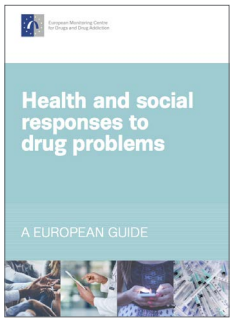
Europe's ability to rapidly respond to public health and security threats caused by new psychoactive substances (NPS) will be significantly strengthened, thanks to new legislation published on 21 November ([1]). The legislation will include a stronger EU Early Warning System (EWS) and a faster risk-assessment process.

The developments are in response to the recent growth in the market in NPS and follow a proposal from the European Commission (EC) comprising: a *Regulation* regarding information exchange on, and an early warning system and risk assessment procedure for, new psychoactive substances (amending the EMCDDA founding regulation) and a Directive including new psychoactive substances in the definition of 'drug'. Compared with the previous procedure, the new legislation introduces shorter deadlines, thereby bringing a faster response to NPS.

([1]) For more, see link www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/2017/16/new-legislation-response-new-psychoactive-drugs_en
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ HIS/?uri=consil:ST_9566_2017_INIT
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/ HIS/?uri=CONSIL:ST_9567_2017_INIT

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

Health and social responses to drug problems: a European guide



The EMCDDA released *Health and social responses to drug problems: a European guide* on 24 October during a week of events organised around Lisbon Addictions 2017. Designed as a reference document, it incorporates summaries and user-friendly signposting to highlight key information, best practice examples and implications for policy and practice. It also acts as a gateway to a wide range of online resources (see 'Background' and 'Resources' sections on the guide webpage). These include experts' background papers, policy and practice briefings and topic pages covering harm reduction, prevention, prisons and treatment.

Available in English at www.emcdda.europa.eu/responses-guide

Xchange registry: prevention programmes

On 24 October, the EMCDDA launched Xchange, a new online registry of evidence-based prevention programmes. In its first phase, the registry will make available manualised interventions that European evaluation studies consider to have beneficial outcomes relating to substance use. In addition to providing information on the effectiveness of programmes, the registry also offers information on the experiences of professionals who have implemented these programmes in individual European countries. This enables decision-makers to assess the ease with which programmes can be implemented in different social, cultural and organisational contexts.

For more, see www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/2017/fs10/xchange-registry_en

New developments in national drug strategies

This latest edition in the EMCDDA Papers series provides an overview of some recent developments in the tools most commonly used to manage national drug policies: strategies, coordination mechanisms and evaluations. It is based on an analysis of reports on national drug policies (compiled by the Reitox national focal points in the 30 EMCDDA reporting countries) as well as on consultation with experts and on scientific literature.

Available in English at www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/emcdda-papers/new-developments-national-drug-strategies-eu_en

Drug-related infectious diseases in Europe

This latest edition in the EMCDDA Rapid communication series presents an update on infectious diseases related to drug use in Europe for the period up to June 2017. It provides an overview of the most recent data on infectious diseases among people who inject drugs (PWID) in Europe, collected through the EMCDDA drug-related infectious diseases (DRID) key epidemiological indicator, and examines ongoing responses to these. The report includes highlights and new findings discussed during the DRID indicator's annual expert meeting, held from 14–16 June 2017 in Lisbon.

Available in English at www.emcdda.europa.eu/rapid-communications/2017/drug-related-infectious-diseases-in-europe_en

JUST PUBLISHED

How to estimate the cost of drug treatment in Europe?

It is estimated that over 1 million people receive treatment for drug-related problems in the European Union every year. With shrinking public budgets, increasing pressure on health systems, changes in the substances used and the need to provide ongoing care to chronic cases, how can we estimate the cost of drug treatment in Europe? This is the question explored in a new EMCDDA Insights publication entitled *Drug treatment expenditure: a methodological overview* ([1]).

Data collection and research are well established in Europe on treatment activities and their outcomes, yet information is limited on the costs of drug treatment. In a first step towards filling this data gap, the new report offers a unique overview of the models currently used to estimate drug treatment expenditure around the world.

EMCDDA Director Alexis Goosdeel said: 'In this economic climate, more than ever, policymakers and service planners require data and information on the capacity, performance and costs of national treatment systems in order to support investment decisions and to make sound policy choices. I hope that this report will be seen as an important signpost in the development of improved estimates for public expenditure on drug treatment and as a contribution to defining good practice in drug policy evaluation. Ultimately this will lead to a more cost-effective allocation of resources'.

The report sheds light on current good practice in this field and suggests areas for future methodological development. Drawing on the experience of economists, policy advisers and scholars from Europe, the United States and Australia, it provides a state-of-the-art overview of estimating drug treatment expenditure as well as data sources, their uses and limitations.

Cláudia Costa Storti

([1]) For more, see www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/2017/11/insights-drug-treatment-expenditure_en

CALENDAR 2017

EMCDDA meetings

9 November:	47th meeting of the EMCDDA Scientific Committee, Lisbon.
9 November:	*European Drug Report 2017* national launch, Warsaw, Poland.
14 November:	*European Drug Report 2017* national launch, Ljubljana, Slovenia.
28 November:	Directors of JHA agencies' network meeting, Lisbon.
28 November:	Launch of the EMCDDA–Europol report on *Drugs and the darknet: perspectives for enforcement, research and policy,* Lisbon.
28 November–1 December:	6th extended Reitox Week and 57th Reitox Heads of focal point meeting, Lisbon.
5–6 December:	17th EU Early Warning System meeting, Lisbon.
13 December:	Meetings of the EMCDDA Executive Committee and Budget Committee, Lisbon.
14–15 December:	EMCDDA Management Board meeting, Lisbon.

External meetings

13–17 November:	2nd COPOLAD annual meeting of drug observatories, Lisbon.
16–17 November:	6th inter-sessional meetings of the CND, Vienna.
20–21 November:	ESPAD Assembly, Pisa.
21–22 November:	81st meeting of the permanent correspondents of the Pompidou Group, Strasbourg.
21–23 November:	8th meeting of the international network on precursor control, Pompidou Group, Strasbourg.
28 November–1 December:	2nd COPOLAD annual week on precursors, Brasilia.
11–12 December:	WHO conference on prison health, Lisbon.
12–14 December:	Expert group on drug-related cybercrime, Pompidou Group, Dublin.

EU meetings

8–9 November:	Horizontal working party on drugs, Brussels.
20–21 November:	EU-ANSA meeting, Lisbon.
28 November:	Horizontal working party on drugs, Brussels.

UPDATE

European Commissioner Julian King visits EMCDDA

European Commissioner for the Security Union, Julian King paid his first visit to the EMCDDA on 6 November, where he met EMCDDA Director Alexis Goosdeel and the agency's experts in the area of security ([1]).

The EMCDDA's long-term strategic vision is to contribute to a 'healthier and more secure Europe' by providing sound evidence for policies and actions on drugs. During the meeting, EMCDDA experts presented to Commissioner King the agency's contribution to the EU Policy Cycle on Serious Organised International Crime, based on its strategic overview of the EU drug market, including drug production and trafficking and current threat assessments linked to new synthetic opioids (particularly new fentanils).

([1]) www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/2017/14/visit-commissioner-julian-king_en

A last word from the editor

And so we reach our 100th edition and the end of *Drugnet Europe* as we know it. After 21 years of offering you the newsletter in print, we are now winding up this print edition in favour of a more dynamic, digital delivery of our news, brought to you with greater frequency.

Drugnet Europe was first launched on 26 September 1996 and, since then, has been through countless changes, including four image updates and regular modifications in periodicity, linguistic options and focus. Hundreds of authors have contributed to the newsletter over this time and contractors from seven countries have helped shape it and send it to press.

As one of the first EMCDDA publications, the newsletter has followed the growth of the agency from its infancy to maturity and, as such, is a key resource in our institutional memory. I have had the pleasure to edit the newsletter over these two decades and would like to thank all of those who ensured the steady stream of content and reflection. I will also remember the 'behind-the-scenes' *Drugnet Europe*, including editing amidst the boxes as I moved house, late night writing beside a sleeping baby and proofreading in countless locations both near and far!

On that note, a final thank you. We look forward to engaging with our readers in the new digital format in 2018.

Kathy Robertson

To ensure that you keep up to date with EMCDDA activities, events, products and services, please sign up to receive our news electronically by completing the subscription form at http://eepurl.com/coizO9

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