

E.M.C.D.D.A.

European Monitoring Centre
for Drugs and Drug Addiction

DrugNet Europe

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In March 1997, the EMCDDA launches its second *General Report of Activities*. Below, Mr. Georges Estievenart, Director, looks at some of the main accomplishments of the agency in 1996 and at perspectives for 1997.

1996, in the life of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, may best be described as the take-off year, thanks to the development and completion of much of the ground-work carried out during 1995, the year when the agency was launched.

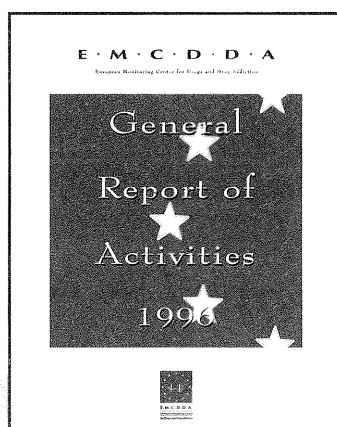
Undoubtedly the high-point of the year was the publication of the Monitoring Centre's *1995 Annual Report on the State of the Drugs Problem in the European Union*, the first in a long line of reports which promise to become a major feature of the Centre's work in the future and its main institutional product. The Centre's visibility was also ensured by the publication of the *1995 General Report of Activities* and *DrugNet Europe*, and will be heightened further in 1997 by a new series of scientific publications.

Building on experience gained in compiling the first overview of drugs in Europe, the EMCDDA and the REITOX Focal Points established new reporting structures in 1996 to ensure greater

reliability and comparability of information in accordance with the general mandate of the Centre. Co-operation with the six international partner organisations also gained momentum resulting, among others, in

OUT NOW!

1996 General Report of Activities



increased co-operation in reporting methods and the creation of a joint EMCDDA-UNDCP consultancy.

The EMCDDA proved to be a useful partner for the European institutions in

1996, a fact that was underlined by the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament in the course of joint working meetings with the Centre as well as in a significant report on drugs submitted to the European Council in Dublin in December 1996. This relationship will continue in 1997 thanks to an EU-commissioned EMCDDA project to carry out work on a number of topical issues such as new synthetic drugs and concrete aspects of the implementation of drugs legislation in Europe. Here, the Centre will carry out scientific work allowing it to clarify these subjects and to facilitate decision-making at the level of the Member States and the institutional bodies of the European Union.

The *1996 General Report of Activities* reports on the agency's scientific and administrative achievements as well as steps made in co-operation with its institutional and political partners. A taste of new projects for 1997 are set out in the following pages of this newsletter.

All in all 1996 was a particularly challenging year due to the contrast between all important medium- and long-term objectives, and very short-term demands requiring high visibility. Of course there is still a long way to go to reconcile these two constraints, but the path is already clearly marked out.

FIRST EUROPEAN CONFERENCE ON THE EVALUATION OF DRUG PREVENTION

Over 80 high-level experts working in the field of drug prevention in the European Union will meet in Lisbon from 12 - 14 March to examine the scientific evaluation of drug prevention programmes in the EU Member States and beyond. The aim of the Conference, the first of its kind

in Europe to focus exclusively on this theme, will be to promote evaluation as a means of achieving higher quality standards and control in prevention activities, in line with the priorities of the EMCDDA.

A theoretical introduction on the state of the art in the evaluation of prevention will be followed by three workshops examining the *Guidelines for the Evaluation of Drug Prevention*, drawn up in 1996 by the EMCDDA and the German Focal Point, the *Institut für Therapieforschung**. Other workshops will explore how these

Guidelines may be used in different settings, such as the community, schools, youth sub-cultures and the mass media.

A number of plenary sessions feature on the agenda which will examine, among others, the planning of evaluation, existing evaluation instruments and the use of intermediate variables in the evaluation process. Also under discussion will be some of the barriers and challenges to evaluation.

Monica Blum

** See DrugNet Europe No 2.*

Defining Demand Reduction

In a field where concepts and terminology are not always clear, obtaining objectivity and comparability of information is no easy task. In 1996, therefore, the EMCDDA underlined the need to define, and specify terms and concepts in, the field of demand reduction. A clear understanding of demand reduction is essential to facilitate communication and information exchange on technical and policy matters and to assist classification in the area of documentation. It is thus relevant to all projects of the EMCDDA.

Acknowledging the fact that many interpretations of demand reduction exist across Europe, the EMCDDA contracted the UK Focal Point, the Institute for the Study of Drug Dependence (ISDD), to look into the boundaries and internal contours of the concept via a «*Study on Concepts and Terminology in the Field of Demand Reduction*». The groundwork for the Study began in the Summer of 1996 in the form of a Delphi study and was followed by a literature review and expert meeting to shed light on the issue and propose ways forward.

The Study, completed at the end of 1996, concluded that the operational definition of demand reduction used in the EMCDDA's 1995 Annual Report (which focused on prevention and treatment) roughly corresponds to experts' understanding of the term. It also revealed, however, that only a minority of those questioned considered this definition to be sufficient in itself, most calling for the definition to be extended. Elements of harm reduction and enforcement were included in the meaning by some experts, while others equated demand reduction with a comprehensive policy approach including supply reduction.

The EMCDDA will continue to explore this issue in the future and will consolidate, in a pragmatic way, information collection and analysis in areas considered to fall under demand reduction. At the same time, it will continue its efforts to define and classify the field in order to arrive at a coherent understanding of demand reduction in the context of related concepts.

Margareta Nilson

The above-mentioned Study is available from the EMCDDA.

D-DAY: POLITICIANS UNITE AGAINST COMMON ENEMY

Political leaders from all parties in Portugal stood united on 28 January in a one-day nationwide anti-drugs initiative known as D-Day.

In a country where drug abuse among young people seems to have been on the rise over the last five years, this media campaign, organised by the Portuguese Government, targeted over 1000 schools from elementary to secondary level with the simple slogan «Life is not a drug».



Portugal's President, Jorge Sampaio, joins in D-Day activities

Portugal's President, Speaker of the Parliament, Prime Minister and leaders of the opposition parties all descended on schools during the day to debate the problem of drugs with teachers and pupils. Meanwhile, outside the classroom, supermarkets, cinemas, football teams, banks and even the national zoo joined in the campaign which had prevention as its core concern.

Along with the usual stickers, pins and posters, over four million leaflets were distributed throughout the country informing young people on the dangers of drugs and educating parents on the tell-tale signs of drug abuse. The national telephone company commemorated the day by signing an agreement to launch a freephone drugs helpline, while

TV companies broadcast a spot encouraging society to face up to drugs with the message «So that drugs don't come knocking on your door».

The Portuguese Focal Point, *Observatório VIDA*, marked this National Day of Reflection with a presentation of its annual activities report. This was attended by the EMCDDA.

New Projects: Demand Reduction

Building on initiatives developed under its 1996 work programme, the EMCDDA has launched a new series of projects for 1997 in the area of demand reduction.

The *Information System on Demand Reduction Activities**, currently being tested in the fields of prevention, outreach work and treatment, will be extended to other areas in the course of the year thanks to three new projects investigating activities in the criminal justice system, the university training sector and the workplace. These projects will explore the kind of demand reduction activities existing in these areas in Europe and how the activities may be classified for inclusion in the EMCDDA databases. The project related to the criminal justice system will be completed in May 1997 allowing for the first results

to be included in the 1996 Annual Report on the State of the Drugs Problem in the European Union. The findings of the remaining studies will be discussed in expert meetings in the Autumn where future action will be defined.

As a spin-off to its project on the Evaluation of Prevention, which includes the first European Conference on this topic in March, the Demand Reduction Department is setting up an *Evaluation Instrument Bank* at the EMCDDA. Essentially a collection of evaluation instruments, such as questionnaires, this Bank will offer evaluators easy access to adequate tools aimed at enhancing the quality of evaluation.

Finally, the EMCDDA will be organising its first workshop on the Evaluation of Treatment from 17-18 March in Athens where it will draw up terms of reference for the coming years, paving the way for future work programmes.

Margareta Nilson

* See DrugNet Europe No 3.

Expert Meeting examines Feasibility Study

An expert meeting was held in Lisbon on 21 January to discuss a small-scale feasibility study begun by the EMCDDA in October 1996 to analyse how amounts of different drugs are defined as being for personal use or for drug trafficking in national legislation, national directives or judicial guidelines. The study examines the feasibility of collecting data on judicial distinctions made in practice in the Member States and proposes a more thorough pilot study in 1997.

It is already clear from the study that this is a complex subject and that the quantity of a drug involved is merely one of several factors determining whether it is considered as being for personal use or for trafficking. In EU Member States, very small amounts are almost invariably considered in practice to be for personal use and much larger amounts to be for other purposes. In between lies a grey area where a range of other factors is taken into account, including the circumstances in which the drug is found, the presence of other evidence

(e.g. unexplained amounts of money) and the characteristics of the person (e.g. whether they are an addict or have a previous criminal record).

Very few countries have legislation that defines small quantities although, in some countries, guidelines are provided by public prosecutors and, in others, a significant degree of discretion is exercised by the police.

Participants at the meeting stressed that it will be necessary to examine this issue at all three stages in the judicial process: police arrest and charge; prosecution; and court decision. The next step will be to examine the feasibility of collecting data at each of these levels in the different Member States and to formulate more precisely the terms of reference of a pilot study that could obtain the information required.

The feasibility study stems from a workshop held in Brussels in March 1996 on the application of national drugs legislation in Europe where the EMCDDA was named an important contributor on research on this topic.

Richard Hartnoll

New Projects: Epidemiology

With the aim of improving the comparability, quality and usefulness of research on drug use prevalence in the European Union, the EMCDDA is embarking on a number of new projects in 1997.

In the area of prevalence estimation, three new projects are on the drawing board, namely, 'Improving the Comparability of National Population Surveys', focused on measuring drug use in the general population, and two studies aimed at assessing problematic drug use. The first of these, 'National Level Addiction Estimation', cross-tests the different methods used in countries while the second, 'Local Level Addiction Estimation', focuses on the more sophisticated methods (capture-recapture). These two studies, as well as a Scientific Monograph currently under preparation, follow on from a prevalence estimation seminar held in Strasbourg in June 1996.

To complement bare prevalence figures, an 'Inventory, Bibliography and Synthesis of Qualitative Research' has been started which will provide more detailed information on drug use, such as patterns of use and social factors*. A seminar on this topic will be held in Bologna in July 1997. The EMCDDA has also commissioned a quick review on 'New Trends in Synthetic Drugs' such as XTC, other amphetamines and LSD.

In the field of dynamic modelling, a 'Study of Options for Models on Drug Use' has begun which is intended to provide an inventory of different types of modelling that can be used by the EMCDDA. This is designed to integrate available data and study possible scenarios of drug use and its health consequences. Finally, two projects are underway to assist the Department with the overview of the drug situation in the EU for the 1996 Annual Report.

Lucas Wiessing

* The EMCDDA is actively seeking information on current research projects using qualitative methodology. Please contact the Epidemiology Department if you are aware of such research.

BOOKSHELF

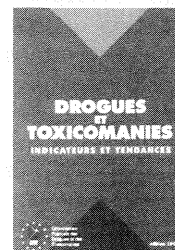
«Drogues et Toxicomanies - Indicateurs et Tendances»

(Drugs and Drug Addiction -
Indicators and Trends)

Launched in December 1996 by the French Focal Point, the *Observatoire français des Drogues et des Toxicomanies* (OFDT), this publication describes the state of the problem of drugs and drug addiction in France in 1996, building on the findings of the first report in the series which described the situation the previous year.

The report is divided into two sections covering key indicators and trends. The first section presents hard core indicators via a series of tables, graphs, descriptive texts and reference points which paint an overall picture of drug use and supply.

This is followed by a second section carrying texts based on the results of surveys, studies or research. These texts have been compiled by



authors on the basis of quantitative and qualitative observation in the areas of epidemiology, ethnography, economics and sociology. This multidisciplinary and global approach helps to complement, and sometimes query, the picture drawn purely on the basis of hard core indicators.

The publication of this report corresponds to the mission of OFDT to chronicle the situation of drugs and drug addiction in France. It also forms the basis of the Focal Point's *National Report* submitted to the EMCDDA as a contribution to the 1996 Annual Report on the State of the Drugs Problem in the European Union.

Published by: *Observatoire français des Drogues et des Toxicomanies*. **Date:** December 1996. **Language:** French (English version available in March 1997). **Price:** Free. Also available via the OFDT website: <http://www.ofdt.fr>. **ISBN** 2-11-089286-2. For further information please contact: *Observatoire français des Drogues et des Toxicomanies*, 105 rue Lafayette, 75010 Paris, France. Tel: ++ 33 1 53 20 16 16. Fax: ++ 33 1 53 20 16 00.

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

A Day in the Life of a National Focal Point

AUSTRIA

In October 1995, the *Österreichisches Bundesinstitut für Gesundheitswesen* (ÖBIG) was officially commissioned by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Health and Consumer Protection (FMHCP) to establish and run the Austrian Focal Point of the REITOX network. Founded under the Federal Act in 1973 as a fund with a separate legal personality, and today a 65-person team, ÖBIG focuses on research, planning and implementation of projects, counselling, training and retraining activities and documentation and information work in the field of public health. Many of these tasks are performed on behalf of, or in close co-operation with, national administration bodies at federal and provincial levels. Scientific Officer in charge of the Focal Point tasks at ÖBIG, Sabine Haas, introduces the organisation.

During its first year of existence, the Austrian Focal Point concentrated largely on establishing a national network of partners, a task which was particularly important since, unlike other National Focal Points of the REITOX network, ÖBIG had not previously worked in the field of drugs. As the drugs topic is very wide, the organisation divided the work into several categories, taking into account, where possible, existing fora of co-operation. At present, the Focal Point relies on three networks of national partners which meet regularly (an administration network at federal level; a network of drug co-ordinators in the provinces; and a network of prevention specialists). Co-operation with the

research sector and with specialised institutions (counselling, treatment and care facilities) is also undertaken on a bi-lateral level.

In the context of the activities of the EMCDDA's REITOX programme, an advisory panel was established by ÖBIG in 1996, composed of the Austrian members of the Centre's Management Board and Scientific Committee as well as representatives of the FMHCP and drug co-ordinators from the different provinces. This panel undertakes consultation activities relating to questions of strategy and appropriate subject matters, assists in co-operation and exchange work between Austria's representatives at the EMCDDA, defends the position of the Focal Point and ensures that the situation and needs of the provinces are taken into account.

ÖBIG aims to act as the centre of the Austrian data and information exchange network in the field of drugs and to promote information exchange. Its activities concentrate on documentation and co-ordination, with special emphasis on collection and distribution of information from and to national partners, the EMCDDA and the REITOX network and on co-ordination of activities aimed at creating a set of comparable core data on drugs nationwide. In this context, activities to introduce a uniform treatment monitoring system in conformity with European standards will be one focus of its work in the coming months. The most important output of the work to date has been the National Report on the Drug Situation in Austria in 1996, published last November.

For further information please contact: Sabine Haas, ÖBIG, Stubenring 6, 1010 Vienna. Tel: ++ 43 1 5156160. Fax: ++ 43 1 513 8472. E-mail: Sabine.Haas@reitox.net

Management Board sets the scene for 97

The EMCDDA's Management Board held its ninth meeting in Lisbon from 9-10 January and adopted the Centre's 1997 work programme. Although essentially the continuation of last year's work, this programme also includes a number of new elements responding to demands from the Community institutions.

These new elements include issues such as alternative measures to prison, quantities of drugs used for personal use or for trafficking and drug-related urban petty crime, following on from the pilot-study on that topic undertaken in 1996. To facilitate the programme tasks, the Management Board agreed to increase the total number of posts at the agency (30) by 5, two of which will establish a co-ordination structure for the Focal Points of the REITOX network. The Board also adopted the Centre's 1997 budget which was increased by 0.3 MECU to a total of 6.3 MECU.

The meeting also discussed and adopted the *1996 General Report of Activities*. The Board considered that this Report painted a very precise picture of the activities accomplished by the Centre in 1996 and illustrated that the agency had finally reached cruising speed.

Other decisions taken by the Board were: clearance for the Director of the 1995 budget; the adoption of the preliminary draft budget for 1998 at 7.0 MECU; the adoption of the modifications to the financial regulation and internal financial rules of the agency; and an agreement on the informal and factual co-operation of Norway in the activities of the EMCDDA.

For the first time, the Management Board met at the Centre's headquarters thanks to the completion of refurbishment work. The next meeting of the Management Board will take place at the EMCDDA on 19 and 20 June 1997.

Kathleen Hernalsteen

The EMCDDA welcomes any suggestions on the content of this newsletter and looks forward to your contributions. The newsletter is available in printed form in English but, on request, may be accompanied by translations in French, Portuguese and German. Please let us know which version you would prefer.

EMCDDA Calendar

28 February - 1 March - The EC agencies, European University Institute, Florence.

4-5 March - Participation in the meeting of Permanent Correspondents of the Pompidou Group, Strasbourg.

6 March - Visit to the Office of Official Publications of the European Communities, Luxembourg.

12-14 March - First European Conference on the Evaluation of Drug Prevention, Lisbon.

17-18 March - Workshop on the Evaluation of Treatment, Athens.

18 March - Participation in the meeting of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs (UNDCP), Vienna.

23-25 April - Participation in the Seminar on Drug Dependence and the Community Approach, Cádiz.

Selected EU Meetings

28 March - Drugs Expert Group within the Council of the European Union.

25 April - Drugs Expert Group within the Council of the European Union.

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