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for Drugs and Drug Addiction

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Synthetic Drugs

Brussels Conference calls for Concerted Action

From 27 to 28 November 1997, the EMCDDA participated in a major European Conference on Synthetic Drugs in Brussels, organised by the European Parliament, the Luxembourg Presidency and the European Commission. Among others, the Conference called for concerted action and information exchange at a time when data on the short-term effects of these drugs are increasing but the longer-term risks remain unclear.

On the first day, chaired by Sir Jack Stewart Clark of the European Parliament, Chairperson of the Committee on Civil Liberties and Internal Affairs, Ms. Hedy d'Ancona (MEP), stressed the need for dialogue, pragmatism and good information in developing strategies to reduce the individual and social damage linked to synthetic drugs. Following the opening address by vice-chairman of the EMCDDA Management Board, Mr. Marcel Reimen, on behalf of the Minister of Justice of Luxembourg, Mr. Marc Fischbach, the participants heard a speech by Commissioner Anita Gradin. The Commissioner told the Conference of the need for wider international discussion on easily manufactured and cheap synthetic drugs, a matter she would raise at next June's UN General Assembly Special Session on Drugs.

Mr. Georges Estievenart, Director of the EMCDDA, and Mr. Willy Bruggeman, Deputy Co-ordinator of the Europol Drugs Unit, then gave overviews of the situation in the European Union. Mr. Estievenart stressed that new trends in synthetic drug use should be seen in the social and cultural framework of European youth cultures rather than as a phenomenon linked to marginalisation. However, he added that, although these trends presented special challenges in terms of new approaches to monitoring and demand reduction,

they should not be seen as separate from the broader context of drug use. Mr. Bruggeman gave a complementary overview from the law enforcement



Many new synthetic drugs are marketed using symbols familiar to the young and fashion-conscious.

perspective and described emerging technical and political measures, including increased co-operation with the chemical industry.

The first day concluded with a stimulating presentation from Juan Gamella, Professor of Social Anthro-



A new EMCDDA publication on new synthetic drugs has recently been published. See page 7 for more.

pology at the University of Granada, Spain, who tackled the question of the 'success' of ecstasy from an economic

and cultural perspective. He suggested that the balance of stimulant and psychedelic pharmacological actions was highly suited to the psychological and cultural requirements of the dance scene, and that the convergence of this factor with commercial interests - both in the marketing of ecstasy itself, as well as through use of ecstasy-associated images to promote other commodities - was a major driving force in the drug's 'success'.

On the second day, presentations by UNDCP and the United States were followed by a series of 'Experiences from the Scene'. The latter covered a wide range of interventions and monitoring and research projects across the EU, from Hamburg, Manchester, Amsterdam, Luxembourg and five cities involved in a multi-centre study of ecstasy use. Together, these presentations reinforced the message that new trends witnessed in different countries cannot be reduced to a simple stereotype or a single drug, but represent a more complex phenomenon involving different groups, drugs and contexts. All require differentiated pragmatic approaches based on information reflecting different circumstances. This session was followed by another on the physical and psychological consequences of synthetic drugs, including evidence of short-term effects on mood and memory following use of ecstasy.

Finally, the Conference divided into three workshops on prevention, information and research; health promotion and treatment; and supply reduction and law enforcement. The proceedings ended with a panel discussion and was closed by Mr. Reimen on behalf of the Luxembourg Presidency.

Richard Hartnoll

EMCDDA WORKSHOP

Demand Reduction in the Workplace



Not all drug users are unemployed, hence the workplace could be an important setting for prevention activities.

A workshop constituting the third and final round of an EMCDDA-commissioned study on *Demand Reduction in the Workplace* was held at the Monitoring Centre from 9 to 11 November. Designed to assess the workplace as a field of intervention, the workshop examined the specific conditions and resources available for carrying out and improving drug prevention activities in this setting.

With the help of innovative computer-supported conference techniques, which were considered both stimulating and productive, the participants rapidly advanced new ideas and produced a final consensus report.

Experts at the meeting considered the workplace to be a field where prevention activities were both possible and advisable, despite the fact that by the time individuals reach this setting their behaviour patterns and values have already been shaped by the family, peer groups and schools (the 'first socialisation' stage). This being the case, it was felt that, in order to obtain the required backing, prevention interventions in this field would need to adopt other strategies than those used in activities such as school and peer group campaigns.

Consensus was reached among the participants in the study that the most important elements of workplace drug prevention were of an organisational nature: for example, ensuring the involvement of workers and mid-management employees in programme development and implementation, as well as in training and information strategies. Drug screening of employees was considered unsuitable as a prevention approach.

The study, which was finalised at the workshop, identified matters for further investigation including: concepts, programmes; experts and expertise; the extent of the drug problem in the workplace; and the cost benefits of existing programmes. The study revealed that this additional research would not necessarily be epidemiological in nature, since the situation in companies did not favour reliable and qualitative data collection.

Gregor Burkhart

For further information please contact the Demand Reduction Department of the EMCDDA.
Tel: ++ 351 1 811 3000. Fax: ++ 351 1 813 1711.

REITOX 'Virtual Library': Feasibility Phase Completed

The results of the first feasibility phase of a REITOX project to establish a distributed documentary database on drug abuse were presented by the participating partners at a final evaluation meeting in Paris on 2 October*. With the long-term aim of establishing a technical link between the existing internal documentary databases of the REITOX network, the project provides a first experience of linking European documentation centres. In particular, it focuses on the standardisation and accessibility of existing European bibliographic databases on web-servers.

This 'virtual library' will be developed throughout 1998 following REITOX documentation and information strategies. It will also involve other participants (European Commission, EMCDDA, Portugal, Sweden) and propose complementary services to users. At present, the database contains around 700 detailed records, with abstracts and indexing on epidemiology and national policies. As such, it is considered an important research tool for professionals.

The database is available on the Web at the following address:
<http://www.ofdt.fr/reitox65>

Adelaide Seita Duarte

* Participants: the EMCDDA; ISDD (UK); Toxibase (France); and the Trimbos-Institute (NL). Observers: CAN (Sweden); EC Focal Point; and Observatório Vida (Portugal). The first phase of the project was co-ordinated as a REITOX programme sub-task by Toxibase (France) under the supervision of OFDT.



**Joint EMCDDA/COST A-6 Seminar
on the Evaluation of Action Against Drug
Abuse in Europe**

The EMCDDA and the European Commission's COST A-6 programme* organised a joint seminar from 1 to 2 December in Zürich to assess progress made by the programme and to develop perspectives for future European activities.

The first day of the seminar focused on the achievements of the five COST A-6 working groups** on the evaluation of prevention, treatment and drug policy. These themes provided the focus of three working sessions on the second day, which also examined methods to build on the work of COST A-6 and the EMCDDA with a view to promoting evaluation culture and improving methodology.



of projects on the evaluation of treatment were considered particularly promising, including: the COST A-6 guidelines; WHO workbooks; and the evaluation activities of the EMCDDA specifically related to the dissemination of knowledge. Both in prevention and treatment evaluation, the need was recognised for effective knowledge transfer from the research level to practice through distributing guidelines and investing in training of professionals.

Finally, the working group on drug policy concluded that a starting point for the evaluation of such policies was a good description. Given the complex-

ity of intervening variables, this was felt to be a challenge in itself and the need was stressed for a broad theoretical framework to understand the construction of drug policy and its impact. Based on the work of the COST A-6 programme, the EMCDDA is considering convening a focus group in 1998 to set a research agenda.

Margareta Nilson

* A five year programme (1993-1997) run by the European Commission's DGXII (Science, Research and Development) aiming to gain valid information concerning the impact of various drug policy concepts and measures on the extent, nature and consequences of drug abuse.

** The five working groups examined: Evaluation of Policies, Policy Changes and Societal Responses to Policies; the Evaluation of Primary Prevention; the Evaluation of Treatment and Rehabilitation; the Development of Evaluation Instruments and Protocols; and Drug-Related Delinquency.

At the prevention working group, the EMCDDA *Guidelines on the Evaluation of Drug Prevention* and a COST A-6 reference project on the same subject (including definitions in the evaluation field) provided starting points for the debate. This focused in particular on the use of qualitative and participatory instruments, such as those used in the evaluation of the *WHO Health Promoting Schools Network*, and the use of combined quantitative/qualitative approaches in ethnographic studies on synthetic drugs in Spain.

The working group on treatment evaluation heard contributions from two US evaluation experts who suggested that while evaluation studies had had an impact on policy-makers, particularly in decisions on funding, they had not been instrumental in improving services. A number

BOOKSHELF

UNRISD
Studies on the Impact of the Illegal Drug Trade

The United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) publishes a series of country studies designed to increase awareness of the costs and consequences of present drug policies and to consider the implications of solutions proposed to developing areas.

The series aims to improve the quality of policy discussions by presenting careful analysis of experiences in specific countries. Titles in the series include: *'Bolivia and Coca: A Study in Dependency'*; *'Political Economy and Illegal Drugs in Colombia'*; *'Mexico's 'War' on Drugs: Causes and Consequences'*; *'Unintended Consequences: Illegal Drugs and Drug Polices in Nine Countries'*; *'Marijuana in the Third World: Appalachia, USA'* and *'The Burmese Connection: Illegal Drugs and the Making of the Golden Triangle'*.

Published by: UNRISD, Lynne Reiner, United Nations University.
Authors: Various.
Date: 1991-1997.
Languages: English.
Price: Various.
ISBN: Various. See UNRISD catalogue.

For further information, please contact:
 Rosemary Max, UNRISD, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland. Tel: ++ 41 22 798 8400. Fax: ++ 41 22 740 0791.
 e-mail: max@unrisd.org

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.

HIV and Hepatitis in Injecting Drug Users

National level data on the spread of HIV and hepatitis in injecting drug users in the European Union were presented for the first time in this year's EMCDDA Annual Report. While the HIV problem is well-known, Europe-wide data on the issue are difficult to come by, since no uniform monitoring system exists to follow trends in prevalence and incidence.

Much more difficult to prevent, due to higher infectiousness, and comparable to HIV infection in terms of illness and deaths, hepatitis was shown in the Annual Report to be a major health problem in injecting drug users across Europe. The report presented the first European data on prevalence of hepatitis B and C, which consistently indicate extremely high prevalence of these infections, especially hepatitis C.



Photo: Diário de Notícias/Ana Balao

New developments in prevention practice examine ways to stimulate the transition from injecting to smoking or sniffing.

AIDS cases are reported but lag years behind HIV infections, making AIDS monitoring unsuitable for a rapid response to new rises in HIV. The Annual Report showed that although HIV prevalence is stable in most EU countries, an increase is still reported in Portugal and Belgium, calling for immediate action.

From 1995 to 1997, the EMCDDA participated in an EU Concerted Action*, that analysed possible scenarios of the spread of AIDS/HIV in Europe and the epidemiological, economical and social impact of the disease. This project, bringing together experts from many countries, used back-calculation to estimate current and future trends in the spread of HIV. It also developed estimates per country, per transmission category and year of birth, and explored the effects of changing therapy and other factors using dynamic models. The project resulted in a range of outcomes, often highly policy-relevant, such as the fact that young persons at risk are inadequately reached by interventions.

An estimate of around 500,000 infected injecting drug users in the EU was given, calculated in a French study. The majority of these cases will suffer extensive liver damage over the years, leading to liver cancer and premature death.

A European response to the massive spread of hepatitis is lacking. The

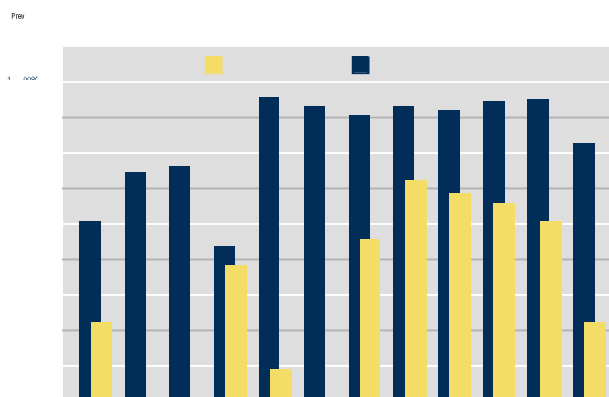
preventive measures taken to combat HIV infections in injecting drug users, already often insufficient themselves, are certainly inadequate to prevent the spread of hepatitis. New approaches (e.g. from Australia) concentrate on stressing absolute hygiene around injecting. Other developments in prevention examine ways to stimulate transition from injecting to smoking or sniffing.

This was one of the topics of an international HIV conference in London, 'Narrowing the Divide' to which the EMCDDA was invited to give an overview of epidemiology and prevention. The two-day conference, organised by The HIV Project and Mainliners (UK) succeeded in presenting an overview of the latest scientific findings as well as informing service-providers as to the implications of these for their every day practice.

Besides presenting data on HIV and hepatitis in the second Annual Report, an EMCDDA/REITOX working group examined the possibilities of using infectious disease data as an indicator of injecting drug use. The project looked at the different existing data sources in France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands and the UK and the potential for using these for Europe-wide monitoring. A review of the literature was undertaken and trends-data on HIV and hepatitis were gathered. The follow-up to this project will increase the number of participating countries, and look more deeply into organisational issues of developing Europe-wide monitoring of infectious diseases in injecting drug users.

Lucas Wiessing

* A Europe-wide project funded by the EU. This project was co-ordinated by RIVM (National Institute of Public Health and the Environment) in the Netherlands.



Even where other drug-related infectious diseases are rare, generally half or more of injectors have been infected with hepatitis C - worrying in itself because it means HIV risk behaviour is continuing.

EMCDDA Annual Report 1997 (p. 31)

EMCDDA Participates in Cities Forum



URB-AL: For further information please contact Mr. Jerome Poussielgue, DG I B, Rue de la Science, 14-4/79, 1049 Brussels, Belgium. Tel: ++ 32 2 299 0749. Fax: ++ 32 2 299 3941.

At the invitation of the European Commission, the EMCDDA participated in the *First International Seminar on Drugs and Cities* held in Santiago de Chile on 10 and 11 November 1997 in the framework of the EC Programme, URB-AL*. At the event, many European cities and Latin American municipalities discussed their respective situations and identified co-operation possibilities to be co-financed by the European Commission. The forum provided an excellent opportunity for the EMCDDA to present its activities, its second *Annual Report* and its first findings on drug-related urban petty crime. The Centre was also asked by many participants to assist them in their preparation of joint projects to be submitted to the Commission in the Spring of 1998.

* A four-year project launched by the European Commission in September 1997 which aims to create networks of cities and local authorities in Europe and Latin America on subjects of common interest.

EMCDDA STATUTORY BODIES

Scientific Committee



The 8th meeting of the EMCDDA's Scientific Committee took place on 25 November 1997 during which it gave its opinion on the 1998 work programme as well as the implementation of Article 4 (risk assessment) of the *Joint Action on New Synthetic Drugs*. It also briefly touched upon the issue of quality assurance of the National Focal Points.

In its opinion on the 1998 work programme, the Scientific Committee recommended that the programme include projects on law enforcement data and data from the criminal justice system (as approved in the three-year work programme) and proposed that the Centre actively promote and support the scientific evaluation of intervention programmes including treatment. Furthermore, the Committee underlined that the tasks bestowed on it and the Centre by the *Joint Action*, required adequate scientific support which should be reflected in budgetary terms. It also defended the need to undertake well-designed studies which were highly suited to providing quality scientific evidence for political decision-making.

In relation to the *Joint Action*, the Committee proposed to set up a Steering Group composed of its chairman, vice-chairman and three other members, which would act as the main risk assessment body in the event of a request from a Member State. In particular, the group was charged to develop *Guidelines* before 1 June 1998 designed to assist it in carrying out preliminary risk assessments. The results of these preliminary investigations will then be forwarded to a meeting of the Scientific Committee and other experts after which a report will be sent to the Member States and

the European Commission. The *Guidelines* will be continuously revised and updated by the Scientific Committee, taking into account the development of methodologies in the risk assessment field.

Finally, in relation to the quality assurance of the National Focal Points the need to provide Focal Point staff with specific training programmes in epidemiology was stressed.

Kathleen Hernalsteen

Management Board

An extraordinary meeting of the EMCDDA Management Board was held on 3 and 4 November 1997 in Lisbon during which the three-year work programme was adopted and the 1998 work programme and budget discussed. Among others, the members examined the conditions necessary for the implementation of the early-warning mechanism on new synthetic drugs under the terms of the *Joint Action* adopted on 16 June 1997.

The next meeting of the Management Board takes place on 8 and 9 January 1998.

Special Focus

The Luxembourg Presidency and Drugs

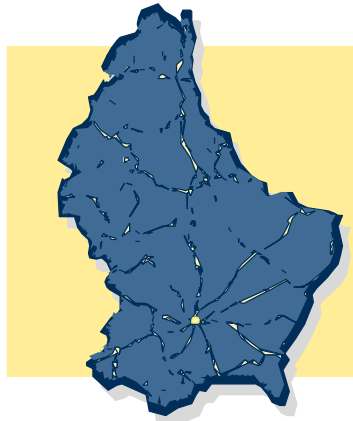
On 4 December 1997, at an informal meeting convened by the Luxembourg Presidency, Ministers of Health, the Interior and Justice in the Council of the European Union met in Brussels to discuss various aspects of the drugs problem. At the meeting, they highlighted the need for an integrated approach and closer co-operation between their ministries within the EU. Below, Chairperson of the Horizontal Drugs Group* of the Council, Ms Andrée Clemang, presents other key points of the six-month presidency.

Three key events immediately spring to mind when considering the Luxembourg Presidency and the fight against drugs. The first of these was a seminar jointly organised in September with the former Dutch Presidency of the Council in which priorities were identified for research activities linked to the consumption of synthetic drugs. This was followed in November by two other seminars, the first on training and drugs, which aimed to identify the needs of professional training within Member States, and the second giving an overview of synthetic drugs, as described at the start of this newsletter.

In the wake of efforts by previous presidencies to implement the *Action Plan on the Fight against Drugs* (adopted by the Madrid European Council in December 1995), and mindful of the priorities set by the Dublin Summit in December 1996, the Luxembourg Presidency actively pursued the implementation of recently-adopted instruments in the fight against drugs.

Particular emphasis was attached to the *Joint Action* adopted by the Council in December 1996 on the 'approximation of the laws and practices of police, customs services and judicial authorities in the fight against drug addiction and illegal drug trafficking' as well as to the preparations for full implementation of the *Joint Action* adopted on 16 June 1997 on synthetic drugs.

This preparatory stage benefited from excellent co-operation of the EMCDDA and the Europol Drugs Unit.



Implementation of the *Action Plan on Organised Crime* agreed by the Amsterdam Summit in June 1997 led to the adoption of a *Joint Action* establishing a programme of exchange, training and co-operation for persons responsible for action against organised crime (Falcon Programme). Progress was also made in negotiations on instruments to improve customs strategies and mutual assistance between customs authorities (Naples II Convention and the Resolution on the strategic action programme for customs authorities). Here, a new boost will be given to the fight against drugs by the imminent entry into force of the Euro-



pol Convention. Nearly all implementing regulations have been agreed, or are in the last stage of negotiation, and ratification procedures have been completed or have passed the parliamentary stage in most Member States.

In the field of demand reduction, the implementation of the *Programme of Community Action on the Prevention of Drug Dependence* was actively pursued.

As regards international co-operation in the fight against drugs, major efforts

were made to set up a co-ordination mechanism between the European Union and the Latin American and Caribbean States.

Following a ministerial meeting between the European Union and the Rio Group in December 1997, experts from both regions met in Brussels to enhance co-operation in the drugs field. Also noteworthy was the organisation of a meeting on drug trafficking by Latin American groups in September 1997 in Valencia and a meeting of drug liaison officers in October in Bogotá.

With regard to the Caribbean region, the European Commission and concerned Member States actively pursued the implementation of the Caribbean Drugs Action Plan. Transatlantic dialogue focused on the implementation of the above plan and precursor control while co-operation with Central and Eastern Europe prioritised synthetic drugs and money laundering.

During 1997, a major exploratory mission to the region of Central Asia and an identification mission to NIS and Russia in the field of Justice and Home Affairs, including drug control, were organised by the Commission with the support of experts from the Member States. The reports on the findings of these missions have been recently presented by the Commission and are currently being studied by the 15 countries.

Finally, in the context of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs' preparatory meetings for the 1998 UN General Assembly Special Session on Drugs, the presidency actively encouraged the adoption of co-ordinated positions between Member States on precursors, synthetic drugs, money laundering, juridical co-operation, demand reduction and alternative development.

Andr e Clemang,
Chairperson of the Horizontal Drugs Group.

* EU Horizontal Drugs Group - A cross-pillar working group mandated by COREPER to facilitate co-ordination of the work on drug-related matters under the three pillars of the EU/EC namely: public health; common foreign and security policy and co-operation in the fields of justice and home affairs.

NEW EMCDDA PUBLICATIONS



Scientific Monographs

This first volume in a new series of EMCDDA Scientific Monographs entitled *Estimating the Prevalence of Problem Drug Use in Europe* is now available in English from the EMCDDA. In 24 chapters, the monograph presents the 'state of the art' in European prevalence estimation and discusses the different methods used along with their respective strengths and weaknesses. French version to follow.



EMCDDA Insights

New Trends in Synthetic Drugs in the European Union is the first title in the new EMCDDA Insights Series, a collection designed to convey the findings of studies, surveys and pilot projects carried out by the EMCDDA under its present and future work programmes. This edition is based on two EMCDDA-commissioned studies reporting on the epidemiology of synthetic drug use and related demand reduction activities in the European Union. Copies in English now available from the EMCDDA.

Coming soon... General Report of Activities 1997.

NEW

F O R U M

News on Drugs from around the EU



Comparable data on European students' use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs were recently published in a report of the *European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs* (ESPAD). Initiated and coordinated by the Swedish Council for Information on Alcohol and Other Drugs (CAN) and supported by the Pompidou Group, the project was conducted in 26 countries during 1995. Data collection took place in the classroom via self-administrated questionnaires in a sample of classes randomly chosen to be nationally representative. To render the results as comparable as possible the methodology was strictly standardised.

"The 1995 ESPAD Report" can be ordered from The Swedish Council for Information on Alcohol and Other Drugs, CAN, Sweden.
Fax: ++ 46 8 10 46 41. Price: SEK 400.

The final report of the International Conference on *Drugs, Dependence and Interdependence* organised in Lisbon in March 1996 by the North-South Centre of the Council

of Europe and the Environment and Development Research Centre in co-operation with the EMCDDA and the Pompidou Group, is now available free of charge from the address below. The Conference focused on the drugs issue from a global interdependence perspective and provided an overview of the various aspects of the problem from the angle of economics, development, environment and human rights.

Please contact: The North-South Centre of the Council of Europe, Av. da Liberdade, 229-4°, P- 1250 Lisbon, Portugal. Tel: ++ 351 1 352 4954. Fax: ++ 351 1 352 4966. E-mail : info@nscentre.org

A Help Desk will be functioning from 1 February 1998 to stimulate and help local prevalence studies using the capture-recapture technique. Those interested please contact Mr. Gordon Hay at the address below:

Centre for Drug Misuse Research, University of Glasgow, Glasgow, G12 8QG, UK.
E-mail: gkua24@udcf.gla.ac.uk
Fax: ++ 44 141 339 5881.

If you are interested in publishing news from your organisation in the 'Forum', please send your contributions to the editor K. Robertson.

NEW

DRUGS-LEX

The latest on drugs and legal matters



The importance of demand and harm reduction policies throughout the 15 Member States was strengthened by the *Committee on Civil Liberties and Internal Affairs* of the European Parliament on 3 November 1997 via a proposal for a recommendation on the *Harmonisation of Drugs Legislation*. Adopted by a small majority, the proposal recognises the need for pragmatic drug strategies, and calls on Member States to bring national laws in line with how they are applied

in practice. Through the proposal, the EMCDDA could be invited to study the possible indicators allowing an independent assessment of the results of policy measures on drugs in the 15, and to consider the inclusion of Central Europe and Cyprus in the REITOX network. The proposal will be presented for adoption to the plenary session of the European Parliament in January 1998.

Danilo Ballotta

A Glimpse at a National Focal Point Finland

Since early 1996, the Finnish National Focal Point has been hosted by the National Research and Development Co-operation Centre for Welfare and Health (STAKES), an organisation committed to safeguarding the future of social welfare and health in Finland and promoting high-quality, cost-effective services for all citizens.

The Finnish National Focal Point is a two-person team integrated into the STAKES statistics and registers unit. Its main tasks are to provide a clearing-house function for drug information in Finland and to further develop existing drug information systems. The Focal Point utilises, as widely as possible, existing associations in order to establish new drug networks. This it achieves via projects related to a variety of drug phenomena undertaken in co-operation with authorities or actors in the drugs field. The partners of the Focal Point are largely information producers, NGOs and research institutes.

One of the Focal Point's central projects is the compilation each year of the Finnish *National Report* (in preparation for the EMCDDA's *Annual Report*), an activity that has proved instrumental in uniting actors working on drugs. The development of drug information systems in Finland, stimulated by the need to fill in information gaps, has also been enhanced by the REITOX and EMCDDA projects. By utilising and combining existing general register data, it has been possible to create better indicators and indicator packages to evaluate different drug phenomena such as drug-related mortality, drug convictions and drug-related morbidity. The role of the national centre in this process has been to initiate new ideas and to encourage other partners to embark on work in these areas.

Since the drug situation during the 1980s in Finland was good, little effort was expended in developing drug-specific information systems. The rapid deterioration of the drug situation in 1990s, however, along with increasing media interest in drug issues, created momentum among actors in the drug sector which has stimulated projects to the present day.

In addition to the Focal Point, STAKES runs other units involved in drug issues. Its *Group on Welfare and Health Promotion* specialises in surveys on juvenile health habits, including information on drug use habits. This group also consults municipal officials in the development of drug prevention and treatment programmes. Furthermore, the *Social Research Unit for Alcohol Research Studies* regulates the position of intoxicants and drug addicts in health and social services and specialises in population and school surveys concerning alcohol and drug use.

In the near future, the main challenges of the Finnish National Focal Point will be to: establish a permanent information system on drug treatment demand; co-ordinate activities related to the early-warning system on synthetic drugs; and create a regular system for evaluating the prevalence of

EMCDDA Calendar

- 26-27 January - Preparatory meeting, *Early-warning system on New Synthetic Drugs*, EMCDDA, OFDT, National Addiction Centre, Paris.
- 29 January - Meeting with the national co-ordinators of the European Drug Prevention Week, DG V, Luxembourg.
- 5-6 February - 13th meeting of the Heads of the REITOX Focal Points, Lisbon.
- 26-27 February - Phare liaison meeting, Riga.

Selected EU Meetings

- 13 January - EU Horizontal Drugs Group, Brussels.
- 11 February - EU Horizontal Drugs Group, Brussels.

drug addiction or, in Finnish terms, the prevalence of 'hard drug use'.

For further information please contact: Mr. Ari Virtanen, National Research and Development Centre for Welfare and Health (STAKES), Siltasaarenkatu, 18C (3rd floor), SF-00351 Helsinki, Finland.

Tel: ++ 358 9 3967 2378.
Fax: ++ 358 9 3967 2324.
E-mail: Ari.Virtanen@reitox.net



NEW

E · M · C · D · D · A NOTICEBOARD



Photo Competition: For those readers who may have missed the last editions of *DrugNet Europe*, the EMCDDA has launched a photographic competition aimed at encouraging reflection on images of drugs in the media. The competition will run until 1 March 1998.

For further information please contact the EMCDDA or consult *DrugNet Europe* Nos 7 and 8 or the website at: info@emcdda.org

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