



News release

from the EU drugs agency in Lisbon

PORTUGUESE HEAD OF STATE VISITS EMCDDA

President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa: ‘We cannot allow the positive results of public policies to diminish the importance of the drugs issue on the political agenda’

(10.7.2019) His Excellency the **President of the Portuguese Republic, Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa** visited the **EU drugs agency (EMCDDA)** today for an insight into the work of the agency and the latest trends and developments in the drug situation in Europe. This was the **President’s** first visit to the **EMCDDA** since he took office.

President Rebelo de Sousa was briefed by **EMCDDA Director Alexis Goosdeel** on the key findings from the **European Drug Report 2019** and the **Portugal Country Drug Report 2019**, launched on 6 June ⁽¹⁾. During the visit, the head of state met members of the agency’s 100-strong staff and learned about their ongoing projects and challenges ⁽²⁾. **Dr João Goulão**, Portuguese member of the EMCDDA Management Board, also attended the event.

The **EMCDDA** provides the EU and its Member States with ‘factual, objective, reliable and comparable information’ on drugs and drug addiction and their consequences, offering an evidence base on the European drugs problem to inform policymaking and practice. As well as monitoring the drug situation today, the agency operates early-warning mechanisms to remain vigilant to, and act on, emerging threats.

The **President** said: ‘We cannot allow the positive results of public policies over the last 20 years to diminish the importance of the drugs issue on the political agenda. Nothing is ever definitively won. EU Member States must continue to invest in knowledge and information to support effective interventions that contribute to reducing the social harms of drug use and trafficking. This effort must be achieved collectively, because only together can EU countries tackle this increasingly sophisticated problem’.

Presenting the agency’s **Strategy 2025** ⁽³⁾, **Alexis Goosdeel** said: ‘The EMCDDA contributes to a healthier and more secure Europe, through better informed drug policy and action. Working with policymakers and practitioners from both the health and law-enforcement domains, we provide evidence for decisions which affect European citizens, particularly those touched by drug use and trafficking. We will continue to enrich our monitoring system with novel data sources and techniques to help us keep pace with new trends and developments.’

The **EMCDDA** was established in 1993 in the face of an escalating drug phenomenon in Europe and the need for independent, science-based information to help Europe understand the nature of its drug problems and better respond to them. Following preliminary monitoring tasks, the agency was inaugurated in Lisbon in 1995 and, in 2020, will celebrate 25 years of monitoring.

⁽¹⁾ www.emcdda.europa.eu/edr2019

⁽²⁾ www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/work-programmes-and-strategies/2019-programming-document_en

⁽³⁾ www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/2017/directors-message/strategy-2025_en — www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/work-programmes-and-strategies/strategy-2025