

# Speech

---

Speaker	<b>Wolfgang Goetz</b>
Title of speech	<b>Opening address</b>
Occasion	<b>Lisbon Addictions Conference 2015</b>
Date	<b>23.09.2015</b>

---

Dear Secretary of State for Health,

Dear Director General of SICAD,

Dear Representative from the European Commission,

Dear Colleagues and participants,

## <Introduction>

It is a great pleasure for me to be here today and to say a few words at the opening of *Lisbon Addictions 2015*, the **First European conference on addictive behaviours and dependencies**.

*Lisbon Addictions 2015* is clearly a milestone for the European and international scientific community working on substance use and addiction. In Europe, this is the first time such a large multidisciplinary and cross-cutting event has been organised in this field ...and the EMCDDA is very proud to have had an active role in its conception, planning and [now its] delivery.

## <Why the EMCDDA is associated>

To promote the sharing of research findings that can inform policy discussions and support effective responses is at the very core of our mission at the EMCDDA.

For this reason, over the past 20 years, we have been progressively strengthening our relationship with the European and international research community.

I am well aware of the hard work that the organising committee has put into this conference over the past year in order to bring you innovative, state-of-the-art research, opportunities for networking and options for forging partnerships and synergies... The EMCDDA's contribution to this event fits with our commitment to providing practitioners and policymakers with evidence-based information.

### <EMCDDA 20 years of monitoring>

As most of you are certainly aware, this year the EMCDDA is commemorating 20 years of monitoring the drugs problem in Europe. And we wanted to derive maximum benefit from having so many experts in Lisbon for this conference to create synergies with our more regular EMCDDA business.

Earlier this week we organised the **EMCDDA conference: 20 years of monitoring and communicating evidence on drugs**. The purpose of that conference was to review the achievements of our first 20 years of work, as well as to reflect on how to further continue producing robust and up-to-date information for decision-making.

We also decided to organise the ceremony for the **EMCDDA Scientific paper award** — now in its 5<sup>th</sup> consecutive year — to coincide with *Lisbon Addictions 2015*.

With this award, the EMCDDA celebrates scientific writing and acknowledges high-quality research in the field of illicit drugs. This year we distinguish five papers published in peer-reviewed journals in 2014. They cover the research areas of basic biology, epidemiology, demand reduction, drug policy and drug supply.

Our award ceremony will take place during the opening reception at 18.30 today. I would be delighted to see you all there.

### <Acknowledgements>

*Dear Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

I would like to finish by thanking the main organisers of the event — the Portuguese General-Directorate for Intervention on Addictive Behaviours and Dependencies, the journal *Addiction*, and the International Society of Addiction Journal Editors (ISAJE) — for giving us the opportunity to embark on such an inspiring challenge and for the excellent collaboration that we have enjoyed over the last year.

I have no doubts that *Lisbon Addictions* will become a major regular event in the substance use and addictions field.

At the EMCDDA we look forward to contributing again to this joint endeavour ... and we believe this enthusiasm is shared by all our partners on the organising committee.

### <Last major conference as EMCDDA Director>

On a more personal note, I would like to mention that this is my last major conference as EMCDDA Director.

It has been (and still is) a privilege for me to serve this agency and its stakeholders for more than 10 years, and it is with a great sense of accomplishment that I will hand over to Alexis Goosdeel the position of EMCDDA Director from 1 January 2016.

I have been working closely with Alexis for more than 16 years and this is now the second time he becomes my successor...

So when I tell you that the EMCDDA and you — the stakeholders — will be in very good hands, you understand that this doesn't come out of the blue.

Thank you very much for your attention.  
I wish you a fruitful meeting and pleasant stay in Lisbon.