



**E.M.C.D.D.A.**  
European Monitoring Centre  
for Drugs and Drug Addiction

# news release

from the EU drugs agency in Lisbon

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## EU DRUGS AGENCY SIGNS JOINT STATEMENT WITH ARGENTINIAN DRUG CO-ORDINATION BODY SEDRONAR

The **EU drugs agency (EMCDDA)** and the Argentinian drug co-ordination body **SEDRONAR\*** signed a **Joint Statement** in Lisbon today, initiating co-operation that could pave the way for the creation of an Argentinian Drugs Monitoring Centre.

The signing came during the official visit of **His Excellency the President of Argentina, Fernando de la Rúa** to the **EMCDDA** this afternoon as part of the Head of State's visit to Portugal.

The statement was signed by Secretary of State **Lorenzo Cortese**, Head of **SEDRONAR**, and by **EMCDDA** Vice-Chairman and Executive Director, **Marcel Reimen** and **Georges Estievenart** respectively.

The statement expresses a desire 'to promote and develop mutual relations of friendship and co-operation in the global context of prevention and control of drug abuse' and the need for governments to implement 'comprehensive and balanced public policies on drugs'.

Once an Argentinian Drugs Monitoring Centre has been established, **SEDRONAR** will make the results of this process available to other countries of the MERCOSUR, Bolivia and Chile, with a view to contributing to the creation of similar national centres and facilitating the exchange and comparison of data at sub-regional level.

Discussions on the establishment of drug monitoring centres in Latin America have gained new momentum in recent months with major meetings in Bolivia and Colombia underlining the need for such bodies at national level. On 10 September, a Friendship Declaration was signed between the **Chilean authorities** and the **EMCDDA**, opening up co-operation in the domain of drug-monitoring methodology.

In today's statement, the signing parties declare themselves 'united in the belief that information on the drugs phenomenon is a vital tool and a precondition both for drafting and implementing policies in this field, and for evaluating the impact of government policy in reducing the problems arising from the abuse and illegal trafficking of drugs and psychotropic substances'.

In particular, they express their willingness to co-operate 'in concrete terms via regular exchanges of, and mutual access to, statistical, documentary and audiovisual information and Internet sites.' The **EMCDDA** will lend firm support to the process of establishing the new Argentinian Drugs Monitoring Centre, in accordance with its mandate, in the form of working sessions, training and other related instruments.

Commenting on today's signature, **President de la Rúa** said: 'this statement is important to help carry forward active bilateral co-operation in the field of drugs. It will allow Argentina to benefit from valuable experience, in order to launch a Federal Drug Information System and establish the Argentinian Drugs Monitoring Centre on firm foundations. It will also help establish a basic framework for all information on drugs that, at present, is treated by different constituencies.'

**Marcel Reimen** highlighted the 'importance for the **EMCDDA**, as the European agency in charge of monitoring drugs and drug addiction, to seize this opportunity to develop concrete co-operation with **Argentina** in the field of drugs, taking into account its unique experience in building a drug information system at regional level'.

**Georges Estievenart** added that: 'faced with the scale of the global drugs problem today, it is essential that countries co-operate to build compatible drug-information systems, as requested in June 1998 by the United Nations Special Session on Drugs'.

Also present at the ceremony was Secretary of State of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers and responsible for the Portuguese drugs portfolio, **Vitalino Canas** and President of the *Instituto Português da Droga e da Toxicodependência* **Elza Pais**. The Argentinian delegation included the Minister of Foreign Affairs, **Adalberto Rodriguez Giavarini**, and Ambassador of Argentina in Portugal, **Enrique A. Pareja**.

\* *Secretaría de Programación para la Prevención de la Drogadicción y la Lucha contra el Narcotráfico (SEDRONAR) (Secretariat for Planning the Prevention of Drug Addiction and the Fight against Drug Trafficking).*

#### **Notes for editors:**

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**Drug monitoring centres:** In June this year delegates from the EU, Latin America and the Caribbean met in Bolivia and endorsed the Declaration of Cochabamba, which underlines the 'need for creating regional and national information networks and observatories to promote effective data collection and analysis'. And in September, countries attending the Ibero-American encounter of national drug observatories in Cartagena de las Indias (Colombia) stressed the need to 'formalise drug observatories in Latin America'.

See 'Drug monitoring centres explored' *Drugnet Europe*, No. 31, p. 4.

See 'Cochabamba Declaration: need for drug observatories', *Drugnet Europe*, No. 31, p. 5.

See 'Latin America: drug observatories explored', *Drugnet Europe*, No. 32, p. 3.

<http://www.emcdda.org/infopoint/publications/drugnet.shtml>

**Argentinian monitoring centre** (SEDRONAR Decision 800/01): This would be set up in accordance with the current statutory provisions which led to the creation of the *Sistema Federal de Información sobre Consumo Indebido y Control de Estupefacientes y Substancias Psicotrópicas* [State system of information on the illegal use and control of drugs and psychotropic substances] (Act of the *Poder Ejecutivo Nacional* [national executive power] – PEN No 1 066).

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