



NEWS RELEASE from the EU drugs agency in Lisbon

GERMANY'S NEW NATIONAL DRUGS COORDINATOR VISITS LISBON

Sabine Bätzing briefed on EMCDDA's work and findings

(27.2.2006 LISBON) Germany's newly appointed **National Drugs Coordinator, Sabine Bätzing**, is to visit Lisbon from 27 February to 1 March, at the invitation of **EMCDDA Director Wolfgang Götz**. Ms Bätzing's schedule, which includes a meeting with the Centre's experts, is primarily aimed at giving her an overview of its work and main findings on the drug situation in the EU. She will also have an opportunity to meet Portuguese members of parliament active in the field of drugs policy.

Ms Bätzing is at 31 the youngest Social Democratic Party (SPD) member of Germany's parliament, the Bundestag. She succeeded party colleague Marion Caspers-Merk as National Drugs Coordinator at the end of November 2005, but had already distinguished herself as an active campaigner on issues relating to drugs, not least as a member of the Bundestag's Youth and Family Committee.

The National Drugs Coordinator's scope of duties covers the reduction of health damages caused both by legal and illegal drugs. Sabine Bätzing is particularly interested in drug prevention and the consequences of polydrug use. In Germany, she has taken a public stand against the legalisation of cannabis, and pointed out the health risks associated with the consumption of cannabis. Ms Bätzing campaigns energetically for the decrease of tobacco consumption and for improved protection of non-smokers. Additionally she has declared action against excessive consumption of alcohol by young people. Another of her concerns is the misuse of prescription drugs, particularly by young women.

The newly appointed German Coordinator will spend the morning of Tuesday 28 February at the **EMCDDA**, where after a welcome by **Marcel Reimen, Chairman of the EMCDDA Management Board**, and **Wolfgang Götz** she will hear a series of presentations on the Centre's activities. These include epidemiology, drugs and markets; law and policy; institutional relations; and cooperation with the Reitox network of national 'focal points' that provide the raw data for the **EMCDDA's** analyses.

In the afternoon Ms Bätzing will be a guest of the Portuguese authorities on a visit to a local drug project. On the morning of Wednesday 1 March she is to meet members of the Health Committee of Portugal's parliament, the Assembleia da República, including Maria de Belém, who chairs the committee.

Accompanying Ms Bätzing on her visit to Lisbon will be two members of her staff: Ingo Michels, Head of Office, and Susanne Wackers, who is nominated to the **EMCDDA Management Board**. Also in the delegation will be Werner Sipp from Germany's Ministry of Health, who heads the unit handling legislation on narcotics and international drug policies and is a member of the Council of the European Union's main coordinating forum on drugs policy, the Horizontal Drugs Group.