



E.M.C.D.D.A.

European Monitoring Centre  
for Drugs and Drug Addiction

# DrugNet Europe

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**D**irector of the US White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), General Barry R. McCaffrey, visited Lisbon on 17 July to participate in an unprecedented United States-European Union Informal Drug Forum at the EMCDDA. The Forum marked the end of General McCaffrey's eight-day fact-finding tour of seven European cities.

The Drug Forum, involving some 30 high-level US and European officials, described the state of the drug problem on both sides of the Atlantic; examined US and EU drug strategies; and discussed mutual US-EU drug-policy perspectives. Taking place outside any formal framework, the Forum also allowed free discussion on, and comparison of, different situations and approaches to drugs.

Commenting on the Forum, Franz J. Bindert, Chairman of the EMCDDA Management Board, said: 'America and Europe are different in many ways. At present, as the importance of the EMCDDA grows as an information centre and an international partner in the field of drugs, it is particularly important to take transatlantic dialogue on the subject a step forward. It is therefore with great pleasure that the Centre welcomes this opportunity to provide a forum for an exchange of experience at such a high level'.

EMCDDA Director Georges Estievenart said: 'The comparison of experiences, situations, responses and ideas between the US and the EU on the global drug problem is an essential element in the

## US-EU DRUG FORUM

*Opening doors for transatlantic exchange*



Photo: EMCDDA

international effort to curb the consumption, trafficking and production of drugs. A way to achieve this comparison is to provide new opportunities for free discussion with no formal agenda or conclusions between high-level officials and personalities. That is the purpose of this first US-EU Informal Drug Forum'.

The Forum concluded with a series of innovative ideas for US-EU co-operation and a regular exchange of ideas and research on drug-related matters.

General McCaffrey underlined the importance of collecting accurate and comparable data – the mandate of the EMCDDA – to inform the decisions of drug policy-makers. He emphasised his commitment to an open exchange of ideas and information between Europe and the United States, affirming that 'by the turn of the century we must replace ideology with science' in the development of drug prevention.

Both European and US representatives stressed the diversity of drug consump-

tion and recognised that drug epidemics were frequently regional phenomena that crossed national boundaries both in the European Union and the Americas. It was pointed out that while there were many problems, there was no single solution. A particular issue for decision-makers was how to translate policy into action at local level.

The meeting opened the doors for several forms of co-operation: discussing mutual problems in data collection; improving the tracking of drug trends world-wide;

exchanging information on ways of identifying newly emerging trends in different localities; opening access to the US national drug clearing house; and sharing experience in developing performance and outcome measures of policies and interventions.

Bernard Kouchner, French Secretary of State for Health, expressed the view that meetings such as the Forum should be held on an annual basis to discuss specific topics such as synthetic drugs. The EMCDDA will propose this idea to its Management Board for consideration.



Photo: J.M. Marques

General B. McCaffrey and Georges Estievenart – 'heads together' at the US-EU Drug Forum.

## WORKBOOKS ON THE EVALUATION OF TREATMENT

**W**ithin the framework of an ongoing project to produce a series of workbooks on evaluating treatment for drug addiction, developed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) with the support of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) and the EMCDDA, a workshop was held in Reggio Emilia (Italy) from 22–26 June, organised by the city's drug-treatment services.\* The workshop was directed by the Addiction Research Foundation, Ontario (Canada), with the assistance of specialist groups from the WHO, the UNDCP and the EMCDDA. Experts from Brazil, Bulgaria, Colombia, Iran, Ireland, Italy, Spain, Tanzania and Thailand attended the meeting.

The workbooks will enable programme-planners, managers and decision-makers in treatment services and systems to put evaluation into practice, to improve the way resources are allocated and to increase the effectiveness of treatment. At the workshop, representatives of the pilot group of treatment-evaluation programmes chosen to participate in the project and provide the test ground for the workbooks heard descriptions of the evaluation programmes to be developed. Tripartite evaluation teams will be set up at local level composed of a policy-maker, a researcher and a clinician. Meanwhile the WHO, the UNDCP and the EMCDDA will ensure the controlled distribution of the workbooks, provide training on how to use them and increase the accessibility of evaluation tools. As a control, the workbooks will be distributed to other groups, but without the training component.

The final versions of the workbooks are scheduled for completion by 1999. The EMCDDA will participate in publishing and disseminating these studies in the European Union.

Petra Paula Merino

\* See *DrugNet Europe* No. 10.

Those planning, or already involved in, evaluating treatment services and interested in the work of the WHO, the UNDCP and the EMCDDA in this area should send their contact details by e-mail to the Demand Reduction Department of the EMCDDA (Petra.Paula.Merino@emcdda.org). The eight workbooks cover various types of evaluation: needs assessment; process, cost, outcome and economic evaluation; and client satisfaction.

## Coming soon: Study on Alternatives to Prison

**I**n 1997, the EMCDDA commissioned a study from the Office of Drug Addiction of the Basque government on 'Alternatives to Imprisonment for Drug Addicts'. The study, co-ordinated by the Instituto Deusto de Drogodependencias, Bilbao, and currently nearing completion, aims to: describe the existing drug-law framework in each of the 15 EU Member States; illustrate the practical application of alternative measures to prison; and study the state of the art in evaluating such measures. Information for the study was gathered via a questionnaire completed by experts in all the Member States. These experts held a final meeting on the project in Bilbao on 26 June.

Alternative procedures, or measures, that avoid drug users being sent to prison exist in all EU countries and may be applied at any stage of the legal case: initial inquiry, prosecution or sentencing. The regulations vary from one country to another, as

does the translation of legislation into practice.

This is an area where the criminal-justice system meets the social and health systems. The meeting concluded that better co-ordination and understanding were needed between the sectors and that differences between the systems were particularly evident in discussions on evaluation (is the objective improved health or decreased criminality?). The meeting underlined the long way still to go to achieve common evaluation standards and the need for research, first to deal with the feasibility and acceptance of alternative measures, and, only later, with effectiveness.

The final study will be available in September 1998. The results of the seminar are currently being prepared.

Margareta Nilson



## Demand Reduction in the Workplace

**A**n EMCDDA report on *Drug Demand Reduction in the Workplace* was presented at a workshop on the same topic in Barcelona from 19–20 June.\* Organised by Comisiones Obreras (Spain) and Cooperativa Marcella (Italy), the meeting expanded strategies, throughout Europe, for fostering interpersonal relationships in the workplace and placing workers at the fore of demand-reduction activities.\*\*

Discussions at the meeting focused on possibilities for transferring the experience of workplace programmes from one country – with its specific

economic situation, legislation, enterprise culture and trade-union interests – to another. The EMCDDA report provides valuable information on the transfer and implementation of demand-reduction programmes in this way. The Centre's information system on drug demand-reduction activities, EDDRA, was welcomed by the participants for its role in building networks of professionals and programmes in the workplace.\*\*\*

Gregor Burkhardt

\* Jellinek Consultancy and Alcon Foundation, *Demand Reduction in the Workplace* (Lisbon: EMCDDA, 1998). For copies, please contact Gregor.Burkhardt@emcdda.org/.

\*\* Strategies of this kind, implemented by Cooperativa Marcella in Italy, have been particularly well received among Italian enterprises. This represents a breakthrough in an area where new approaches are not easily accepted.

\*\*\* Accessible at <http://www.emcdda.org/>.



Photo: Diário de Notícias

## 12th World AIDS Conference

**L**atest developments in AIDS research were presented at the 12<sup>th</sup> World AIDS Conference in Geneva from 28 June–3 July in the presence of over 13,000 delegates. The participants ranged from scientists to representatives of 'at-risk' communities.

New developments in the epidemiology of HIV among injecting drug users were seen to include: the planned introduction of HIV reporting to complement AIDS reporting in Western countries; evaluation studies revealing the effectiveness of needle exchanges and outreach prevention; network analyses showing the influence on the epidemic of contacts between and within groups of the population; rapid-assessment methods including contextual information for surveillance, especially in Third World countries; modelling approaches to assess prevalence/incidence trends; and the potential impact and cost-effectiveness of interventions.

Data for Europe illustrated falling AIDS incidence as a result of improved treatments, but ongoing infections in young people, including new injecting drug users. Optimism regarding new anti-retroviral treatments has been tempered in recent years by concerns about toxicity, resistance, adherence and cost, and although vaccine development is progressing, it is unlikely to offer anything more than partial protection. This underlines the need to avoid complacency and to continue preventive efforts to minimise risky behaviour by drug injectors.

The theme of the Conference was 'Bridging the Gap', and addressed both the flagrant disparities between North and South with regard to access to treatment and prevention, and the lack of understanding between scientists and those living with HIV. Although the Conference did much to increase awareness, bridging the gap remains a challenge.

Lucas Wiessing

## BOOKSHELF



### *The European Handbook on Prevention*

The Jellinek Consultancy, the Netherlands, and the Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe (Working Group on Prevention) collaborated on this *Handbook* from 1996–98 with the participation of 16 countries from Western, Central and Eastern Europe. During the drafting process, pilot projects were implemented to ensure that the *Handbook* was tested in practice and adopted by those working in the European drug-prevention field.

The *Handbook* describes various prevention models and provides in-depth details of the practical organisation of prevention programmes. Step by step, using the checklists, guidelines, advice and plans provided, prevention workers are guided through the establishment of sound prevention programmes. The *Handbook* also enables them to exchange ideas with other prevention workers and projects.

The Pompidou Group has been an important partner in the EMCDDA's project on evaluating drug prevention. The EMCDDA's *Guidelines on the Evaluation of Drug Prevention* (see page 7) and the *Handbook on Prevention* were developed in close co-operation and are designed to be complementary, containing mutual cross-references. Whereas the Pompidou Group's *Handbook* is a 'how-to' manual on planning and implementing drug-prevention interventions, the EMCDDA's *Guidelines* use a low-threshold approach for evaluation and provide a basic step-by-step introduction to its techniques. Both works represent considerable progress in the prevention field, above all in terms of their scientific soundness.

**Published by:** Pompidou Group (Working Group on Prevention) with the financial support of the Dutch Ministry of Public Health, Welfare and Sport (Addiction Policy Department)

**Copyright:** Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe

**Authors:** Dr Jaap van der Stel, assisted by Deborah Voordewind (Jellinek Consultancy) • **Date:** 1998

**Language:** English; French version in preparation

**Price:** Free • **ISBN:** 90-74037-08-9

**To order a copy of the *Handbook*, please contact:**

The Pompidou Group, Secretariat, Council of Europe,  
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex, France. Tel: ++ 33 388 41 35 66.  
Fax: ++ 33 388 41 27 85. E-mail: [pompidou.group@coe.fr](mailto:pompidou.group@coe.fr)

The EMCDDA is responsible for the selection of materials for the Bookshelf and for the text presented. However, responsibility for the content of these books and the opinions expressed therein lies with the authors themselves.

**A**ction against drugs was a priority for the UK Presidency of the Council of the European Union (January–June 1998), consolidating and building on valuable work inherited from its predecessors. The cross-pillar Horizontal Drugs Group played a central role in co-ordinating and monitoring activity on all fronts.\* In addition, implementing the recommendations of the Council High-level Group on improving co-operation in tackling organised crime – many of which will impact on drug trafficking – was overseen by the Council Multi-disciplinary Working Group on Organised Crime. Three joint surveillance customs exercises successfully targeted drug trafficking in sea containers, in air cargo and on the Balkan route.

Under the UK Presidency, the ratification of the Europol Convention was completed. Once open, the fully-fledged organisation will be a vital new weapon in combating drug trafficking and other forms of serious pan-European crime.

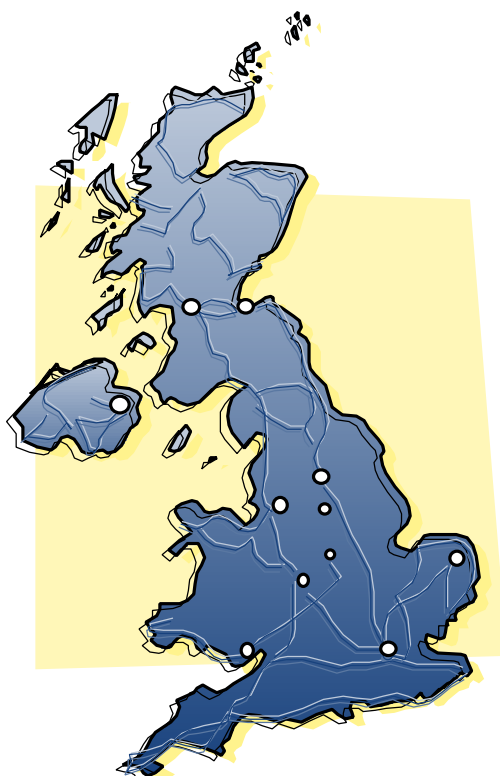
Meanwhile, the Early-warning System on New Synthetic Drugs (adopted by the Council under the terms of a Joint Action of 16 June 1997), in which the Europol Drugs Unit and the EMCDDA play an important role, is now up and running. In this context, the UK Presidency – on behalf of the 15 Member States – referred the drug MBDB to the EMCDDA for risk assessment.\*\*

The Presidency was also active in ensuring effective EU co-ordination in preparing for the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Drugs held in New York in June. Among others, the Session adopted a political declaration stressing the commitment of the world community to combating drug abuse and demonstrated a high level of consensus on a global approach to the drugs problem.\*\*\*

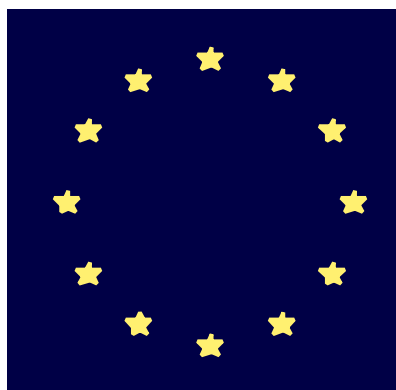
Priorities for EU drugs co-operation with Latin America were also finalised during the Presidency and important work progressed in the context of the Caribbean Drugs Initiative. Agreement

## SPECIAL FOCUS

### The UK Presidency and Drugs



was reached on establishing a co-ordination and co-operation mechanism designed to deepen political and technical dialogue with the EU, to



enhance existing collaboration on drugs and to develop new areas of co-operation in the field. The first meeting of the mechanism is likely to be held in late 1998 or early 1999.

In the field of EU enlargement, drug issues featured prominently at the inaugural meeting of the European

Conference organised in London in March following a decision of the Council. The Expert Group on Drugs and Organised Crime, established at the meeting, met in June and made good progress in identifying ways of improving practical co-operation amongst the Conference participants.

Under the EU's first pillar (Public Health), implementation of the Community Action Programme on the Prevention of Drug Dependency continued, as did preparations for the third European Drug Prevention Week (November 1998).

In May, the Presidency organised a Drug Prevention Conference in Brighton, UK, which brought together policy-makers and practitioners from across Europe to discuss best practice in drug prevention and education and in targeting young people at risk.\*\*\*\*

Finally, at its meeting in June 1998, the Cardiff European Council endorsed proposals from the Horizontal Drugs Group on the key elements of

a post-1999 EU drugs strategy and priorities for action in 1998–99. The Group agreed on the importance of striking a balance between supply reduction – with particular focus on practical co-operation at working level between law-enforcement and judicial agencies – and demand reduction. The value of an integrated, multi-agency approach to the drugs problem was also highlighted.

These elements will be incorporated into a detailed plan by the Austrian and German Presidencies.

**Steve Pike**  
**Action Against Drugs Unit**  
**UK Home Office**

\* The Horizontal Drugs Group is a cross-pillar working group mandated by the Committee of Permanent Representatives to the EU (COREPER) to facilitate the co-ordination of work on drug-related matters under the three pillars of the Treaty on European Union: Public Health; Common Foreign and Security Policy; and Co-operation in the Field of Justice and Home Affairs.

\*\* See *DrugNet Europe* No. 11.

\*\*\* See *DrugNet Europe* No. 12.

\*\*\*\* See *DrugNet Europe* No. 12.

## Advances made in two epidemiological indicators

**T**he EMCDDA is collaborating with the REITOX National Focal Points on the harmonisation of several key drug indicators. Work on two of these – the demand for drug treatment and drug-related deaths – began in 1996, with several REITOX working groups set up to analyse the existing situation and provide recommendations for the future. Since late 1997, the feasibility of implementing recommendations on each indicator has been assessed in two projects. These projects, phases in the EMCDDA's ongoing work on indicators, involve all Focal Points in their capacity as key players in implementing European standards on drug information.

The project on treatment demand, completed in July 1998, was co-ordinated by the German National Focal Point. Participating experts from nearly all the national centres and a delegate from the Pompidou Group met in Lisbon from 6–7 July to discuss their findings. Work undertaken in previous projects was integrated into the results, including a common core list of variables, a working classification of treatment centres and guidelines for controlling double counting. Over the next few months a complete protocol, fully compatible with that of the Pompidou Group, will be drafted and tested.

The project on drug-related deaths, also completed in July, was co-ordinated by the Dutch National Focal Point building on work carried out by the Danish Focal Point. A plenary expert meeting took place from 29–30 June in Utrecht. Results included working standards for data reporting from General Mortality Registries and Special Registries, and recommendations for new initiatives. These included the creation of national working groups on drug-related deaths and the production of guidelines for the application of the 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-10) in collaboration with the World Health Organisation and EUROSTAT. The two organisations were regularly consulted and participated actively in this project.

Julian Vicente

## 5<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE INTERNATIONAL EPIDEMIOLOGY WORK GROUP ON DRUGS

**O**ver 20 researchers from networks and international or regional organisations involved in collecting and analysing epidemiological information on drugs met at the EMCDDA from 21–23 July for the 5<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the International Epidemiology Work Group on Drugs. This meeting discussed trends in drug use and drug-related problems in different areas of the world.

Participants were drawn from the European region (represented by the EMCDDA and its REITOX network, the multi-city network of the Pompidou Group and the drugs co-ordination unit of the Phare programme); from North and South America (the United States, Canada, the Inter-American Drug Abuse Commission (CICAD) and Chile); and from South Africa. The World Health Organisation (WHO) and

the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) also attended. Mexican and Asian epidemiological networks were unable to take part.

The participants exchanged information on innovative methodologies for identifying, tracking and understanding emerging drug trends; discussed the relationship between epidemiological data and public-health decision-making; and examined possibilities for international research collaboration. Although some broad trends and common problems may be observed across these regions, the more detailed picture is one of considerable diversity.

Richard Hartnoll

See next issue of *DrugNet Europe* for further details.

## GLOBAL RESEARCH NETWORK ON HIV PREVENTION

**T**he US National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) held an inaugural meeting in Geneva from 24–26 June aimed at starting a Global Research Network on HIV Prevention Among Injecting Drug Users (IDUs). The encounter brought together scientists from all over the world who co-ordinate research and prevention networks. Presentations revealed that HIV continues to penetrate new drug-user populations, such as in Eastern Europe and the Newly Independent States of the former Soviet Union. Much emphasis was laid on improving knowledge of harm reduction

and on investigating the political and practical barriers to its implementation. New methods of investigation, such as Rapid Assessment,\* were seen to offer quick epidemiological information and to provide possible openings for prevention work, among others in the social and political context. The EMCDDA delivered an overview of HIV epidemiology among IDUs and of harm reduction in Western Europe, and presented its current activities on injecting drug use.\*\*

Lucas Wiessing

\* Rapid Assessment – a method for collecting available information rapidly to implement early interventions.

\*\* For a copy of this presentation, please contact: [Lucas.Wiessing@emcdda.org/](mailto:Lucas.Wiessing@emcdda.org/).

## EMCDDA STATUTORY BODIES

### *Management Board assesses progress*

**T**he 13<sup>th</sup> meeting of the EMCDDA Management Board was held in Lisbon from 2–3 July. The main items on the agenda were: the *Annual Report on the State of the Drugs Problem in the European Union*; the REITOX network; the EDDRA and legal databases; implementation of the Joint Action on New Synthetic Drugs; and administrative issues.

With regard to the *Annual Report*, an in-depth discussion was held on the evaluation conducted by consultant to the EMCDDA, David Turner. The Board provisionally decided that, from 1999 onwards, the *Report* would be published in two parts: an extensive report on the drug problem, to be available in English only; and a detailed 'Summary and Highlights' available in all 11 Community languages to be downloaded from the EMCDDA web site (<http://www.emcdda.org>).

In relation to REITOX, the Board members heard a progress report on the document regarding the 'Role of the National Focal Points' and called for issues such as financing to be clarified further. To this end, EMCDDA Director Georges Estievenart has requested additional information from the national centres on their personnel and financial requirements. The document will be submitted to the Board for a final decision at its meeting in October.

The EDDRA database was felt to be an open dynamic system and an essential tool in the field of demand reduction. As a result, the Board decided to proceed

with the project and designate it one of the REITOX 'Core Tasks'.\* The legal database was also found to be an important project.\*\* Further information on the need, extent and potential users of this database was requested by the Board for its meeting in January 1999.

The Chairman of the Scientific Committee briefed the Management Board on the state of



implementation of the Joint Action on New Synthetic Drugs. He reported that the Steering Committee was finalising the risk-assessment guidelines on the basis of which an enlarged Scientific Committee would proceed to the risk assessment of MBDB at its meeting on 9–10 November.\*\*\*

Finally, on administrative issues, the Management Board approved the implementing rules of the EMCDDA's internal financial regulation and adopted the rules for the composition and procedure of the EMCDDA's Staff Committee. The Board next meets from 22–23 October in Lisbon.

*Kathleen Hernalsteen*

\* See page 7.

\*\* This database covers the laws and juridical acts on drugs in the 15 Member States.

\*\*\* See *DrugNet Europe* No. 12.

## THE EMCDDA AND ITS PARTNERS



### *Heads of EU agencies meet in Lisbon*

**I**n its capacity as Chair of the agencies of the European Union, the EMCDDA held a meeting of the 11 Directors in Lisbon on 13 July.\* The Directors discussed issues ranging from financial and personnel issues to inter-agency co-operation, the agencies' role in the accession of Central and Eastern European countries to the EU, and a meeting with Carlo Trojan, Secretary General of the European Commission, scheduled for early 1999. For the first time, the new European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, based in Vienna, was represented by its recently elected Director, Beate Winkler. The meeting was fruitful and led to an exchange of views on topics of common concern as well as co-operation in concrete areas such as an integrated budget and accounting system.

*Kathleen Hernalsteen*

\* On 5 February 1998, the EMCDDA succeeded the European Environment Agency as Chair of the 11 EU agencies for a period of one year.

## REITOX Focal Points meet in Lisbon

**T**he REITOX National Focal Points (NFPs) and the EC Focal Point met in Lisbon from 22–23 June to discuss, among other topics, the state of progress of their *National Reports and Information Maps* under preparation for the 1998 *Annual Report on the State of the Drugs Problem in the European Union*.\*

The Centre reported on NFP participation in the Joint Action on New Synthetic Drugs and described future related activities. It also presented five harmonised epidemiological indicators and suggested that the implementation of these indicators by the national centres could contribute to an in-depth, global view of drugs in the European Union. The Focal Points were positive about the detailed overview provided at the meeting on the joint creation of a comprehensive European Drugs Monitoring System.

At the meeting, the Focal Points discussed the 1999 REITOX Work Programme, some proposing a closer integration of epidemiological and demand-reduction information. The Focal Points welcomed consultation on the content of forthcoming activities as well as their own closer relationship with the Centre.

The Focal Points engaged in an open-ended discussion with the EMCDDA Director, Georges Estievenart, who

reviewed the progress of the Centre over the last three years. He pointed out that it had become a reference point on drugs in Europe and beyond and that there had been an increase in co-operation with third-country partners. The decentralisation of particular tasks to the national centres now seems likely as mutual confidence grows. The Director also introduced the new REITOX Co-ordinator, Roger Lewis, who took up appointment on 1 July 1998.

Progress on the IDA/REITOX project – aimed at user-friendly and rapid improvement in the field of communication – was also outlined. IDA II is likely to provide the basis for Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs) to access the REITOX network in the future.

The NFPs congratulated the Centre on progress made in implementing the EDDRA feasibility phase and agreed on the importance of designating the project a REITOX 'Core Task'.\*\*

Finally, the EC Focal Point and the representative of the Phare Programme presented the state of progress of their current activities. The next REITOX meeting is scheduled to take place in Lisbon on 19–20 October 1998.

*Roger Lewis*

\* *Information Maps and National Reports* – Instruments devised by the EMCDDA to record in detail the sources, availability, quality and flow of information in the different countries to the national centres and to estimate the drug situation in each Member State. The information collected by these instruments is synthesised and integrated every year into the EMCDDA's *Annual Report*.

\*\* *Core Tasks* – a set of permanent requirements carried out by the National Focal Points on a continuous basis.

## Raising the EMCDDA profile... with a difference!



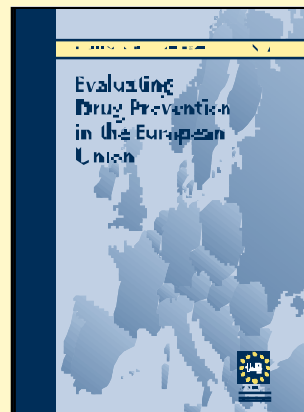
**F**rom 13–25 June, sponsored by the EMCDDA, staff member António Paixão travelled from Lisbon to Gröningen, the Netherlands, to participate in Eurovespa '98, an annual event bringing together over 120 Vespa clubs and over 2,000 motorbikes from throughout Europe. Sporting the Centre's logo and advertising its web site, Antonio's 25-year old Vespa travelled 5,943 km in the name of the agency and survived the trip! Participating in the event were representatives from as far afield as Algeria, Argentina, Japan and South Africa.



## EMCDDA PUBLICATIONS

### New EMCDDA Publications:

- *General Report of Activities 1997* (English, French, German, Portuguese and Spanish)
- *EMCDDA Publications Catalogue* (English, French, German, Portuguese and Spanish)
- EMCDDA Scientific Monograph No. 2 – *Evaluating Drug Prevention in the European Union*. Available in English only.
- EMCDDA web site – now fully revised and updated! (<http://www.emcdda.org>).



### Coming soon...

- *First Report on European Union Drug Information Structures and Sources* (Autumn 1998)
- EMCDDA Manuals Series No. 1 – *Guidelines on the Evaluation of Drug Prevention*
- EMCDDA Presentation Brochure in 11 EU languages

## A Glimpse at a National Focal Point DENMARK

**T**he Danish National Board of Health is an advisory and administrative body designated by the Ministry of Health in 1994 to act as the Danish National Focal Point in the REITOX network. The organisation aims to: monitor public health; follow developments in health issues; advise the Ministry and other public authorities; and supervise health-care professionals.

Responsibility for co-ordination and contact with the EMCDDA lies with the 24-person section for preventive medicine, headed by Vibeke Graff, also Head of the Focal Point. This section is responsible for national prevention initiatives in the areas of alcohol and drugs, as well as others such as doping, exercise, skin cancer, eating disorders and suicide. Responsibility for the national registers used to monitor the drug situation in Denmark (such as the national register of causes of death and the register of drug abusers receiving treatment) lies with the section for health statistics.

The National Board of Health is the Danish professional authority working to prevent drug abuse. In Denmark, national measures concerning drug abuse are based on a 1994 government review on drug policy which advocates against legalising drugs and for continued efforts to combat drug abuse in the population. It is the task of the National Board of Health to secure a firm and professionally documented basis for national efforts and to create a foundation for a division of tasks between the State, counties and municipalities as well as other bodies concerned with drug abuse.

In addition to its responsibility for national drug monitoring, the National Board of Health has multiple and comprehensive tasks concerning drugs. Among others, it develops information and campaign materials both for the general population and for specific target groups. It also offers support to initiatives at local level to help implement new knowledge and new methods in practical prevention activities. The Focal Point co-operates with other bodies at national, regional and local levels.

## E · M · C · D · D · A NOTICEBOARD



**T**he EMCDDA is participating in a seminar entitled 'Co-operation on Policies in the Field of Drugs and Drug Dependence' organised by His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Portugal, Jorge Sampaio.

The seminar, to take place from 8–9 October in Porto, will focus on information, demand reduction and risk reduction as well as on co-operation between the cities of Latin America and Europe.

The central monitoring of drug abuse lies at the core of the various national initiatives and activities in the field of drug prevention. The National Board of Health has overall responsibility for prevention and launches regular population surveys.

In recent years, much progress has been made in the drug-monitoring field. The most significant improvement has been the creation of the national register of drug abusers receiving treatment which makes it possible to follow a group over time and thus to analyse any changes in recruitment, composition and other characteristics. The register has created a basis for

systematic and continuing documentation of the development of drug abuse in Denmark, and has improved the possibilities of obtaining exact estimates of the extent of problem drug abuse and its spread.

From a European perspective, one very significant result of creating this register is the possibility of undertaking comparative international surveys, not only at city level but also at national level. The National Board of Health welcomes this new development.

For further information, please contact: Kari Grasaasen, National Board of Health, Amaliegade 13, 1012 Copenhagen K. Tel: ++ 45 33 91 1601. Fax: ++ 45 33 33 0018. E-mail: [vig@sst.dk](mailto:vig@sst.dk) or [kag@sst.dk](mailto:kag@sst.dk).

### EMCDDA Calendar

10 September – EMCDDA meeting with the European Agency for the Evaluation of Medicinal Products, London.

11 September – EMCDDA meeting with DG V on indicators, Brussels.

21–22 September – EMCDDA project meeting on mortality among cohorts of drug users, Rome.

23–24 September – EMCDDA/WHO joint meeting on cohort studies among drug users, Rome.

25 September – Visit to the EMCDDA from the European Parliament Committee for the Environment, Brussels.

30 September – Scientific Committee Steering Group Meeting, Lisbon.

1–2 October – EMCDDA Scientific Committee Meeting, Lisbon.

3 October – Seminar on the 'Health of Intravenous Drug Users', Marseilles.

8–9 October – Seminar on 'Co-operation on Policies in the Field of Drugs and Drug Dependence', Porto.

19–20 October – Meeting of the Heads of the REITOX Focal Points, Lisbon.

21–22 October – Participation in a meeting of the Sociedad Espanola de Epidemiologia, Seville.

22–23 October – EMCDDA Management Board, Lisbon.

29–31 October – EMCDDA Qualitative Research Seminar, Lisbon.

### Selected EU Meetings

24 September – Horizontal Drugs Group, Brussels.

2 October – Horizontal Drugs Group, Brussels.

21 October – Horizontal Drugs Group, Brussels.

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