A year in review: EMCDDA publishes its latest General Report of Activities

An external evaluation of the EMCDDA, new products and services, and support to policy and practice in the fields of health and security are among the features presented in the latest General Report of Activities published today by the agency. The report, covering key achievements and governance in 2018, presents the implementation of the EMCDDA work programme activities over the 12-month period.

The year 2018 was one in which the value that the agency brings to its stakeholders and key partners was further confirmed. An external evaluation of the EMCDDA, carried out by the European Commission (EC) and presented to the EMCDDA Management Board in December 2018, concluded that the agency is performing very well, delivers excellent outputs and has a high reputation at both European and international levels. The agency will closely follow up on the recommendations of the evaluation to guide its future activities and remain policy relevant and structurally fit to respond to stakeholder needs.

The most tangible results of the agency's work are its publications. In 2018, 45 scientific and corporate publications, in addition to 30 Country Drug Reports, were released, including seven joint publications produced with EU agencies or international organisations. The EMCDDA's annual overview of the drug situation, in the form of its flagship European Drug Report, was launched in Brussels in June by European Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship, Dimitris Avramopoulos and by EMCDDA Director, Alexis Goosdeel.

Policy and practice relevance were at the core of the agency's work throughout the year. The EMCDDA provided services to its three main customer groups: EU institutions; national policymakers in the EU Member States; and professionals working in the drugs field. Here it contributed to major EU drug policy documents, through technical support to EU institutions, and, overall, contributed to around 300 drug-related scientific, policy and practice events. The agency disseminated best practice, held training sessions and undertook capacity-building activities to share knowledge in 2018. Its cannabis policy news service continued to provide regular alerts to its policy audience and its audience doubled in 2018.

A three-year initiative with the purpose of promoting hepatitis C testing among people who inject drugs (PWID) in drug treatment settings was launched mid-year. This reflected an operationalisation of a central EMCDDA public health priority, as defined in the agency's Strategy 2025.

The agency's role in coordinating the EU Early Warning System (EU EWS) on new psychoactive substances was also strengthened in 2018 as a result of the application (on 23 November) of a new legal framework. This framework provides the EMCDDA with increased responsibilities and new formal

partnerships with other EU agencies, and it amends its Founding Regulation (recast). The EWS was formally notified for the first time of 55 NPS during the year, bringing the total number of NPS currently monitored to around 730.

The EU Member States are among the agency's core partners, particularly the Reitox national focal points (NFPs), its main data providers. 2018 was the first year of implementation of the Reitox Development Framework, adopted by the heads of the NFPs in 2017, and much of the agency's efforts were focused on supporting the NFPs in this endeavour.

Finally, a key development in working with partners was the signing of a grant agreement between the EC and the EMCDDA to implement, from January 2019, a new technical cooperation project for European Neighbourhood Policy partner countries. Entitled 'EU4 Monitoring Drugs', this will be the largest technical cooperation project carried out so far by the agency.