



European Monitoring Centre
for Drugs and Drug Addiction

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General Report of Activities

Key achievements and governance:
a year in review

2020



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Foreword



Laura d'Arrigo

Chair of the EMCDDA Management Board



Alexis Goosdeel

Director of the EMCDDA

We are proud to present the 26th *General Report of Activities* of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), which provides an overview of the agency's key achievements in 2020, the year that marked the EMCDDA's 25th anniversary.

When looking back at 2020, the first word that comes to mind, however, is 'resilience', as it was a year in which the EMCDDA, similar to other organisations in Europe and beyond, had to face a challenge that had never been seen before: the COVID-19 pandemic. Ever since the WHO declared a pandemic in March 2020, the way we live and the way we work have changed. It has also shown us how resilient we are, as an organisation, and as individuals.

Notwithstanding the need for teleworking, a great deal of which was required during the lockdown, the EMCDDA team rose to the challenge and managed to deliver some of the most successful products and services it has produced in recent times. These included 35 scientific and corporate publications that, in addition to our other resources, generated great interest on the part of the 1.6 million people who visited the EMCDDA's website during this extraordinary period.

While the year started with a clear list of priorities that were defined by our 2020 work programme, the organisation had to adapt swiftly to the new reality brought about by the pandemic. The priority, more than ever, was to serve our key customers – EU and national drug policymakers; practitioners in the Member States – with timely analyses of the impact of COVID-19 on drug use, services and markets. To that end, 11 new projects were kicked off, including trendspotting exercises, and a rich set of resources was produced and disseminated as a result.

As every challenge also brings an opportunity, for the EMCDDA this meant an acceleration of the digital transformation at all levels: core business and corporate. In the core business areas, highlights included the digital launch, with the European Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva Johansson, of our yearly flagship publication the *European Drug Report 2020*, in the form of a special anniversary edition that marked 25 years of EU drug monitoring. The EMCDDA's training and capacity-building activities also went fully digital, benefiting close to 500 drug professionals, including health practitioners, law enforcement officers and policymakers both within the EU and beyond. The EMCDDA's knowledge-transfer offer was also enriched in 2020 with the new webinar series – seven such events were organised on COVID-19, with an average of 200 participants per webinar.

2020 also brought the first risk assessments on new psychoactive substances (NPS) carried out under the new legal framework on NPS that started to be applied in 2019. In that regard, three risk assessments were organised via teleconference by the newly appointed EMCDDA Scientific Committee. All three of the NPS in question have, in the meantime, been subject to control measures in the EU through delegated directives issued by the European Commission further to the evidence received from the EMCDDA.

At the corporate level, the EMCDDA mobility transformation programme was initiated. The objective of this important initiative is, by the end of 2021, to equip all of our staff members with modern and fully mobile workstations, which will increase flexibility and efficiency during remote or hybrid working.

2020 was also a year of enhanced partnership. The EMCDDA worked closely with its European partners, in particular with the Reitox network of national focal points. The agency offered them support throughout the year, and data on the impact of COVID-19 on the work of our main network was collected and published in a report drafted by the network itself in December.

Work in the area of international cooperation was scaled up in 2020 when the EMCDDA received funding from the European External Action Service to implement a bilateral technical assistance project with Georgia. This will add to the work performed in this area to implement the two ongoing EU-funded projects relating respectively to enlargement countries (Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance 7) and neighbouring countries (EU4Monitoring drugs).

2020 was also marked by the adoption, under the German Presidency of the Council, of the new EU drugs strategy for 2021-2025. The EMCDDA provided technical input to the preparation of the document, and the agency will be called to support its implementation in the years to come.

The 2020 roadmap of the *EMCDDA Strategy 2025* came to an end during the year, and the Management Board was presented with the results of the successful implementation of this document. These results will inform the new roadmap, leading up to 2025, the preparation of which also started in 2020.

At the end of this challenging but transformative year, we would like to express our gratitude to the staff of the EMCDDA who, through their dedication and outstanding resilience, made all our achievements possible in 2020. We dedicate this *General Report of Activities* to them.

Our special thanks go to the members of the EMCDDA Management Board for their ongoing support and guidance, and to our Scientific Committee, which started its mandate in this challenging year of 2020.

Our final acknowledgement goes to the Heads and the staff of the Reitox National Focal Points and more broadly to all the networks and partners that enabled us to achieve our goals and gave us the privilege of contributing to their work in 2020.

List of acronyms and initialisms

ABAC	electronic management and accounting system
BCP	business continuity plan
CA	contract agent
CEPOL	EU Agency for Law Enforcement Training
CICAD	Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission
COVID-19	coronavirus disease 2019
CND	UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs
Copolad	Cooperation Programme between Latin America and the European Union on Drugs Policies
COM	Communication unit
COSI	Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security
DIR	Directorate
ECA	European Court of Auditors
ECDC	European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
ECDD	Expert Committee on Drug Dependence
ECHA	European Chemicals Agency
EDR	<i>European Drug Report</i>
EFSA	European Food Safety Authority
EMA	European Medicines Agency
EMCDDA	European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction
EMPACT	European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats
EMSA	European Maritime Safety Agency
ENP	European neighbourhood policy
ESPAD	European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs
EU4MD	EU4Monitoring drugs
Europol	European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation
EWS	Early Warning System
EXO	Executive office
FG	function group
FTE	full-time equivalent
HEA	Public health unit
IAS	Internal Audit Service
ICF	Internal Control Framework
ICS	internal control standards
ICT	information and communication technology
IPA	Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance
JHA	Justice and Home Affairs
KPI	key performance indicator
LIBE	Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs
MoU	memorandum of understanding
NFP	national focal point
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NPS	new psychoactive substances
OAP	operational action plan
OAS	Organization of American States
RTX	Reitox and external partners unit
SAS	Risks to public safety and security unit
SDI	Scientific coordination unit
SLA	service-level agreement
SNE	Seconded national expert
TA	temporary agent
THC	tetrahydrocannabinol
UN	United Nations
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
WHO	World Health Organization

| Mission statement

Independent, science-based information is a vital resource to help Europe understand the nature of its drug problems and better respond to them. It was based on this premise, and in the face of an escalating drugs phenomenon, that the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) was established in 1993. Inaugurated in Lisbon in 1995, it is one of the EU's decentralised agencies.

Building on the EMCDDA's founding regulation (Regulation (EC) No 1920/2006) as amended (Regulation (EU) 2017/2101 as regards information exchange on, and an early warning system and risk assessment procedure for, new psychoactive substances (NPS)), the [EMCDDA Strategy 2025](#) defines the agency's current mission and vision statements.

| Mission

The EMCDDA exists to support evidence-based decisions and actions at the EU and national levels by providing factual, objective, reliable and comparable information concerning drugs and drug addiction, and their consequences. The EMCDDA's mission is therefore grounded in the consensus that sound information is a prerequisite for developing effective policies in the drugs area.

| Vision

The EMCDDA's vision is a healthier and a more secure Europe, achieved through better-informed drug policy and action.

To do this effectively, the agency must constantly strive to respond to the needs of its primary customers, who can be defined as:

- EU institutions;
- national decision-makers/policymakers;
- professionals working in the drugs field.

Beyond meeting the information needs of its primary customers, to address its mandate the EMCDDA also needs to engage with other stakeholders, including academic institutions and researchers; the general public, civil society and those affected by drug problems; and international organisations and third countries.

| Values

The EMCDDA is committed to the EU and its values. Beyond these, the agency has identified its own set of core values to inform all aspects of its work, inspire staff in their professional performance, inform future organisational policies and guide the agency's interactions with stakeholders and partners.

The EMCDDA's four core values are:

- scientific excellence;
- integrity and impartiality;
- customer focus and service orientation;
- efficiency and sustainability.

Management Board's analysis and assessment

The Management Board has analysed and assessed the authorising officer's (Director's) *General Report of Activities* for the financial year 2020.

The Management Board appreciates the performance of the EMCDDA in implementing its work programme under unprecedented circumstances, while being innovative, for example through the rapid launch of a series of products and services on the impact of the pandemic on the drugs field, the webinars on specific topics and the virtual launch of the *European Drug Report 2020*.

The Management Board praises in particular the EMCDDA's capacity to adapt to the challenges posed by the COVID-19

pandemic, including by switching to telework and increased digitalisation.

The agency continued to show operational efficiency through the agile implementation of the 2020 work programme, and reached an outstanding level of budget execution, with 100 % of commitment appropriations executed.

In conclusion, the Management Board welcomes the 2020 *General Report of Activities*, which provides an excellent overview of the agency's achievements as set out in the work programme adopted by the Board.

Executive summary

This report presents the implementation of the activities of the EMCDDA's work programme for 2020, the first year of the **Programming Document 2020–22**.

The report mirrors the work programme for 2020, which, in line with the *EMCDDA Strategy 2025*, presents the activities of the EMCDDA within the three main areas of work: health, security and business drivers.

While the EMCDDA has clear objectives and priorities in each area, it is important to note that the multifaceted nature of the drugs problem means that these areas are interlinked and complementary. Therefore, for the purpose of this executive summary, a section that includes transversal work is presented first.

Events that shaped the work of the EMCDDA in 2020

COVID-19 pandemic

On 11 March 2020 the World Health Organization (WHO) declared coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) a pandemic. As a result, and following the guidelines issued by the Portuguese authorities, the EMCDDA Director decided to activate the business continuity plan (BCP) on 13 March (Friday), at midnight. As of the next working day (16 March), the agency's staff switched to teleworking mode.

While entering this new and challenging phase, the EMCDDA had to ensure the continuity of its operations and the protection of its 100+ staff members, while continuing to deliver some of its most valuable products and services to its key customers.

Acting in a highly responsive manner, in March, shortly after the pandemic was declared, the EMCDDA set up a task force and developed a COVID-19 hub page bringing together well-timed resources on the disease and its impact on both drug users and the professionals in the drugs field.

From that moment on, until the end of 2020, the EMCDDA acted with agility and managed to shift its priorities promptly to meet the emerging needs. Twenty-eight new projects were designed in a timely manner by the agency's staff and approved by the Director, 11 of which were focused on COVID-19. This allowed the EMCDDA to release new resources and disseminate knowledge in innovative ways (such as online training sessions, meetings and webinars). The Reitox National Focal Points played a substantial role in supporting the Centre to swiftly adapt the work programme, as well as the tools and methodologies used, to the new context and emerging needs.

25 years of drug monitoring

In 2020 the EMCDDA celebrated its 25th year of operation. In the quarter of a century since it embarked on its first work programme the agency has witnessed radical changes in both the extent and the nature of the drugs problem.

In order to mark this important milestone for EU drugs monitoring, the EMCDDA rolled out a monthly stream of branded content highlighting the agency's added value. This included a look back at 25 years of annual reporting on the drugs problem in Europe and a digital storytelling campaign ('Voices'), launched on International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (26 June). Through this campaign, the agency's team and the wider community shared their stories on what the EMCDDA means to them.

Transversal work: health and security

In 2020 the agency continued to produce timely and high-quality information, together with strategic and situational analyses and threat assessments, to inform policy and practice. In this regard, the agency's most tangible outputs are its publications, some of which are produced in cooperation with partners. In 2020, **35 scientific and institutional publications** were produced by the EMCDDA. The agency also authored or co-authored 29 scientific articles and book chapters that were published in prestigious journals and publications, enhancing the agency's scientific reputation.

Furthermore, over 1.6 million visitors accessed the EMCDDA website in 2020 (i.e. 4 500 visits per day).

One of the most downloaded resources was the *European Drug Report 2020 – Trends and developments*, the EMCDDA's yearly flagship publication. The report was launched virtually on 22 September, from Brussels, Paris and Lisbon, with a panel comprising Ylva Johansson, European Commissioner for Home Affairs, Laura d'Arrigo, Chair of the EMCDDA Management Board, and Alexis Goosdeel, Director of the EMCDDA. Accompanying the main report was a summary of the key issues (in 24 languages) and the 'Statistical Bulletin 2020', containing the European dataset underpinning the report.

Participation in drug-related events and in training and capacity building are complementary means for the EMCDDA to disseminate information, analysis and knowledge. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most on-site events were replaced by online activities. During the year, the agency managed to transfer its knowledge to close to 500 professionals working in the drugs field, including law enforcement officers and policymakers both in the EU and beyond. An additional 200 people (on average) attended each of the seven webinars on COVID-19 that were organised by the EMCDDA.

Specific highlights from the EMCDDA's work within the three main areas – health, security and business drivers – are presented below, and details can be found in the later sections of the report and in the annexes.

Health area

Through its *EMCDDA Strategy 2025*, the agency is committed to contributing to a healthier Europe by addressing important drug-related public health concerns.

In this regard, the emerging priority in this area was to contribute timely information and resources to the fight against COVID-19.

To that end, the 'EMCDDA update on the implications of COVID-19 for people who use drugs and drug service providers' was released in March 2020, very shortly after the disease was declared a pandemic by the WHO.

In the following months, the EMCDDA carried out several trendspotter exercises centred on COVID-19 and drugs, the results of which were released rapidly to the interested groups. A rapid assessment was undertaken of the impact of COVID-19 on drug use and related harms, and on drug service provision and help seeking in Europe. This included a round of surveys, including a tailored web survey answered by over

11 000 people who use drugs and a number of facilitated groups with experts. Findings were triangulated and reported via rapid reports and webinars.

During the year, the agency continued to act upon the key public health priorities that were defined in the *EMCDDA Strategy 2025*, namely to contribute to the reduction of drug-related deaths; to promote hepatitis C testing and treatment among people who inject drugs; and to promote the implementation of evidence-based prevention interventions.

To support the EU's efforts in these critical areas, the EMCDDA launched new resources focusing on drug overdoses in Europe and the interventions in place to prevent them. It also continued its harm-reduction initiative to increase access to hepatitis C testing and improve linkage to care. Finally, it took further steps in implementing the European Prevention Curriculum through the roll-out in several countries of the 'training of trainers' system that started in 2019, including a new online component.

In the area of NPS, the EMCDDA continued to implement the EU Early Warning System (EWS) in collaboration with its EU partners. The EU EWS was formally notified for the first time of 46 NPS during the year, bringing the total number of NPS currently monitored to around 830. Furthermore, six risk communications were issued to the EU EWS network.

Furthermore, risk assessments for three NPS were carried out by the extended EMCDDA Scientific Committee via teleconference. These were the first risk assessments conducted under the new NPS legislative framework, within shorter deadlines and under teleworking conditions, which added to the complexity of the task. One of these new substances, isotonitazene, was placed under control in the EU by a Commission delegated directive adopted in September 2020. The delegated directive tackling the other two substances, MDMB-4en-PINACA and 4F-MDMB-BICA, was adopted in March 2021.

Risk communications and reports accounting for the potential impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the drug markets and risks to people who use NPS were issued during the year, including one alert on the subject, three situation reports and an EWS update on NPS.

In the policy area, much of the agency's efforts continued to focus on following up on the developments in the evolving cannabis market in order to promptly inform the EU policy debate. To that end, two new reports were released, and regular cannabis policy news items were issued on relevant European and international developments in this field. A meeting of EU agencies was also organised on the topic in February.

An ongoing priority in the policy area was to contribute to implementing the EU action plan on drugs 2017–2020 and to support the European Commission, as required, in the evaluation of the EU drugs strategy 2013–2020. Furthermore, the EMCDDA provided input, upon request, to the Commission and to the German Presidency of the Council in relation to the development of the new EU strategy and action plan on drugs for 2021–2025.

The information and analysis provided by the EMCDDA in the health area were supported by the ongoing, underlying monitoring work that was carried out by the agency throughout the year. The core monitoring activity (based on the five EMCDDA key epidemiological indicators) was further strengthened, with a significant contribution from the Reitox network of national focal points (NFPs), the agency's main data providers in the Member States. All meetings took place online in 2020.

A key publication in 2020 was the *ESPAD Report 2019*, which was launched online in November and the findings of which were discussed with experts during an EMCDDA webinar.

New data sources also continued to be developed and implemented. These leading-edge indicators provide useful, timely and complementary data that offer valuable insights into drug use in Europe. To that end, the EMCDDA enhanced its collaboration with innovative initiatives, including the Sewage Analysis Core Group Europe on wastewater analysis, the European Web Survey on Drugs (providing data on drug consumption in different populations of drug users in 16 European countries), the European Drug Emergencies Network (an organisation that monitors emergency data on acute drug-related harm that are provided by selected hospitals in 18 European countries), the European Syringe Collection and Analysis Project Enterprise (ESCAPE) and the Trans-European Drug Information Project (TEDI). Data collected from the EMCDDA's collaboration with these initiatives fed into many of the EMCDDA's analyses that were produced and published during the year.

| Security area

The EMCDDA further disseminated the joint EMCDDA–European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation (Europol) *EU Drug Markets Report 2019*, which was released in November 2019. The agency's efforts in this regard included a presentation by the Director at the European Parliament in January 2020.

Much of the agency's work in 2020 was dedicated to investigating the impact of COVID-19 on the drug markets. This

included the release in May of a new EMCDDA and Europol joint publication titled *EU Drug Markets – Impact of COVID-19*. This was complemented by a special report on *COVID-19 and Drugs – Drug supply via darknet markets*, which was published in the same month.

In the policy area, the EMCDDA provided technical input and advice to EU institutions, on request, on issues such as drug activity on darknet markets and on the preparation of the new EU strategy and action plan on drugs 2021–2025 and the new EU security union strategy for 2020–2025.

Furthermore, the agency continued to contribute to the European Multidisciplinary Platform against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) operational action plans (OAPs) of the EU policy cycle on organised and serious international crime. This included providing input on the drafting of the EMPACT OAPs for 2021 on NPS / synthetic drugs and on cannabis, cocaine and heroin; and delivering drug-related training activities for 387 law enforcement professionals alongside the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL).

To support the comprehensive analytical effort in the security area, work continued in 2020 on improving the quality and availability of core supply data, in close collaboration with the Reitox NFPs and with our EU partner Europol. In terms of new sources of data and innovative monitoring approaches, the EMCDDA further developed its capacity for open-source information and darknet monitoring, which have been gaining importance in relation to understanding the rapidly evolving and increasingly tech-savvy drug market. In addition, progress was made in preparation for pilot data collection on drug-related homicide.

| Business drivers

| Institutional developments

The EMCDDA Management Board took the unanimous decision on 25 June, following a proposal by the Commission, to renew the mandate of the agency's Director, Alexis Goosdeel, for the next 5 years, until 31 December 2025.

The Director's top priorities for the second half of his mandate include the digital transformation of the EMCDDA and the development of a new business model to help the agency contribute more efficiently to a healthier and more secure Europe. To this end, the EMCDDA business model innovation initiative began in 2020, with the objective of redesigning the way the agency creates and delivers value to its key customers:

policymakers at the EU and national levels and practitioners in the Member States.

Communication and service delivery to meet evolving EMCDDA customer needs

The COVID-19 pandemic brought about significant changes in the way the world communicated in 2020. Furthermore, it reshaped the needs of the EMCDDA's key customers, namely policymakers at the EU and national levels and practitioners in the EU Member States. To that end, priority was given to ensuring that products and services were provided in a timely manner to these customers via the agency's digital channels. These included online training courses and events (e.g. webinars) and product launches (e.g. the launch of the *European Drug Report 2020* and many COVID-19-related products).

Further activities were carried out to enhance engagement with the agency's audience, in particular via online communication channels. As a result, the upward trend in the number of social media followers continued in 2020, with an increase observed for all channels (e.g. a 9 % increase in Facebook followers and a 73 % increase in Instagram followers).

Finally, the 'Customer needs' initiative, which started in 2018, made further progress in 2020. During the year, a framework for proactively identifying and responding to stakeholders' needs was developed and prepared for staff testing. The framework consists of a collection of methods and instruments such as customer journey mapping, needs and gap analyses, personas, surveys, online consultations, face-to-face (semi-structured) interviews, focus groups, workshops, metrics and staff training. The next step will be to link this dynamic framework to the EMCDDA business model innovation initiative.

Working in partnership

In fulfilling its tasks, the agency relies on a large number of partners, and in particular the Reitox network of NFPs, which plays a critical role in sustaining the EU core monitoring system. 2020 saw the completion of the first [Reitox development framework roadmap \(2017–2020\)](#), and the EMCDDA initiated, with input from the NFPs, an assessment of the implementation of this document. The results will inform the joint preparation of the second roadmap (2021–2025), which will be presented to the heads of NFPs for adoption in 2021.

The EMCDDA also took stock of the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the work of the NFPs. The report *EMCDDA National Focal Points' Activities during the COVID-19 Pandemic* was released in December. The report concluded that in the course of the year the NFPs performed many extra activities, including launching new COVID-19-related surveys, creating and providing national guidelines, disseminating information to drug users and the staff of drug services and providing new services.

In performing its work and achieving its objectives, the EMCDDA also relies on its other EU and international partners. Together with the other eight EU agencies that are members of the Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) Agencies' Network, the EMCDDA contributed to a [joint paper on the COVID-19 response by the JHA agencies](#), which captures the agencies' individual and joint efforts to deal with the impact of the pandemic. The document was formally endorsed by the heads of the JHA agencies during a videoconference held on 9 July.

In terms of international organisations, in February the EMCDDA and the Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe adopted an appendix to the memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed between the two organisations in 2010. Furthermore, in Washington DC, in January, the EMCDDA and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD) signed a new work programme for the 2019–2024 period, under the MoU signed with CICAD's parent body, the Organization of American States (OAS), in 2000.

In terms of cooperation with third countries, the EMCDDA signed two new working arrangements – with Kosovo(*) in September and with Serbia in December – via an exchange of letters between the EMCDDA and the respective national authorities.

In this area, the agency continued to cooperate with enlargement countries and to implement technical cooperation projects under the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA). In this regard, the IPA 7 project entered its second year of implementation. Entitled 'Stepwise integration of the IPA beneficiaries in the activities of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) and the Reitox network', the project, which has a total budget of EUR 1 million and is planned to run until June 2022, aims to enhance the capacity of the EU and the six IPA beneficiaries to detect, analyse and report on emerging drug-related health and security threats.

(*) This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNSCR 1244/1999 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.

Cooperation with European neighbourhood policy (ENP) partner countries also continued through the technical assistance project 'EU4monitoring drugs' (EU4MD), financed by the European Neighbourhood Instrument. It is planned that the project, which has a total budget of EUR 3 million, will run until June 2022 (extended from December 2021), with the objective of supporting national and regional readiness in the ENP area (for 15 potential partner countries) to identify and respond to drug-related health and security threats. In 2020, a significant number of project outputs were released, including the report *Emerging evidence of Afghanistan's role as a producer and supplier of ephedrine and methamphetamine*, which generated a great deal of interest among EMCDDA stakeholders and media across the world. The project also published a pair of reports on the impact of COVID-19 on drug markets in the eastern and the southern ENP countries.

In 2020 the Commission also granted EUR 800 000 in funding to the EMCDDA to implement its first bilateral project with Georgia. The new project, called EMCDDA4GE, will start in 2021, with a duration of 24 months.

Scientific capacity

2020 marked the beginning of the 2020–2022 mandate of the EMCDDA's newly appointed Scientific Committee, following its official appointment by the Management Board in December 2019.

At the committee's 52nd meeting, which took place virtually on 13 November, Prof. Dr. Catherine Comiskey (Ireland) was elected to the position of Chair and Prof. Dr. Henri Bergeron

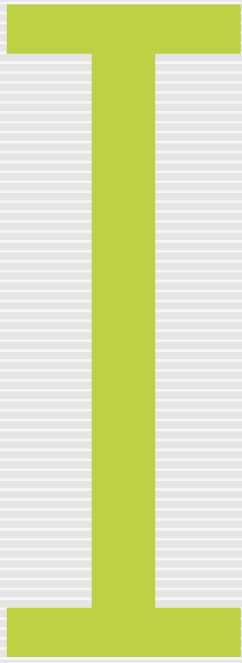
(France) to the position of Vice-Chair for the 2020–2022 period.

In 2020 the EMCDDA finalised the implementation of the first futures exercise to analyse current and potential future global changes and their implications for the European drug monitoring system until 2030. This involved a solid participatory approach and a series of workshops organised with key EMCDDA stakeholders. The exercise resulted in a set of recommendations on how to keep the EMCDDA's tools and methods fit for purpose in the context of a changing information environment and new information needs.

Corporate performance

Despite the impact of COVID-19 on its activities, in 2020 the EMCDDA managed to achieve a good level of performance in implementing its work programme.

While, as a consequence of the pandemic, some of its key performance indicators (KPIs) were not fully achieved (see Annex Ib), the agency showed remarkable resilience and continued to function without interruption throughout the year. Moreover, the EMCDDA provided proof of its high responsiveness, as the agency was able to release some high-value resources on the impact of COVID-19 on drug users, drug markets and drug services in a timely way. In doing so, the agency acted as an agile organisation that was successful in shifting priorities rapidly and reallocating its resources efficiently to that effect. Once again the agency reached an outstanding level of budget execution, with 100 % of commitment appropriations executed.



PART I

Report of activities: key achievements of the year

Main area 1: Health

Core monitoring

In 2020 the EMCDDA celebrated **25 years of monitoring** the drug situation in Europe. In the quarter of a century since it embarked on its first work programme, the agency has witnessed radical changes, in both the extent and the nature of the drugs problem.

FIGURE 1. '25 years of monitoring' logo



**YEARS OF
MONITORING**

1995–2020

The annual core data-collection and management activities are key tasks set up in the EMCDDA's founding regulation. These are implemented every year in close collaboration with the agency's main data providers, namely the Reitox network of NFPs in the EU Member States, Norway and Turkey.

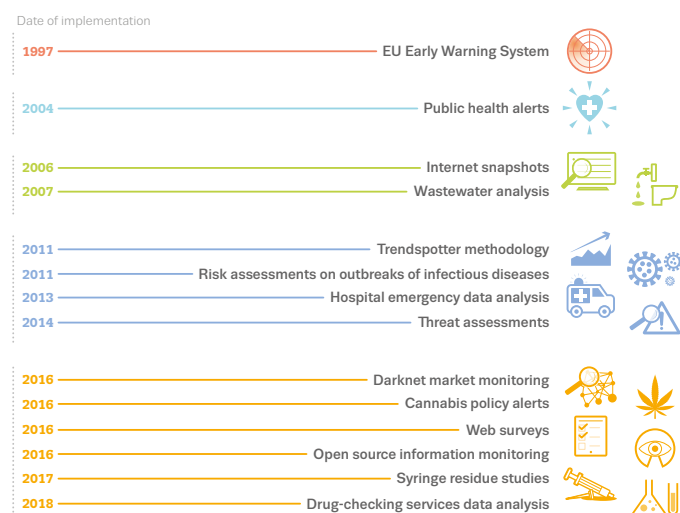
Revolutionary changes, both in the extent and the nature of the drugs problem and in the world in which we live, have called for constant reflection, innovation and agility to keep pace with new developments and rethink existing routines. This is why, in its response to a fast-moving drugs problem, the EMCDDA has adopted a multi-indicator approach to monitoring.

Central to this core monitoring activity are the five key epidemiological indicators:

- GPS, which describes the prevalence and patterns of drug use among the general population;
- PDU, which focuses on the prevalence and patterns of high-risk drug use;
- TDI, which is the treatment demand indicator;
- DRD, which describes drug-related deaths and mortality among drug users;
- DRID, which describes drug-related infectious disease.

By supplementing data routinely submitted by Member States with information from an expanding range of leading-edge sources, as shown in Figure 2, the agency can now respond with more timely and rounded analyses to inform drug policies and practices in the years to come.

FIGURE 2. EMCDDA preparedness and response



25 YEARS OF MONITORING 1995–2020

Monitoring the prevalence and patterns of drug use plays a vital role in our understanding of the drug situation in Europe.

The worldwide health crisis brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020 raised serious additional concerns relating to the wellbeing of people who use drugs; ensuring service continuity for those with drug problems; and protecting those offering care and support for this population.

For this purpose, the EMCDDA set up a new [COVID-19 hub page](#) to bring together a selection of resources on the disease and its impact on people who use drugs and those providing services to them. The resources include publications, news material, documents and external links that reach out to [drug service providers](#), people who use drugs and prison services.

Further information on COVID-19-related resources and activities undertaken can be found later in the report.

In August 2020 the EMCDDA published its [latest update on 'Take-home naloxone'](#), including updated country profiles and factsheets from the countries concerned, along with a new online [knowledge questionnaire on overdose and take-home naloxone](#) aimed at both those likely to witness an overdose and the wider interested public (available in four languages – English, French, German and Spanish).

During [European Testing Week](#), in May 2020, the EMCDDA released its [latest update on drug-related infectious diseases in Europe among people who inject drugs](#), stressing that early diagnosis through testing and improving links to treatment and care are crucial steps towards protecting this vulnerable group and reaching global health goals.

Analytical work was further developed to inform key EMCDDA outputs, in particular the *European Drug Report 2020* package.

European Drug Report 2020: in the spotlight

High availability across all drug types, drug production within Europe and highly potent substances are among the concerns addressed in the [European Drug Report 2020 – Trends and developments](#). In this latest EMCDDA annual review – marking 25 years of monitoring – the agency described the drug situation at the end of 2019, along with recent changes caused by the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020.

The official launch of the European Drug Report 2020 took place virtually on 22 September, from Brussels, Paris and Lisbon, with a panel comprising Ylva Johansson, European Commissioner for Home Affairs, Laura d'Arrigo, Chair of the EMCDDA Management Board, and Alexis Goosdeel, Director of the EMCDDA. A total of 495 people attended the event, including 67 journalists and 428 stakeholders.

The Commissioner stated that 'This report shows that illicit drugs remain a threat to the health and security of EU citizens.' She added that the publication was 'an essential source of reference, data and information.'

Accompanying the main report on trends and developments was a [summary of the key issues](#)

FIGURE 3. Video of Commissioner Ylva Johansson on the occasion of the launch of the *European Drug Report*



(in 24 languages), presenting a selection of the main findings from the latest analysis, chosen for their policy relevance and general interest.

The '[Statistical Bulletin 2020](#)', containing the European dataset underpinning the report, was also made available. In addition, a [video](#), two news releases ('[Taster](#)' in English and '[Highlights](#)' in 24 languages), a special edition of the newsletter [Drugnet Europe](#) and a [promotional brochure](#) were produced by the agency to mark the launch of the *European Drug Report 2020*.

When looking back at 25 years of annual reporting on the drugs problem in Europe the EMCDDA's Scientific Director states that:



EMCDDA Scientific Director Paul Griffiths

Two things stand out: first, Europe's drugs problem has evolved considerably over this period; and second, this evolution has been accompanied by a dramatic increase in the quantity and quality of the information available on the topic.

An [article by Paul Griffiths](#), the EMCDDA's Scientific Director, which was released in September, describes reporting through various EU enlargements and a rapidly changing drug landscape, and shows how information needs for informed policies have evolved over time.

Support for those third countries that are a priority for the EU continued under the framework of the technical assistance projects IPA 7 and EU4MD (for details see 'Business driver 2: Partnership').

Work in the area of drugs and prisons continued during 2020, and will culminate in the launch of an in-depth review on current and future challenges in the prison and drugs field in 2021.

ESPAD Report 2019: in the spotlight

FIGURE 4. *ESPAD Report 2019*



Smoking and drinking among 15–16-year-old school students are showing signs of decline, but there are concerns over potentially risky cannabis use and the challenges posed by new addictive behaviours.

These were among the findings in a new report from the European school survey project on alcohol and other drugs (ESPAD), published in collaboration with the EMCDDA.

Almost 100 000 students participated in the latest survey round, responding to an anonymous questionnaire.

The [ESPAD Report 2019](#) was launched online on 12 November, and the findings were discussed with experts during an [EMCDDA webinar](#), which was attended by 450 participants.

A [video](#) was also produced highlighting the main messages of the report (see Figure 5).

FIGURE 5. *ESPAD highlights video*



Responding to new psychoactive substances: EU Early Warning System and risk assessment

In 2020 the EMCDDA continued to ensure the robust implementation of the EU EWS on NPS, under the EU legislative framework on NPS ⁽¹⁾, and in close collaboration with its partners in the Member States (the Reitox network of EWS correspondents) and partner EU agencies (the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA), the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA), the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and Europol).

Key outputs from the EWS included risk communications issued to the EWS network, namely rapid formal notifications of the first detection in Europe of new substances, public health alerts on NPS, the exchange of forensic and toxicological analytical data, and outputs relating to the implementation of the new NPS legislation.

In a nutshell, the EMCDDA's main activities in this area were as follows.

- Case reports on 46 NPS detected for the first time in the EU were received, processed and analysed – literature available for each of those substances was assessed, and available information was appraised prior to issuing the formal notifications to the EU EWS network. Prior to the formal notification, a rigorous assessment takes place based on the literature available, the analytical data submitted and the comparison of the substance with better-known substances, to determine whether the substance falls within the definition of an NPS and whether the data provided on the detection is sufficient. Only those substances that meet the criteria are formally notified to the network.
- Around 830 NPS were monitored by the EU EWS, as of the end of 2020.
- Six risk communications, including four advisories and two alerts, were issued to the EU EWS network.
- Three situation reports were issued to the EU EWS network. Situation reports are a new type of publication launched under the lockdown that aim to strengthen situational awareness and to help the network to prepare for, respond to and recover from public health and social threats caused by NPS.
- Three initial reports – on isotonitazene, 4F-MDMB-BICA and MDMB-4en-PINACA – were launched, prepared and submitted to the Council and the Commission within the deadlines stipulated by the NPS regulation.
- Risk assessments of isotonitazene, 4F-MDMB-BICA, and MDMB-4en-PINACA were carried out by the EMCDDA, and the respective technical reports and risk assessment reports were submitted to the Commission and the Member States within the deadlines stipulated by the NPS regulation.

Operation of the EU Early Warning System

FIGURE 6. New psychoactive substances monitoring in 2020



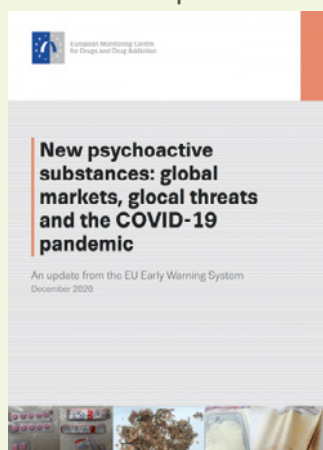
Network management and the provision of technical assistance on a daily basis to the members of the Reitox EWS network continued to be among EMCDDA's central activities. This was particularly important, and challenging, in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This obliged both the EMCDDA and its partners to switch to teleworking for most of the year. Notwithstanding these constraints, the EU EWS continued to run without interruption.

The 20th annual meeting of the Reitox EWS network took place via videoconference on 10 November, with the participation of the 27 EU Member States, Norway and Turkey. All the presentations given at this meeting and the minutes of the proceedings were published in the European Database on New Drugs.

(1) From 23 November 2018, Council Decision 2005/387/JHA was replaced by Regulation (EU) 2017/2101 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 November 2017 amending Regulation (EC) No 1920/2006 as regards information exchange on, and an early warning system and risk assessment procedure for, new psychoactive substances.

New psychoactive substances and the COVID-19 pandemic: in the spotlight

FIGURE 7. EMCDDA rapid communication on NPS and the COVID-19 pandemic



The EMCDDA rapid communication [New psychoactive substances: global markets, global threats and the COVID-19 pandemic – An update from the EU Early Warning System](#) was published in December.

Covering the period from 2005 to October 2020, the report encourages the reader to reflect on how the issues highlighted may apply to their country, region or neighbourhood, and on how the pandemic may be having an impact.

The update includes recent developments in NPS use and the market and highlights emerging threats. It also underlines the need to continue to invest in developing and maintaining strong early-warning and response systems for NPS and illicit drugs to protect public health.

The EMCDDA played an important role in the organisation of the Seventh International Conference on Novel Psychoactive Substances, jointly with the International Society for the Study of Emerging Drugs, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the World Anti-Doping Agency, the University of Hertfordshire and The Center for Forensic Science Research & Education. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the conference was held online on 18 and 19 November. The EMCDDA, as a key member of the Scientific Conference Committee, designed the scientific programme and contributed several keynote presentations.

Reflecting the world-leading expertise and role played by the EMCDDA in the NPS area, particularly in relation to early warning, the agency provides information, expertise and advice each year to the UNODC and the WHO. In particular, it collated and sent to the UNODC information on all NPS detected in the Member States in 2019, including a list of NPS formally notified in the first semester of 2020. The EMCDDA also provided the WHO Expert Committee on Drug Dependence (ECDD) with data for the prioritisation process and for the preparation of critical reviews, which informed the discussions held at the 43rd ECDD meeting.

The agency's work with those third countries that are a priority for the EU, namely candidate and potential candidate countries, continued in 2020 under the framework of the IPA 7 project (see 'Business driver 2: partnership'). In that regard, the representatives of Montenegro and Serbia attended the online annual meeting of the Reitox EWS network. Other project activities in this area had to be cancelled, however, due to the travel restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Risk assessments on new psychoactive substances

Under the latest legislation, to ensure a stronger and faster response to NPS, initial reports are drawn up on NPS that may pose health or social risks at the EU level.

In that regard, the initial report on isotonitazene was submitted to the Commission and the Member States on 3 April. Based on the findings of the report, the Commission requested that the EMCDDA carry out a risk assessment on this substance. The risk assessment meeting was conducted via videoconference on 26 May; consequently, the technical report and the risk assessment report on isotonitazene were submitted to the Commission and the Member States on 29 May, within the 6-week deadline stipulated by the regulation.

On 13 November, Commission Delegated Directive (EU) 2020/1687 of 2 September 2020 was published in the *Official Journal of the European Union*. Entering into force on 3 December, this delegated directive will lead to the new synthetic opioid isotonitazene being placed under control in the EU. The Member States will have until 3 June 2021 to bring into force the laws, regulations and administrative provisions necessary to comply with this directive. This is the first ban under the revised EU legislation on psychoactive substances.

Furthermore, two initial reports – on 4F-MDMB-BICA and MDMB-4en-PINACA – were launched by the EMCDDA and submitted to the EU institutions on 14 October, within the stipulated deadline. As a result, the Commission asked the EMCDDA to carry out risk assessments on the two substances. The risk assessments meeting was once again conducted

by the EMCDDA via videoconference, on 7 December. Subsequently, the technical reports and risk assessment reports on the two substances were submitted to the Commission and the Member States on 9 December.

On the basis of the risk assessments, the Commission decided to propose control measures on these substances. The Commission delegated directive bringing 4F-MDMB-BICA and MDMB-4en-PINACA under control in the EU was adopted on 12 March 2021.

Acknowledging the EMCDDA's contribution in this area, in March 2021 the European Commission stated:

Thank you for all your hard and excellent work on the initial reports and the risk assessment reports and for your all your support to the Commission in the preparation of this delegated act. And all this under difficult circumstances due to the on-going pandemic.

In addition to initial reports and risk assessment reports, a range of other activities inform policymaking in the EU and in the Member States. For instance, the EMCDDA provided data and technical advice on the common position to be taken

by the EU on the scheduling of substances under the UN conventions and on the draft delegated directives controlling the substances that were risk-assessed.

The EMCDDA operating guidelines for the risk assessment of new psychoactive substances were published in December. The purpose of these guidelines is to ensure compliance with the scope and requirements of Regulation (EC) No 1920/2006 (as amended) and Council Framework Decision 2004/757/JHA (as amended) in respect of the risk assessment procedure for and reporting on NPS.

To operationalise the technical aspects of the risk assessment, the guidelines are supported by a set of guidance notes developed by the EMCDDA.

| New trends and health threats

To improve the timeliness of reporting, it is crucial that new and flexible monitoring tools complement the EMCDDA's core monitoring system. In 2020 the agency further developed and strengthened its system for monitoring and understanding new and emerging trends in drug use and drug markets.

Trendspotter studies on COVID-19: in the spotlight

Since the start of 2020, European countries have been experiencing an unprecedented public health threat with the emergence of COVID-19. In order to investigate the effects of this pandemic on people who use drugs in Europe, and the implications for them, the EMCDDA instigated a mixed-method trendspotter study to investigate the current situation (see Figure 8).

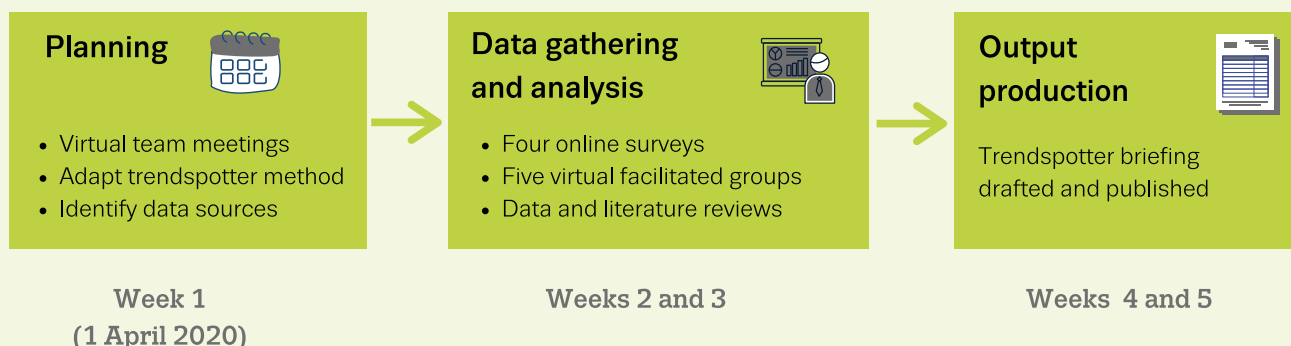
As Europe grapples with the unprecedented public health threat posed by COVID-19, how is the outbreak affecting drug users and service providers? The question that the EMCDDA examined in a trendspotter study published in May: **'Impact of COVID-19 on drug services and help-seeking in Europe'**. The report **provided evidence of a decline in the availability of drug services** and in the numbers of those seeking help.

A further briefing published in June provided a **snapshot of the state of play with respect to the impact of**

COVID-19 on drug-consumption patterns and drug-related harms during the early stages of the pandemic. The report described how national confinement measures and disrupted street drug markets have reduced both the opportunities to use drugs within social environments and the availability of some substances. But it also suggested a **rise in the use of alcohol and prescription medicines**, in some groups, as a means of coping with anxiety and depression during lockdown.

As part of the study, information on the impact of COVID-19 on people who use drugs, and on the services that support them, was collected via a **special round of the European Web Survey on Drugs**, launched in April. The survey, available in 18 languages, gathered information on how patterns of drug use, access to health services and the drug market may have changed in Europe during the pandemic.

FIGURE 8. Adapted trendspotter methodology, April 2020



Data from hospital emergency departments show that every year in Europe thousands of individuals experience drug-related toxicity, which results in emergency presentations to hospital. The **latest findings from the European Drug Emergencies Network on hospital emergencies** were presented in an EMCDDA report released in February.

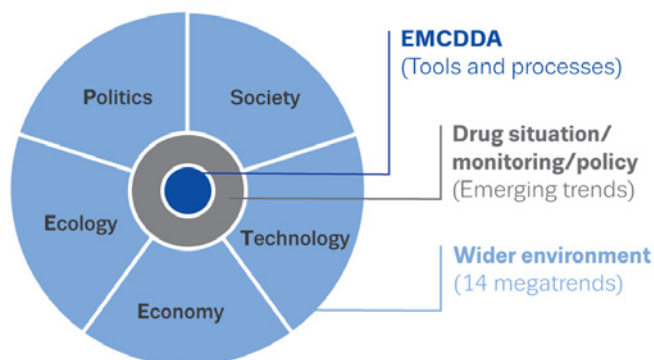
The **latest findings from the largest European project in the emerging science of wastewater analysis** were presented in March by the Europe-wide Sewage Analysis Core Group Europe, in association with the EMCDDA. **The project analysed wastewater in 68 cities, located in 23 European countries**, to explore the drug-taking behaviours of their inhabitants.

In 2020, **new findings from the ESCAPE network** were analysed (published in early 2021). The analysis is the result

of an innovative project investigating the substances used by people who inject drugs, by chemically analysing the content of used syringes. In addition, data collected from the Trans-European Drug Information Project were analysed throughout the year.

Furthermore, the agency endeavoured to anticipate the developments in the EU drug situation through a participatory 'Futures' exercise, aimed at analysing current and potential future global changes and their implications for the European drug monitoring system until 2030. This led to a series of events in 2020, including the organisation of two internal face-to-face workshops in February and a 'Futures Policy Workshop' in September involving participants from the EU institutions and 16 different EU Member States. The exercise

FIGURE 9. Environmental scanning 360-degree view



The STEEP approach (covering society, technology, economy, ecology and politics) is used to identify blind spots in terms of what might drive change.

was based on a horizon-scanning approach, which is a holistic, 360-degree analysis of the general environment – a study of events and trends affecting the drug area but going beyond the drugs or addiction field, and even the European region (see Figure 9). The objective was to examine main drivers of change that have, or may have in the future, implications for the drugs situation, drug monitoring and related responses. The set of recommendations defined by the exercise will help the agency to maintain an up-to-date understanding of the extent of drug use, patterns and trends and to identify future reporting needs. It will also inform the *EMCDDA Strategy 2025* roadmap and the ongoing work on the new EMCDDA business model, in terms of keeping the EMCDDA's tools and methods fit for purpose in the context of a changing environment and new information needs.

Drug interventions

In 2020 the preparation of the second edition of the flagship EMCDDA publication *Health and Social Responses to Drug Problems – A European guide* was initiated, with plans for publication in 2021. This included the commissioning of a round of background papers on new topics including migration and drugs, homelessness and image- and performance-enhancing drugs.

Best Practice Portal

Identifying the best practices among interventions across the EU and beyond, and the factors determining their effectiveness, is a key area of work for the EMCDDA, and the main dissemination channel for this information is the [Best Practice Portal](#).

In 2020, existing modules were kept updated and new modules were added on the following topics, among others:

- [evidence updates on social-reintegration- and employment-focused interventions;](#)
- [substitution treatment for stimulant users;](#)
- [evidence-based interventions for vulnerable populations;](#)
- [pharmacotherapy for amphetamine and methamphetamine use.](#)

In December, a [new protocol for updating the 'Evidence' database of the Best Practice Portal](#), which is one of its key components, was released.

An additional important task was the further consolidation of the EMCDDA's online databases on interventions in nightlife settings and evidence-based prevention programmes with online training tools.

Training and capacity building

Another effective means of disseminating best practices is through training activities. During the year several such events took place, including Reitox academies and other training initiatives, which were held in cooperation with traditional partners such as the University Institute of Lisbon. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, most of the initiatives had to be organised virtually, while some were delayed due to the difficult circumstances for all the stakeholders involved.

A total of 49 participants from 30 countries attended the first fully online [European Drugs Summer School](#), organised by the EMCDDA and the University Institute of Lisbon from 29 June to 10 July. Over half of the delegates were from outside the EU, hailing from Chile to Zimbabwe and Brazil to Myanmar/ Burma. Despite the time-zone differences, the average daily participation was 90 %, while satisfaction registered through weekly polls was high.

The European Prevention Curriculum continued to be implemented during 2020 in a number of countries through a 'training of trainers' system (initiated in 2019) and local translations of the curriculum itself. In October a Reitox Academy on European Prevention Curriculum: Training for Decision-, Opinion- and Policymakers took place (for details see 'Business driver 2: Partnership').

EMCDDA COVID-19 webinars: in the spotlight

In 2020 the EMCDDA offered a new series of webinars around the theme of COVID-19. Between May and December the EMCDDA hosted seven COVID-19 webinars, designed to help those working in the drugs field understand how drug users, and those supporting them, were coping with the pandemic and to share knowledge and experience (see Figure 10).

An average of 200 participants (representing 73 countries in total) attended these online events. The webinars allowed for discussions on emerging challenges. Later in the year the EMCDDA organised an additional webinar on ESPAD (see 'Main area 1: Health' for details).

FIGURE 10. EMCDDA COVID-19 webinars 2020



Harm reduction

In 2020 the EMCDDA continued to promote good practices in harm reduction, including the integration of evidence-based practices, interventions and policies into routine healthcare and public health settings.

Work was initiated in partnership with the ECDC on an update of guidance on the prevention of infectious diseases among people who use drugs. A new project also focused on the evidence for the use of drug equipment in intervention settings. As part of its harm-reduction initiative to increase access to hepatitis C testing and improve linkage to care, on 28 July the EMCDDA promoted its knowledge questionnaire designed for those working in drug treatment settings. The main aim of the questionnaire is to allow those working in such services to refresh their knowledge of the hepatitis B and C viruses, including transmission, testing and care for people who inject drugs. The questionnaire is available in seven languages (Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Polish and Portuguese). This is to be used alongside planned EMCDDA barometers aiming to help countries monitor progress against the UN’s sustainable development goals.

The EMCDDA also organised a workshop to support countries in designing a national diagnostic process aimed at identifying barriers and opportunities to support hepatitis C testing and care in drug services through a participatory approach. The meeting with national representatives provided an opportunity to test and finalise the key EMCDDA documents in the hepatitis C virus area to be available in 2021.

Implications of COVID-19 for people who use drugs and drug service providers: in the spotlight

The public health crisis raised serious additional concerns relating to the well-being of people who use drugs; ensuring service continuity for those with drug problems; and protecting those offering care and support for this population.

What specific risks are people who use drugs likely to face during the COVID-19 pandemic? What services will they need? How will professionals working with this group need to adapt on the frontline? These are among the questions raised in an [EMCDDA update published in](#)

[March 2020](#), at the same time as the pandemic peaked in Europe.

The update was the work of an EMCDDA task force of experts and reviewers, which was set up to assess the emerging COVID-19 risks for this population and, where necessary, to encourage the planning and adaptation of frontline and specialist drug interventions.

The updates, produced in cooperation with the Reitox NFPs, [are available in 10 EU languages](#).

Statement from Dianova

[Dianova](#), an organisation consisting of an international network of 24 non-governmental organisations (NGOs), associations and foundations operating in the Americas, Europe, Asia and Africa, and dedicated to social change, made the following statement:

There has been a crucial actor in the field of drugs in the pandemic: the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA). The EMCDDA has reacted in a very proactive way, providing information

and analysing trends in the areas of drug use, the provision of drug-related services and the evolution of drug markets ...

On behalf of Dianova, we would like to thank Alexis Goosdeel and his team for their tireless work during the last months to face the pandemic by putting people at the centre and by supporting civil society organizations that work in the field of addictions.

| Drug policies

Support for drug policy at the EU level

Throughout the year, the EMCDDA continued to provide technical input and advice to drug policymakers at the EU level, namely to the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission, and also to policymakers in the Member States, as they are key EMCDDA customers.

Regarding the European Parliament, ongoing contact was maintained. The EMCDDA Director met several members of the European Parliament and gave presentations at three meetings of the Parliament's Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE Committee), on 28 January, on 4 June (online) and on 27 October (online) (see 'EMCDDA Director: main activities').

Concerning the Council, the agency provided support to the Croatian and German Presidencies. While many of the year's

regular meetings were cancelled due to COVID-19, the agency attended the remaining institutional and technical meetings by invitation. These included nine meetings of the Horizontal Drugs Group (seven of which were remote meetings) and the online meeting of national drugs coordinators that was organised by the German Presidency on 14 October. The EMCDDA also contributed to the meetings of the Council's Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security (COSI) and to EU expert dialogues such as those of the EU–Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, the Dublin Group, the EU–Argentina, the EU–Russia and the EU–Civil Society Forum on Drugs, along with the Horizontal Drugs Group.

A key contribution in 2020 was the input provided to the Commission and the Council (the German Presidency), as required, on the preparation of the new EU strategy and action plan on drugs for 2021–2025. On 18 December the Council approved the EU strategy setting out the political framework and priorities for the EU's drug policy in 2021–2025. The strategy aims to ensure a high level of health promotion, social

stability and security, to and contribute to awareness raising. Based on this strategy the Council will prepare an action plan that will set out concrete measures to achieve these priorities.

In terms of collaboration with the European Commission, the Director had regular meetings throughout the year with the Commission's services. These included meetings with Commissioner Johansson, with the Director-General for Migration and Home Affairs, Monique Pariat, with the Deputy Director-General, Olivier Onidi and with the Director for Law Enforcement and Security, Laurent Muschel. He met on several occasions with Ms Floriana Sipala, Head of the Organised Crime and Drugs Policy Unit at DG Migration and Home Affairs. (See 'EMCDDA Director: main activities')

Technical support was provided to the Commission in the NPS area, among others. Examples include the provision of data and technical advice on the EU common position to be taken on the scheduling of substances under the UN conventions, and on the draft delegated directives controlling the substances that were risk-assessed (see section above on the EU EWS). Information and analyses were also provided on other topics, such as the impact of drug trafficking from Latin America and the Caribbean to the EU.

In 2020 the EMCDDA continued to contribute to the enlargement package adopted by the Commission. The package contains the reports in which the Commission present their detailed annual assessment of the state of play in each candidate and potential candidate country. In 2020 the EMCDDA provided a briefing note and a roadmap for each candidate and potential candidate country, assessing the

progress and challenges met in developing a drug information system comparable with that in the EU. The EMCDDA also participated in the consultation organised by the Commission with the other JHA agencies.

The Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND), the central UN policymaking body in drug-related matters, held its 63rd session in Vienna from 2 to 6 March. An EMCDDA delegation that included the Director and the Scientific Director attended the event to provide technical support to the Commission and the Member States, participate in a series of side events and make EMCDDA products available at a publications stand.

A CND special event commemorating the United Nations International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking took place online on 26 June. The EMCDDA Director was invited to give **closing remarks on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the world drug situation – the European perspective.**

A workshop on cannabis took place on 6 and 7 February at the EMCDDA, with the participation of four other EU agencies. In the context of interagency collaboration, the EMCDDA met with the CPVO, EU-OSHA, the EFSA and the EMA to have a first discussion on how the different agencies dealt with cannabis-related technical issues within their current work and to share reflections about any recent developments in the cannabis area that were impacting their area of responsibility. Invited speakers from the United States (the Rand Drug Policy Research Center) and Canada (the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction) provided an overview of legalised recreational cannabis markets – insights from the Americas.

Cannabis: in the spotlight

As of December 2019, Canada, Uruguay and several US states had passed laws that license the production and retail sale of cannabis, mostly by private companies, to adults for non-medical (sometimes referred to as recreational) purposes. With discussions about alternatives to cannabis prohibition becoming more common in some parts of the world, there is a growing interest in learning from the cannabis policy changes in the Americas.

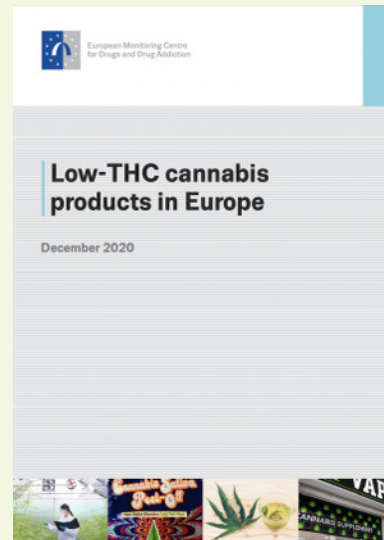
To that end, the EMCDDA technical report **Monitoring and Evaluating Changes in Cannabis Policies: Insights from the Americas** was published in January. This report provides an overview of the changes in cannabis policies in the Americas and the evidence emerging from evaluations of their impact. Highlighting the challenges in monitoring and evaluating regulatory changes in the drugs field, it aims to respond to the growing interest of those involved in planning or evaluating any modifications to cannabis regulation.

Furthermore, an increase in the open sale of cannabis products in Europe has raised questions around the possible legal and commercial status of these products.

The new EMCDDA publication **Low-THC Cannabis Products in Europe**, released in December 2020, focuses on low-THC products that take forms similar to illicit cannabis products (e.g. smoking mixtures, oils and edibles ⁽²⁾). The report highlights the challenges facing policymakers and suppliers of low-THC products, including the legal status of the products and the regulatory frameworks that may apply to their sale.

(2) Being translated into several languages (French, German and Spanish), with other Member States translating it too (Czechia and Poland).

FIGURE 11. Cover of EMCDDA report *Low-THC Cannabis Products in Europe*



It presents an initial overview of the situation, covering the types of low-THC product available, user profiles, associated harms and regulatory responses in Europe. The report provides a first overview of the EU directives and regulations that may be applicable to low-THC cannabis products in their different forms, such as foods, cosmetics and herbal smoking products.

Support for drug policy in the Member States and priority third countries

National policymakers are one of the three key customer groups outlined in the *EMCDDA Strategy 2025*, and several activities were carried out by the agency in relation to this group in 2020.

During the year, the EMCDDA Director had high-level contacts with authorities in several Member States (see 'Business driver 4: Management'). These included meetings with the Delegate of the Government for the National Plan on Drugs, Ms Azucena Martí, the Deputy Director of Institutional Relations of the Government Delegation for the National Plan on Drugs and Head of the Spanish Focal Point, Ms Elena Álvarez Martín, during an official visit to Spain on 12 February; and an online meeting on 9 July with the Federal Drug Commissioner of Germany, Ms Daniela Ludwig, and Mr Jörg Pietsch, Head of the Office of the Drug Commissioner.

Furthermore, on 20 February Mr Goosdeel participated in the international conference on 'Antidrug policies: prevention of drug phenomena and fight against drug routes – Cooperation strategies in the fight against drug trafficking', organised by the Italian Ministry of the Interior in Rome. On that occasion, the Director met with Mr Giuseppe Cuchiara, Director of the Central Directorate for the Anti-Drugs Services of the Public Security Department at the Ministry of Interior. Mr Goosdeel also participated in the online EU National Drug Coordinators Meeting under Germany's Presidency of the Council, on 14 October, where he delivered a keynote address on harm reduction. The Director also spoke at the online event of the Cyprus National Addictions Authority on 12 November and participated in several events organised by the Portuguese authorities during the year.

The EMCDDA provided support to national policymakers through the evaluation of national drug strategies and action plans, through technical support provided upon request and through proactive capacity-building activities. At the technical level, the agency provided ongoing support to Portugal by evaluating the Portuguese national drug action plan; this included a technical meeting with the external evaluators responsible for the evaluation, and participating as an advisor in steering-group meetings. During the year, technical support was also provided to Cyprus for evaluation activities relating to their national strategy. The agency also organised an online workshop on policy evaluation, on 19 and 20 November, with four IPA 7 countries. All training materials were updated and adapted to better fit an online training event.

The annual meeting of the legal and policy correspondents took place online on 11 and 12 June. The impact of COVID-19 on drug policy and implementation barriers to alternatives to coercive sanctions were two of the topics discussed.

Main area 2: Security

Drug market monitoring and identification of new trends

To support the comprehensive analytical effort in the security area, work continued in 2020 on improving the quality and availability of core supply data, in close collaboration with the Reitox NFPs and with our EU partner Europol.

In terms of new sources of data and innovative monitoring approaches, the EMCDDA, in cooperation with the Joint Research Centre, further developed its capacity for open-source information and darknet monitoring, which have been gaining importance in understanding the rapidly evolving and increasingly tech-savvy drug market.

In 2020 the findings of the third joint EMCDDA–Europol *EU Drug Markets Report 2019* and its supporting digital information package (which were released in November 2019) were disseminated widely by the EMCDDA.

This dissemination included the presentation that was given by the Director to the European Parliament's LIBE Committee on 28 January. Mr Goosdeel reiterated that the report, launched on 26 November 2019, is a 'clear wake-up call' for policymakers to address the rapidly growing drug market, which is increasingly global, joined-up and digitally enabled. The Director stressed that the drugs problem needed to be prioritised in Europe and that there was no time for complacency. 'Drugs must receive the attention they deserve,' he said.

Furthermore, the *EU Drug Markets Report 2019* promotional video, presenting highlights of the report in under four minutes, was produced in 10 languages: Arabic, Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish (see Figure 12).

The Reitox Academy on Drug Supply Indicators took place online on 8 and 9 October (see 'Business driver 2: Partnership'). The objective of the academy was to support the Reitox network in the improvement of the quality of the EU datasets in the area of drug markets and supply. A total of 37 participants from 24 countries attended the academy.

FIGURE 12. *EU Drug Markets Report 2019 promotional video*



As part of the research conducted under the EU4MD project, funded by the European Commission (for details, see ‘Business driver 2: Partnership’), in November the EMCDDA

released the report Emerging evidence of Afghanistan’s role as a producer and supplier of ephedrine and methamphetamine.

This report explores whether Afghanistan, where most of the world’s opium is produced, has the potential to become a significant producer of methamphetamine, made from ephedrine extracted from ephedra plants grown in mountainous regions of Afghanistan.

COVID-19 and drug markets

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic were also analysed by the EMCDDA in this area. Two rapid reports were released in May, shortly after the onset of the pandemic in the EU. These timely analyses researched the way drug markets in the EU adjusted to the new conditions, from the perspective of both supply and demand.

COVID-19 and drug markets: in the spotlight

What effect is COVID-19 having on the drug market in the EU?

To answer that, a new joint publication from the EMCDDA and Europol, EU Drug Markets – Impact of COVID-19, was launched on 29 May. It analysed the impact of the pandemic on the market for the main drug types (cannabis, heroin, cocaine, amphetamines, NPS), including demand, production, trafficking and availability.

It reported higher prices, local shortages and reduced purity for some drugs, while noting continued violence among suppliers and distributors.

It also showed how organised crime groups remain active and resilient, by adapting transportation models, trafficking routes and concealment methods, even during the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also profoundly impacted consumers’ behaviour.

In a special report launched on 5 May, Drug Supply via Darknet Markets, the EMCDDA explored whether established methods of drug supply and distribution to consumers had changed during recent restrictions on movement.

FIGURE 13. *EMCDDA–Europol joint publication*



Analysing three darknet markets in the first quarter of 2020, the report revealed that the pandemic, and responses to it, appeared to have resulted in increased activity levels. This related mainly to cannabis, as ‘regular cannabis users may have decided to stock up, anticipating market disruption during the lockdown period’. In contrast, as people stayed at home, the report pointed to a decline in the demand for drugs commonly used in recreational settings.

In 2020 the EMCDDA continued to work on drug-related homicide, one of the most serious manifestations of drug markets with a high social cost. In that regard, the EMCDDA released the technical report **Drug-related Homicide in Europe: Data protocol** as part of its ongoing work to develop and improve the monitoring of drug-related crime, harms and other consequences. The protocol provides a framework for standardised drug-related homicide data processing, which will allow for an improved understanding of the broader ramifications of drug markets and international comparisons.

Support policy and operational responses to drug security challenges

In the policy area, the EMCDDA provided technical input and advice to its key partners, in particular the European Commission. The analyses provided drew heavily on the analysis, evidence and recommendations contained in the *EU Drug Markets Report 2019*.

This included:

- support for a 'preparatory action' for the development of a tool for the monitoring and analysis of drug activity on darknet markets;
- input into the Croatian Presidency's discussion paper on combating drug trafficking, presented at the Law Enforcement Working Party of the Council's COSI;
- input, as required, into the preparation of the new 2021–2025 EU drugs strategy and action plan on drugs, and the new EU security union strategy for 2020–2025.

Furthermore, the agency continued to contribute to the EMPACT OAPs of the EU policy cycle on organised and serious international crime. This included implementing the tasks under the OAP for 2020 and providing input into the drafting of the relevant OAPs for 2021 on NPS / synthetic drugs and on cannabis, cocaine and heroin.

Furthermore, the EMCDDA, together with its partner CEPOL, continued to organise and deliver training activities for law enforcement professionals. A total of 387 law enforcement professionals attended these training activities, as follows:

- 188 participants in the online module on synthetic drugs;
- 163 participants in a webinar on the impact of COVID-19;
- 36 participants in the online training session on drug trafficking (postponed from 2019)

The annual meeting and proceedings of the Reference Group on Drug Supply Indicators took place on 27 October, via Zoom, due to the COVID-19-pandemic-related travel restrictions.

Main area 3: Business drivers

Business driver 1: Institutional

Governance and institutional developments

The EMCDDA Management Board took the unanimous decision on 25 June, following a proposal by the Commission, to renew the mandate of the agency's Director, Alexis Goosdeel, for the next 5 years. Mr Goosdeel took up the post of Director on 1 January 2016 and will now hold the position until 31 December 2025.

FIGURE 14. Quote from EMCDDA Director Alexis Goosdeel



Laura d'Arrigo, Chair of the EMCDDA Management Board, welcomed the reappointment stating:

I congratulate Mr Goosdeel on the renewal of his mandate. It shows the recognition by the Management Board of his vision for the EMCDDA and of the work accomplished under his guidance. The Director and his team have delivered first-rate results over this period, while demonstrating their ability and agility to adapt to unprecedented change.

As announced by the Director, the EMCDDA business model innovation initiative started in 2020. The objective is to

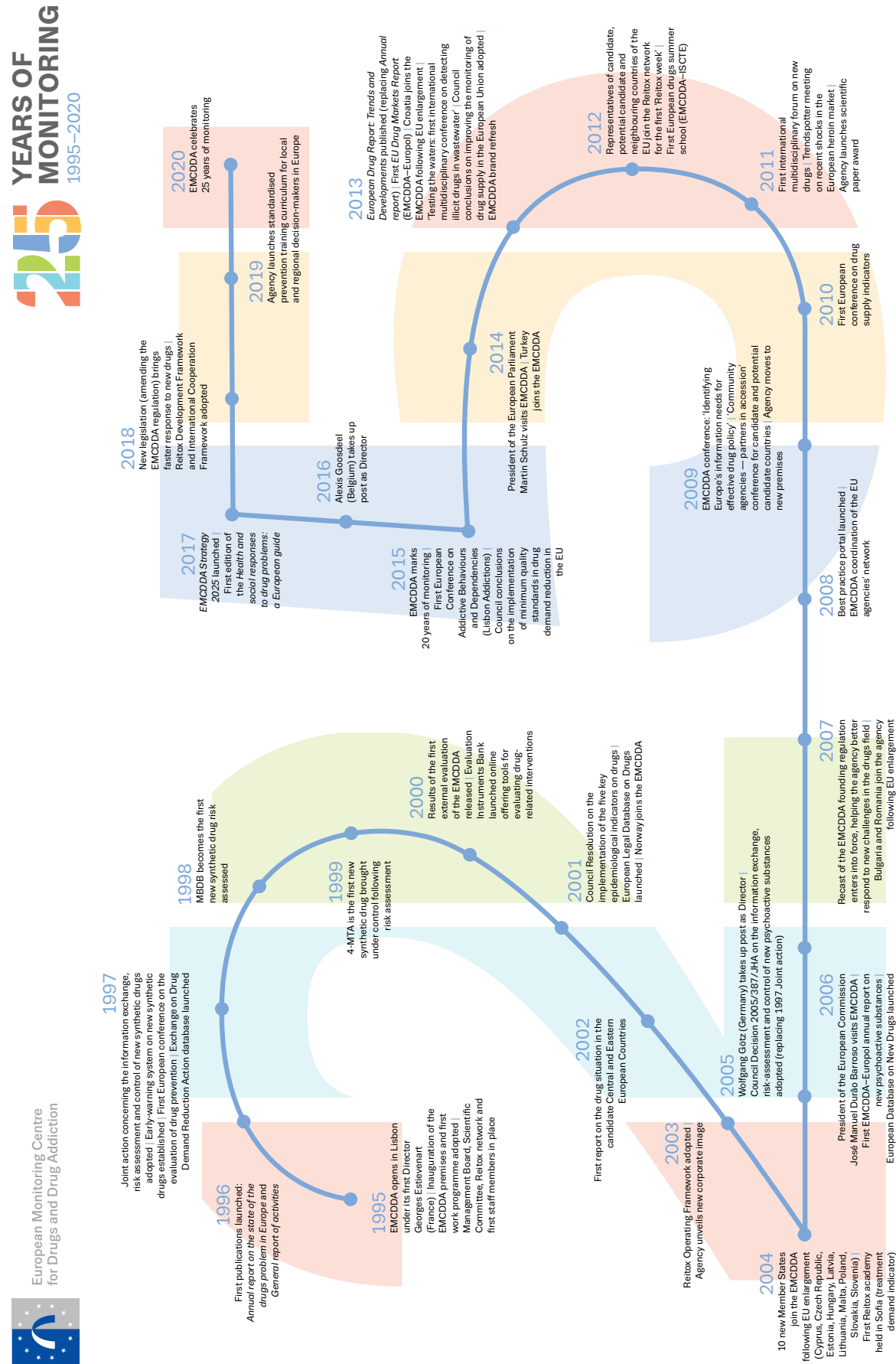
redesign the way the EMCDDA creates and delivers value to its key customers: policymakers at the EU and national levels and practitioners in the Member States. Work will be completed in December 2021, when the approach on a new business model will be put forward to the EMCDDA Management Board for adoption.

Finally, in December 2020 the EMCDDA presented to the Management Board the state of implementation of the EMCDDA's action plan to follow up on the recommendations from the fourth external evaluation of the EMCDDA that was carried out by the European Commission in 2018, in line with the relevant document adopted by the Management Board in December 2019.

The EMCDDA in 2020: 25 years of monitoring

In 2020 the EMCDDA celebrated its 25th year of operation. Despite a commemorative stakeholder event being cancelled due to COVID-19, the project marking this milestone was able to deliver on the planned overall communication strategy. This included a monthly stream of news, content and branded material, disseminated via a variety of formats and channels; a retrospective and prospective look at the agency's added value, reinforcing organisational identity; and positive engagement via a digital storytelling campaign, involving staff and key customers (see below).

FIGURE 15. Commemorative timeline of selected events from the agency's history



EMCDDA Director on 25 years of monitoring

FIGURE 16. Voices video from EMCDDA Director Alexis Goosdeel

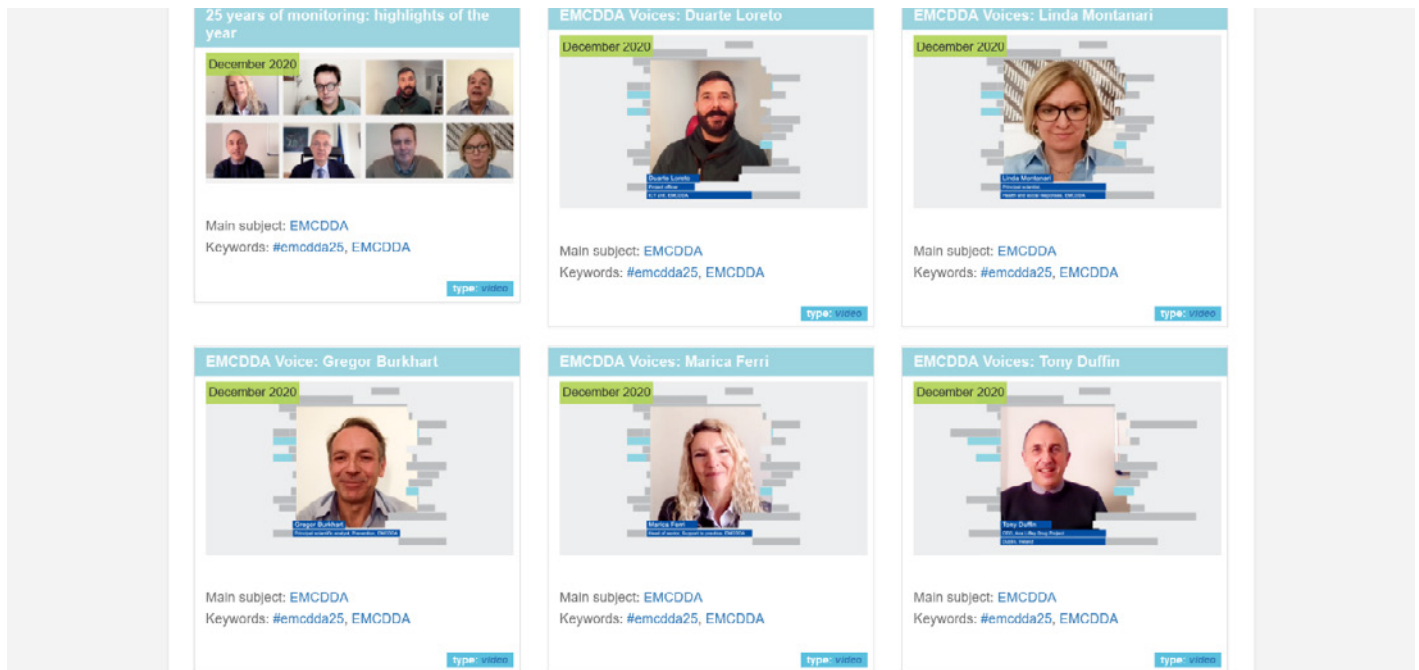


The EMCDDA Director said:

For the past 25 years, the EMCDDA has provided strategic analysis in a policy area that cuts across health and security. Part of the agency's unique value is its comprehensive coverage of this multifaceted problem. By improving the comparability of drug data across the EU, we have given countries a 'common language' with which to describe the extent and effects of drug use.

We can now be proud of our internationally recognised European drug monitoring system, including early-warning mechanisms to ensure rapid responses to new substances and emerging threats. This has contributed to a deeper and broader understanding of the problem, earning the agency the reputation as the trusted reference point on drugs in Europe.

FIGURE 17. Voices campaign videos



In order to mark this important milestone for the EU drugs monitoring, the Director launched a digital storytelling campaign ('Voices') on 26 June, the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. Through this campaign, and an internal online survey, staff members (and later external stakeholders from key customer groups) were invited to share their stories on what the EMCDDA means to them. **Eight videos** were produced and promoted via social media in the second half of the year, as part of this campaign.

Communication and service delivery to meet evolving EMCDDA customer needs

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 also brought with it unusual work circumstances for the EMCDDA. In that regard, much of the agency's effort was focused on adapting its work practices to the new conditions.

While all the EMCDDA's operations were impacted (see 'Business driver 4: Management'), one key area was communications. On the one hand, the agency had to rapidly switch all of its dissemination activities online; on the other hand, an internal strategy had to be put in place to help communication with, and among, the agency's staff who were teleworking. Crisis-communication activities were also carried out under the BCP.

In terms of external communication and dissemination, these continued to be guided by the *EMCDDA Strategy 2025*, which sets out a vision for a 'healthier and more secure Europe' through better-informed drug policy and action. The strategy states that, to do this effectively, the agency must constantly strive to respond to the needs of its key customers. It gives 'central importance to identifying our customers' needs, developing services and effective communication, as these all represent essential elements for our work to have impact'.

The COVID-19 pandemic, however, brought with it significant changes in the way the world communicated in 2020; furthermore, it reshaped the needs of the EMCDDA's key customers, namely policymakers at the EU and national levels and practitioners in the EU Member States. To that end, priority was given to ensuring that timely products and services were provided to these customers via the digital channels. This included online training courses and events (e.g. webinars – see 'Main area 1: Health' and 'Main area 2: Security') and product launches (e.g. the launch of the *European Drug Report 2020* – see 'Main area 1: Health' and many COVID-19-related products).

Furthermore, the EMCDDA's communication efforts were focused on ensuring the production of high-quality publications – a **total of 35 scientific and institutional**

FIGURE 18. EMCDDA online communication channels



publications were produced in 2020. The agency also authored or co-authored 29 scientific articles and book chapters.

These efforts were accompanied by activities to enhance engagement with the agency's audiences, mainly via online communication channels (see Figure 18 for details).

This included 1 627 122 visits to the EMCDDA website during the year (i.e. an average of 4 500 visits per day).

Furthermore, the upward trend in the number of social media followers continued in 2020, with an increase observed for all channels (e.g. a 9 % increase in Facebook followers and a 73 % increase in Instagram followers).

The number of views of EMCDDA videos also rose in 2020, with an overall increase in lifetime views of some 30 % compared to 2019.

Positive engagement with the media also continued in 2020. The EMCDDA serviced 272 requests in the course of the year, down from the 378 recorded in 2019 (a slowdown possibly due to COVID-19) but equal to the number of requests serviced in 2018.

More data on communications metrics can be found in Figure 18 and Annex Ib.

In parallel, the EMCDDA continued to implement key projects such as the 'Customer needs' project, which started in 2018. During the year a framework for proactively identifying and responding to stakeholders' needs was developed and prepared for testing by staff. The framework consists of

a collection of methods and instruments that the EMCDDA may use when engaging with its customers, such as customer journey mapping, needs and gap analyses, personas, surveys, online consultations, face-to-face (semi-structured) interviews, focus groups, workshops, metrics and staff training. Such methods will allow the agency to tune in to the 'customer voice', which is essential for embedding and sustaining customer focus and service orientation at the EMCDDA.

The next step will be to link this dynamic framework to the EMCDDA business model innovation initiative.

Regarding internal communication, an intranet page dedicated to COVID-19 was created for the agency's staff and regular communications were sent in the context of the business continuity effort (see 'Business driver 4: Management'). Furthermore, the Communication unit proposed tailor-made training in the design and facilitation of online events for staff, along with access to free online training courses to upskill in using a range of online platforms and tools.

| Business driver 2: Partnership

Reitox network activities

The Reitox network was set up in 1993, when the EMCDDA was established, and is composed of NFPs in the EU Member States, Norway and Turkey, as well as a focal point at the European Commission. The NFPs – from which the agency draws the bulk of its data – collect and analyse national information on drugs, drawing on various sectors including health, justice and law enforcement. They form the backbone of the agency's work.

The activities of the network are defined each year in the grant agreement signed between each NFP and the EMCDDA, while longer-term strategic options are guided by the Reitox development framework, which was adopted by the network in 2017.

2020 saw the completion of the first Reitox development framework roadmap (2017–2020), and the EMCDDA initiated, with input from the NFPs, an assessment of the implementation of this document. The results will inform the joint preparation of the second roadmap (2021–2025), which will be presented to the heads of NFPs for adoption, and to the Management Board for endorsement, in 2021.

Similar to other activities, work in this area was marked by the COVID-19 pandemic. In that regard, the EMCDDA had to cancel all travel to the Member States on the part of its staff, including any visits to the NFPs, and continue all its activities remotely.

This work included the two meetings of the heads of NFPs, which took place online on 5–7 May (62nd meeting) and 24–27 November (63rd meeting and 9th extended Reitox meeting), and the two technical meetings, which also took place via teleconference on 10 March and 7 October.

An important means for strengthening the capacity of the network is provided by the Reitox academies (see also 'Main area 1: Health' and 'Main area 2: Security').

Two academies were organised online, as described below.

1. Reitox Academy on Drug Supply Indicators (8–9 October, 2 half days)

The objective of the academy was to support the Reitox network in improving the quality of the EU datasets in the area of drug markets and supply. As such, it was designed to aid the progress of the EU Member States, Norway and Turkey towards implementing the revised drug supply indicators, as developed by the EMCDDA, the Member States and Europol in line with the Council conclusions of November 2013.

A total of 37 participants from 24 countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czechia, Estonia, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Turkey) attended the academy. Attendance was open to all relevant focal-point partners at national level, including – but not limited to – partners from law enforcement or other criminal justice agencies.

The evaluation that was carried out at the end of the event showed that the objectives of the academy had been met and that the participants were satisfied by the format and content of the academy.

2. Reitox Academy on the European Prevention Curriculum: Training for Decision-, Opinion- and Policymakers (26–30 October, 5 half-days)

The aim of the European Prevention Curriculum initiative was to implement a standardised prevention training curriculum in Europe and improve the overall effectiveness of prevention. The training curriculum was developed by the EU-funded project UPC Adapt, and consisted of nine units.

The academy brought together 19 participants from the EU Member States (Czechia, Ireland, Cyprus, Latvia, the Netherlands, Romania, Slovenia and Finland) and from the western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro). Three master trainers attended the training course as observers (from Czechia, Spain and Portugal).

All respondents stated that the objectives of the course had been met and that they gained new knowledge or skills. 94 % expressed the view that the content was relevant to their professional development. Overall, the training met the expectation of all respondents, and there was 100 % overall satisfaction with the academy.

Three more academies had been planned to take place during the year, namely the Regional Academy on the European Prevention Curriculum, in Poland; the National Academy on Hepatitis and Drug Use, in Austria; and the Reitox Academy on Communication with Drug Professionals (a follow-up to the 2019 Reitox Academy on Communication). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, however, these events had to be cancelled or postponed to a later stage, when conditions permit the organisation of on-site training.

The EMCDDA also took stock of the effects of the pandemic on the work of the NFPs.

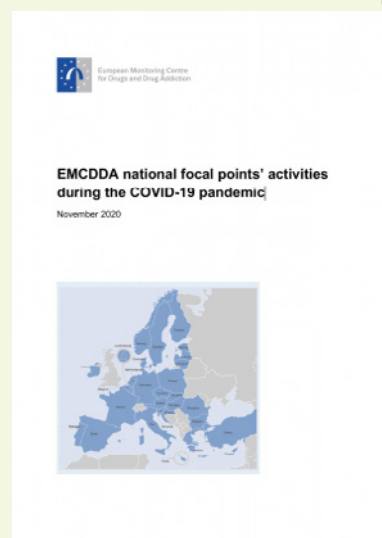
EMCDDA National Focal Points' Activities during the COVID-19 Pandemic: in the spotlight

This new **EMCDDA–Reitox report** highlighted how the network of NFPs responded to the COVID-19 crisis in 2020. The report describes the impact of the pandemic on the NFPs' work, the challenges they encountered and the strategies they introduced to overcome them.

The report concluded that in the course of the year the NFPs performed many extra activities, including launching new COVID-19-related surveys, creating and providing national guidelines, disseminating information to drug users and the staff of drug services and providing new services.

The NFPs demonstrated their great ability to adapt and were able to continue their work with no major disruptions.

FIGURE 19. EMCDDA–Reitox report



To support the NFPs cope with the situation, the EMCDDA allowed them to use part of their 2020 grants budget to acquire the necessary information and communication technology (ICT) equipment to better cope with teleworking conditions, and to cover the costs of translation of COVID-19-related reports or surveys.

Despite the pandemic, significant progress was made in implementing the EMCDDA Reitox certification process, which formally acknowledges the competence of an NFP and confirms that it meets the minimum criteria to fulfil the tasks of an NFP as set out in the EMCDDA regulation.

Certification aims to increase the legitimacy of each NFP at national level by demonstrating how well it contributes to the EMCDDA's core tasks of collecting and reporting consistent, harmonised and standardised information on drugs in Europe. It is also designed to increase the degree of assurance at EU level that the NFPs are fulfilling their role as national interfaces with the agency. Certification covers the institutional context, NFP mandate, data collection, analysis and interpretation, reporting and dissemination. This process was described in the document EMCDDA Certification of the Reitox National Focal Points, which was published in December.

Cooperation with EU agencies

Cooperation with EU agencies continued to be strengthened in 2020. Key EMCDDA partners included the ECDC, the ECHA, the EFSA, the EMA, Europol and CEPOL.

Cooperation with the ECDC, the ECHA, the EFSA, the EMA and Europol took place in line with the working arrangements concluded with the five agencies in 2018 and 2019 for implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/2101 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 November 2017 amending Regulation (EC) No 1920/2006 as regards information exchange on, and an early warning system and risk assessment procedure for, new psychoactive substances (see 'Main area 1: Health').

In February, the Head of Central Nervous System and Ophthalmology of the EMA's Scientific and Regulatory Management Department visited the EMCDDA to discuss, among other cooperation projects, the EMA Opioid Initiative Taskforce and the EMCDDA's contribution to this initiative. Cooperation with the EMA took place in line with Article 28(c) of the EU's pharmacovigilance legislation.

Cooperation with the ECDC also took place on the subject of drug-related infectious diseases (see 'Main area 1: Health'). In 2020 the agencies began work on updating the joint guidance document *Prevention and control of infectious diseases among people who inject drugs*, which was initially published in 2011.

Joint work is also taking place on monitoring the sustainable development goals of eliminating viral hepatitis and ending the HIV epidemic. Ongoing close collaboration takes place through mutual participation in expert meetings and advisory committees of the agencies, participation in country visits at the request of Member States and reviews of technical reports (e.g. guidance on providing support for vulnerable populations in the EU during the COVID-19 pandemic).

Another key EU partner is Europol. In addition to their collaboration within the framework of the EU EWS, the two agencies carry out joint work within EMPACT (see 'Main area 2: Security'), including collecting data on the production of synthetic drugs (European Reporting Instrument on Sites related to Synthetic Production). In 2020 the EMCDDA participated in four technical meetings of EMPACT.

Cooperation with CEPOL has developed, and the two agencies continued to organise and deliver training activities for law enforcement professionals (see 'Main area 2: Security'). These activities were part of the EMCDDA's contribution to the OAP of the COSI.

In 2020 the EMCDDA also contributed to the work of the JHA Agencies' Network. During the year the nine member agencies initiated a dialogue to share their experiences in dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic and to consider new avenues for closer cooperation among the agencies and with key stakeholders inside and outside the EU. The agencies' individual and joint efforts to deal with the impact of the pandemic were captured in a 'Joint paper on the COVID-19 response by the JHA agencies', which was formally endorsed by the heads of the JHA agencies during a videoconference held on 9 July.

Throughout the year the EMCDDA contributed to the work of other technical networks of the EU agencies, including the Coordination Group on Trafficking in Human Beings, the EU Agencies Network on Scientific Advice, the EU Joint Taskforce on Artificial Intelligence, the Performance Development Network, the Heads of Communication and Information Network and the Information and Communication Technology Network.

Cooperation with international organisations

Global organisations

The EMCDDA's main partners at the global level are the UNODC and the WHO.

On a general basis, the EMCDDA contributes to technical discussions with the UNODC and other international partners on how to improve data collection and on how to facilitate inter-agency collaboration. The EMCDDA is also an active member of the international expert working group on drug epidemiological statistics led by the UNODC and the WHO.

Since 2014, the EMCDDA and the UNODC have collaborated regularly with respect to data on NPS, in line with an agreement from the Member States on data sharing and in the context of international discussions for increased cooperation and exchange of information on NPS (see 'Main area 1: Health'). Each year, the EMCDDA provides to the UNODC Early Warning Advisory the list of NPS notified to the EU EWS and the list of the NPS seized by each EU Member State, Norway, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

In 2020 the EMCDDA contributed to and reviewed the publication [The Role of Drug Analysis Laboratories in Early Warning Systems](#). This manual, published in English and Spanish, focuses on information available from laboratories analysing drug seizures or responsible for toxicological analysis.

The EMCDDA was also involved in the 63rd session of the CND (2–6 March) and the intersessional meetings of the CND (October). Furthermore, the EMCDDA remained in contact with the UNODC's regional offices to work with non-EU countries on developing national drug monitoring systems and joint activities, such as UNODC East and South with the EU4MD project and UNODC for South Eastern Europe with the IPA 7 project.

The EMCDDA cooperates with both WHO headquarters (in Geneva) and the WHO Regional Office for Europe.

Cooperation with WHO Europe in recent years has covered prison and infectious diseases, whereas cooperation with WHO headquarters has focused on intervention quality standards and the monitoring of treatment systems.

The EMCDDA, WHO Europe and the ECDC have been working closely to assist countries in the elimination of viral hepatitis in line with the WHO hepatitis elimination agenda. In January 2020 WHO Europe, together with other leading international partners, attended an EMCDDA technical meeting aiming, through partnership and synergies at the European and national levels, at scaling up action on hepatitis C for people who inject drugs.

Cooperation with WHO Geneva also takes place in the area of NPS. The EMCDDA regularly assists the WHO ECDD with data for the prioritisation process and for the preparation of critical reviews. In 2020 the EMCDDA provided data to the ECDD and assisted it with the prioritisation of substances, which informed the discussions held at the 43rd ECDD meeting, which took place on 12–20 October.

Regional organisations

The main EMCDDA partners at regional level are the Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe and CICAD.

Cooperation with the Pompidou Group is based on the MoU signed in 2001, and annual work programmes indicate the core areas of cooperation. An appendix to the MoU signed in 2010 was adopted in February 2020. The cooperation areas include drug policies, precursor control, prison, cybercrime, cooperation with non-EU countries and support for training.



Signing of the joint work programme between the EMCDDA and CICAD-OAS (Ambassador Adam Namm, Executive Secretary of CICAD (left), and Alexis Goosdeel, EMCDDA Director (right))

The EMCDDA continues to cooperate with CICAD within the framework of the MoU signed in October 2000 and in line with the new work programme for 2019–2024 that was signed on 21 January 2020 in Washington, during the visit of the EMCDDA delegation headed by Director Alexis Goosdeel. During the visit, Director Goosdeel met with Ambassador Adam Namm, Executive Secretary of CICAD. The purpose of the visit was to discuss ongoing EMCDDA–CICAD cooperation and to review the topics to be addressed under the joint work programme (2020–2024). The EMCDDA collaborates with CICAD under an MoU signed with its parent body, the OAS, in 2000.

Strategic objectives outlined in the work programme include: strengthening regional and international monitoring systems; harmonising and developing indicators in the areas of drug supply and demand; supporting the establishment of national drug monitoring centres and drug information networks; and exchanging information on strategies and legislation and developments in drug production and use. The cooperation involves the EMCDDA's participation as an observer in CICAD's regular sessions and the presence of CICAD experts at EU expert meetings on an ad hoc basis.

Cooperation with third countries

In terms of cooperation with third countries, at the technical level, this was mainly carried out within the EU-funded technical cooperation projects IPA 7 and EU4MD (see section below on cooperation with third countries within the framework of EU-funded technical assistance projects).

At the institutional level, work was guided by the EMCDDA's *International Cooperation Framework*, which charts the direction of work in this area for the 2018–2025 period, and by the *EMCDDA Strategy 2025*, which identifies partnerships as one of the agency's main business drivers.

Two new working arrangements were signed in 2020, with Kosovo and with Serbia, via an exchange of letters between the EMCDDA and the respective national authorities.

The EMCDDA and Kosovo signed a new working arrangement on 28 September. Dignitaries attending the ceremony in Pristina included Agim Veliu, Kosovo's Minister for Internal Affairs, Armend Zemaj, Minister for Health, and Tomáš Szunyog, the new EU Ambassador in Kosovo. EMCDDA Director Alexis Goosdeel participated in the ceremony

virtually. The new agreement provides for the exchange of expertise between the entities concerned, thus contributing to developing drug data collection and reporting capacities in the region.

A working arrangement was also signed by the EMCDDA with Serbia, in December. Due to COVID-19 restrictions the agreement was formalised through an exchange of letters between Milan Pekić, Acting Director of the Office for Combating Drugs of the Government of Serbia, Prof. Dr. Berislav Vekić, Secretary of State at the Ministry of Health, Vladimir Rebić, General Police Director at the Ministry of the Interior, and Alexis Goosdeel, EMCDDA Director.

The working arrangements with Kosovo and Serbia follow the one signed in 2019 with another partner from the western Balkans, namely Albania, and they will pave the way for greater cooperation on monitoring the drug phenomenon in Europe and beyond.

Memoranda of understanding and working arrangements are also in place with the following third countries: Armenia, Israel, Georgia, Moldova, Russia, Switzerland and Ukraine. This allows the active participation of experts from the partner countries in EMCDDA expert meetings and the Reitox week.

Finally, an important event in the work of the EMCDDA with its external partners was the organisation of the ninth Reitox Week, which took place from 23 to 27 November. This forum brings together the EMCDDA's Reitox network; representatives of candidate, potential candidate and neighbouring countries of the EU; and other key partner countries. The aims of this annual event are to broaden the scope of the regular meetings of heads of NFPs; underline the usefulness of the EU drug monitoring model; add impetus to the agency's technical cooperation with partners outside the EU; and learn from each other's experience. The 2020 Reitox Week, which took place virtually for the first time, brought together some 50 countries.

Cooperation with third countries within the framework of EU-funded technical assistance projects

Enlargement countries

Cooperation with the EU enlargement countries in 2020 mainly took place within the framework of the technical cooperation project funded by the European Commission through the IPA, known as IPA 7.

IPA 7: in a nutshell	
Title	'Stepwise integration of the IPA beneficiaries in the activities of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) and the Reitox network'
Beneficiaries	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia
Objective	To enhance the capacity of the EU and the IPA beneficiaries to detect, analyse and report on emerging drug-related health and security threats
Duration	36 months (July 2019–June 2022)
Total budget	EUR 1 million
Main achievements in 2020	<p>Knowledge exchange: 35 IPA 7 experts attended four EU expert meetings organised by the EMCDDA.</p> <p>Support for building EWS in selected IPA beneficiary countries: regular data exchange with EWS coordinators; information transmitted on NPS formally notified to IPA 7 nominated experts; information on NPS detected submitted regularly to the EMCDDA.</p> <p>Outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ impact of COVID-19 on health services and users, and on drug markets launched (for publication in 2021); ▪ website; ▪ presence on social media. <p>Enhance data collection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ studies launched on cannabis, methamphetamine, European Web Survey on Drugs; ▪ feasibility studies launched on wastewater monitoring and hospital emergency data (European Drug Emergencies Network).

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the project in 2020. While some events could be organised online (as noted above), all of the activities involving travel (which represent a high proportion in a technical assistance project) had to be cancelled during the year. This included all the assessment missions and capacity building activities that had been planned to take place in the beneficiary countries. As a result, the relevant KPI was partially achieved (see Annex Ib).

The delayed activities will be carried out in 2021 and 2022, depending on the evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic.

EU neighbouring countries

Cooperation with neighbouring countries took place within the framework of the EU4MD project, funded by the European Commission through the European Neighbourhood Instrument.

EU4MD: in a nutshell	
Title	EU4Monitoring drugs (EU4MD)
Potential beneficiaries	Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Palestine ⁽³⁾ , Tunisia and Ukraine
Objective	To support national and regional readiness in the ENP area to identify and respond to drug-related health and security threats
Duration	42 months (January 2019–June 2022)
Total budget	EUR 3 million
Main achievements in 2020	<p>Knowledge exchange and capacity building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 102 participants (from 13 countries) attended 10 capacity-building activities, including four EU expert meetings organised by the EMCDDA. <p>Reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Emerging evidence of Afghanistan's role as a producer and supplier of ephedrine and methamphetamine</i> (see 'Main area 2: Security') (publication); ▪ Impact of COVID-19 on drug markets, drug use and drug-related harms and responses in east European neighbourhood policy countries (publication); ▪ Impact of COVID-19 on drug markets, drug use and drug-related harms and responses in south European neighbourhood policy countries (publication); ▪ <i>Darknet drug-related sales in east European neighbourhood policy countries</i> (restricted dissemination: Commission services, European External Action Service); ▪ <i>Darknet drug-related sales in south European neighbourhood policy countries</i> (restricted dissemination: Commission services, European External Action Service). <p>Data collection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ COVID-19 impact on drug use, markets and services in Georgia and Ukraine; ▪ Treatment Facility Survey ongoing in selected countries; ▪ work initiated to implement the 2021 European Web Survey on Drugs, drug residue analysis in waste water and used syringes, data collection on non-fatal drug-related emergencies and on mapping drug prevention systems; ▪ dissemination of information and visibility4 editions of EU4MD quarterly newsletter, with an audience of 204 people at the end of 2020; ▪ website (in English and French); ▪ presence on social media.

(3) This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

Similar to the IPA 7 project, EU4MD was significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, which delayed all activities for which travel to or from the beneficiary countries had been planned.

However, the project reacted very quickly to the new developments and carried out two trendspotter exercises to assess the impact of COVID-19 on the drug situation in these partner countries.

Impact of COVID-19 on drug markets, drug use, drug-related harms and responses in ENP countries: in the spotlight

The expansion of contactless drug dealing, the increase in the use of licit drugs and the adaptation of drug treatment protocols during lockdown are among the findings highlighted in the new EMCDDA report '[Impact of COVID-19 on drug markets, drug use, drug-related harms and responses in east European neighbourhood policy countries](#)'.

Launched on 28 September, the report is the first publication released within the framework of the EMCDDA's [EU4MD](#) project. The publication presents the key results of an EMCDDA trendspotter study, prepared in consultation with some 30 experts from all six eastern ENP countries.

A summary of the original English report is available in Azerbaijani, Armenian, Belarussian, Georgian, Romanian and Ukrainian.

The emergence of new drug trafficking routes, the reduced availability of drug-related health services and the adaptation of drug treatment protocols during the COVID-19 pandemic are among the findings highlighted in the report '[Impact of COVID-19 on drug markets, drug use, drug-related harms and responses in south European neighbourhood policy countries](#)'.

The report, released under EU4MD, presents the key results of an EMCDDA trendspotter study, prepared in consultation with some 20 experts from seven southern ENP countries.

A summary of the original English report is available in Arabic, French and Hebrew.

In 2020 the EMCDDA was also granted funding of EUR 800 000 by the European Commission to implement a project with Georgia. The new project, called EMCDDA4GE, will start in 2021, with a duration of 24 months.

Other events with partners

In 2020 the implementation manual [Early Warning System on new psychoactive substances & emerging drug phenomena](#) was published by the Cooperation Programme between Latin America, the Caribbean and the European Union on Drugs Policies (Copolad II). The EMCDDA contributed to the revision of this manual and was one of its editors.

On 26 June the EMCDDA was joined by a range of its external partners in a virtual event following on from the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. The meeting was a symbolic gathering of representatives of the European Commission, the permanent missions representing the partner countries in Brussels, the delegations of the European Union in these countries and the partner countries' national correspondents.

Reflecting the theme for this year's international day – 'Better knowledge for better care' – EMCDDA Director Alexis Goosdeel delivered a keynote speech on lessons learned regarding the impact of COVID-19 on the drug situation in Europe.

Business driver 3: Scientific capacity

Scientific Committee activities

As the guardian of the EMCDDA's reputation for scientific excellence, the Scientific Committee plays a key role in ensuring and improving the quality of the work carried out by the agency.

In January the EMCDDA's [newly appointed Scientific Committee](#) embarked on its 2020–2022 mandate, following its official appointment by the Management Board in December 2019.

During the year, the Committee – composed of 15 high-level scientists selected from the EU Member States, Norway and Turkey – adopted a formal opinion on the EMCDDA's *Single Programming Document 2021–2023*, and provided input on the agency's main projects and scientific publications, in line with the guiding principles for the review of selected publications. The Scientific Committee also contributed to the Horizontal Drugs Group's annual dialogue on research.



Prof. Dr. Catherine Comiskey, Chair of the EMCDDA Scientific Committee

The Committee's 52nd meeting took place virtually on 13 November, when Prof. Dr. Catherine Comiskey (Ireland) was elected to the position of Chair and Prof. Dr. Henri Bergeron (France) to the position of Vice-Chair for 2020–2022.

In 2020 the Committee continued to make a significant contribution to upholding the agency's scientific integrity, covering the most relevant scientific fields linked to the problems of drugs and drug addiction today.

The EMCDDA Data Quality Board approved the roles and responsibilities within the framework of its Data Quality Management Framework and the new terms of reference for the Data Coherence Group, two important tools for further developing the scientific quality of EMCDDA's outputs and services. These initiatives also completed the follow-up plan on the recommendations of the 2017 Internal Audit Service (IAS) audit of the management of data and the respective action plan.

The Lisbon Addictions Programme and Organising Committee, which the EMCDDA co-chairs, met throughout the year to assess the impact of COVID-19 on the organisation of the Lisbon Addictions conference. After a careful assessment of all the implications, the next edition was postponed to November 2022, and the two committees started working on the reconceptualisation of the conference and necessary preparatory activities.

Finally, in 2020, the new committee also assessed the risks of three NPS (see 'Main area 1: Health'). This is one of the key roles of the committee. On the basis of the risk assessments the Commission decided to control all three substances in the EU.

Business driver 4: Management

EMCDDA Director: main activities

The Director, through his external activities, contributed to increasing the visibility of the EMCDDA and consolidating the credibility of its work by building and improving partnerships. Some examples are listed below.

The purpose of these activities was twofold: to provide information on the performance of the EMCDDA in delivering on its mandate and implementing its annual work programme; and to communicate the scientific evidence resulting from the agency's monitoring and analytical work.

These high-level communication efforts, which involved some missions at the beginning of 2020 and the Director's participation in online events after mid March, were focused on the agency's key customers, namely drug policymakers at the EU and national levels and practitioners working in the field. Important institutional exchanges also took place with high-level representatives of some international organisations and third countries.

EU bodies

In terms of EU policymakers, Mr Goosdeel further strengthened relationships with the European Parliament. The Director gave presentations at three meetings of the European Parliament's LIBE Committee. On 28 January he presented the joint EMCDDA–Europol *EU Drug Markets Report 2019*, together with a Europol representative. On 4 June the Director gave an overview of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the drugs situation, and on 27 October he presented the main findings of the *European Drug Report 2020 – Trends and developments*, remotely, to the members of the LIBE Committee. In addition, throughout the year he had meetings with several members of the European Parliament on issues concerning the work of the agency and budgetary needs for 2021.

Concerning the Council, on 21 February the Director participated in a meeting of the Council's COSI in Brussels.

The Director had regular meetings with the European Commission's services throughout the year. These included meetings with Commissioner Johansson, the Director-General of DG Migration and Home Affairs, Monique Pariat, the Deputy Director-General, Olivier Onidi, and with the Director for Law Enforcement and Security, Laurent Muschel. He met on several occasions with Ms Floriana Sipala, Head of the Organised Crime and Drugs Policy Unit at DG Migration and Home Affairs. On 29 September the Director participated in a videoconference meeting with Commissioner Johansson

and Ms Pariat. The meeting was organised between DG Migration and Home Affairs and the directors of six home affairs agencies (EASO, the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), the EMCDDA, Europol, CEPOL and eu-LISA) to establish a forum for joint strategic reflection, the exchange of information and coordination on matters of common interest. On 26 October the Director participated in the informal workshop organised by DG Migration and Home Affairs by videoconference for the EMCDDA Management Board members on the revision of the EMCDDA's mandate. The meeting was chaired by Mr Laurent Muschel, Director for Law Enforcement and Security.

With regard to building relationships with the other EU agencies, Mr Goosdeel participated in the meeting of heads of EU agencies on 6 February in Brussels, and the one on 8 October by videoconference. The Director also participated in virtual meetings of the heads of JHA agencies, on 9 July and 20 November, and attended an extraordinary online meeting of heads of EU agencies on Brexit with the Commission's UK Task Force on 26 November.

EU Member States

The Director paid an official visit to Spain on 12 February 2020. The visit included meetings with the Delegate of the Government for the National Plan on Drugs, Ms Azucena Martí, the Deputy Director of Institutional Relations of the Government Delegation for the National Plan on Drugs and Head of the Spanish Focal Point, Ms Elena Álvarez Martín, and other members of the Executive Committee of the Government Delegation for the National Plan on Drugs. Meetings were also organised with representatives of the International and Ibero-American Foundation for Administration and Public Policies to discuss the EMCDDA's cooperation within the Copolad, Central Asia drug action programme and EU action against drugs and organised crime projects. Finally, the Director visited the Intelligence Centre for Counter-Terrorism and Organized Crime and met with the Director, Mr Ángel Alonso.

On 20 February Mr Goosdeel participated in the international conference on 'Antidrug policies: prevention of drug phenomena and fight against drug routes – Cooperation strategies in the fight against drug trafficking', organised by the Italian Ministry of the Interior in Rome. On that occasion, the Director met with Mr Giuseppe Cuchiara, Director of the Central Directorate for the Anti-Drugs Services of the Public Security Department at the Ministry of Interior.

The Director had an online meeting on 9 July with Ms Daniela Ludwig, the Federal Drug Commissioner of Germany, and Mr Jörg Pietsch, Head of Office of the Drug Commissioner. Mr Goosdeel participated in the online EU National Drug Coordinators Meeting under Germany's Presidency of the Council on 14 October. The meeting focused on people-centred drug policies, with a special emphasis on vulnerable groups, and explored the topics of prevention, early intervention and harm reduction. Mr Goosdeel delivered a keynote address on harm reduction at the meeting.

The Director spoke at the Cyprus National Addictions Authority online event on 12 November.

An online meeting between the Director and the Belgian Minister for the Interior, Ms Annelies Verlinden, took place on 7 December to discuss the budget for EMCDDA and priorities within drug-related policies.

Mr Goosdeel participated in several events organised by the Portuguese authorities.

International organisations and third countries

Mr Goosdeel paid a technical visit to the United States on 20–24 January. He met with Ambassador Adam E. Namm, Executive Secretary of CICAD. Mr Goosdeel had a meeting on 22 January with Director James W. Carroll of the Office of National Drug Control Policy, and on 23–24 January visited the headquarters of the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) and its Special Testing Laboratory.



Visit by the EMCDDA delegation headed by EMCDDA Director Goosdeel at the Drug Enforcement Administration's Special Testing Laboratory.

The Director participated in the 63rd session of the CND, on 2–4 March, organised by the UNODC in Vienna. On 3 March Mr Goosdeel gave a presentation entitled ‘25 years of supporting evidence-informed policies and actions in the EU – the EMCDDA approach’ at the Croatian side event on ‘Comprehensive and evidence-based approach in tackling the world drug problem’. On the same day, Mr Goosdeel participated in a European Union side event with a joint presentation of the *EU Drug Markets Report 2019*, together with a representative from Europol.

He delivered a keynote speech on 4 June at the online Copolad II Final Conference.

On 26 June the Director participated by videoconference in a special commemorative event of the 63rd session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, on the occasion of the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking organised by the UNODC. During this event the *World Drug Report 2020* was launched, followed by a discussion on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the world drug situation, from a regional perspective, co-sponsored by the European Union and the UNODC. The Director made the closing remarks.

EMCDDA operational response to the COVID-19 pandemic

On 11 March the WHO declared coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) a pandemic. As a result, and following the guidelines issued by the Portuguese authorities, the EMCDDA Director decided to activate the BCP on 13 March (Friday), at midnight. As of the next working day (16 March), the agency’s staff switched to teleworking mode.

In a statement informing employees on 13 March, the Director stressed that:

The decision to switch to teleworking has been taken to strengthen efforts to protect EMCDDA staff and their families. But it has also been taken in the spirit of our common responsibility to help flatten the curve of infection and ease the pressure on national healthcare systems.

He then added:

This is a very unusual moment, both for the EMCDDA and for the EU and its citizens, and we will only be able to cope with the current situation by remaining united and solidary.

This decision was the latest in a number of proactive contingency measures taken by the EMCDDA’s management since late February, the beginning of the COVID-19 outbreak in Europe, in line with the scientific evidence published by the ECDC, the WHO, the Portuguese health authorities and its own medical adviser. These measures, which were aimed at

minimising the risk of infection, included postponing meetings, cancelling work trips, limited access to the premises and quarantining a small number of staff members due to recent travel history.

In preparation for the shift, staff members were trained in the technical skills required for an extended teleworking period and advised on how to adapt work methods and procedures in the new circumstances.

In addition to the staff teleworking, key measures of the BCP included the following.

- Weekly meetings of the Incidence Response Team, consisting of the Director, the business continuity manager, the agency’s medical adviser and other key staff. During these meetings the situation at the EMCDDA and in Portugal was analysed, and updates were then sent to all the agency’s staff.
- Establishing clear protocols and procedures for accessing the EMCDDA premises and for communicating on COVID-19-related events. These procedures were kept updated and published on a dedicated intranet page, including a section on questions and answers.
- Intensifying the internal communication effort, including regular staff updates on the situation by the Director, the business continuity manager and the agency’s medical adviser.
- Redefining the workflows in some key areas (e.g. finance) in order to adjust to the switch of the operations concerned from paper-based to fully electronic work circuits.
- Ensuring that the ICT infrastructure would support the organisation’s teleworking efforts (see later section under this business driver).

While these measures were initially designed to last for a limited period (a few weeks), the evolution of the pandemic has obliged the EMCDDA, like other organisations, to maintain its BCP for a much longer time (at the time this report was drafted, in March 2021, the BCP was still active and the EMCDDA continued to function in teleworking mode).

Data-protection activities

Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 on data protection was fully observed during the year, and the activities required, in particular regarding data protection records, were carried out. Furthermore, the EMCDDA Management Board approved, in its meeting in June, a decision on a review of the internal

rules concerning the processing of personal data within the framework of the EMCDDA's operation.

Strategic planning and corporate performance monitoring and reporting

The EMCDDA ensured the efficient implementation of the annual work programme, which is part of the [Programming Document 2020–22](#). The agency achieved 95 % of the results defined in the work programme as level-1 priorities, 74 % of the level-2 priority results and 43 % of the level-3 priority results (see Annexes Ia and Ib).

While, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the initial targets ⁽⁴⁾ were not met, the EMCDDA showed not only its resilience in continuing its work without interruption, but also its agility in adapting to the new situation and changing its work priorities accordingly. As a result, the agency was highly responsive in providing its key customers with timely information, including on the impact of the pandemic on drug use, drug harms and drug markets in the EU. Projects that were no longer a priority in the given conditions were put on hold in 2020, while 28 new projects were kicked off, 11 of which were related to COVID-19.

This was accompanied by a subsequent reallocation of the agency's resources that made possible a significant investment in the new priorities, the most important of which was the procurement of ICT equipment (the workstations transformation programme – see later section under this business driver).

In terms of planning, the next single programming documents – for 2021–2023 and 2022–2024 (preliminary draft) – were also delivered in a timely manner to the EMCDDA's stakeholders, and both documents were adopted by the Management Board in December 2020.

Concerning corporate reporting, the main output was the [General Report of Activities 2019](#), which was adopted by the EMCDDA Management Board through a written procedure, and **was published on 15 June**.

Finally, 2020 brought a new approach to operational planning, monitoring and reporting at the EMCDDA. Despite the challenges related to the teleworking conditions under the pandemic, the agency managed to successfully roll out its new management information system – the Matrix@EMCDDA project. Matrix is the application that now supports the EMCDDA's internal management plan.

As part of the change management component of this important corporate project, the EMCDDA also changed its performance monitoring process: quarterly performance reviews were established, carried out in Matrix, to replace the previous mid-year performance review exercise.

While its roll-out involved considerable resources, mainly in terms of staff time, the new system centred on Matrix has also brought increased reliability, stability and transparency in implementing work programme monitoring at the EMCDDA. Further improvements are envisaged with a view to enhancing the user experience and system operability and functionality.

Financial resource management

The priorities in the field of financial resources management were effective and timely planning, monitoring and execution of the EMCDDA budget, and optimising all of the related processes. These were complemented by the efficient use of material resources. In this context, the EMCDDA reached the maximum level of performance in terms of budget execution, with 100 % of commitment appropriations executed (see Table 1). In terms of procurement execution, the procurement plan was put in place and successfully executed in close collaboration with all units.

TABLE 1. Budget execution

Commitment appropriations	100 %
Payment appropriations	94.73 %
Consumption of 2020 (C8) credits	91.55 %

Human resources management

The sound management of existing processes, as required by the applicable Staff Regulations and their implementing rules, remained key in 2020.

Another priority was the organisation of appropriate training for the agency's staff, to support the effective implementation of the EMCDDA's new long-term strategy. The target of providing an average of 3 training days per staff member (KPI 2.3; see Annex 1b) was only partially achieved pursuant to the exceptional constraints entailed by the COVID-19 pandemic, because of which several actions for initially planned training sessions had to be cancelled/reconsidered due to *force majeure*, and were only partially replaced by available actions for online/remote training.

(4) 'KPI 7: Work programme delivery' had set up the following targets: 100 % of level-1, 80 % of level-2 and 50 % of level-3 outputs/results achieved.

Facility support services

In the area of logistics and infrastructure management, ensuring a healthy and safe working environment remained key in 2020.

To that end, the identification of health and safety risks for staff remained one of the main priorities of the agency, as did increasing effectiveness, efficiency gains and cost savings, including through further synergies with the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA). The information included in the risk registry was adapted following the annual risk assessment exercise that was delivered in 2020.

The agency also implemented further measures to guarantee the efficient use of the EMCDDA's infrastructure, with special attention paid to controlling utility-related costs, building possible further synergies with EMSA and ensuring a safe working environment. In this respect, it is worth noting that, compared to 2019, the agency managed a reduction of 10.4 % in utilities costs during 2020.

In line with the policy in place at the EMCDDA, this was complemented by environmentally friendly measures (an internal environmental report was delivered in 2020 – see Annex VII).

Information and communication technology support services

The EMCDDA's ICT programmes and services are developed and delivered in line with the triennial objectives, which

are to implement and support core business and corporate projects and processes and to provide a continuously stable environment that supports existing basic and advanced services.

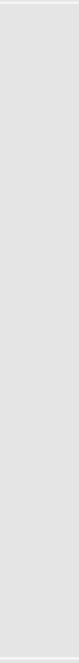
Concerning providing support for core business areas, the priority in 2020 was to respond to the important changes in the organisation of work brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.

To that end, ICT operations during the year concentrated on ensuring that the specific needs of the BCP could be fulfilled. Furthermore, and looking at the future, the EMCDDA has accelerated the initiation of the EMCDDA workstation transformation programme, which aims to create a modernised digital workplace that will enable the agency's staff to make full and efficient use of teleworking as an increasingly established work practice.

The optimal allocation and prioritisation of ICT resources was supported by the internal ICT Steering Committee, by refining priorities and deciding on the intensity of work to be devoted to each activity, depending on the most critical organisational needs.

Synergies and efficiency gains

Synergies with EMSA were further pursued in the areas of staff training, infrastructure management and ICT.



II

PART IIA

Management

2.1. Management Board

Main decisions

As usual the Management Board met twice during the year, but the meetings were held for the first time by videoconference due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The first meeting took place on 24 June and the second on 10 December 2020.

At the June meeting the Management Board held an exchange of views on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the drugs situation. The Director presented highlights from the EMCDDA's budgetary and financial performance, along with the main achievements of the EMCDDA in 2019 based on the *General Report of Activities*. The Management Board adopted a favourable opinion on the EMCDDA's final annual accounts for 2019 and congratulated the Director and his staff on the excellent budgetary execution.

The Management Board agreed with the Working Arrangement between the EMCDDA and the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Public Administration and the Ministry of Healthcare of Kosovo and mandated the Director to sign the arrangement at a date and place to be jointly decided.

In restricted session, the Management Board decided unanimously, following a proposal by the Commission, that the term of office of Mr Alexis Goosdeel as Director of the EMCDDA would be extended for a duration of 5 years, with effect from 1 January 2021.

At its 62nd meeting on 10 December 2020, the Management Board held an exchange of views on 'Developing capacity building on prevention in the EU'. As usual at the December meeting, the Management Board adopted the EMCDDA's budget for 2021 and preliminary draft budget for 2022.

In line with the provisions of Article 32 of the framework financial regulation applicable to EU agencies and of the EMCDDA financial regulation, the Management Board adopted

the EMCDDA's *Single Programming Document 2021–2023*, including the 2020 work programme. The board also adopted the EMCDDA's preliminary draft programming document for 2022–2024, which includes the preliminary draft work programme for 2022.

In restricted session, the Management Board elected Ms Elina Kotovirta (Finland) as an Executive Committee member, with a mandate running from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2023. The Management Board also decided that Mr Alexis Goosdeel, Director of the EMCDDA, would be assigned to a post of grade AD 15, as available in the EMCDDA authorised establishment plan, with effect from 1 January 2021.

The Management Board approved the implementation by the EMCDDA of a project for technical assistance to Georgia.

2.2. Major developments

The COVID-19 pandemic was a major external factor that significantly influenced the work of the agency as of mid March 2020 (for details see Part I of this report and Annexes Ia and Ib).

The EMCDDA showed great flexibility in adapting swiftly to a 100 % teleworking and videoconferencing mode. Despite the challenge of these unprecedented circumstances, the new working methods allowed the EMCDDA to continue implementing its activities and delivering its services in line with the emerging needs of its key customers.

To that end, the agency created a task force to design a series of new products on the impact of the pandemic on drug users and professionals in the drugs field, based on almost-real-time reporting. While some of the projects that had been planned prior to the pandemic had to be deprioritised, the EMCDDA released new resources and disseminated knowledge in innovative ways, reaching an increased number of stakeholders.

2.3. Budgetary and financial management

Information on budgetary and financial management is provided by the report included in the EMCDDA's *Annual Accounts 2020* (see Annex VIII).

In terms of procurement execution, the 2020 procurement plan was put in place in line with the EMCDDA 2020 management plan, and was successfully executed in close collaboration with all units.

The negotiated procedures launched during the course of the year are outlined in the tables below.

TABLE 2. EMCDDA negotiated procedures in 2020

Tendering	2020 figures	Number of direct contracts	Number of framework contracts
Negotiated procedures – see Annex I, Section 11.1(a) of the financial regulation applicable to the general budget of the Union (exceptional procedures)	0	0	0
Negotiated procedure – single tender (*)	95	95	0
Negotiated procedure – at least three candidates	7	6	1
Negotiated procedure – at least five candidates	5	4	1
Open procedures	4	1	3
European Commission frameworks joined	6	0	6

(*) Including appointment letters and very-low-value contracts.

TABLE 3. EMCDDA negotiated procedures' values in 2020

	Works		Supplies		Services		Total for 2020			
	Number of contracts	Volume of contracts (EUR)	Number of contracts	Volume of contracts (EUR)	Number of contracts	Volume of contracts (EUR)	Number of contracts	%	Volume of contracts (EUR)	%
EUR > 1 000 and ≤ 15 000	5	11 338	7	22 314	83	623 036	95	89 %	656 688	50 %
EUR > 15 000 and ≤ 60 000	0	0	0	0	7	265 600	7	7 %	265 600	20 %
EUR > 60 000 and ≤ 144 000	0	0	0	0	5	402 572	5	5 %	402 572	30 %
Total	5	11 338	7	22 314	95	1 291 209	107	100 %	1 324 860	100 %

Summary of budgetary operations, revenue and expenditure

The information about the appropriations transferred in 2020 can be found in the report on budgetary and financial management, as included in the EMCDDA's *Annual Accounts 2020*. The EMCDDA Management Board approved two amending budgets in 2020, which were duly published.

The results achieved under the main financial/performance indicators for 2020 are 100 % execution of commitment appropriations, 94.73 % implementation of payment appropriations, 91.55 % execution of appropriations carried forward from 2019 and 0.65 % cancelled/unused payment appropriations.

Information on grants, contribution and service-level agreements

Pursuant to the decision taken by the relevant EU authorities, in 2020 the EMCDDA received EUR 1 007 367 from the EU budget as the second instalment of EU financing for the second year of execution of the EU4MD project (for more details, see 'Business driver 2: Partnership'). This technical assistance project aims at enhancing the capacity of eastern and southern ENP countries (it can also cover, on an ad hoc basis, the 'neighbours of the neighbours') to monitor drug markets and contribute to improving national and regional responses to security and health-related threats posed by contemporary drug markets and related issues. The project concerns the following beneficiary countries: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia (for the southern neighbourhood partnership); and Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine (for the eastern neighbourhood partnership). The project will run from 1 January 2019 to 30 June 2022, and the appropriations allocated from the EU budget for its execution amount to a total of EUR 3 000 000. In accordance with the relevant financing agreement, these appropriations are provided by annual instalments, to be entered into the EMCDDA budget as assigned appropriations.

Concerning service-level agreements (SLAs) concluded by the EMCDDA, the following were in force in 2020:

- SLA between the EMCDDA and the European Commission (DG for Human Resources and Security) for the provision of services (upon agreed compensation whose amount depends on the actual services provided) relating to staff's training, health/medical services, safety and security;
- SLA between the EMCDDA and the European Commission (Office for the Administration and Payment of Individual Entitlements) for the provision of services (upon agreed

compensation whose amount depends on the actual services provided) relating to the management of staff's pecuniary rights;

- SLA between the EMCDDA and the European Commission (DG Budget) for the provision of services (upon agreed compensation whose amount depends on the actual services provided) relating to the use of the electronic management and accounting system (ABAC) system;
- SLA between the EMCDDA and the European Commission (DG Informatics) for the provision of services (upon agreed compensation whose amount depends on the actual services provided) relating to the hosting of the ABAC, ICT procurements, e-procurement (e-Prior services) and secure connectivity/access to Commission-hosted applications (Rachel);
- SLA between the EMCDDA and the European Commission (DG Informatics) for the provision of services by the EU Computer Response Team – CERT EU – relating to ICT security (computer emergency response);
- SLA between the EMCDDA and EMSA relating to the shared management of the premises of their headquarters and the sharing of the associated services and costs;
- SLA between the EMCDDA and EMSA relating to synergies for the sharing of ICT services and equipment.

Further information can be found in Annex VI.

2.4. Delegation and sub-delegation of the powers of budget implementation to the agency's staff

The EMCDDA has set its internal procedures for budget execution and internal control while defining and implementing a partially decentralised management model, in accordance with the EMCDDA financial regulation, which transposes in its entirety the text of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 2019/715 on the framework financial regulation for EU agencies.

As a consequence, both the operational and the financial decisions required for the implementation of the EMCDDA's single programming document and budget have been delegated to the heads of unit. The administration unit provides support to managers for budgetary and financial management execution and the implementation of financial transactions, as well as for internal budget planning, monitoring and reporting.

These procedures have been codified, and all of the EMCDDA's deputy authorising officers have received specific training and information on their roles, duties and liabilities, in accordance with the provisions of financial regulation and the Staff Regulations.

The key actors in and steps of the EMCDDA's procedures for budget execution can be summarised as follows (see also Tables 4 and 5 below).

- Project manager: initiates and provides operational input for the administrative and financial operations related to project implementation (e.g. technical specifications for procurement procedures, cost estimates and 'certified correct' for payments).
- Budget and financial management team: undertakes budget planning and monitoring, checking for consistency with the programming document and budget allocations. Financial and contractual support officers provide assistance in the preparation of administrative and contract documents with the input of the project manager involved.
- Financial management: initiating officers carry out operations using the EMCDDA's ABAC system, prior to decisions of the authorising officer.

- Executive office unit: the verifying officer carries out *ex ante* financial verification.
- Accounting officer: executes and records payments and recovery orders.

The procedures presented above are consistent with the EMCDDA's project-based working methods, which aim to integrate activity and resource management, in accordance with activity-based management / activity-based budgeting principles. In this context, the EMCDDA has established procedures for planning, monitoring and reporting, with a clear indication of the actors involved, their roles and their responsibilities.

After the adoption of the new 'Operating framework for the Reitox system' in January 2003, a new grant agreement model was introduced for the annual co-financing of activities by the Reitox NFPs. According to this agreement an external audit may be carried out each year by an independent body or expert, in order to certify that any financial documents submitted to the EMCDDA comply with the financial provisions of the agreement, that the costs declared are the actual costs and that all receipts have been declared.

TABLE 4. Key features of the EMCDDA's partially decentralised management mode

Level of operations (and actors)	Role/operations
Decentralised level (operational and technical units)	Operational initiative/input and operational and financial decisions by delegation in order to implement the work programme and budget
Central level (executive office unit and administration unit)	Coordination and management of executive planning, monitoring, reporting and assessment of the implementation of the work programme and budget. Administrative and financial support, management and control of implementation

TABLE 5. Key actors involved in implementing the EMCDDA's partially decentralised management model

Level of operations	Actors	Role/operations
Decentralised level (operational and technical units)	Project manager and head of the unit concerned	Initiates and provides operational input into the operations required to implement projects
Decentralised level (operational and technical units)	Project manager and head of the unit concerned	Initiates and provides operational input into the operations required to implement projects
Central level (administration unit)	Budget planning and monitoring team	Checks the consistency of operations with the adopted work programme and budget. Budgetary appropriations to be committed are set aside
	Human resources management team	Defines rights and checks compliance with Staff Regulations for staff-related management and expenditure
	Financial management team	Prepares the required administrative and legal supporting documents, controls compliance with applicable regulations and processes the required financial operations
Central level (executive office unit)	Verifying officer	<i>Ex ante</i> verification
Decentralised level (operational and technical units)	Head of unit / deputy authorising officer	Authorises budgetary and legal commitments and payments
Central level (administration unit)	Accounting officer	Executes and records payments and recovery orders

In order to effectively tackle the exceptional constraints entailed by the pandemic COVID-19 and meet the need to operate remotely in this context, as from 16 March 2020, and until further instruction, the process for the management of the EMCDDA financial operations has been digitalised as much as possible and concentrated in a reduced number of financial actors, in line with the chain of command of the EMCDDA authorising officer.

The EMCDDA's activities and operations are scrutinised by several processes and actors:

- external audits by the European Court of Auditors (ECA) (twice a year);
- external audits for specific projects (IPA-funded projects etc.);
- discharges by the European Parliament (once a year);
- internal audits by the IAS of the European Commission (once a year);
- opinions of the European Commission's services on the agency's programming document (once a year);
- external periodic evaluations (set at every 6 years in the EMCDDA founding regulation);
- agreements by the European Commission on implementing rules for the Staff Regulations (one agreement for each rule);
- consent by the European Commission on the possible deviation of the EMCDDA financial regulation from the Commission's framework financial regulation for decentralised agencies;
- the European Data Protection Supervisor, for compliance with Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 (by prior notification and upon complaint);
- the European Anti-Fraud Office (upon complaint);
- the Ombudsman (upon complaint);
- the Court of Justice of the European Union (upon complaint).

Ex ante controls of financial transactions were applied exhaustively throughout 2020 to verify their compliance with the EMCDDA financial regulation and the corresponding implementing rules. These controls were carried out swiftly to ensure that payment deadlines were met, legal commitments

were concluded in a timely manner and income was recovered promptly, without prejudice to the application of corrections, if required.

Financial workflows were properly defined and a sound system of authorisation of access to the ABAC was put in place. The manual of procedures was applied and updated, as required.

2.5. Human resources management

Human resources developments

The work to align the EMCDDA's human resources processes and policies with the reform of the EU Staff Regulations continued in 2020. This included, in particular, the adoption of implementing rules on the duties of Commission drivers (Decision C(2019) 7822), on leave (Decision C(2020) 1559) and on the transfer of pension rights (Decision C(2020) 4818). As in previous years, the EMCDDA participated in the work carried out by inter-agency working groups in this area.

As regards the EMCDDA 2020 establishment plan, the total number of authorised posts was equal to that in the EMCDDA establishment plan for 2019 (i.e. 76 posts), pursuant to the relevant decision of the EU budget authority.

Brief description of the results of the screening/benchmarking exercise

The results of the EMCDDA 2020 staff screening exercise reflect the EMCDDA's efforts to ensure the effective and efficient allocation and use of its resources (see Annex IV). The results show that 72.24 % of the EMCDDA's human resources capacity was devoted to operational activities in 2020 and only 18.25 % was allocated to administrative support and coordination; the remaining 9.50 % was assigned to operations considered neutral.

2.6. Strategy for efficiency gains

As far as efficiency gains are concerned, and as they result from the EMCDDA's past and present performance in the use of assigned resources, the EMCDDA is committed to constantly improving the effectiveness and efficiency of its activities and to maximising the use of its resources. In this context, the EMCDDA has pursued action to further rationalise and reduce the running costs of its premises – namely through measures aimed at reducing energy consumption – to offset

the impact of the extension of staff working time pursuant to the entry into force of the revised Staff Regulations (e.g. by installing solar shading on glass areas, solar power panels, climate-control switches on windows and an intelligent lighting system, or by optimising heating and cooling cycles at the EMCDDA's premises).

Cooperation and synergies with EMSA have been intensified beyond those resulting from the implementation of the agreement in force between the two agencies to share the use of common areas in the compound where their headquarters are located (namely the canteen, underground parking area and conference facilities). Further cooperation and synergies have been developed, in a common effort to proactively exploit the opportunities provided by the geographical proximity of the two agencies, while safeguarding the autonomous legal personality and capacity assigned to each agency by the EU legislature. These developments concern in particular the joint procurement of shared services to increase critical mass and obtain better conditions (e.g. for maintenance, security, cleaning, the canteen and cafeteria, catering, travel agency, interim staff and medical services); the joint organisation of training activities of common interest for the staff of both agencies; and the sharing of some services/bodies, such as the EMCDDA medical officer and the invalidity and disciplinary committees. Following up on the economies achieved with the common implementation of a business continuity facility with EMSA, the EMCDDA is committed to extending the agreement.

As the new digital workplace programme develops, the EMCDDA will seek to match technological developments and to achieve further economies by updating its current infrastructure architecture. Progress in this area will depend, however, on the availability of resources.

2.7. Assessment of audit and ex post evaluation results during the reporting year

2.7.1. Internal Audit Service

The IAS strategic internal audit plan 2020-2022 includes two prospective audit topics for the EMCDDA: human resources management; and strategic planning and programming. The audit plan also includes follow-up activities and a reserve audit topic on international cooperation.

The IAS started the preliminary interviews for the audit on human resources management in November 2020. The fieldwork was carried out in January 2021. The objective of the audit is to assess the adequacy of the design and the

effectiveness of the internal control system put in place by the EMCDDA to manage its human resources. The audit will also assess the centre's compliance with the relevant human resources rules and procedures.

2.7.2. European Court of Auditors

The report of the ECA on the EMCDDA's 2019 annual accounts confirmed their reliability and the legality and regularity of the transactions underlying them. In this context no finding was mentioned or issued.

2.8a. Follow-up of recommendations and action plans for audits and evaluations

In its report on the EMCDDA 2019 annual accounts the ECA did not mention any findings or express any observations requiring follow-up action by the EMCDDA.

The audit report on information technology project management in the EMCDDA included two 'very important' recommendations aimed at: defining and adopting a requirements management process; and, defining and adopting a systems development methodology. Both of these recommendations were implemented in 2019 and formally closed, by the IAS, in 2020.

The audit report on the management of data collection, validation and quality assurance in the EMCDDA included one 'very important' recommendation aiming at improving the definition of the agency's business needs and identifying the related IT functionalities to support the data collection, validation and quality assurance process. The EMCDDA agreed with the IAS on an action plan to address the issued recommendation, which was adequately and effectively implemented. The recommendation was formally closed, by the IAS, in January 2020.

2.8b. Follow-up of recommendations issued following investigations by OLAF

The EMCDDA's Management Board approved the Anti-fraud Strategy in June 2016, reflecting OLAF's methodology and guidance, including the rules on internal investigations, the initiatives for awareness-raising on staff ethics, the rules on gifts and hospitality offered by third parties, the guidelines on serious wrongdoing and whistleblowing.

The strategy took into account the priorities set by the European Commission within the framework of the Common Approach on EU decentralised agencies, especially: the proper handling of conflicts of interests and the development of anti-fraud activities through prevention, detection, awareness-raising and closer cooperation with OLAF.

Since its creation, there were no cases of fraud in the Centre and the degree of exposure of the EMCDDA to the risk of fraud can be generally considered as relatively reduced.

The EMCDDA has not been the subject of an OLAF investigation in previous years and, therefore, there are no standing recommendations.

2.9. Follow-up of observations from the discharge authority

Measures taken in light of the observations accompanying the decision on the discharge to the EMCDDA for 2018

Observation No 16 of the discharge decision

Notes with concern that, according to the Centre, several recommendations included in the 2015 IAS audit on IT project management have been only partly implemented and that, at the end of 2018, two recommendations were still outstanding; notes, however, that those two recommendations were expected to be implemented by mid-2019; calls on the Centre to report to the discharge authority on the progress achieved by June 2020;

Measure taken by the EMCDDA to follow up on Observation No 16

All recommendations emerging from the referred IAS's audit have been implemented, and were formally closed in January 2020.

Observation No 17 of the discharge decision

Notes that, according to the Court's report, pursuant to Directive 2008/104/EC2 and Portuguese labour law, interim workers should work under the same working conditions as workers employed directly by the user undertaking; notes, however, that the relevant contracts did not explicitly require the temporary work agencies to respect those conditions and that there is no evidence that the Centre itself carried out any comparison between the working conditions of its own staff and those of interim staff, which undermines safe

and predictable working conditions for the staff and causes a risk of litigation and risks for the Centre's reputation; notes that, according to the Centre's reply, the contract between the Centre and the temporary work agency refers to the obligation of the Centre to comply with all aspects of the applicable legislation and that, pursuant to that contract, the temporary work agency is the party exposed to the risks of litigation; highlights, however, that this type of situation still carries high reputational risks for the Centre; welcomes the fact that the Centre is reassessing its policy for the use of temporary workers to base that policy more on the law of the Member State in which the Centre is located, in line with its operating needs and the legal framework; calls on the Centre to analyse the working conditions of its interim staff and ensure that those conditions are in line with Union and national labour law; calls on the Centre to report to the discharge authority on the progress achieved by June 2020;

Measure taken by the EMCDDA to follow up on Observation No 17

The EMCDDA has reviewed its policy for the use of temporary workers by better defining/clarifying the profile/tasks of possible interim workers and by adopting a restrictive approach to the employment of such workers, whose use is substantially limited to meet specific essential needs for temporary support of an administrative or technical nature.

Furthermore, the EMCDDA has confirmed that its contract with the temporary work agency providing this kind of worker explicitly requires the latter to comply with all aspects of the applicable legislation, namely the Portuguese legislation that transposes Directive 2008/104/EC.

Observation No 18 of the discharge decision

Notes that the Union signed an agreement with Norway in 2006 that defines the formula to calculate Norway's financial contribution to the Centre as well as the minimum contribution threshold which should be subject to an annual adjustment based on price trends and gross national income in the Union; notes with concern that, while the Union budget subsidy increased by 24 % between 2007 and 2018, Norway's contribution remained almost the same; notes that, according to the Centre's reply, there is no linear correlation between the increase of the Union subsidy and Norway's contribution and that the Centre does not have the required legal capacity to claim a different formula/method for the adjustment of the minimum contribution by Norway; calls on the Centre with the parties concerned to adjust the minimum contribution by Norway in accordance with the agreed terms;

Measure taken by the EMCDDA to follow up on Observation No 18

The EMCDDA has duly ensured the follow-up required for the technical adjustment of Norway's minimum contribution to its budget, pursuant to the relevant provisions of the agreement between the EU and Norway for the latter's participation in the work of the EMCDDA.

In particular, the EMCDDA has confirmed with the relevant Commission services that the method defined and applied for this adjustment is correct and has been correctly applied.

The application of this method has confirmed that the amount paid by Norway for its annual contribution to the EMCDDA since 2007 had never been less/lower than the adjusted minimum amount, as required by the relevant provisions.

Observation No 19 of the discharge decision

Calls on the Centre to focus on disseminating the results of its research to the public, and to reach out to the public via the social media and other media outlets;

Measure taken by the EMCDDA to follow up on Observation No 19

The EMCDDA's website is the favoured vehicle for disseminating knowledge, with over 1.6 million visitors in 2020 (see 'Business driver 1: Institutional'). The EMCDDA has made great strides in making it easier for users to find content on the website by developing a number of key catalogues and repositories including: a **document library** for researches; a **media library** with graphics, videos and photos; and an **events calendar** rounding up drug-related conferences and events in Europe.

The agency's online presence was also assured through social media activities. By the end of 2020 the agency had almost 18 000 followers on **Twitter**, more than 12 000 followers on **Facebook**, some 1 300 followers on **Instagram** and nearly 6 000 followers on **LinkedIn**. Videos published by the **EMCDDA on YouTube** received around 260 000 views during the year (and an overall increase in lifetime views of some 30 %, as compared to 2019). Furthermore, 37 digital campaigns were launched, resulting in over 68 000 individual emails to subscribers.

2.10. Environment management

The EMCDDA has actively monitored its environmental performance and CO₂ footprint since 2014. Continuous improvement cycles have reduced its CO₂ footprint over the years in comparison to the baseline established in 2014.

Annex VII to this report provides for further details on this matter.

2.11. Assessment by management

Based on the information provided in the previous subsections, the conclusion of the management assessment is that the EMCDDA's internal procedures for budget execution and internal control, including the definition and implementation of a partially decentralised management model, in accordance with the EMCDDA financial regulation, which transposes in its entirety the text of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 2019/715 on the framework financial regulation for EU agencies (see Section 2.4. above), are fully effective and function well.

PART IIB

External evaluations

As a follow-up to the external evaluation of the EMCDDA carried out during 2018, the European Commission made, on the basis of the report presented by an independent consultant (ICF International), a series of recommendations for follow-up. At its meeting of 12 and 13 December 2019, the Management Board adopted an EMCDDA action plan to follow up on these recommendations. The actions envisaged took into account the current EMCDDA mandate, as the full improvement of some areas may entail carrying out activities not necessarily covered by the existing regulation. Within this framework, the EMCDDA carried out a series of activities to address the recommendations made. Below there is a non-exhaustive description of the main areas covered, presented in a succinct manner.

In order to foster engagement with the scientific community, during 2020 the EMCDDA continued to contribute to and participate in 'online virtual' scientific meetings and conferences. It also hosted a number of technical meetings and webinars in which the scientific community participated. The EMCDDA summer school was conducted virtually, and a winter technical training course is also planned. The agency also continued to produce scientific articles that were accepted by high-ranking scientific journals.

The EMCDDA strived for forward-looking products by identifying future trends and risks to better support EU preparedness and response in the ever-changing drugs landscape, as well as communicating more directly with national stakeholders. Indeed, the EMCDDA futures exercise was completed successfully in 2020. A series of expert workshops were held during the year, and in 2021 the EMCDDA will launch a toolbox of methods to support its stakeholders in conducting foresight and horizon-scanning exercises. In addition, three data development projects were established in 2020 to increase preparedness in the areas of drug trends, policy and practice.

The EWS continues to follow up rapidly on new drugs identified in Europe, and remains an important tool in identifying the appearances of new substances and supporting the EU's legislative actions on control measures.

The agency continued, as far as possible, to help develop more timely and sensitive data collection tools, and data from these instruments was given greater prominence in its publications, as is evident in the *European Drug Report 2020*.

A number of trendspotting exercises have been launched in response to COVID-19, and the agency has received a great deal of praise for its performance in rapidly monitoring developments in drug use.

A number of rapid analyses were produced in the context of EMCDDA capacity-building projects. These have provided early warnings on important new developments.

The EMCDDA continued to monitor and follow up on important policy developments. Work in the cannabis area is a particularly good example of this, and includes the preparation of a publication on low-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) products. Input has also been provided into new developments in this area at the request of the Council and of Commission services.

To strengthen its communication with key stakeholders, the agency initiated a series of webinars on subjects such as the impact of COVID-19, and these will be continued in the future on topics of interest to the EMCDDA's primary customer groups.

Furthermore, the EMCDDA pursued the implementation of two technical cooperation/assistance projects with priority third countries – IPA 7 (2019–2021) and EU4MD (2019–2022) – under which a series of activities were carried out to identify and report on future trends in the drug market.

To increase the comparability of information and data, further the use of visual aids and improve the quality of translation, a new graphic-rich product, entitled *European Drug Report 2020 – Key issues*, was developed to accompany the main trends and developments report, and was published in 24 languages.

A number of technical and scientific reports were translated to increase their dissemination potential.

Work on the agency's digital strategy highlighted ways in which it can optimise its channels and engage more with customers through the EMCDDA's digital newsletters and social media work. It proposed piloting podcasts and producing more audiovisual material.

The development of online/virtual events was prioritised, and an online edition of the *European Drug Report 2020* launch was organised in which more than 400 people were able to participate. Specialised training for staff in producing engaging virtual events was organised to equip them with the skills that they need.

Further work was undertaken to assess how to provide more multilingual content, including an analysis of who currently accesses the translated products.

The media is an important conduit for informing the general public. Various landscaping initiatives have been undertaken to improve the EMCDDA's reach via this channel, with an expansion to online sources such as blogs.

The NFPs contributed to the rapid dissemination at the national level of the 'EMCDDA update on the implications of COVID-19 for people who use drugs (PWUD) and drug service providers' by translating it into their national languages.

Improving the understanding and reporting on polydrug use has been given greater focus throughout the EMCDDA's technical work programme, insofar as this has been possible in the context of the current resources and mandate. In particular, greater attention has been paid to this issue in the agency's work on monitoring fatal and non-fatal drug overdoses. The development of new methods, for example the analysis of syringe residues, has also generated new opportunities for reporting on this topic. The EMCDDA is also exploring how to better measure and report on polydrug use. This will be helpful in informing our reporting with respect to new EU drugs strategy for 2021–2025.

In order to further develop work at the international level in line with the agency's mission, the EMCDDA has again collaborated with the ESPAD group on reporting on drug, alcohol and tobacco use among school students. The 2020 reporting exercise therefore provides valuable information on issues related to this recommendation. EMCDDA continues to have access to ESPAD's harmonised international database, which includes detailed information on patterns of polydrug use and associated factors. A number of new analyses have been produced that utilise these data.

The EMCDDA's triennial single programming document continues to include activities developed in cooperation

with partners, and underlines the added value this joint work provides to the EU.

In context of the EWS on NPS, information exchange has been ongoing with the Reitox network of EWS correspondents, the ECDC, the ECHA, the EFSA, the EMA and Europol. Some international partners have also been involved with these activities on an informal basis.

The latest edition of the EMCDDA–Europol *Drug Markets Report* addressed the international dimension of the drug problem, as does the preparatory work for the forthcoming edition of this publication. Similarly, *Health and Social Responses to Drug Problems – A European guide*, a new version of which is also in preparation, includes consideration of the international evidence base.

The agency also continues to cooperate at an international level alongside the International Network on Health and Hepatitis in Substance Users, the European Association for the Study of the Liver, the Correlation European Harm Reduction Network and other projects and networks.

Further improvements were made to reach national stakeholders, policymakers, practitioners and the general public. The Best Practice Portal continued to be revised and updated with the latest evidence and tools, and a new focus on implementation experiences. It is anticipated that the translation of materials into national languages will continue.

A new edition of the *Health and Social Responses to Drug Problems – A European guide* (for publication in 2021) will support national stakeholders with state-of-the-art information in the health and social responses area. Indeed, the guide is being reconceived to be more accessible for its users, and will be better integrated into the website, with access to further resources via a toolbox approach.

There has been enhanced engagement and dialogue on social media with members of the general public, who were given the opportunity to send questions to the EMCDDA about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on drug users and drug services.

In the area of drug supply, the focus remained on improving the quality and coverage of data collected in the Member States.

In the security area, significant progress has been made in addressing methodological needs and knowledge gaps in the use of darknet markets for the supply of drugs and the use of open-source information (in cooperation with the Commission and Europol).

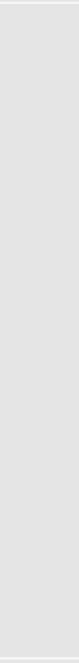
Furthermore, the EMCDDA has put additional emphasis on the production of short, topic-specific briefings (e.g. on violence and on methamphetamine production in Europe and in third countries) to assist the EU institutions.

Furthermore – and in addition to the EU4MD and IPA 7 projects that provide useful information for monitoring and understanding the global dimension because of the direct impact it has on the EU drug situation – the EMCDDA has kept abreast of the latest developments in other regions of the world by engaging in activities with priority countries and with international organisations.

At the corporate level, streamlined ICT tools relating to time management and appraisal have been developed and fully deployed, along with an annual training policy/plan.

Furthermore, and within the context of the constraints entailed by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the processes for managing the EMCDDA's financial operations (namely payments) have been further digitalised and streamlined. This has involved, in particular, the development of a simplified electronic workflow where the payment procedure is processed on the basis of a digitalised version of the original paper-based supporting documents and the number of financial actors and steps involved is reduced to the minimum required by the relevant financial regulation.

Similar electronic workflows have also been put in place for the administrative procedures applicable to managing the entitlements and obligations of EMCDDA staff.



III

PART III

Assessment of the effectiveness of the internal control systems

3.1. Effectiveness of the internal control systems

The EMCDDA's Management Board formally adopted the internal control standards (ICS) in July 2010, and the new Internal Control Framework (ICF) in December 2017. Both documents were transposed by analogy and are fully consistent with the equivalent standards, principles and guidelines laid down by the European Commission. The ICS and the ICF constitute the basis for assessing the effectiveness of the internal control system at the EMCDDA, as provided for in Article 30 of its financial regulation (Decision of the Management Board of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) to adopt the new financial regulation of the EMCDDA).

The ICF consists of five interrelated components and 17 principles aimed at providing reasonable assurance in relation to the: 1. effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the operations; 2. reliability of reporting; 3. safeguarding of assets and information; 4. prevention, detection, correction and follow-up of fraud and irregularities; 5. adequate management of risks relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.

The overall assessment of the internal control system depends on the assessment at the level of the principles and components. Besides the ongoing monitoring of internal control, embedded in the business processes of the centre, the EMCDDA performs a yearly assessment of the state of play of the ICS/ICF, which covers all control principles and components: control environment; risk assessment, including the risk of fraud; control activities; information and communication; and monitoring activities.

A comprehensive document that reviews and sets out the progress made in implementing the EMCDDA's ICS was drawn up in early 2013. This document was updated regularly after that point, until 2017. Following the adoption of the ICF, a document with a full repository of the state of play of implementation of

the 17 ICF principles was drafted in 2018. This document is updated regularly on the basis of needs and opportunity.

The result of the 2020 assessment is that all components are present and functioning. The assessment identified two principles where some improvements may be needed, in relation to control activities and information and communication. This does not affect the overall effectiveness of the internal control system. The EMCDDA is taking the necessary corrective actions to improve the underlying shortfalls that have been identified.

The EMCDDA had to face, as did all the other EU institutions and bodies, the effects of an unforeseen pandemic (COVID-19). With the activation of the BCP, and within its framework, the EMCDDA further improved certain areas in order to carry out control activities and to ensure the efficient and effective circulation of information and communication at both the internal and the external level. This involved adapting the EMCDDA's activities at both the operational and the support level to fulfil the EMCDDA's mission.

The Director established an EMCDDA task force to coordinate the agency's public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic in early March 2020. This was after activating the agency's contingency management plan and putting in place measures to ensure the safety of the EMCDDA's staff and business continuity. Once the BCP was in place, the agency began to consider the impact of the pandemic on its substantive work. This is an ongoing task, because the situation is continuing to develop in ways that require the EMCDDA to review and recalibrate its response.

At the transversal level, the EMCDDA developed a flexible and overarching framework to help address the issue in a structured manner. This involved focusing on the impact of the pandemic and responses to it on the agency's plans and work programme, along with prioritising information-provision and impact-monitoring activities in a way that is flexible, rapid and useful for our different stakeholders.

This framework has a number of overlapping pillars.

1. Providing an immediate response to support stakeholders and to facilitate communication on drug-related issues by establishing a dedicated set of online resources.
2. Starting a process to review the impact of the situation on our current substantive activities and planning to ensure core activities are protected and risks and problems are mitigated.
3. Considering the implications of the current situation on the need to monitor and respond on:
 - (a) impact on service provision and help-seeking behaviour;
 - (b) patterns of drug use and associated problems;
 - (c) drug markets.
4. Ensuring coordination and synergy between substantive activities in this area and implementing a number of rapid outputs and services.

An overview of the activities focusing on the EMCDDA's role as a conduit for rapid, objective and reliable information on this swiftly evolving situation, along with rapid assessment and monitoring activities, is presented in other sections of this report.

Ultimately, the internal controls have proved effective and resilient throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. After the activation of the BCP, within that framework, the agency:

- set teleworking as the default working mode, except for critical functions;
- ensured regular contact with staff and provided them with guidance via email and virtual meetings;
- created a dedicated intranet page for COVID-19; launched a staff well-being survey online;
- used remote tools to conduct recruitment;
- prepared 'Guidelines for returning to work on the premises';
- deprioritised some lower-level priorities;
- participated in the EU Agencies Network's COVID-19 working group to ensure the use of resources among agencies was maximised.

Furthermore, the risk management process was a central element in the system of internal control and, as in previous years, a comprehensive risk identification and assessment exercise aimed at improving risk management at the EMCDDA was carried out in 2020. The central risk register was updated regularly. This register identifies, for each area, the estimated risk level, impact and response; the mitigating measures currently in place; and the list of programmes, projects and actions that will contribute to reducing the outstanding residual risk levels. Risk assessment was carried out continuously at the EMCDDA throughout the year, while a comprehensive analysis was performed by the managers in the context of preparing the single programming documents.

The following developments in 2020 contributed to the overall effectiveness of the internal control systems.

- Implementation of measures aimed at improving project management in the EMCDDA, particularly in the ICT sector.
- Consolidation of the performance model based on a limited number (10) of composite KPIs, that is, KPIs built on and measured by sets of underlying lower-level performance indicators. This new performance model was first presented in the EMCDDA's *Programming Document 2019–21*.
- Progressive deployment of Matrix as a corporate management information system for operational planning, monitoring and reporting of activities.
- Internal EMCDDA coordination mechanisms (e.g. the heads of unit meetings, editorial board meetings, product coordinating meetings, ICT Steering Committee meetings and scientific coordination meetings) further contributed to strengthening risk management processes by enhancing the capacity of managers and other key staff to closely monitor all major issues relating to the timely and effective implementation of planned activities, the delivery of outputs and the achievement of results.
- Drafting and formalisation of the strategy for the organisational management and internal control systems, included as an annex to the *Single Programming Document 2021–2023*, in line with the applicable guidelines issued by the Commission;
- Start of the process to review the EMCDDA's anti-fraud strategy, which is expected to be carried out during 2021. For further information on the EMCDDA's anti-fraud strategy, please refer to Section 2.8b above.

In terms of the prevention and management of conflicts of interest, the EMCDDA's Management Board adopted a revised policy in December 2014 that reflects the common approach endorsed by the Parliament, the Council and the Commission in July 2012, calling for the development and application in all EU decentralised agencies of a coherent policy on preventing and managing conflicts of interest concerning the members of the Management Board, the members of the Scientific Committee and the agencies' directors.

The policy took into account the main recommendations addressed to agencies in this area by the European Parliament (namely within the framework of the discharge process), the European Court of Auditors (in its Special Report No 15/2012 – Management of conflict of interest in selected EU agencies), the European Ombudsman (on the occasion of the Ombudsman's visits to several agencies, as part of a programme launched in May 2011) and the Commission's IAS, in its capacity as the internal auditor for the agencies.

The Commission worked closely with the agencies to prepare a model for guidelines on the prevention and management of

conflict of interests in EU decentralised agencies. In particular, the network of the Heads of EU Agencies contributed to this preparation by gathering information about agencies' experiences and best practices in this field.

The agency also has in place conflict-of-interest policies applicable to its statutory staff, who are bound by the Staff Regulations (e.g. at the moment of taking up duty, conflict of interest of spouses, during recruitment processes).

3.2. Conclusions of the assessment of internal control systems

Based on the information provided under Section 3.1 above, the overall result of the management assessment of the effectiveness of internal control system as a whole is that it is fully effective and functioning well.

3.3. Statement of the manager in charge of risk management and internal control

Statement of the Manager in charge of risk management and internal control

I, the undersigned,

In my capacity as Manager in charge of risk management and internal control within the EMCDDA, I declare that in accordance with the EMCDDA's Internal Control Framework, I have reported my advice and recommendations on the overall state of internal control in the agency to the Executive Director.

I hereby certify that the information provided in the present General Report of Activities and in its annexes is, to the best of my knowledge, accurate, reliable and complete.

Done in Lisbon on 30 April 2020



Fabian Pereyra

Head of the Executive Office

I V

PART IV

Management assurance

4.1. Review of the elements supporting assurance

The declaration of assurance of the authorising officer is based on the following combination of external and internal oversight and control procedures over the EMCDDA's organisation and activities.

- The assessment of the effectiveness of the internal control system.
- The risk management exercise.
- The statement of the manager in charge of risk management and internal control.
- The accounting officer's certification of the 2020 provisional accounts.
- Assurance provided by the ECA's audit: no preliminary observations as regards to the 2020 audit and no open observations from prior years ⁽⁵⁾.
- Assurance provided by the IAS audit: no 'critical' or 'very important' recommendations outstanding from the IAS audits, at year-end.
- Progress in implementing the recommendations of the external evaluation.
- *Ex ante* controls.
- The register of exceptions.

- The EMCDDA's anti-fraud strategy and the policy for the prevention and management of conflicts of interest.

The aforementioned building blocks do not identify any significant weaknesses that could impact the declaration of assurance of the authorising officer.

4.2. Reservations

A reservation in the declaration of assurance is prompted by the occurrence of significant internal weaknesses or external events that lead to the materialisation of critical risks.

At the EMCDDA, critical risks are events that have the potential to:

- jeopardise the realisation of major policy objectives;
- cause serious damage to the centre's stakeholders;
- require critical intervention from the Parliament, the Council or the Commission regarding the centre's performance;
- result in critical observations/recommendations from the European Court of Auditors, the IAS and the European Anti-Fraud Office;
- result in the breaching of laws and the pervasive infringement of regulations;
- result in material financial loss;
- put the safety of the centre's staff at risk;
- seriously damage the centre's reputation and image;
- cause any other event that, due to its likelihood and impact, is assessed, by the management, as critical to the achievement of the organisational objectives.

(5) There is one observation in relation to which, 'The ECA takes account of the existence of a pending case before the CJEU, addressing several questions concerning the application of Directive 2008/104/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on temporary agency work to EU agencies. Since the reply to those questions by the CJEU may have an impact on the ECA's position as regards the use of interim workers by the EMCDDA, the ECA refrains from making follow-up on observations from previous years concerning this matter, until the CJEU rendered its ruling in that case.'

None of these risks materialised at the EMCDDA in 2020.

The assessment of materiality involves a qualitative and a quantitative judgement, and the occurrence of any critical risk is material per se. Qualitative elements taken into account include the nature of the event, its recurrence, its duration and its effect on the activities and programmes of the EMCDDA. Quantitative elements are assessed based on budgetary considerations. The EMCDDA is continuously looking to adjust and refine the concrete criteria to assess materiality.

In 2020 the EMCDDA identified medium to high risks related to: the COVID-19 pandemic; the Centre's budgetary constraints; a lack of resources and funding for the NFPs; supplementary requests from EU institutions and Member States; suboptimal IT project and assets management; and a shortfall in ICT staff. To tackle each of these risks, the EMCDDA has taken all necessary mitigating actions. A clear demonstration of the efficiency and effectiveness of the measures taken is evidenced by the performance achieved by the EMCDDA in 2020, as stated in Section 2.3 'Budgetary and financial management' above.



V

PART V

Declaration of assurance

Declaration of assurance by the authorising officer

I, the undersigned, Director of the EMCDDA,

In my capacity as authorising officer,

Declare that the information contained in this report gives a true and fair view.

State that I have reasonable assurance that the resources assigned to the activities described in this report have been used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and that the control procedures put in place give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.

This reasonable assurance is based on my own judgement and on the information at my disposal, such as the results of the self-assessment, *ex post* controls, the work of the Internal Audit Service and the lessons learnt from the reports of the Court of Auditors for years prior to the year of this declaration.

Confirm that I am not aware of anything not reported here which could harm the interests of the agency.

Done in Lisbon on 12 May 2021.



Alexis Goosdeel

Director



Annexes

Annexes

Annex I **Core business statistics**

Annex Ia **Implementation of the 2020 work programme by objectives and expected outputs/results**

This annex is [available online](#).

Annex Ib **Key performance indicators**

This annex is [available online](#).

Annex II

Statistics on financial management

Calculation of budget outturn

TABLE 6. Budget outturn and cancellation of appropriations

Budget outturn	2018	2019	2020
Reserve from the previous years' surplus (+)	189 764	22 251	20 639
Revenue actually received (+)	16 169 483	18 195 649	18 058 665
Payments made (-)	- 16 009 622	- 16 525 529	- 16 972 131
Carryover of appropriations (-)	- 455 152	- 1 777 308	- 2 494 470
Cancellation of appropriations carried over (+)	27 093	12 561	23 407
Adjustment for carryover of assigned revenue appropriations from previous year (+)	292 360	115 167	1 494 794
Exchange rate differences (+/-)	- 1 911	99	- 2 229
Adjustment for negative balance from previous year (-)	- 189 764	- 22 251	- 20 639
TOTAL	22 251	20 639	108 036

Descriptive information and justification

- **Budget outturn.** The amount of budget outturn was limited as a result of the very high rate of budget execution in 2020.
- **Cancellation of commitment appropriations.** In 2020 commitment appropriations amounted to total 17 021 083 EUR (commitment appropriations from C1 fund source). The EMCDDA was able to commit 17 020 470 EUR of these appropriations. The non-committed amount from the whole 2020 financial envelope is EUR 613, thus 99,996 % implementation of commitment appropriations in 2020 and rate of cancellation of C1 commitments: 0,004 %.
- **Cancellation of payment appropriations for the year and payment appropriations carried over.**

The payment appropriations for 2020 amounted to a total of EUR 17 297 999, of which:

- EUR 17 021 083 from C1 fund sources;
- EUR 276 916 from C8 fund sources (i.e. appropriations carried forward from 2019 under budget titles 1 and 2).

In line with the excellent performance of the previous years, the EMCDDA was able to use 99.35 % of these appropriations, i.e. EUR 17 184 883, as follows:

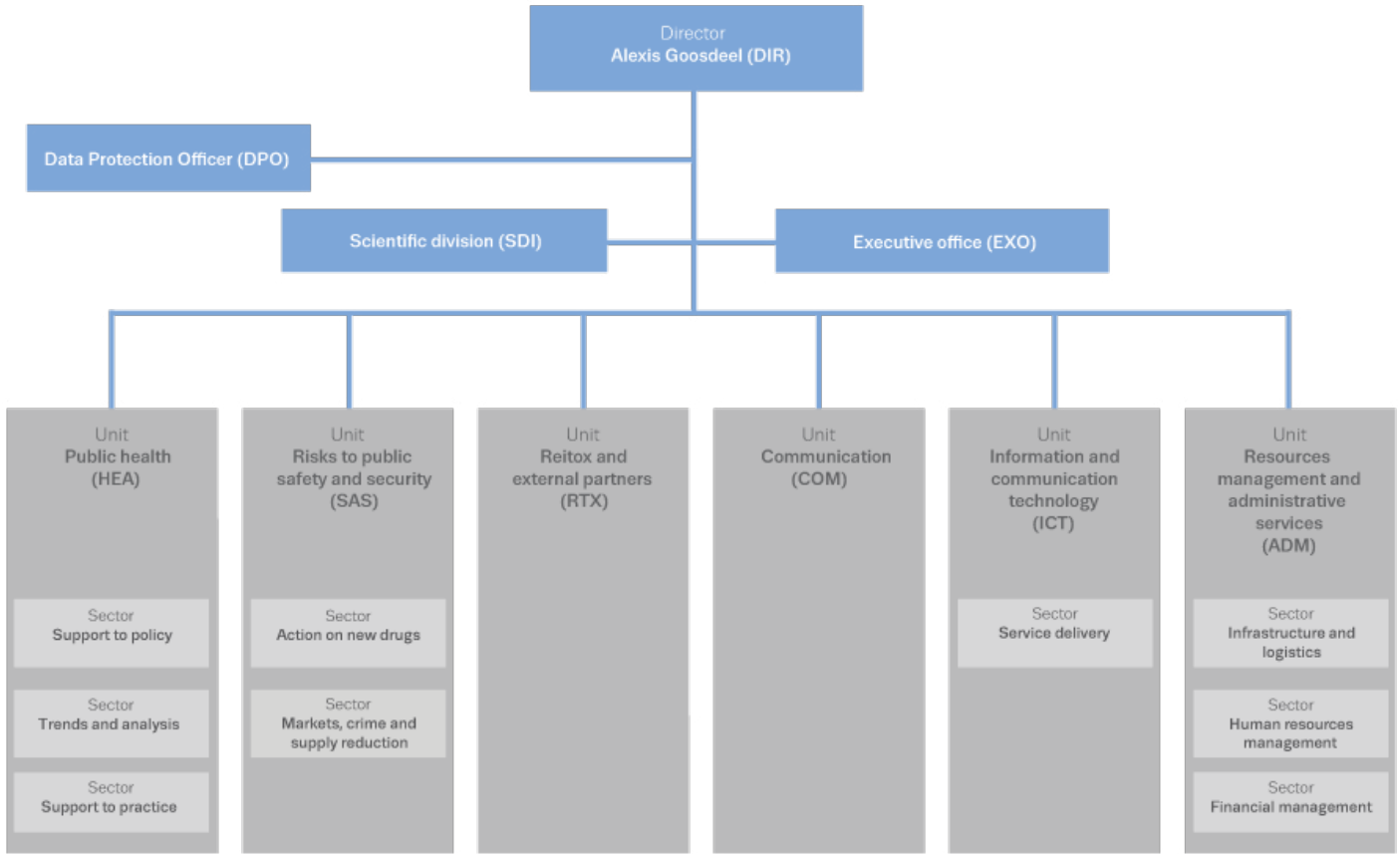
- EUR 16 124 654 from 2020 C1 fund sources for payments executed in 2020;
- EUR 253 509 from C8 fund sources (committed in 2019) for payments executed in 2020;
- EUR 806 720 carried forward to 2021 for payments to be executed in 2021.

The cancelled payment appropriations for 2020 were EUR 113 115, or 0.65 %, expressed as a share of total payment credits for 2020.

Without considering the assigned appropriations, no payment appropriations were carried over and cancelled.

Annex III Organisational chart

FIGURE 20. Organisational chart



Annex IV

Establishment plan and additional information on human resources management

TABLE 7. Information on recruitment grade / function group for each type of post

Key functions	Type of contract (official (O), temporary agent (TA) or contract agent (CA))	Function group (FG), recruitment grade *	Indication whether the function is dedicated to administrative support or operations (subject to definitions used in screening methodology)
1 – Director	TA	AD 14 (external)	Operational
2 – Head of unit	O, TA	AD 9 (internal, inter-agency, external)	Operational
3 – Head of sector	O, TA	AD 7 (internal, inter-agency, external)	Operational Administrative Neutral
4 – Principal administrator	O, TA	AD 8 (internal, inter-agency, external)	Operational Administrative Neutral
5 – Administrator	O, TA	AD 5 (internal, inter-agency, external)	Operational Administrative Neutral
6 – Senior Assistant	O, TA	AST 10 (internal, inter-agency, external)	Operational
7 – Team leader	O, TA	AST 7 (internal, inter-agency, external)	Administrative
8 – Assistant	O, TA	AST 1 (internal, inter-agency, external)	Operational Administrative Neutral
Head of Administration unit	O, TA	AD 9 (internal, inter-agency, external)	Administrative
Head of Human Resources sector	O, TA	AD 8 (internal, inter-agency, external)	Administrative
Head of Finance sector	O, TA	AD 8 (internal, inter-agency, external)	Neutral
Head of ICT	O, TA	AD 9 (internal, inter-agency, external)	Administrative
Secretary	O, TA, CA	AST 1, FG II (internal, inter-agency, external)	Operational Administrative
Mail clerk	CA	FG II	Administrative
Editor	O, TA	AD 6 (internal, inter-agency, external)	Operational
Data protection officer	O, TA	AD 6 (internal, inter-agency, external)	Administrative
Accounting officer	O, TA	AD 6 (internal, inter-agency, external)	Neutral
Internal auditor	O, TA	AD 6 (internal, inter-agency, external)	Neutral
Secretary to the Director	O, TA, CA	AST 1, FG II (internal, inter-agency, external)	Operational

TABLE 8. Job screening/benchmarking against previous year's results

(as per methodology for agencies job screening (2014))

Job type (sub)category	Year n – 1 (%) 2019	Year n (%) 2020
Administrative support and coordination	19.11 %	18.25 %
Administrative support	18.45 %	17.61 %
Coordination	0.67 %	0.64 %
Operational	71.07 %	72.24 %
Top-level operational coordination	4.33 %	4.19 %
Programme management and Implementation	54.59 %	57.10 %
Evaluation and impact assessment	0 %	0 %
General operational	12.15 %	10.95 %
Neutral	9.82 %	9.50 %
Finance/control	9.82 %	9.50 %
Linguistics	0 %	0 %

Implementing rules

- Decision DEC/MB/20/01 of the Management Board of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) on the EMCDDA general implementing provisions on the duties of Commission drivers.
- Decision DEC/MB/20/03 of the Management Board of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) on the EMCDDA general implementing provisions on leave.
- Decision DEC/MB/20/10 of the Management Board of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) on the general implementing provisions for Articles 11 and 12 of Annex VIII to the Staff Regulations on the transfer of pension rights.

Annex V

Human and financial resources by activity

TABLE 9. Human and financial resources per activity

Work programme action areas	Main actors for implementation/ cost objects	Assigned human resources (HR) (FTE)					Initial allocation of budget resources – non-assigned appropriation	Final allocation of budget resources – non-assigned appropriation	Executed budget – non-assigned appropriation
		Official	TA	CA	SNE	Total HR	Total budget	Total budget	Total budget execution
Main area: Health	HEA, SAS, SDI, RTX&EP, COM, ICT, DIR/EXO	2.65	23.2	9.5	0	35.35	5 532 341	5 532 908	3 968 662
Main area: Security	SAS, SDI, HEA, RTX&EP, COM, ICT, DIR/EXO	0.6	9.95	2.4	1	13.95	3 283 295	3 283 631	2 278 501
Main area: Business drivers	DIR/EXO, SDI, COM, RTX&EP, ADM, ICT, HEA, SAS	5.75	29.85	15.1	0	50.7	8 203 703	8 204 544	10 773 883
Total		9	63	27	1	100	17 019 339	17 021 083	17 021 046

Annex VI

Contribution, grant and service-level agreements. Financial framework partnership agreements

TABLE 10. Contribution, grant and service-level agreements in 2020

	General Information				Financial and HR Impacts				
	Actual or expected date of signature	Total amount	Duration	Counterpart		2019		2020	
Grant agreements									
						CA	PA	CA	PA
Grant RTX – Austria	1.6.20	79 590	31.12.20	GESUNDHEIT OSTERREICH GMBH	Amount CA/PA*	79 590	81 840	79 590	78 921
					Number of CA				
					Number of H11				
Grant RTX – Belgium	1.6.20	79 590	31.12.20	SCIENSANO	Amount CA/PA	79 590	79 590	79 590	83 570
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Bulgaria	1.6.20	79 590	31.12.20	NATIONAL CENTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND ANALYSES NCPHA	Amount CA/PA	45 541	46 128	79 590	49 520
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Cyprus	5.6.20	79 590	31.12.20	CYPRUS NATIONAL ADDICTIONS AUTHORITY	Amount CA/PA	79 590	99 488	79 590	63 672
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Czechia		79 590	31.12.20	CESKA REPUBLIKA	Amount CA/PA	79 590	59 693	79 590	83 570
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Denmark	1.6.20	79 590	31.12.20	DANISH HEALTH AUTHORITY	Amount CA/PA	79 590	79 590	79 590	83 570
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Estonia	1.6.20	79 000	31.12.20	NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT	Amount CA/PA	79 000	69 614	79 000	81 359
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Finland	20.6.20	79 590	31.12.20	FINNISH INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE	Amount CA/PA	79 590	79 590	79 590	83 570
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				

	General Information				Financial and HR Impacts				
	Actual or expected date of signature	Total amount	Duration	Counterpart		2019		2020	
Grant agreements									
					CA	PA	CA	PA	
Grant RTX – France	1.6.20	79 590	31.12.20	OBSERVATOIRE FRANCAIS DES DROGUES ET DES TOXICOMANIES GIP	Amount CA/PA	79 590	79 590	79 590	79 590
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Germany	1.6.20	79 590	31.12.20	IFT INSTITUTE FOR THERAPYRESEARCH	Amount CA/PA	79 590	79 590	79 590	79 590
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Greece	1.6.20	79 590	31.12.20	UNIVERSITY MENTAL HEALTH, NEUROSCIENCES AND PRECISION MEDICINE RESEARCH INSTITUTE COSTAS STEFANIS	Amount CA/PA	79 590	79 590	79 590	83 570
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Hungary	20.7.20	79 590	31.12.20	MAGYARORSZAG	Amount CA/PA	79 590	58 020	79 590	83 569
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Ireland	1.6.20	79 590	31.12.20	THE HEALTH RESEARCH BOARD	Amount CA/PA	79 590	79 590	79 590	83 570
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Italy	1.6.20	79 590	31.12.20	REPUBBLICA ITALIANA	Amount CA/PA	79 590	78 150	79 590	82 898
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Latvia	1.6.20	72 760	31.12.20	SPKC DISEASE PREVENTION AND CONTROL CENTRE OF LATVIA	Amount CA/PA	72 760	72 760	72 760	76 398
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX Lithuania	1.6.20	79 590	31.12.20	DRUG TOBACCO AND ALCOHOL CONTROL DEPARTMENT NTAKD	Amount CA/PA	79 590	79 590	79 590	83 570
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Luxembourg	1.6.20	79 590	31.12.20	GROSSHERZOGTUM VU LETZEBURG GRAND DUCHYOF LUXEMBOURG	Amount CA/PA	79 590	59 693	79 590	83 570
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				

	General Information				Financial and HR Impacts				
	Actual or expected date of signature	Total amount	Duration	Counterpart		2019		2020	
Grant agreements									
					CA	PA	CA	PA	
Grant RTX – Malta	9.6.20	55 375	31.12.20	REPUBBLIKA TA MALTA	Amount CA/PA	54 071	47 092	55 375	54 460
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Netherlands	1.6.20	79 590	31.12.20	STICHTING TRIMBOS-INSTITUUT, NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION	Amount CA/PA	79 590	79 590	79 590	83 570
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Poland	20.7.20	79 590	31.12.20	KRAJOWEGO BIURA DO SPRAW PRZECIWDZIALANIA NARKOMANII	Amount CA/PA	79 590	79 590	79 590	83 570
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Portugal	1.6.20	79 590	31.12.20	SICAD GENERAL DIRECTORATE INTERVENTION ADDICTIVE BEHAVIOUS DEPENDENCIE	Amount CA/PA	79 590	71 270	79 590	83 570
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Romania	1.6.20	79 590	31.12.20	THE NATIONAL ANTI DRUG AGENCY	Amount CA/PA	79 590	79 371	79 590	86 671
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Slovakia	9.10.20	79 590	31.12.20	SLOVENSKA REPUBLIKA	Amount CA/PA	79 590	79 458	79 590	92 103
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Slovenia	1.6.20	79 590	31.12.20	NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC HEALTH	Amount CA/PA	79 590	59 693	79 590	92 431
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Spain	7.9.20	79 590	31.12.20	REINO DE ESPANA	Amount CA/PA	79 590	79 590	79 590	83 570
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Sweden	1.6.20	79 590	31.12.20	THE PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY OF SWEDEN	Amount CA/PA	79 590	79 590	79 590	83 570
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				

General Information					Financial and HR Impacts				
	Actual or expected date of signature	Total amount	Duration	Counterpart		2019	2020		
Grant agreements									
					CA	PA	CA	PA	
Grant RTX – Croatia	1.6.20	46 100	31.12.20	CROATIAN NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC HEALTH	Amount CA/PA	58 250	43 731	46 100	52 805
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Total RTX grant agreements					Amount CA/PA	2 060 603	1 961 077	2 083 805	2 140 390
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
ENI/2018/401-149 EU4Monitoring Drugs	12.12.18	3 000 000	31.12.20	EUROPEAN COMMISSION	Amount CA/PA	1 197 414	1 197 414	1 007 367	1 007 367
					Number of CA	5	5	5	5
					Number of SNEs				

*CA: Commitment appropriations; PA: Payment appropriations

Service-level agreements									
SLA-DIGIT (HOSTING, PROCUREMENT, E-PRIOR, RACHEL, ETC)	38 844	EUROPEAN COMMISSION	Amount CA/PA	31 040	31 040	38 844	38 844		
			Number of CA						
			Number of SNEs						
SLA-DG BUDG (ABAC)	48 000	EUROPEAN COMMISSION	Amount CA/PA	49 000	49 000	48 000	48 000		
			Number of CA						
			Number of SNEs						
SLA-Training	3 500	EUROPEAN COMMISSION	Amount CA/PA	8 374	5 074	3 500	3 676		
			Number of CA						
			Number of SNEs						
RENT JOINT CENTRE - SLA EMCDDA/EMSA AGREEMENT	90 000	EUROPEAN MARITIME SAFETY AGENCY	Amount CA/PA	90 000	90 000	18 000	18 000		
			Number of CA						
			Number of SNEs						
SLA ID CARDS	1 652	EUROPEAN COMMISSION	Amount CA/PA	474	154	1 652	635		
			Number of CA						
			Number of SNEs						
SLA EMCDDA - EUROPOL SIENA (MOU)	2 466	EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT COOPERATION (EUROPOL)	Amount CA/PA	2 326	2 326	2 466	1 815		
			Number of CA						
			Number of SNEs						
SLA CERT-EU/EMCDDA 2020	24 480	EUROPEAN COMMISSION	Amount CA/PA	24 000	24 000	24 480	24 480		
			Number of CA						
			Number of SNEs						
Total service-level agreements					Amount CA/PA	205 214	201 594	136 942	135 450
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
TOTAL					Amount CA/PA	2 265 817	2 162 671	2 220 747	2 275 840
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				

Annex VII Environment management

Context of the agency and its environmental management strategy

The EMCDDA is part of the Group of Justice and Home Affairs Agencies under DG Migration and Home Affairs. As such, the EMCDDA has no direct mandate related to the environment. The EMCDDA recognises that the agency, as a public institution, needs to actively monitor its environmental performance and implement appropriate measures to reduce its impact on the environment. Following the adoption of the **environmental policy of the EMCDDA**, a yearly policy compliance report and a report on the progress on environmental measures will be conducted as part of the annual work plan review process. Furthermore, a Working Group on Environment was appointed by the Director.

Environment policy of the EMCDDA

The EMCDDA, in response to the growing need to preserve and improve the environment, and to the calls for its protection made by an increasingly environmentally aware and concerned society, is committed to reducing its negative environmental impact and to continually improving its environmental performance as an important part of its operating methods.

For this purpose, the key principles and objectives of the EMCDDA's environmental policy can be summarised as follows.

- Comply with or exceed the requirements of current environmental legislation, in particular the legislation applicable to the EMCDDA.
- Minimise waste by evaluating operations and ensuring they are as efficient as possible, and actively promote reuse or recycling both internally and among the centre's visitors and suppliers.
- Encourage efficient use of energy, utilities and natural resources, especially where these are non-renewable.
- Operate and maintain the vehicle(s) of the agency and adopt a travel policy with due regard to environmental issues; encourage the use of alternative means of transport and car sharing as far as reasonably practical.
- Purchase and procure products that do the least damage to the environment, namely those with eco labels or suppliers with environmental certificates, where possible,

in order to minimise the environmental impact of production, distribution and consumption.

- Promote environmentally conscious behaviour by the staff of the EMCDDA and contribute to raising the awareness of others by adding environmental statements to work emails and publications.
- Establish procedures for the periodic review of environmental compliance, measures taken and goals achieved.
- Be an environmentally responsible neighbour in the community where the agency operates, and seek to identify and correct incidents or conditions that endanger health, safety or the environment.
- Participate in efforts to improve environmental protection and understanding.
- Share appropriate pollution prevention technology, knowledge and methods with other EU agencies.
- Consider obtaining an environmental certification for the EMCDDA in the long run, with due regard to the available resources.

Overview of the agency's environmental management system

The EMCDDA's environmental management system is loosely based on the EU eco-management and audit scheme.

The environmental policy frames the intention of the agency and creates the legal framework defining the scope of the environmental management system. The Director appointed a Working Group on Environment with a mandate to review, communicate and propose measures related to the environmental performance of the agency. The main service providers – the Infrastructure and Logistics sector and the ICT unit – plan, implement and improve the measures approved by the Director. There are two reporting lines within the envisaged environmental management system that includes all mapped stakeholders. The environmental performance of the EMCDDA is reported within the annual work plan review process in the form of KPIs, and through the annual publication of the agency's environmental report. The findings and targets of the environmental report are reviewed by the Working Group on Environment, which then issues recommendations. Environmental matters are promoted and published through the Working Group on Environment. The use of green public procurement is required.

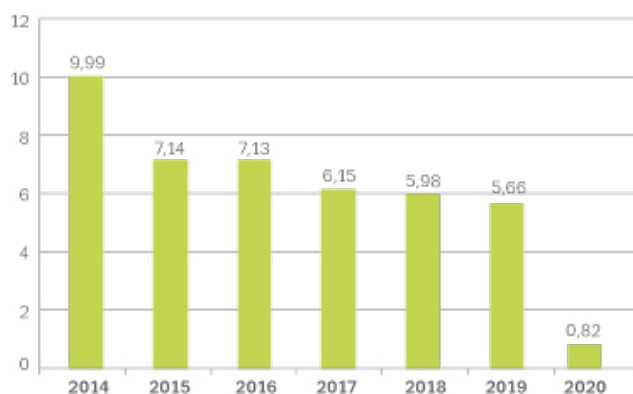
Environmental aspects, indicators and targets

The annual environmental report of the EMCDDA is produced by the Infrastructure and Logistics sector. It covers the following indicators, which are usually key points for public administrations working mostly in an office environment and are based on the UNFCCC standard for the calculation of an organisation’s CO₂ footprint:

- energy consumption,
- water consumption,
- paper consumption,
- waste production and sorting,
- canteen,
- official vehicles,
- staff transport to and from work,
- missions,
- CO₂ emissions.

The EMCDDA has been actively monitoring its environmental performance and CO₂ footprint since 2014 (see Figure 21). Continuous improvement cycles have reduced its CO₂ footprint over the years in comparison to the established 2014 baseline. The following results were published in 2021 related to data from 2020. The exceptional good result for 2020 is achieved partially due to the COVID-19 related reduction in Missions and transport as well as the switch to CO₂ neutral electricity generated from renewable energy sources.

FIGURE 21. CO₂ footprint evolution between 2014 and 2020 (Tonnes of CO₂ per person)



Actions to improve and communicate environmental performance

The Working Group on Environment has its own intranet page with information on its mandate and measures to be implemented. It posts the yearly environmental report on this intranet page. Frequent awareness-raising communications promote environmentally friendly behaviour to staff.

Due to the application of green public procurement measures, contract renewals related to utilities and consumables may take into account more environmentally friendly solutions. For example, the electricity provided now delivers electricity from 100 % renewable energy sources, compared to the 60–40 mix of the previous provider.

The Working Group on Environment recommended that electricity consumption be improved and that solar power cells be installed on the roof of the building. Furthermore, the installation of electrical car-charging stations was recommended to promote the purchase of electrical cars. Both projects were approved by the Director in 2019. The EMCDDA responded by following the recommendation and implemented the projects in 2020.

The environmental policy states that the EMCDDA is striving to obtain environmental certification in the long run, with due regard to the available resources. So far, the lack of a direct mandate and the size of the EMCDDA have prevented any such implementation due to unavailable financial and staff resources. The same lack of resources prevents the offsetting of the agency’s CO₂ footprint beyond the offsetting achieved by the solar panel based electricity production on the roof of the building.

Annex VIII EMCDDA provisional accounts – Financial year 2020

This annex is [available online](#) ⁽⁶⁾.

(6) As available at the moment of submission of this document (i.e. 12 May 2021) and to be replaced by the final accounts once adopted in accordance with the relevant financial rules

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About this report

The *General Report of Activities* is an annual publication providing a detailed progress report of the EMCDDA's activities over a 12-month period. It catalogues the Centre's achievements in each area of its annual work programme. The report is a useful information source for all those seeking comprehensive information on the Centre and its work.

About the EMCDDA

The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction is the hub of drug-related information in Europe. Its mission is to provide the European Union and its Member States with 'factual, objective, reliable and comparable information' on drugs and drug addiction and their consequences. Established in 1993, it opened its doors in Lisbon in 1995, and is one of the European Union's decentralised agencies. The Centre offers policymakers the evidence base they need for drawing up drug laws and strategies. It also helps professionals and researchers pinpoint best practice and new areas for analysis.