European Monitoring Centre
for Drugs and Drug Addiction

Message from the Director

from the EU drugs agency in Lisbon

EMCDDA enters new phase as it embarks on 2021 activities

(29.01.2021) This year, the EMCDDA will embark on a new five-year Roadmap under its Strategy 2025, kicking off with an ambitious range of activities for the period 2021–23. We enter this new phase amid major uncertainty, when the long-term impact of the COVID-19 pandemic remains largely unknown. In such times, as seen in 2020, the strength of the agency lies, not only in its planning capability, but also in its agility and capacity to adapt rapidly to new realities.

I am pleased to announce that, at the heart of our work in 2021 will be the development of a new business model, which places customers and digital transformation at its core. This new model is designed to ensure that the EMCDDA will be fit to perform in an increasingly dynamic external environment and prepared to embrace new opportunities that may arise.

Among the developments shaping our work is the new EU Drugs Strategy 2021–25, which sets the political framework, priorities and actions for implementing EU drugs policy over the next five years. Our strategic developments are also informed by a range of initiatives, including our ongoing 'Futures' exercise, as well as the outcome of the fourth external evaluation of the agency in 2018.

While innovating our business model, we will continue to invest in our flagship publications, including: the second *Health and social responses to drug problems: a European guide*; the fourth EMCDDA–Europol *EU Drug Markets Report* and the annual *European Drug Report*. These products will be complemented by smaller, focused and timely analyses on emerging topics, as well as a range of knowledge-exchange activities, including the dissemination of best practice and capacity-building and training initiatives.

Developing and implementing the new business model will require further innovation of our information collection methods, for more sensitive and timely reporting in the areas of health and security, in close collaboration with the Reitox national focal points and other networks. It will also require enriching our collaboration with external partners, such as through our Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance project (IPA 7), the EU4Monitoring Drugs project (EU4MD) and our first bilateral project with Georgia (EMCDDA4GE).

At the centre of our work is our vision to contribute to a healthier and more secure Europe, through efforts to improve the health and security of people living in the EU. This overarching commitment will drive the agency in the years to come and guide it in delivering added value.

It was an honour and a privilege last year to be reappointed as EMCDDA Director to take the agency forward on this exciting course of travel to 2025. I am thrilled to lead the agency through one of the most challenging, yet most promising, times since its creation. Together with an ever-committed staff and partners, I look forward to a new period in the life of the EMCDDA, which will build on innovation to bring sustainable growth for EU drug monitoring.

The EMCDDA Programming Document 2021–23 will be published in February: www.emcdda.europa.eu

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