



FINAL MINUTES OF THE SIXTY-FIRST MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT BOARD (25 JUNE 2020)

25 JUNE

Introduction by the Chair

The **Chair, Ms Laura d'Arrigo**, welcomed the participants at the 61st EMCDDA Management Board meeting. Despite of the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Executive Committee decided at the end of April to hold the forthcoming Management Board meeting as planned on 25 June 2020. It was felt unanimously that it was important to maintain the meeting for the Management Board to give a sense of continuity in guiding and adopting the decisions needed for the EMCDDA legal compliance.

For the first time in the history of the agency, and due to the exceptional circumstances, the EMCDDA Management Board meeting was held by video conference and in English only. The Chair thanked the Management Board members for their cooperation and adaptability for using the Skype for Business connection of the EMCDDA sister EU Agency, EMSA, for this meeting.

The Chair reminded the participants that the Budget and the Executive Committee met on 24 June in order to prepare the Management Board meeting. Finally, Ms d'Arrigo announced some practical details for the video conference.

1. Adoption of the agenda

EMCDDA/01/20 rev 1
EMCDDA/02/20

The Chair suggested adding a point for information under point 8 'International cooperation' about a cooperation project with Georgia (8.4.).

Mr João Goulão, member for Portugal, proposed providing an update on the dates of the next Lisbon Addictions Conference under 'Any other business' (11.2.).

Decision: The Management Board adopted the revised agenda of the meeting.

PART I: *Exchange of views*

3. Exchange of views on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the drugs situation

3.1. Presentation by the EMCDDA

The **Director** recalled that since March 2020, COVID-19 has put the EMCDDA's responsiveness to the test, both in terms of business continuity and monitoring the drug phenomenon in unprecedented times. The EMCDDA developed a flexible and overarching framework to help address the issue in a structured manner. This involves focusing on the impact of the pandemic and responses to it on the agency's plans and work programme as well as prioritising information provision and impact monitoring activities in a way that is flexible, rapid, and useful for the different stakeholders, in particular national policy makers and practitioners.

The EMCDDA's first response was to establish a web presence with a landing page and briefing focusing on the implications of COVID-19 for people who use drugs and drug service providers. The EMCDDA has also set up an online COVID-19 resources page, where we have compiled examples of advice being issued to people who use drugs and service providers by some national bodies and different associations, networks and NGOs.

Using an array of methods — including a web survey, ‘trendspotter’ methodology and darknet monitoring — the agency has acted quickly and proactively to publish a range of new resources exploring the risks faced by people who use drugs, drug market changes and how drug professionals working with this group may need to adapt on the frontline. It has also launched a COVID-19 webinar series to give a voice to key professionals working in the drugs field and improve understanding of how drug users, and those supporting them, are coping with the pandemic. 255 participants attended the fourth webinar on ‘Impact of COVID-19 on patterns of drug use’ on 17 June 2020.

The Director evoked the vulnerabilities of people who use drugs (PWUD) to COVID-19 due to underlying chronic medical conditions, lifestyle factors, poor socio-economic conditions and marginalisation. He underlined the importance of prevention measures in settings frequented by PWUD (e.g. drug services, homeless shelters and prisons) and ensuring the ongoing provision of drug treatment services, including opioid substitution medications and other essential medicines to clients.

The analysis of how the outbreak affected drug services and help-seeking in Europe showed that there has been a decline in the availability of drug services during the pandemic and in the numbers of those seeking help. But drug services have adapted and innovated during the fast-changing crisis in ways that could be carried forward into the future. With face-to-face counselling curtailed during containment, telemedicine by phone or video has been embraced as an alternative across European drug services. Providers of opioid substitution treatment (OST) have also acted rapidly to change the way in which they provide medication (e.g. mobile OST) and respond to new treatment demands (e.g. new induction procedures), while most countries have relaxed regulations on take-home OST for stable patients (e.g. prescribing for longer periods). Harm-reduction services have also been swift to adapt, playing a key role in providing frontline support during the crisis. This includes: increasing outreach work and needle- and syringe-exchange activities; providing shelter management for homeless and marginalised groups; maintaining drug consumption room services (in situ or mobile) and moving some interventions online (e.g. drug checking). Data show that, between January and March 2020, there was some drop in demand for treatment services for reasons including closure or restricted access to treatment centres and clients’ inability to reach centres due to confinement measures.

In the context of the recent unprecedented global events linked to the COVID-19 pandemic, the EMCDDA recognised an urgent need to understand the impact of these developments on drug markets in order to anticipate emerging threats and meet immediate and longer-term data needs for policy-making and operational responses.

Among others, the EMCDDA in partnership with Europol released on 29 May a supplement to the *EU Drug Markets* report on the ongoing impact of the pandemic on the drug market and organised crime. The report identified some of the immediate observations on the drug market and also identified some potential threats for the future. The analysis reports higher prices, local shortages and reduced purity for some drugs, while noting continued violence among suppliers and distributors. It also shows how organised crime groups remain active and resilient, by ‘adapting transportation models, trafficking routes and concealment methods’, even during the pandemic.

Disruption to the drug trafficking supply chain is seen mostly at the distribution level, due to social distancing measures within the EU. With street dealing severely affected by restrictions on movement, consumers and dealers are increasingly turning to alternative methods (e.g. use of darknet markets, social media platforms and encrypted communication apps), with cashless payments and fewer face-to-face interactions. While the logistics may have changed, the movement of bulk quantities of drugs between EU Member States has not ceased, despite border controls, due to the continued commercial transportation of goods across Europe. There is less evidence of disruption at the wholesale importation level. Drug trafficking by maritime shipping continues at levels similar to the pre-pandemic period, although there has been a marked disruption in smuggling by air passenger transport. The long-term impact of the pandemic on drug markets is not known yet, continuous monitoring is necessary.

Overall, stakeholders commented that innovative practical solutions made drug services, such as OST programmes, more effective and that these positive responses should not be lost. Unanimous feedback was received about the view that drug-related services should be considered as essential health services. Finally, concerns were expressed about the effect of the expected economic recession on vulnerable groups.

The Director thanked all Member States, Reitox national focal points, groups of experts and drug users associations, as well the EMCDDA staff for the rapid responses, in a year which marks the celebration of 25 years drug monitoring by the agency. The Director also thanked the Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe for disseminating actively the information on the EMCDDA resources and webinars, and for its fully complementary information for all stakeholders.

3.2. Sharing of experiences and initiatives in the EU Member States

RO informed that the National Anti-drug Agency through its own integrated centres ensured the continuity of services regarding the treatment with methadone, as well as medical, psychological and social evaluation for drug users referred by law enforcement institutions, respecting the principles of therapeutic justice, priority and respect for universal human rights. The national services were adapted to the accessibility of drug consumers to drug related services, and to the effective management of crisis situations which have an impact on public health and on the crime related to drug consumption. Romania has implemented, at national level, a set of containment measures to prevent the spread of the virus and to comply with measures to ensure social distance and reduce face to face contacts. National prevention programs organised in the school environment and in the community were moved online, together with drug counselling services, for consumers in integrated drug-consumer health, psychological and social care programs.

In the **NL**, drugs services continued functioning for the most vulnerable groups. A complete overview of the impact of the COVID-19 situation is not known yet, but efforts were made to maintain contacts with drug users in harm reduction facilities. An increase in poly drug use and risk behaviour is worrying and is being monitored. Mr Sannes thanked the EMCDDA for its excellent webinars, and wondered about the consequences of the health crisis on the work of the agency and on the staff.

The **Director** explained that the COVID-19 situation had a two-fold impact on the EMCDDA. In the short-term, the agency moved mid-March from a crisis management to Business Continuity Mode. The ICT team was very efficient and allowed all EMCDDA staff to switch from one day to the other to teleworking and videoconferencing. An Incident Response Team meets once a week. Mr Fabian Pereyra, Head of the Executive Office, was the Business Continuity Manager and communicated on a daily basis with all staff. The Director also informed regularly about the decisions taken and organised virtual 'family meetings' for all staff every Friday afternoon for questions. No staff member was infected by COVID-19, and their families are safe. The Director and staff were in permanent contact with the medical advisor of the agency, Dr Gregor Burkhardt. In the longer-term, the impact will be important. The EMCDDA demonstrated a great capacity of innovation, launching a number of new initiatives, and entered already partly in the change of its Business Model.

FR thanked the Director for his presentation, and wondered how many facilities developed audio and video services for drug users. The capacity of drug services to adapt very quickly to the new challenges is a positive lesson learnt. Several observations show that numerous cannabis users became conscious of their dependence on this product during the confinement, as cannabis was less accessible.

ES congratulated the Director and the EMCDDA staff for the quality and usefulness of the new products and services linked to the COVID-19 situation. ES participated in some of the studies and meetings conducted by the EMCDDA. In Spain, the responses to the health crisis for drug users were well-conducted thanks to the work of many professionals. The key words were information, coordination and adaptability. Surveys were held on the use of alcohol, tobacco and behavioural addictions, and a questionnaire about the adaptation of facilities for drug users in Spain was conducted. The Spanish NFP has the role of communication and coordination with the different organisations involved in the addictions field at central, regional, local and international level, including civil society and researchers. During the crisis, good results could be obtained thanks to the already established networks of drug facilities that were maintained and adapted in order to protect the field workers and offer services to drug users. From a European perspective, ES stressed the importance of the established networks and the involvement of Member States for the good results achieved at European level. Finally, ES highlighted the importance of sharing information and working together, which is one of the added values of the EU. It is necessary to reflect about the usefulness of interventions for each Member State and for Europe, and in this area there is certainly still some room for improvement.

In **DE** the local, regional and Federal Government focused on the most marginalised and vulnerable drug users' groups during the COVID-19 pandemic, and inter alia provided online treatment and counselling and made regulations for opium substitution therapy more flexible. Different developments were observed in various cities and regions. Low threshold service and Drug Consumption Rooms had generally a lower capacity or were partially interrupted. The Ministry of Health started a study to identify lessons to be learnt and to explain the differences between cities and regions. The study will be finalised in 2021 and will be circulated to the Management Board members.

PT underlined the role of the Municipalities in the area of harm reduction. Responses for vulnerable groups such as homeless and migrants had to be reinvented. The EMCDDA played a very important role for sharing discussions and experiences through the webinars and trendspotter briefings. Dr Goulão also thanked the Director for the reference to the Pempidou Group of the Council of Europe, and he emphasised its complementarity with the work of the EMCDDA.

SE prepared, like in other countries, specific guidelines for clinics providing opioid substitution treatment (OST) during the COVID-19 pandemic. The National Public Health Agency analyses the impact of the crisis from a broader public health perspective, by collecting data from different sources.

EL noted that the pandemic provided an opportunity for collaboration and innovation, but that the challenge for Greece was to reflect about how the collaborative spirit and mainstream innovation could be transposed into a strategic plan for the future. It is also important not to forget the risk group of alcohol users, as alcohol use dramatically increased during the crisis.

IE thanked the EMCDDA for the very informative resources which were helpful for the Irish government. The lockdown marginalised drug users even further. A rapid response of health services was coordinated by Dr Eamon Keenan. The first priority was to guarantee OST and access to medicines for OST clients. The second priority was to enhance Harm Reduction services to avoid overdoses. The contribution from NGOs was significant for the government's response. The Ministry of Health is conducting a rapid assessment of the drug services to draw lessons for policy and practice. The crisis has highlighted social and health inequalities. Structural factors have to be analysed to improve an inclusive health system.

WHO congratulated the EMCDDA for the excellent work done and stressed the collaboration between both organisations. WHO developed products to support countries during the COVID-19 outbreak, in particular for drug users in prisons. WHO/Europe has published interim guidance entitled 'Preparedness, prevention and control of COVID-19 in prisons and other places of detention'. WHO also prepared two factsheets together with the EMCDDA on COVID-19 and drug use in vulnerable groups, as well as a factsheet on COVID-19 and alcohol use.

In **IT** the COVID-outbreak caused 35 000 deaths and had serious consequences on the national health system, which had no contingency plan in place and lack of staff. An increase in treatment demands for cocaine, cannabis and alcohol use was noted. The format of some interventions had to be adapted, as for instance online counselling was put in place in particular for cocaine and cannabis users.

Mr Olivier Onidi, representative of the European Commission, praised the EMCDDA for its continued work, which offered a rapid response and valuable outputs. The EMCDDA focused first on public health and moved then gradually to law enforcement in cooperation with Europol. It is important to focus on the lessons learnt from remote working methods, not only for the EMCDDA staff and the Management Board members, but also for the provision of drug services in the Member States. Mr Onidi advised to keep the Business Continuity functioning and to be prepared for the upcoming months of economic and social crisis.

Ms Florence Mabileau, representative of the Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe, thanked the Director for the excellent communication about very good EMCDDA products, and for the excellent webinars. The Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe launched a platform 'Save lives, protect people' with examples of practices and innovative approaches (66 articles published from 19 countries). The Pompidou Group collaborated with the Correlation network, the EMCDDA, WHO, UNODC, civil society, and international NGOs.

The **Chair** concluded that sharing information had been capital during the COVID-19 pandemic. Ms d'Arrigo thanked the EMCDDA for its proactivity and the dissemination of its products. The Chair highlighted the flexibility and adaptability of drug services to the unexpected challenges, a positive lesson that should be continued in the long-term, and praised the work of the practitioners and NGOs working with drug users on the front line. The Chair further noted the complementarity of initiatives taken at national level, and hoped that the good cooperation will continue in future.

PART II: *Items for decision and information*

4. Activity reports:

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| 4.1. Report on the activities of the Chair | EMCDDA/04/20 |
| 4.2. Report from the Budget Committee | EMCDDA/05/20 |
| 4.3. Report on the external activities of the Director | EMCDDA/06/20 |

No comments were made on these three activity reports.

5. Presentations by EU Presidencies

5.1. Presentation on the conclusions of the Croatian Presidency

Mr Željko Petković, Chair of the Horizontal Working Party on Drugs (HDG), presented the conclusions of the **HR** EU Presidency. He thanked all Member States for their support during this challenging Presidency. The COVID-19 health situation has unfortunately led to the cancellation of the meetings that were planned for April, May and June. During these exceptional circumstances the Presidency used written consultations and videoconferencing to ensure the continuity of the work.

Exchanging views around the theme of COVID-19 and its implications on the drugs situation, as well as on the field work with drug users, to share knowledge and experience was kicked off at the HDG online meeting on 16 June. In the framework of the special event of the 63rd session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) that will be held on 26 June on the occasion of the United Nations International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, besides launching World Drug Report 2020, a discussion will take place on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the world drug situation, co-sponsored by the EU and UNODC.

HR, on behalf of the EU, led the preparations for the regular and normative segment of the 63rd session of the CND in March. Special emphasis was placed on the issue of availability and abuse of medicines and on a comprehensive and scientific approach in dealing with the global drug problem. A Council Decision on the position to be adopted, on behalf of the EU, in the 63rd session of the CND on the scheduling of cannabis and cannabis-related substances and on the scheduling of new psychoactive substances, was adopted. The CND decided to clarify the implications and consequences of the cannabis-related recommendations. A vote will be scheduled at the reconvened 63rd session in December 2020. The HR Presidency coordinated the discussion on the revision process of the UNODC Annual Report Questionnaire (ARQ). A revised version of the ARQ was presented by UNODC and supported during the 63rd session of the CND.

The preliminary results of the evaluation of the EU Drug Strategy (2013–20) were planned to be presented at the National Drug Coordinators meeting in May in Zagreb, but due to the situation with COVID 19 the meeting was cancelled.

EU dialogues took place with Western Balkans and Brazil. The preparation for EU dialogues with Iran and China will be taken over by the DE Presidency. Meetings of the Dublin Group and of the EU-CELAC Technical Committee will take place under the DE Presidency. The EU-CELAC Cooperation and Coordination Mechanism on Drugs meeting was planned to be held in April 2020 in Zagreb, but also had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 situation.

On behalf of the Management Board, the **Chair** congratulated the Chair of the HDG and his team for its work and professionalism during the HR Presidency despite the exceptional circumstances.

5.2. Presentation of the programme for the German Presidency

Mr Stephan Brandt, substitute member for Germany, Office of the Federal Drugs Commissioner, presented the programme of the upcoming DE Presidency of the EU.

DE thanked the Croatian and trio Presidency partners for the excellent cooperation, which helps to ensure a coordinated crisis management and addressing more long-term topics and challenges. The overarching goal of Germany's Presidency of the Council of the European Union will be to address the COVID-19 crisis and ultimately contribute to making the European Union stronger than it was before entering the crisis.

In terms of drug policies, the overall motto of the DE presidency is 'Drugs and vulnerable groups'. To this end, the German Presidency believes it would be useful for the EU Member States to exchange views on why it is important to pay extra attention to these groups. In this context, the German Presidency intends to discuss how to respond best to the needs of vulnerable groups, for instance children of addicts, heavy drug users or farmers in drug cultivating areas. This will include a discussion on possible elements to minimize adverse consequences to public health as well as individuals. Furthermore, the EU National Drugs Coordinators Meeting, which will take place on 14 October, as a virtual meeting, will discuss aspects of a modern drug policy such as prevention, early intervention and harm reduction with special regard to vulnerable groups.

Besides this, the HDG's main activities under DE Chairmanship will focus on the impact of COVID-19 on the drugs situation, and on the WHO recommendations on cannabis and cannabis-related substances, including the preparation of the reconvened 63rd session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in December 2020.

Furthermore, the proposal on a new EU Drugs Agenda will be adopted by the European Commission on 22 July 2020. Subsequently, the document will be discussed in the HDG.

PT stressed that the main theme chosen by the DE Presidency was of utmost importance. Mr Goulão ensured the DE Presidency of its full support, in particular for the adoption of the EU Agenda of Drugs. PT will hold the Presidency of the EU in the first half of 2021.

On behalf of the Management Board, the **Chair** wished DE good luck for its Presidency, and assured DE of the full support from the Member States and the EMCDDA.

6. Budget and financial issues:

6.1. EMCDDA 2019 accounts: opinion of the Management Board

EMCDDA/09/20

The **Director** presented the main achievements of the EMCDDA in 2019 based on the General Report of Activities, as well as the highlights of the budgetary and financial performance, and thanked all staff for their work.

The EMCDDA published 32 main publications in 2019. Two EMCDDA flagship publications, namely the European Drug Report 2019 and the third edition of the EU Drug Markets Report (which was produced jointly with Europol), were launched in Brussels in the presence of Mr Dimitris Avramopoulos, the European Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship. These reports contributed new evidence on the dynamic drug phenomenon and the increasingly innovative EU drug market. The launch of the EU Drug Markets Report, which was complemented by excellent background papers, was interactive with a stakeholders event. The report was articulated with webinars to better use the wealth of information.

2019 was the first year of operation under the new legislative framework of the EU Early Warning System (EWS) on new psychoactive substances (NPS). In close collaboration with our partners, which include the Reitox EWS network in the Member States, Norway and Turkey, and five EU agencies, the EMCDDA ensured the efficient implementation of the EWS. The EWS was notified for the first time of 53 NPS in 2019, bringing the total number of substances under monitoring to around 780.

A major event was the third Lisbon Addictions Conference, which was organised on 23–25 October 2019 by the Portuguese SICAD (Serviço de Intervenção em Comportamentos Aditivos e Dependências – General Directorate for Intervention on Addictive Behaviours and Dependencies), the journal Addiction (of the Society for the Study of Addiction), the EMCDDA and ISAJE (International Society of Addiction Journal Editors). Lisbon Addictions 2019 was attended by a record number of more than 1300 participants from 73 countries. The Director thanked Mr João Goulão, Mr Manuel Cardoso, Ms Ana Sofia Santos, all staff of SICAD and of the EMCDDA involved for their excellent cooperation.

The EMCDDA reached a 100% execution rate of L1 activities, 92% of L2 activities and 73% L3 activities for the implementation of its 2019 work programme, which represents a very good result.

In terms of budgetary performance, the execution rate for commitment appropriations was 100 %, the best ever result of the agency, and the execution rate of payment appropriations was 98.28 % (99.98 % in budget title 3 for operational activities). In this context, the EMCDDA was able to achieve an extremely reduced rate of cancellation of (unused) payment appropriations, i.e. 0.08 %. This rate is far below the threshold of 5 %, this being one of the conditions to be met to avoid the risk of ‘penalisation’/reduction of the EU subsidy for the EMCDDA budget for 2022, pursuant to the mechanism foreseen by the European Commission for the preparation of the EU budget. The report of the European Court of Auditors included no remarks on the EMCDDA 2019 accounts.

The Director stressed that Member States should support the priority of drugs in the area of Security at the Council and the European Parliament, in order to secure adequate funding for the agency for 2021 as a starting point for the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2021–27.

The **Chair** congratulated the Director and his staff on behalf of the Management Board for the collective effort and excellent budgetary execution.

Decision: The Management Board adopted a favourable opinion on the EMCDDA final accounts for the financial year 2019.

The **Chair** stated that the amending budget no. 1 to the 2020 budget addressed mainly the needs for an adjustment of Norway's contribution to the EMCDDA 2020 budget, for entering the financial contribution by Europol to the joint EMCDDA-Europol 2019 EU Drug Markets Report into the budget as internal assigned revenue, and for reallocating unused appropriations for ICT investments.

Decision: The Management Board adopted the EMCDDA amending budget no. 1 for the financial year 2020.

6.3. EMCDDA budget for 2021 and Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021–27: oral report on the state of play by the European Commission

Mr Olivier Onidi, representative of the European Commission, supported the motto of the DE Presidency of the Council of the EU 'Together for Europe's recovery', which could also be an overarching aim for the EMCDDA. The EMCDDA has produced many more outputs and services than in the past, and the added value of the agency is generally recognised, but the agency saw only a modest increase in its budget over the past years. However, in the current situation, any slight increase is a strong sign of recognition.

The European Commission adopted on 27 May 2020 a revised proposal for the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2021–27. The aim of this revised MFF is to support the EU and Member States to face the expected economic, social and health impact of the situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The MFF foresees a global envelope of 123 Mill. EUR, and includes an increase for the EMCDDA of 5 Mill. EUR for 2021–27 compared with the previous proposal, which is a positive signal. It is important to continue to make a strong case about the quality of the products delivered by the agency, with a link to the economic recovery, to gain further recognition of the European Parliament and the Council.

The European Commission adopted its proposal for the EU budget for 2021 on 24 June 2020. The proposed amount of the EU 2021 subsidy for the EMCDDA (EUR 16 614 372) is based on the EU subsidy for the EMCDDA in 2020 plus an increase of 2% indexation. It might not be sufficient, but it also has to be considered as a good sign. It is important to continue discussing the 2021 budget with the Member States and with the European Parliament. In the future, new tasks for the EMCDDA should be accompanied by a reinforcement of its budget.

LT thanked the EMCDDA for the comprehensive analysis of the budget situation and arguments to defend an increase of the EU 2021 subsidy for the EMCDDA, and stressed that the discussion of the budget of the agency for 2021 and beyond needs to be continued with national authorities. **LT** wondered if it was possible for the EMCDDA to prepare a shorter document with a couple of main justifications, which would be more useful for contacts with policy makers. **Ms Belian** further referred to the Inception Impact Assessment for the revision of the EMCDDA Regulation, which has been published by the European Commission for public consultation, and asked if the possible future extension of the EMCDDA's mandate could be used as an argument.

The **Director** informed that the EU and UNODC co-sponsored a panel discussion on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the world drug situation, held as part of the CND Special Event on the United Nations International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking on 26 June. Europol and the EMCDDA will make an intervention. The Director will co-chair the concluding remarks, and the press release will contain a joint statement that he will make on behalf of EMCDDA, ECDC and Europol. The Director underlined that the awareness of the Ministers of Finances, of Health and of Interior in the Member States about the budget situation has to be raised. **Mr Goosdeel** had the opportunity to meet with the Advisor of the Italian Minister of Interior in February, but his first official visit to Hungary and a visit to the Netherlands had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 situation.

The Director clarified that Member States could choose the budgetary arguments that seem more relevant to the national context from the set presented by the EMCDDA. He confirmed that the note will be updated with a point on the role of the EMCDDA during the COVID-19 pandemic, and that the key arguments will be shared with the Management Board members.

DE drew the attention of the Management Board members to the fact that the Inception Impact Assessment included various options for the future of the EMCDDA, with different consequences, and asked the European Commission if it has foreseen a non public consultation with the Member States on this issue.

Mr Olivier Onidi, representative of the European Commission, confirmed that a consultation with the EU Member States will be organised, and that the Commission counts on the DE Presidency of the Council of the EU

for its support in this discussion. Mr Onidi encouraged the Member States to use the good work of the EMCDDA and its usefulness in the COVID-19 situation as main arguments for supporting a budget increase for the agency in 2021. The revision of the mandate of the EMCDDA will be a second step.

The **Chair** thanked the European Commission and in particular DG HOME for its continuous support and the slight increase proposed for the EU 2021 subsidy for the EMCDDA. Ms d'Arrigo strongly encouraged Member States to alert on the necessity to raise the priority of drugs on the political agenda, and to refer to the excellent performance of the agency in terms of achievements and budget execution.

7. EU drugs policy and future of the EMCDDA: oral update by the European Commission

Ms Floriana Sipala, representative of the European Commission, informed that the current EU Drugs Strategy expires at the end of the year, and is being evaluated. The adoption of a new EU Agenda on Drugs for 2021–25, together with other important documents such as the Security Union Strategy, is planned on 22 July 2020. The DE Presidency will steer the discussions in the Council about this strategic document. The EU Agenda on Drugs will propose the continuation of the strongly evidence-based, integrated and balanced EU model for drugs. At the same time, it will try to inject a higher sense of urgency to address the drug phenomenon, which is deteriorating.

The EU Agenda on Drugs will focus on three main trends (enhanced security, awareness, and addressing harms), and cover both the internal and external aspects of the drugs issue. It will address the topics of gender, vulnerable groups, drugs in prisons, direct and indirect effects of drugs such as driving or environmental impacts, and will include an Action Plan.

Concerning the revision of the EMCDDA regulation, Ms Sipala explained that the Inception Impact Assessment includes a number of options, also those which are required based on the Smart Regulation principles. Member States can provide feedback through the official consultation or directly to the Commission.

The **Chair** thanked the Commission for having shared some preliminary information on the new EU Agenda on Drugs and stated that the Management Board will look forward to the discussions on the documents under DE Presidency.

8. International cooperation:

- Candidate and potential candidate countries:

8.1. Working arrangement between the EMCDDA and Kosovo*

EMCDDA/11/20

The **Chair** reminded that the Management Board mandated the EMCDDA Director in June 2019 to negotiate a formal cooperation agreement between the EMCDDA and the Ministry of Internal Affairs (now referred to as Ministry of Internal Affairs and Public Administration) and the Ministry of Healthcare of Kosovo, further to an initial request of the latter in November 2018. The EMCDDA and the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Public Administration and the Ministry of Healthcare of Kosovo, in close liaison with EU services – European Commission DG HOME and DG NEAR and the European External Action Service – agreed on a final draft, which was submitted on 9 January 2020 to the European Commission for opinion. The European Commission issued a favourable opinion on 14 April 2020.

RO considered that the establishment of such a cooperation mechanism does not correspond to the principle of neutrality on the Kosovo status which is supported by the EU or to the national position towards the official recognition of Kosovo's independence. RO believes that the neutral approach regarding this particular issue needs to be followed by all EU institutions, including by the EMCDDA. Taking into consideration the above mentioned, RO did not support the decision to adopt the Working Arrangement between the EMCDDA and Kosovo.

The **Director** underlined that the Working Arrangement fully complied with the instructions of the European Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS).

*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.

Ms Floriana Sipala, representative of the European Commission, confirmed that the Working Arrangement was in conformity with all the legal documents signed with Kosovo.

Decision: 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 Working Arrangement on a date and place to be jointly decided.

8.2. The EMCDDA/IPA 7 project (Instrument for Pre-Accession) EMCDDA/12/20

No comments were made.

- European Neighbourhood Countries:

8.3. 'EU4 Monitoring Drugs' project EMCDDA/13/20

No comments were made.

8.4. Technical cooperation project EMCDDA–Georgia EMCDDA/18/20

The **Director** informed that the EMCDDA was approached in April 2018 by the EU Delegation to Georgia which was defining their assistance on good governing and security, with a focus on fighting organised crime, including drug trafficking. In order to also address the prevention, demand and monitoring/policy planning aspects (and possibly supporting further rehabilitation), the EU Delegation wondered if the EMCDDA could take up a role as implementing partner in the action of supporting Government capacities in this area. The objective of the bilateral programme is to help the Georgian partners making their national drug observatory operational. There is no overlap with the 'EU4 Monitoring Drugs' project, as the budget earmarked for this project does not allow to carry out specific activities with only one country.

The technical assistance project would kick off in early 2021. The amount available is EUR 800 000 and will cover a period of 24 months. DG NEAR and DG HOME have been consulted and are supporting the proposal. The EMCDDA and the EU Delegation to Georgia are currently negotiating the terms of the technical proposal, and the contract should be signed before the end of 2020. Therefore, the EMCDDA Management Board needs to be informed before the amount foreseen for the project can be entered in the EMCDDA budget through an amending budget no. 2 to the EMCDDA 2020 budget, and before the contract can be signed by the Director.

9. Performance, planning and internal controls:

9.1. State of implementation of the recommendations issued by the Internal Audit Service (IAS) EMCDDA/14/20

No comments were made.

10. Data protection and prevention and management of conflicts of interest:

10.1. Assessment of the implementation of the EMCDDA Policy for the prevention and management of conflicts of interest for Management Board members, substitutes and observers EMCDDA/15/20

The **Director** informed that the declarations of conflicts of interest submitted by the members, substitutes and observers of the Management Board until 22 June 2020 show no existing conflicts of interest. The declarations of newly nominated members or substitutes are still outstanding.

Decision: The Management Board took note of the outcome of the screening conducted by the EMCDDA Director that has revealed that for the moment there is no conflict of interest.

11. Any other business

11.1. Planning of meetings in 2021

EMCDDA/16/20

Decision: The Management Board endorsed the planning of meetings for 2021.

11.2. Third European Conference on addictive behaviours and dependencies (Lisbon, 23–25 October 2019): presentation by the Portuguese delegation

PT reminded that the Fourth European conference on addictive behaviours and dependencies – Lisbon Addictions Conference was initially scheduled for 17–19 November 2021. Mr Goulão informed that due to the uncertainties linked to the health situation in Europe and significant budgetary cuts in universities for international conferences, it has been decided to postpone the event to 23–25 November 2022. The Lisbon Addictions Conference will take place in Lisbon, but one or two events will be organised online beforehand.

PART III: *Restricted session*

12. Restricted session:

12.1. Renewal of the mandate of the EMCDDA Director

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The **Director** left the room.

The **Chair** reminded that the vote on the renewal of the mandate of the Director will take place in restricted session – only with the presence of the members and substitute members of the Management Board, without the observers. The Executive Committee proposed that Ms Edith Hofer, from DG HOME, would stay in the meeting as she was responsible for the preparation of this file at the Commission. The Chair also proposed that the following EMCDDA staff members participate in this session:

- Mr Fabian Pereyra, Head of the Executive Office
- Mr Dante Storti, in his capacity as the EMCDDA legal officer
- Ms Monika Blum, Senior Policy Officer to the Management Board
- Ms Elsa Costa for administrative assistance
- Mr Marco Costa for ICT assistance

The members and substitute members of the Management Board received an e-mail from 'DIGIT-EUSURVEY@nomail.ec.europa.eu' with the link to vote at the e-mail address that they provided for the restricted session.

According to the rules of procedure of the EMCDDA Management Board, its decisions are adopted by a two-thirds majority of its members with the right to vote. Annex II to these rules of procedure stipulate that decisions concerning the selection and appointment of the Director shall be taken by a two-thirds majority of its members, by secret vote. The 27 EU Member States have one vote each, the European Commission 2 votes and the European Parliament 2 votes (total: 31 votes). Estonia and Slovakia gave their proxy vote to Ms Elina Kotovirta from Finland. Norway and Turkey are members of the EMCDDA without voting rights.

Mr Olivier Onidi, representative of the European Commission, informed that the European Commission assessed the Director's strategic vision and motivation for a second mandate. The assessment concluded that Mr Alexis Goosdeel was an excellent Executive Director, capable of further growing in his function and improving the performance of the agency.

Mr Fanz Pietsch, Vice-Chair, supported the appreciation made by Mr Onidi.

On 24 June, the members and substitute members of the Management Board received a copy of a note addressed to the Chair by Ms Ylva Johansson, member of the European Commission in charge of Home Affairs. It concerned the decision taken by the European Commission on 17 June 2020 to propose to the EMCDDA Management Board to renew the mandate of the EMCDDA Director for a duration of 5 years, with effect from 1 January 2021, and to derogate from the age requirement in line with Article 52 of the Staff Regulation for the last month of the extended mandate.

31 votes were expressed. The result of the vote was sent with a screenshot by e-mail to the Chair, the Vice-Chair and Mr Olivier Onidi.

The **Chair** declared that 31 votes were expressed in favour of the renewal of the mandate of the EMCDDA Director and the derogation from the age requirement. The result was also communicated in written form to the members of the Management Board. The Chair congratulated Mr Goosdeel on the renewal of his mandate, which 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. Ms d'Arrigo wished the Director all the best for the next term at the helm of the EMCDDA.

The **Director** thanked the Chair and the Management Board members for their recognition and trust for the next five years, and looked forward to his continued collaboration with the Chair.

Decision: The Management Board decided at unanimity that the term of office of Mr Alexis Goosdeel as Director of the EMCDDA shall be extended for a duration of five years, with effect from 1 January 2021.

The Management Board also decided to grant Mr Alexis Goosdeel a derogation from the age requirement in line with Article 52 of the Staff Regulation for the last month of the extended mandate.

The **Chair** thanked the Director and the EMCDDA staff for the preparation of the meeting, and the Board members for their contributions.

The next meeting will take place on 10–11 December 2020.

Laura d'Arrigo
Chair of the Management Board

Annexes: I List of participants
 II List of decisions and conclusions
 III List of action points

Copy: Members, substitutes and observers of the Management Board