



FINAL MINUTES OF THE SIXTY-SECOND MEETING OF THE MANAGEMENT BOARD (10 DECEMBER 2020)

10 DECEMBER 2020

1. Introduction by the Chair

The **Chair, Ms Laura d'Arrigo**, welcomed the participants at the 62nd EMCDDA Management Board meeting. Due to the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, the EMCDDA Management Board meeting was held by video conference through Skype for Business, with remote simultaneous interpretation in English, French and German.

The Chair welcomed the new members present at the meeting. Ms Katrin Tomson-Johanson, Advisor at the Public Health Department of the Ministry of Social Affairs, was nominated as member for Estonia. Mr Christos Mina, Chair of the Cyprus National Addictions Authority, was nominated as member for Cyprus. Spain nominated Mr Joan Ramon Villalbí Hereter, Delegate of the Government for the National Plan on Drugs, as member.

Ms Daniela Ludwig, Federal Drug Commissioner for Germany, was excused. Ms Sandra Dybowski, representative of the German 'Länder', accompanied Mr Stephan Brandt as observer. Ms Judith Bugreev, expert at the Federal Ministry of Health of Germany, participated in the meeting to give a presentation during the exchange of views on 'Developing capacity building on prevention in the EU'. Ms Ana Sofia Santos, Head of the Department for International Relations of SICAD, accompanied the Portuguese delegation. Greece and Hungary were not represented at the meeting. Luxembourg gave its proxy vote to Belgium. Norway did not participate in the meeting.

The European Commission was represented by Mr Laurent Muschel, Director for Security at DG HOME, Ms Floriana Sipala (DG HOME) and Mr Philippe Roux (DG SANTE), as well as Ms Edith Hofer (DG HOME) as observer.

The Chair welcomed Prof. Dr. Catherine Comiskey, who has been elected as Chair of the Scientific Committee in November.

The UNODC was not represented at the meeting.

The Chair reminded the participants that the Budget and the Executive Committee met on 9 December in order to prepare the Management Board meeting. In view of the end of the transition period for the withdrawal of the UK from the EU on 31 December 2020, and in line with the procedures and arrangements for the selection and appointment of the members of the EMCDDA Scientific Committee, the Executive Committee appointed Dr. Tomi Lintonen (FI) as member of the Scientific Committee to replace Prof. Matthew Hickman, British citizen, in the EMCDDA Scientific Committee as of 1 January 2021.

The Chair summarised the main parts of the agenda of the meeting. A restricted session will take place only with the officially nominated members and substitute members of the Management Board to elect a member on the Executive Committee and to take a decision on the reclassification of the Director.

Finally, Ms d'Arrigo announced that a virtual gathering with the EMCDDA staff will take place after the Management Board meeting. On this occasion, two staff members will be awarded a medal for 20 years of European public service.

2. Adoption of the agenda

EMCDDA/20/20 rev 1
EMCDDA/21/20

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

PART I: Exchange of views

3. Exchange of views on 'Developing capacity building on prevention in the EU'

3.1. Presentation by the EMCDDA

The **Director** and **Ms Mounteney, Head of the Public Health unit**, gave a joint presentation on the EMCDDA's prevention-related role and responsibilities over the past 25 years and the recent developments of capacity building on prevention in the EU.

The Director paid tribute to Mr Richard Hartnoll, who laid the foundations for the work on drugs epidemiology at the EMCDDA, and who passed away on 9 December 2020.

In the recent years, the EMCDDA has contributed to the development of the European Universal Prevention Curriculum (EUPC), a project that was financed by the European Commission. Following the very positive outcome of the project, another project has been financed by the European Commission that is aiming at translating the content of the EUPC project into a distance learning programme on a platform which will be transferred to the EMCDDA, including the intellectual property rights. It will allow the EMCDDA to implement a certification programme on the EUPC for practitioners across all EU Member States, in connection with its various partners and experts networks. The EMCDDA has also started planning activities to support Member States to develop national systems for education or for certification on Prevention that are evidence-based.

3.2. Discussion and sharing of experiences in the EU Member States

Ms Bugreev, expert from the Federal Ministry of Health of DE, explained the competencies in terms of prevention in Germany. The German Preventive Health Care Act and Prevention Strategy aims at improving at federal level structures and processes to further develop and better coordinate prevention activities. DE welcomes the EMCDDA activities for the development of the EUPC and the ASAP e-learning platform. Challenges in the area of drug prevention are among others lack of financing and binding action plans or guidelines.

Mr Peil proposed reflections on how to establish a well-functioning prevention system on the basis of the example of **EE**. The work of the EMCDDA has been very helpful to design a cross-sectorial prevention concept. The analysis of scientific literature and evidence faced the obstacle of the need to engage with policy makers and the general population. Funding has to be long-termed and not tied with politics, cooperation mechanisms have to be developed and clear mandates in national and local level have to be set to establish a governance model of prevention. The EUPC training has been conducted in EE for two years and has proven to be a very positive experience.

Ms Simeoni described the ASAP-Training project in **IT**, based on the EUPC. The ASAP-Training project aims at promoting a systemic and complex approach to drug prevention identifying key stakeholders and conducting system analysis for the EU countries. It also aims at improving prevention workforce competencies and skills on quality standards and prevention science through the design and implementation of a two-layered training process for Master Trainers and drug prevention professionals. This project not only allowed IT to quickly create a critical mass of prevention experts who have received adequate training on what are the European standards but it has inspired professionals to identify the standards required for the National Prevention Plan in the field of addictions.

All presentations are uploaded on the special Management Board consultation site.

Mr Muschel, representative of the European Commission, welcomed the presentations as prevention is key for drugs policies. The EU Agenda on Drugs proposed to put prevention on the same level as health and security. Prevention is an area where more investments have to be made, that will have an impact on cities and communities. Many prevention programmes have not been evaluated for evidence base yet, and the EMCDDA could play a more important role in this context. The European Commission hopes that the new EU Action Plan on Drugs will include a dedicated chapter on prevention.

The **Chair** concluded that political will and long-term financing are key for stepping up drug prevention measures.

PART II: *Items for decision and information*

4. Activity reports:

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| 4.1. Report on the activities of the Chair | EMCDDA/23/20 |
| 4.2. Report from the Budget Committee | EMCDDA/24/20 |
| 4.3. Report on the external activities of the Director | EMCDDA/25/20 |

No comments were made on these activity reports.

5. Presentations by EU Presidencies

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| 5.1. Presentation on the conclusions of the German Presidency | EMCDDA/26/20 |
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Ms Ludwig, Federal Drugs Commissioner and member for Germany on the Management Board, presented the preliminary conclusions of the **DE** Presidency of the EU in a video statement.

Despite extraordinary circumstances instigated by the COVID-19 pandemic, the German Presidency of the Council of the European Union was successful in holding all planned five meetings of the Horizontal Working Party on Drugs (HDG) as well as dialogues with the United States (US), Russia, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC) and the Civil Society Forum on Drugs (CSFD).

As one of the priorities of the Presidency regarding drug policy, a recurrent topic throughout the virtual meetings of the HDG under the German Presidency was the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the drugs situation, with emphasis on vulnerable groups. Through video-based expert briefings, the Presidency explored how the pandemic has influenced the global drug economy; how it has affected vulnerable drug users and the availability of drug services internationally and in Germany; as well as the impact the pandemic had on small-scale farmers in drug crop cultivating areas and alternative development. Furthermore, the EU National Drugs Coordinators Meeting, entitled 'Aspects of a modern drugs policy with particular emphasis on vulnerable groups – prevention, early intervention and harm reduction', which took place on 14 October as a virtual meeting, discussed various concrete best-practice examples on how to best support and address the needs of members of vulnerable groups through prevention, early intervention, harm reduction and alternative development.

Besides this, the HDG's main activities under DE Chairmanship focused 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.

Another main priority of the German Presidency was the preparation of a new EU Drugs Strategy 2021–2025. As the EU Member States could not fully support the European Commission's Communication on the EU Agenda and Action Plan on Drugs 2021–2025, published on 24 July 2020, the German Presidency prepared, based on the request of the EU Member States at the HDG, a new draft of the EU Drugs Strategy 2021–2025 for negotiation at the HDG and adoption by the Council hopefully by the end of the year (Note: since then the Strategy has been adopted). The new strategy follows a 'balanced, evidence-based, comprehensive and integrated approach'. It builds on the Communication from the Commission on the EU Agenda and Action Plan on Drugs 2021–2025, and includes good practices and lessons learned from previous EU Drug Strategies and Action Plans, including their evaluations. It also includes current assessments from the EMCDDA, Europol and the civil society.

On behalf of the Management Board, the **Chair** congratulated the DE Presidency for its achievements in a difficult period of time and thanked DE for its efforts.

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| 5.2. Presentation of the programme for the Portuguese Presidency | EMCDDA/27/20 |
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Dr Goulão thanked DE for its work and in particular for having led the process for the new EU Drugs Strategy, and presented the priorities of the **PT** Presidency in the first half of 2021.

The main priorities in the field of drugs are the elaboration of the EU Action Plan on Drugs 2021–25, the negotiation of a revision of the EMCDDA Regulation and the preparation of the 64th session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND).

The Horizontal Working Party on Drugs (HDG) will prepare EU dialogues with third countries, such as the US and a first EU-China dialogue at the end of January 2021. The HDG will prepare a technical committee and a High-Level EU-CELAC meeting, as well as the national drug coordinators meeting (to take place physically in Lisbon or virtually, depending on the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, HDG meetings will take place online at least until the end of March 2021.

The HDG will invite the Civil Society Forum on Drugs (CSFD) in February or March for an exchange of views on the main items to be addressed at the CND meeting, and a CSFD–EU meeting will take place in the margins of the CND meeting.

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

Mr Muschel, representative of the European Commission, thanked the DE Presidency for its work in a challenging time, and expressed the hope that the EU Drugs Strategy 2021–25 could be adopted before the end of the year. He also thanked DE for having prepared a strong EU position on the WHO recommendations on cannabis-related products. He congratulated PT on the ambitious programme of its Presidency, also in terms of external relations, and stressed the importance to follow-up on the EU Drugs Strategy with an EU Action Plan on Drugs 2021–25.

Concerning the revision of the EMCDDA mandate, the European Commission (DG HOME) welcomed the fruitful discussion with the Management Board members on 26 October 2020. The impact assessment, which takes into account the comments made by Management Board members, will be discussed at the Regulatory Scrutiny Board meeting of 16 December. Mr Muschel informed that the Commissioner for Migration and Home Affairs decided to postpone the revision of the EMCDDA mandate, as no appropriate budget increase could be secured for the agency in the current negotiations for the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2021–27. The drugs issue needs to be recognised as an important priority at political level.

While recognising the work and the efforts of DG Home, the **Chair** expressed her disappointment on the postponement, as it was expected that the revision process based on the EC proposal could be launched in the first quarter of 2021. Ms d'Arrigo reminded that the external evaluation of the EMCDDA was finalised in 2018. She underlined the need for an ambitious revision of the EMCDDA mandate with consequent appropriate human and budgetary means.

The **Chair of the Budget Committee** emphasised that any revision of the EMCDDA mandate should be accompanied by an adequate budget.

The **Director** expressed his gratitude to DG HOME for all the efforts and the work undertaken on this file. It is necessary to actively collaborate with the Ministers of Interior and Health of the EU Member States, the Council and the EP to find support to launch the procedure for the revision of the EMCDDA's mandate as soon as possible.

The **Chair** and **Dr Goulão** committed to support any efforts at various ministerial levels in the EU Member States. 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.

The **Director** suggested that the EMCDDA will prepare by the end of January a list of messages and arguments on the basis of the EU Drugs Strategy to support Management Board members in their contacts.

6. Operational and financial programming:

6.1. Multiannual Financial Framework for 2021–27: Oral report on the state of play by the European Commission

Mr Muschel, representative of the European Commission, reminded that the European Commission adopted on 27 May 2020 a revised proposal for the next Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2021–27. The MFF foresees a global envelope of 123,5 Mill. EUR, and includes an increase for the EMCDDA of 5 Mill. EUR for 2021–27 compared with the previous proposal. The MFF will hopefully be adopted at the European Council of 10–11 December.

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. The European Commission is aware that the annual 2% indexation might not be sufficient, but the provision can change with the adoption of revision of the EMCDDA mandate.

The **Director** 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.

PART III: *Restricted session*

7. Restricted session:

The **Director** left the meeting.

The **Chair** reminded that the votes on the election of a member to the Executive Committee and on the reclassification 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 Chair proposed that Ms Edith Hofer, from DG HOME, would stay in the meeting and that the following EMCDDA staff members participate in this session:

- Mr Fabian Pereyra, Head of the Executive Office
- Ms Monika Blum, Senior Policy Officer to the Management Board
- Ms Elsa Costa for administrative 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). Hungary and Greece did not participate in the meeting. Luxembourg gave its proxy vote to Mr Claude Gillard from Belgium. Norway and Turkey are members of the EMCDDA without voting rights.

7.1. Election of one Executive Committee member

EMCDDA/28/20

Ms Elina Kotovirta, member for FI on the Management Board, was the only candidate for becoming member on the Executive Committee.

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

Decision: The Management Board elected unanimously Ms Elina Kotovirta, member for Finland on the EMCDDA Management Board, as member of the Executive Committee for a mandate from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2023.

7.2. Reclassification of the Director

EMCDDA/29/20

The **Chair** informed that the Executive Committee expressed a favourable position concerning the reclassification of the EMCDDA Director from the post AD14 to the post AD 15, due to the Director's performance as confirmed by his positive appraisal reports, and by the external evaluation of the agency.

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

Decision: The Management Board decided unanimously that Mr Alexis Goosdeel, Director of the EMCDDA, shall be assigned to a post of grade AD 15, as available in the EMCDDA authorised establishment plan, with effect from 1 January 2021.

PART II: *Items for decision and information*

8. Operational and financial programming:

8.1. EMCDDA Draft budget for 2021

EMCDDA/30/20 rev1

The **Chair of the Budget Committee** summarised the main figures of the revised EMCDDA budget for 2021.

The Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE) and the Committee on Budgets (BUDG) of the European Parliament (EP) supported an increase of the EU 2021 subsidy to the EMCDDA to EUR 18 106 000, i.e. the amount foreseen in the EMCDDA 2021 preliminary draft budget adopted by the Management Board in December 2019. The Conciliation Committee (EP and Council) met between 17 November and 7 December 2020, and provisionally agreed on the amount of EUR 16 614 372 for the EU 2021 subsidy to the EMCDDA as proposed by the European Commission, based on the amount of the EU 2020 subsidy plus an increase of 2%, with a stable number of staff in the establishment plan. This result will become formal with the final adoption of the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) for 2021–27 expected by the European Council on 10–11 December. The Budget Committee recommended to the Management Board to adopt the EMCDDA budget for 2021, which has been revised in line with this decision.

Ms Sipala, representative of the European Commission, added that if an agreement is reached on the MFF for 2021–27, the EU budget for 2021 should be adopted on 17 December 2020.

DE regretted that the EMCDDA's budget for 2021 could not be increased to the amount foreseen in the EMCDDA 2021 preliminary draft budget adopted by the Management Board in December 2019, and wondered what impact the reduction will have on the EMCDDA's Single Programming Document (SPD) for 2021–23 and the work programme for 2021.

The **Director** replied that the SPD for 2021–23 and work programme for 2021 do not need to be substantially changed, as this document defines for each activity different priority levels. In this context the EMCDDA will fully commit to ensure the full implementation of the L1 activities, but the size and importance of some L2 and L3 activities are likely to be scaled down according to the actual availability of budget resources. The minimum implementation of the work programme and the functioning of the EMCDDA will be guaranteed. The Director informed also the Management Board members that as a consequence of the budgetary situation it may be necessary to merge or to modify the format and deadline for some publications foreseen in the PD 2021, as explained in the document prepared for the Management Board meeting.

As announced by the Director early 2020, the EMCDDA will make an additional effort to ensure the possible maximum co-financing to the Reitox national focal points at the same level as in 2020. Furthermore, it is estimated that the impact of the on-going COVID-19 pandemic could entail a reduction of about 50% of the needs for expenditure for meetings and for missions of the EMCDDA staff in 2021.

DE expressed its confidence in the EMCDDA and the Management Board to find a good and practical solution for handling the financial situation.

Decision: The Management Board unanimously adopted the revised EMCDDA budget for 2021.

8.2. EMCDDA Single Programming Document for 2021–23 and work programme for 2021

EMCDDA/31/20

The **Chair of the Scientific Committee** summarised the formal opinion of the Scientific Committee on the EMCDDA Single Programming Document (SPD) for 2021–23 and the work programme for 2021.

The Scientific Committee considers that the efficient implementation of previous SPDs has allowed the EMCDDA to be highly successful at anticipating and responding to the needs of its stakeholders on new trends and topics, such as the changes in cannabis policy and even the rapid assessment of early potential consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic for the drugs field.

The Scientific Committee is confident that, subject to the availability of adequate resources and within the restrictions currently posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, the EMCDDA will successfully implement its SPD for 2021–23, including the 2021 work programme, and expresses its full support and endorsement to it.

The **Chair** thanked the EMCDDA staff involved in drafting the document for the high-level work accomplished this year.

Decision: The Management Board adopted the EMCDDA Single Programming Document for 2021–23 and work programme for 2021.

8.3. EMCDDA Preliminary draft budget for 2022

EMCDDA/32/20

The Chair of the Budget Committee reminded that the European Commission's last revised proposal for the EU MFF for 2021–27 envisages an increase by 2% of the EU 2022 subsidy to the EMCDDA, compared to the amount currently proposed for 2021 (EUR 16 614 372). The Budget Committee however considered that the request of the Management Board for the EU subsidy to the EMCDDA for 2022 should be consistent with the one for 2021, where the EMCDDA 2022 budget would rely on an EU subsidy of EUR 18 468 120. The Budget Committee recommended to the Management Board to adopt the EMCDDA preliminary budget for 2022.

Decision: The Management Board adopted the EMCDDA preliminary draft budget for 2022, with the abstention of the European Commission for institutional reasons.

8.4. EMCDDA Preliminary draft Single Programming Document for 2022–24 and work programme for 2022

EMCDDA/33/20

DE thanked the EMCDDA for the excellent document and overview of activities. The document will help to continue to avoid double work by the EMCDDA and the Member States.

Ms Sipala, representative of the European Commission, stressed the difficulty of drafting this document given the uncertainty about the next MFF. After the formal transmission of the EMCDDA draft SPD for 2022-24 and the work programme for 2022 by 31 January 2021 to the European Commission, the Commission will adopt its formal opinion as usual after an inter-service consultation.

Decision: The Management Board adopted the EMCDDA Preliminary Single Programming Document for 2021–23 and work programme for 2021, with the abstention of the European Commission for institutional reasons.

9. International cooperation:

9.1. Outcomes of cooperation with non-EU countries, international organisations and other EU agencies

EMCDDA/34/20

The Director gave a general presentation on the outcomes of the EMCDDA's international cooperation, taking the opportunity to refresh the understanding of the EMCDDA's International Cooperation Strategy and Framework. He stressed the support from the EMCDDA for the external dimension of the EU Drugs Strategy, which has also been highlighted by the last external evaluation. The Director thanked the European Commission, and in particular DG HOME, but also DG NEAR and DG DEVCO, for their close collaboration and for helping the EMCDDA to frame the requests from third countries.

Ms Sipala, representative of the European Commission, thanked the Director for the overview on the EMCDDA's international activities, and encouraged the EMCDDA to reach out to the missing partners in the Western Balkans region to conclude working arrangements for strengthening capacity building.

FR wondered if the EMCDDA was working with Morocco as the most important cannabis producing country.

The Director informed that the EMCDDA has a cooperation with Morocco for 10 years now, but that the cooperation remains limited and covered mostly some support to the establishment of the National Drugs Observatory, to the drafting and publication of the first national report, to the training of professionals on prevention and some other activities organised in the context of the EU4MD project.

The Chair welcomed the comprehensive historical overview and stressed the added value of having a technical dialogue with third countries. It is important for Member States to make best use of the wealth of information available at the EMCDDA on third countries with whom the agency has concluded working arrangements.

- Candidate and potential candidate countries:

9.2. The EMCDDA/IPA 7 project (Instrument for Pre-Accession)

EMCDDA/35/20

No comments were made.

- European Neighbourhood Countries:

9.3. 'EU4 Monitoring Drugs' project

EMCDDA/36/20

No comments were made.

9.4. Technical cooperation project EMCDDA–Georgia

EMCDDA/37/20

The **Director** reminded that the EMCDDA is going to engage with the Delegation of the EU to Georgia in an EU action to support the Georgian Government in strengthening its capacities in the drug prevention, treatment and monitoring areas. This engagement was triggered by an initiative of the Delegation of the EU to Georgia back in 2018, which was later supported by DG NEAR and DG HOME. In line with this support, the EMCDDA gave a positive agreement in principle earlier in 2020. The envisaged duration of the project is two years (from 1 January 2021 to 31 December 2022) and the overall budget is EUR 800 000. The EMCDDA is developing the technical proposal which has been submitted to the Delegation of the EU to Georgia. The contract has to be signed before the end of 2020.

Decision: The Management Board approved the implementation by the EMCDDA of the project for technical assistance to the Republic of Georgia as presented in the document EMCDDA/37/20.

10. Performance and internal controls:

10.1. Implementation of the EMCDDA action plan to follow up on the recommendations of the EMCDDA's external evaluation

EMCDDA/38/20

No comments were made.

10.2. Implementation of the Roadmap 2020 of the EMCDDA Strategy for 2025

EMCDDA/39/20

No comments were made.

10.3. State of implementation of the recommendations issued by the Internal Audit Service (IAS)

EMCDDA/40/20

No comments were made.

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

11.1. 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/41/20

The **Director** informed that the declarations submitted by the new members of the Management Board until 7 December 2020 show no existing conflicts of interest.

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.

12. Any other business:

The **Chair** stressed the importance she attached in having the virtual gathering with all the staff members at the end of the meeting. She praised the capacity of the EMCDDA to adapt to the challenging circumstances, by switching to telework and greater digitalisation. She underlined its capacity to implement the work programme, while being innovative, for example with 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.

On behalf of the Management Board she thanked all the staff very warmly: all the scientific units, the Reitox and external partners, the Communication, the Administration and Executive Office teams and, last but not least, all the ICT staff who have tirelessly helped to set up new working tools.

NL asked about the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the EMCDDA staff.

The **Director** expressed his heartfelt thanks to the staff for their resilience, creativity, commitment and flexibility in unprecedented conditions, which allowed the agency to adapt rapidly to 100% teleworking and video conferencing mode. The Incident Response Team has piloted and is still piloting the management of the crisis and meets once per week; it is responsible for the coordination of the action and decision making related to the handling of the pandemic by the Centre.

A Task Force on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the drugs situation was set up under the chair of the Head of the Public Health unit, Jane Mounteney, and proposed immediate actions to monitor the new situation and its impact, with a series of new quick data collection exercises. In that context the Centre has demonstrated its agility and capacity of innovation, as the programme was presented by the Task Force to the Director and the whole process of 'conception-decision-planning-implementation-analysis-publication-communication' was reduced from 12-18 months to 6 weeks. The EMCDDA became much more digital: the agency launched a new series of successful webinars, organised websurveys in cooperation with the Reitox National Focal Points, it created online trendspotting or focus groups and communicated with practitioners and institutions through the social media. The Reitox national focal points and their staff were also associated to these changes. The Director organised from March to end of June a virtual drink with the staff every Friday to maintain the link with each staff member and to answer to questions, and a daily communication mechanism was put in place on the COVID-19 situation by the Business Continuity Manager, Fabian Pereyra. The ICT staff provided an incredible service to all EMCDDA staff in 2020, which allowed moving from one day to another to teleworking without any crash of the system, for providing all the necessary support and complementary equipment individually, and for establishing from scratch a video conferencing capacity within a record time. The situation was challenging and had a cost in terms of heavy workload and lack of personal contacts. It is worth to mention that although the EMCDDA staff has shown a strong capacity of reaction, the pandemic has been a struggle for many of them, some staff members have lost relatives and it is fair to say that there is a negative impact on the mental health: they have resisted, they have been successful, but they are also tired and sad. A survey on the staff wellbeing will be launched in consultation with the Staff Committee and appropriate measures will be proposed to adapt the support provided to the emerging needs.

The **Chair** reminded that a document on the 50th Anniversary of the Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe had been uploaded on the Management Board consultation site. Ms d'Arrigo concluded the meeting with the hope that the next Management Board meeting could take place in Lisbon.

She thanked the Director and the EMCDDA staff for the preparation of the meeting, and the Board members for their contributions. The Chair also expressed her special thanks to the interpreters for their work.

The next meeting will take place on 24 June 2021.

(s.) 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