



PRESS RELEASE

European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction

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EMCDDA Management Board re-elects Director for five-year term

Georges Estievenart (France), Director of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), was re-elected by the Centre's Management Board this morning for a second five-year term. The Management Board, meeting in Lisbon from 30 June to 2 July, re-appointed the Director by 18 votes in favour and one abstention.

Estievenart, who has headed the Lisbon agency since it began operations in 1995, was the only candidate put forward by the European Commission, following an agreement of the Management Board in January 1999. His new term of office will begin on 23 December 1999.

Following the election, Estievenart presented his medium-term plans for the agency over the period 2000–2004. These included consolidating and expanding the Centre's achievements since its conception, particularly in the areas of: epidemiology; demand reduction; networking with the REITOX National Focal Points;¹ new synthetic drugs; external co-operation; dissemination of information; and internal administration.

The Director also outlined a number of new issues to be addressed over this period, including: the geographical expansion of the agency's activities to include Norway and the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs); and potential co-operation with Latin America and Russia. New challenges could cover licit drug abuse (alcohol, tobacco, medicines) and doping in sport.

Following his re-election, Estievenart thanked the Management Board and EMCDDA staff members for their 'invaluable contribution to making the EMCDDA what it is today: a recognised European centre of expertise on drugs at the service of the EU Member States, the host-country Portugal, the Community institutions and the citizens of Europe'. He also looked forward to the Centre's continued progress in fulfilling its key objective: to provide decision-makers and drug practitioners with high-quality 'objective, reliable and comparable information' on drugs. The Centre would be pursuing this goal, the Director affirmed, via measures such as the development of epidemiological indicators to be conceptualised, tested and implemented with, and by, the National Focal Points and ultimately used by countries as a model for harmonised data-collection.²

Also on the Management Board's agenda this week were discussions on the recently-adopted 'Report on the Risk Assessment of 4-MTA in the Framework of the Joint Action on New Synthetic Drugs' and studies related to outreach work and the estimation of time trends and incidence of problem drug use in the EU.

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¹ REITOX - The European Information Network on Drugs and Drug Addiction, composed of National Focal Points in the 15 EU Member States, the Focal Point of the European Commission and an observer Focal Point from Norway.

² These indicators cover: demand for treatment by drug users; mortality and causes of death among drug users; the incidence of infectious diseases among drug addicts; drug use in the general population; and prevalence estimates of problem drug use.