emcdda

Minutes

Meeting	**56th meeting of the Scientific Committee**
Date	**13–14 October 2022**
Venue	**Tivoli Sintra Hotel**
Present	**See the participants list (Annex 1)**

1. Adoption of the agenda

In the absence of the Chair and the Vice-chair of the Scientific Committee, the meeting was chaired by AnneLine Bretteville-Jensen, former Chair of the Scientific Committee.

The Chair opened the 56th Scientific Committee meeting and welcomed the Committee members, the spokesperson of the Reitox network (Mateja Jandl) and the EMCDDA staff present. Henri Bergeron and Catherine Comiskey were excused.

The agenda (Annex 2) was unanimously adopted with a slightly adjusted order of items (inversion of items 7 and 8).

2. Feedback from the Chair on relevant meetings and documents (for information)

The Chair provided feedback on the Management Board meeting held in June 2022 and invited the attendees to read the minutes of the meeting (Annex 3).

3. Adoption of the formal opinion of the Scientific Committee on the EMCDDA Single Programming Document 2023-25 (for adoption)

The Chair went through the changes suggested by the Scientific Committee members for their formal opinion on the EMCDDA Single Programming Document 2023-25 (Annex 4).

The suggested changes were approved by all and the formal opinion of the Scientific Committee on the EMCDDA Single Programming Document 2023-25 was adopted (Annex 5). The Chair reminded the Committee that the formal opinion will be presented by the Committee's Chair at the next Management Board meeting in December 2022.

4. Welcome by the Director and relevant updates (for information)

The EMCDDA Director, Alexis Goosdeel, welcomed all the participants. The Director started by sharing the new and ongoing developments regarding the proposal for a new Regulation of the European Union Drugs Agency (Annex 6). He informed the Committee about the procedural aspects around the discussion and future adoption of the proposal and mentioned the high convergence between the current proposal and the original founding values of the EMCDDA.

The Director then shared the plans around the preparatory work of the agency to implement the new regulation around the three pillars of the current proposal (monitoring, preparedness, and competence/capacity development), as well as the main challenges on the horizon, and reminded the Committee members of their important role in this new era of the agency's existence. The agency is working on an implementation and change management plan that will need to be executed within the context of the resources allocated in 2023, which reflect our current mandate. The agency expects significant new budgetary resources to accompany the new competencies described in the proposed new regulation. However, it is necessary at this stage to wait for a decision on the content of the final proposal and the budget resources that will support this. It is expected that this will be agreed in 2023, with the new regulation coming into effect at some point in 2024.

The Director and the Committee members discussed the proposed approach and the Scientific Committee expressed particular concern around the possible lack of available resources in 2023 for the preparatory work already needed on the expansion of the mandate of the agency. This discussion also informed and continued throughout the following items of the agenda, particularly items 10 and 11.

5. Update from the Public Health unit (for information)

Jane Mounteney, Head of the Public Health unit, updated the Scientific Committee members on the digital products and core publications of the Public Health unit, focusing on cannabis preparedness, harms and harm reduction and drug consumption rooms (Annex 7).

The Head of the Public Health unit also presented a trendspotter study carried out by the EMCDDA on Responsiveness and preparedness in addressing drug-related needs of displaced Ukrainians in EU countries bordering Ukraine.

During the ensuing debate, the Committee members were particularly interested to hear more about the dissemination of EMCDDA findings and the issues around the sustainability of the networks providing data.

6. Update from the Risks to Public Safety and Security unit (for information)

Roumen Sedefov, Head of the Risks to Public Safety and Security unit (SAS), updated the Scientific Committee members on the Early Warning System and its 25th anniversary. The IX international conference on novel psychoactive substances, co-organised by the EMCDDA, will take place on 24-26 October in Panama City. He also emphasised that the new regulation retains the EMCDDA's existing role in the EU Early Warning System and the role of the Scientific Committee on the risk assessment of new psychoactive substances (NPS).

The head of the SAS then updated the Committee on the activities on markets and crime, and presented the EU Drug Markets Report modules on cocaine and methamphetamine, which was the stepping stone for a discussion around the topics of availability, price, purity and market size and consumption estimation (Annex 8).

7. Update on products and outputs 2022 (for information)

Rosemary Martin de Sousa, Head of the Communication unit, updated the Scientific Committee members on the recent and upcoming EMCDDA publications and outputs (Annex 9). She then introduced the members to the strategic communication goals from the

EMCDDA Roadmap 2025, emphasising the digital transformation of the EMCDDA portfolio and further development of content in multiple languages.

In addition, the head of the Communication Unit shared the latest developments on the website, the data visualisation tool and upcoming products. The members of the Committee offered their input on the importance of target reaching, integrating public feedback and quality assessment in this important area of the EMCDDA's work.

8. Update on EMCDDA foresight activities (for information)

Klaudia Palczak, principal scientific manager, introduced the EMCDDA foresight toolbox (Annex 10). She provided feedback on the outcome of the horizon scanning exercise implemented at the EMCDDA and informed on the methodology being used to move towards scenario development which the agency is following.

Klaudia also focused on the importance of foresight activities in understanding key challenges and elements influencing the drugs field and informing the decision-making cycle in the EU and emphasised the mention of foresight in the new regulation for the European Union drugs agency.

Finally, she presented the EMCDDA foresight toolkit as a resource for foresight capacity-building. A debate followed on the importance of foresight for a holistic view of the drugs field and the importance of including civil society in future exercises.

9. Contribution of the EMCDDA Scientific Committee for the 2022 Annual Dialogue on Research of the Horizontal Drug Group (for discussion)

Maria Moreira, principal scientific manager, introduced the results of a pilot Delphi study on the identification of drug-related future research priorities for discussion and possible presentation for the Annual Dialogue on Research of the HDG (Annex 11). Maria contextualised the importance of piloting a new approach for the identification of research priorities and explained the methodology and timeline followed. She then asked the Committee members for feedback on the process and on the outcome, also considering the future role of the EMCDDA under the upcoming regulation.

The members of the Scientific Committee were very supportive of the approach used and agreed that it should be continued to be used to identify research priorities. They also suggested it could be used to review and update current theses coming from the Futures exercise, especially on the basis of the additional priorities and input provided by the respondents in the open text fields. On the process, the Scientific Committee members considered that asking respondents to justify their scores whenever these were divergent from scores given by other respondents could lead to scoring bias. They also suggested improved clarity around communicating with the respondents about the options to revisit the survey to comment on input from other respondents. Finally, they suggested that, when appropriate, the EMCDDA could look into adding different stakeholders to future exercises and, in particular, mentioned experts from other EU agencies, journal editors and people with lived experience or organisations representing them.

The Chair of the Scientific Committee will present the approach and the outcomes at the Annual Dialogue on Drugs of the Horizontal Drugs Group, which takes place on 25 October.

10. Update on the expected regulation of the European Union Drugs Agency and discussion about possible implications for the Scientific Committee (for information and discussion)

Paul Griffiths, the EMCDDA Scientific Director, walked the Scientific Committee members through the potential impact of the new regulation of the EU Drugs Agency on research and possible implications for the Scientific Committee (Annex 12).

The Scientific Director mentioned the importance of the new regulation in expanding the current mandate of the EMCDDA, in terms of moving from just offering evidence-based information towards a more active role of early warning and risk assessment, along with a more holistic monitoring of the drugs phenomenon.

A debate followed around questions about the impact of the new regulation on the role of national focal points and the importance of keeping scientific rigour and appropriate quality assurance mechanisms in this new framework.

11. Next mandate of the Scientific Committee (2023) (for information and discussion)

Maria Moreira introduced the context for the next mandate of the Scientific Committee (Annex 13). Four new members from the reserve list will be appointed by the Management Board at their next meeting, before the new mandate of the Scientific Committee starts in January 2023. At the beginning of next year, the Scientific Committee will need to elect a new Chair and Vice-chair for the duration of the new mandate, which will remain effective until the entry into force of the new regulation (expected 2024). During that period, the regular tasks of the Scientific Committee will remain unchanged.

12. Update on Lisbon Addictions 2022 (for information)

Klaudia Palczak, Maria Moreira and Paul Griffiths updated the members on the Lisbon Addictions 2022 conference programme focusing on co-producers and more.

13. Any other business (AOB)

The following dates have been selected for the 2023 Scientific Committee meetings:

- 57th meeting – 1 to 3 March 2023
- 58th meeting – 25 to 27 October 2023.

With no other business to discuss, the Chair closed the meeting.

Annexes:

Annex 1. Participants list (SciCom/01.4/56)

Annex 2. Meeting agenda (SciCom/01.1/56)

Annex 3. Adopted minutes of the last Management Board meeting (SciCom/02.1/56)

Annex 4. Draft formal opinion on the EMCDDA Single Programming Document 2023-25 (SciCom/03.2/56)

Annex 5. Formal opinion on the EMCDDA Single Programming Document 2023-25 (SciCom/03.3/56)

Annex 6. EMCDDA 2022-25 new regulation (presentation by the Director) (SciCom/04.1/56)

Annex 7. Update from the Public Health unit (presentation by the Head of the Public Health unit) (SciCom/05.1/56)

Annex 8. EU drug markets (presentation by the Head of the Security and Safety unit) (SciCom/06.1/56)

Annex 9. Update on products and outputs (presentation by the Head of the Communications unit) (SciCom/08.1/56)

Annex 10. The EMCDDA foresight toolbox (presentation by Klaudia Palczak) (SciCom/07.1/56)

Annex 11. Annual Dialogue on Research: Recommendations of the Scientific Committee on research priorities (presentation by Maria Moreira) (SciCom/09.2/56)

Annex 12. New mandate (presentation by the Scientific Director) (SciCom/10.2/56)

Annex 13. Scientific Committee 2023 and beyond (presentation by Maria Moreira) (SciCom/11.2/56)