



NEWS RELEASE from the EU drugs agency in Lisbon

FOR PUBLICATION 26 JUNE: INTERNATIONAL DAY AGAINST DRUG ABUSE AND ILLICIT DRUG TRAFFICKING

REACHING 'FORGOTTEN' DRUG USERS

Countries meet to map drug prevention for high-risk groups

(26.6.2003) Experts from 18 countries in Europe meet at the **EU drugs agency, the EMCDDA**, in Lisbon today to explore the issue of drug prevention in hard-to-reach and high-risk groups.

The three-day meeting on 'selective prevention' will explore drug prevention in the community and family, focusing in particular on young offenders, truants, ethnic groups and the socially disadvantaged.

'Reaching forgotten groups of drug users means intervening where risk is highest' says **Georges Estievenart, EMCDDA Executive Director**. 'These groups are often by-passed by prevention strategies in more traditional settings and a concerted effort is needed to get through to them effectively, responding to their specific needs'.

While the **EMCDDA** can now provide a rather comprehensive European overview of drug prevention in structured or formal settings, such as schools, information from more informal contexts remains patchy. In preparation for the meeting therefore, experts participated in an **EMCDDA** survey to help fill in the gaps. Their task was to map information nationally on drug prevention in informal settings.

The survey covered:

- family-based prevention;
- community-based prevention; and
- prevention within selected risk groups and settings of increased risk (e.g. recreational milieux, such as the dance scene).

The meeting will analyse the results of this survey in order to identify good practice, innovative actions and conceptual differences between countries. The ultimate goal of the meeting will be to compare and contrast information on initiatives in these areas in order to present a more complete picture to European policy-makers. The meeting offers great potential for cooperation in information mapping in informal settings and will culminate in a publication in the coming months of best practice in drug prevention among high-risk groups.

Since its creation 10 years ago, the **EMCDDA** has developed extensive activities in the area of drug prevention, particularly to improve the quality of information and exchange of expertise in this area in the **EU**. One of its most successful tools is the **EDDRA** database, an online information system providing details of a wide range of evaluated response programmes in the **EU** (<http://eddra.emcdda.eu.int:8008/eddra>). It has also published guidelines for the evaluation of drug prevention (<http://www.emcdda.eu.int/infopoint/publications/manuals.shtml>) and organised the first European conferences on the evaluation of drug prevention in 1997 and 1999 (http://www.emcdda.eu.int/multimedia/press_releases/1999/pr13_991129_strasbourg.pdf). An overview of the **EMCDDA's** work in these areas is also available (<http://www.emcdda.eu.int/responses/index.shtml>).

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For more on UN International day against drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking, see <http://www.unodc.org>
