European Monitoring Centre
for Drugs and Drug Addiction

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General Report of Activities

Key achievements and governance:
a year in review

2021




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2021

Foreword

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We are proud to present the 27th *General Report of Activities* of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), which provides an overview of the agency's key achievements in 2021.

While 2020 was a year of resilience for the EMCDDA as it faced the COVID-19 pandemic, 2021 was a year of strategic reflection and transformation, which saw the organic evolution of the agency towards a customer-centric, data-driven and digitally enabled organisation.

This transformative journey will now be guided by two strategic documents, which were adopted by our Management Board during the year: the second roadmap (for 2021-2025) of the *EMCDDA Strategy 2025*, and the new EMCDDA business model.

At EU level, under the Portuguese Presidency of the Council, 2021 also saw the adoption of the new EU Drugs Action Plan 2021-2025. The EMCDDA provided technical input to the preparation of the document and will be called upon to support its implementation in the years to come.

At organisational level, our collective effort was focused on several dimensions: ensuring that our staff had the proper means to carry out their activities in the new hybrid working model emerging from the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic; designing and launching innovative products and services in a digital format; and pursuing organisational change initiatives to enable the transformation.

These were supported by significant technological investments that helped us optimise our work processes and reimagine the agency's internal and external communication and dissemination.

A digital portfolio of products and services was developed and delivered to our key customers. This included the yearly EMCDDA flagship publication, the *European Drug Report 2021*, which was launched at an online event with the European Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva Johansson, the Chair of the EMCDDA Management Board and the EMCDDA Director, speaking live from Brussels, Paris and Lisbon, respectively.

This was followed later in the year by the launch of *Health and Social Responses to Drug Problems: A European Guide 2021*. In a new modular format, this represented the first fully digital EMCDDA flagship report. A third flagship publication, the *EU Drug Markets Report*, started to be produced in 2021, jointly by the EMCDDA and Europol, in a similar fully digital format; this will be launched progressively in 2022 and 2023.

A total of 49 scientific and institutional publications were produced in 2021 (including four reports tackling the impact of COVID-19), while a record number of over 1.8 million persons visited the EMCDDA website during the year.

Some 870 people, including health practitioners, law enforcement officers and policymakers both within the EU and in partner countries, also attended training that was (co)organised by the agency, mostly online; around 2 000 participants registered for EMCDDA webinars.

The year 2021 saw an increase of 15 % in the number of new psychoactive substances (NPS) that were detected for the first time in the EU and entered the monitoring of the EU Early Warning System (EWS) on NPS, which is coordinated by the EMCDDA, working closely with its EU partners. Two NPS were risk assessed, and have, in the meantime, been subject to control measures in the EU through delegated directives issued by the European Commission on the basis of evidence received from the EMCDDA.

The growth in the EMCDDA's activities and its many accomplishments during the year were possible thanks to the excellent collaboration with our partners, and in particular with the Reitox network of national focal points (NFPs). Joint work with the latter will now be guided by the new roadmap, for 2021-2025, of the Reitox Development Framework (RDF), which was adopted by the NFPs in 2021 and subsequently endorsed by the EMCDDA Management Board.

Work in the area of international cooperation was also scaled up in 2021 when the EMCDDA started implementing its first bilateral technical assistance project with Georgia, with funding from the European Commission. The other two EU-funded technical cooperation projects, benefiting candidates and potential candidates to the EU (Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance 7) and neighbouring countries (EU4Monitoring drugs), continued to be implemented successfully, despite the constraints related to COVID-19.

At the end of this strategically significant year, we would like to express our appreciation to the staff of the EMCDDA who, through their hard work and their ability to innovate and participate in the organisational transformation, made all our achievements possible in 2021.

Our special thanks go to our Scientific Committee and to the EMCDDA Management Board for their ongoing support and guidance. In particular, we would like to express our gratitude to Ms Laura d'Arrigo, who ended her successful six-year mandate at the helm of the EMCDDA Management Board in December 2021.

Our final acknowledgement goes to all of the networks and partners who joined us in our efforts to contribute to a healthier and more secure Europe in 2021.

List of acronyms and initialisms

3-CMC	3-chloromethcathinone
3-MMC	3-methylmethcathinone
ABAC	electronic management and accounting system
BCP	Business Continuity Plan
CELAC	Community of Latin American and Caribbean States
CEPOL	EU Agency for Law Enforcement Training
CICAD	Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission
CND	UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs
COPOLAD	Cooperation Programme between Latin America and the European Union on Drugs Policies
COSI	Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security
DG	Directorate-General
DRD	drug-related deaths and mortality (EMCDDA indicator)
DRID	drug-related infectious diseases (EMCDDA indicator)
ECA	European Court of Auditors
ECDC	European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
ECDD	Expert Committee on Drug Dependence (World Health Organization)
ECHA	European Chemicals Agency
ECID	Extranets, Collaboration, Intranet and Document Management
EDR	*European Drug Report*
EFSA	European Food Safety Authority
EMA	European Medicines Agency
EMCDDA	European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction
EMCDDA4GE	EMCDDA for Georgia project
EMPACT	European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats
EMSA	European Maritime Safety Agency
ENP	European Neighbourhood Policy
ESCAPE	European Syringe Collection and Analysis Project Enterprise
ESPAD	European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs
EU4MD	EU4Monitoring Drugs
EU-ANSA	EU Agencies Network on Scientific Advice
EUPC	European Prevention Curriculum
Euro-DEN Plus	European Drug Emergencies Network
EWS	Early Warning System
GPS	prevalence and patterns of drug use among the general population (EMCDDA indicator)
HCV	hepatitis C virus
HDG	Horizontal Drugs Group
HFP	Heads of national focal points
HR	human resources
IAS	Internal Audit Service
ICF	Internal Control Framework
ICS	Internal Control Standards
ICT	information and communication technology
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
JHA	Justice and Home Affairs
KPI	key performance indicator
LEEd	CEPOL training platform
LIBE	Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NFP	national focal point
NICC	National Institute of Criminalistics and Criminology (Belgium)
NPS	new psychoactive substances
OAP	operational action plan
OLAF	European Anti-Fraud Office
OSI	open-source information
PDU	problem drug use (EMCDDA indicator)
PLATO	Practice Training Platform
PWID	people who inject drugs

RDF	Reitox Development Framework
RTX	Reitox and external partners
SCORE	Sewage Analysis CORe group Europe
SICAD	Serviço de Intervenção em Comportamentos Aditivos e Dependências
SLA	service-level agreement
SMART	Synthetics Monitoring: Analyses, Reporting and Trends
SPD	single programming document
TDI	treatment demand indicator (EMCDDA indicator)
UN	United Nations
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
WHO	World Health Organization

Mission statement

Independent, science-based information is a vital resource to help Europe understand the nature of its drug problems and better respond to them. It was based on this premise, and in the face of an escalating drugs phenomenon, that the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) was established in 1993. Inaugurated in Lisbon in 1995, it is one of the EU's decentralised agencies.

Building on the EMCDDA's founding regulation (Regulation (EC) No 1920/2006) as amended (Regulation (EU) 2017/2101 as regards information exchange on, and an early warning system and risk assessment procedure for, new psychoactive substances (NPS)), the **EMCDDA Strategy 2025** defines the agency's current mission and vision statements.

Mission

The EMCDDA exists to support evidence-based decisions and actions at EU and national levels by providing factual, objective, reliable and comparable information concerning drugs and drug addiction, and their consequences. The EMCDDA's mission is therefore grounded in the consensus that sound information is a prerequisite for developing effective policies in the drugs area.

Vision

The EMCDDA's vision is a healthier and a more secure Europe, achieved through better-informed drug policy and action.

To do this effectively, the agency must constantly strive to respond to the needs of its primary customers, who can be defined as:

- EU institutions;
- national decision-makers/policymakers;
- professionals working in the drugs field.

Beyond meeting the information needs of primary customers, to address its mandate the EMCDDA also needs to engage with other stakeholders, including academic institutions and researchers; the general public, civil society and those affected by drug problems; and international organisations and third countries.

Values

The EMCDDA is committed to the EU and its values. Beyond these, the agency has identified its own set of core values to inform all aspects of its work, inspire staff in their professional performance, inform future organisational policies and guide the agency's interactions with stakeholders and partners.

The EMCDDA's four core values are:

- scientific excellence;
- integrity and impartiality;
- customer focus and service orientation;
- efficiency and sustainability.

Management Board's analysis and assessment

The Management Board has analysed and assessed the Authorising Officer's (Director's) *General Report of Activities* for the financial year 2021.

The Management Board appreciates the performance of the Centre in producing timely and high-quality information, together with strategic and situational analyses and threat assessments, to inform policy and practice, despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

The EMCDDA Management Board welcomed the Reference Framework and accompanying implementation plan for a new business model for the agency to further develop the EMCDDA into a customer-centric and data-driven organisation, an initiative proposed by the Director and adopted in December 2021.

The agency continued to show operational efficiency through the agile implementation of the 2021 work programme, and reached an outstanding budget execution, with 100 % of commitment appropriations executed.

In conclusion, the Management Board welcomes the 2021 *General Report of Activities*, which provides an excellent overview of the agency's achievements as set out in the work programme, and shows a very good level of performance.

Executive summary

This report presents the implementation of the activities of the EMCDDA's work programme for 2021, the first year of the multiannual single programming document **(SPD) 2021-2023**.

The report mirrors the work programme for 2021, which, in line with the *EMCDDA Strategy 2025*, presents the activities of the EMCDDA within the three main areas of work: health, security and business drivers.

While the EMCDDA has clear objectives and priorities in each area, it is important to note that the multifaceted nature of the drugs problem means that these areas are interlinked and complementary. Therefore, for the purpose of this executive summary, a section that includes transversal work is presented first.

Transversal work: health and security

In 2021 the EMCDDA continued to produce timely and high-quality information, together with strategic and situational analyses and threat assessments, to inform policy and practice. The agency's most tangible outputs are its publications, some of which are produced in cooperation with partners. In that regard, 49 scientific and institutional publications were produced in 2021. The EMCDDA also authored or co-authored 25 scientific articles and book chapters that were published in prestigious journals and publications, enhancing the agency's scientific reputation.

Over 1.8 million visitors accessed the EMCDDA website in 2021 (i.e. almost 5 000 visits per day, a 10 % increase on the figure for 2020).

One of the most downloaded resources was the *European Drug Report 2021,* the EMCDDA's yearly flagship publication, which was listed as one of the key publications of the EU catalogue by the official publisher for EU institutions and bodies. The report was officially launched virtually from Brussels, Paris and Lisbon, with a panel comprising Ylva Johansson, European Commissioner for Home Affairs; Laura d'Arrigo, Chair of the EMCDDA Management Board; and Alexis Goosdeel, EMCDDA Director.

Accompanying the main report was the *Statistical Bulletin 2021*, containing the European dataset underpinning the report, and the rapid communication *New benzodiazepines in Europe – a review,* providing a technical review of the current body of knowledge regarding new benzodiazepines that are monitored by the EU Early Warning System (EWS).

In 2021, while the COVID-19 pandemic continued to unfold, the EMCDDA released four new COVID-19 special reports, out of which two were part of the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA7) technical assistance project with candidates and potential candidates, implemented by the EMCDDA with funding from the European Commission.

Participation in drug-related events and in training and capacity building are complementary means for the EMCDDA to disseminate information, analysis and knowledge. While the COVID-19 pandemic transformed the way training activities were organised, the agency managed to transfer its knowledge to some 870 professionals working in the drugs field, including law enforcement officers and policymakers in the EU and beyond, an increase of almost 75 % compared to 2020. In addition, around 2 000 professionals working in the drug field all over the world attended the eight webinars that were organised by the EMCDDA during the year. As evidence of the growing importance of the transversal training and capacity-building area for the work of the EMCDDA, a new initiative, the European Drugs Winter School, was launched in 2021, to complement the already established European Drugs Summer School, which continued to be organised in collaboration with partners.

Of particular importance for our activities in all areas was the approval by the Council of the EU (Foreign Affairs) of the EU Drugs Action Plan 2021-2025. The new plan presents the concrete actions needed to achieve the priorities of the EU Drugs Strategy, adopted in December 2020. The EMCDDA will be called upon to contribute, as a responsible party, to defined key actions of the plan.

Specific highlights from the EMCDDA's work within the three main areas — health, security and business drivers — are presented below, and details can be found in the later sections of the report and in the annexes.

Health area

Through its *EMCDDA Strategy 2025*, the agency is committed to contributing to a healthier Europe by addressing important drug-related public health concerns. Key priorities are to contribute to the reduction of drug-related deaths; to promote hepatitis C (HCV) testing and treatment among people who inject drugs (PWID); and to promote the implementation of evidence-based prevention interventions.

In this regard, 2021 saw the release of the first modules of a major EMCDDA publication, *Health and Social Responses to Drug Problems: A European Guide 2021*. In an innovative format, this new flagship report examines some of the key public health challenges in the drugs field today and offers timely and practical advice to practitioners and policymakers for designing, targeting and implementing effective responses. Through the eight miniguides that were released in 2021, the publication covers responses in areas of major concern in EU countries: cannabis; non-medical use of medicines; opioids; polydrug use; stimulants; NPS; and harms relating to drug-related infectious diseases and opioid use.

This is also the first fully digital EMCDDA flagship publication, marking a key milestone in the development of a new EMCDDA approach to communication and knowledge dissemination.

Additional resources were launched during the year in all the public health areas covered by the agency. For example, the EMCDDA enhanced its efforts to support countries in their endeavours to prevent and control infectious diseases among PWID with the launch, on World Hepatitis Day, of a new online toolkit aiming to help European countries meet health targets to eliminate viral hepatitis.

In the other priority area of prevention, the European Prevention Curriculum (EUPC) continued to roll out the 'training of trainers' system, and new training took place at the EMCDDA. The EUPC will be hosted on PLATO, a new multilingual integrated platform designed to facilitate e-learning and exchange through a virtual community of practice, which was also launched in 2021.

In the area of NPS, the EMCDDA continued to implement the EWS in collaboration with its EU partners. The EWS was formally notified for the first time of 52 NPS during the year (a 15 % increase on the figure for 2020), bringing the total number of NPS currently monitored to around 880. In addition, seven risk communications were issued to the EWS network.

Risk assessments for two NPS (3-methylmethcathinone (3-MMC) and 3-chloromethcathinone (3-CMC)) were carried out by the extended EMCDDA Scientific Committee in a hybrid meeting and the reports were subsequently submitted to the EU institutions in line with the NPS regulation.

In addition, two NPS that had been risk assessed by the EMCDDA in 2020 (MDMB-4en-PINACA and 4F-MDMB-BICA) were included in the definition of 'drug' by a European Commission delegated directive in 2021.

As well as contributing to the new EU Drugs Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2025, many of the agency's efforts in this area have continued to focus on following up on the developments in the evolving cannabis market, in order to promptly inform the EU policy debate. To that end, in addition to the cannabis miniguide mentioned earlier in this executive summary, regular cannabis policy news items were issued on relevant European and international developments in this field. A workshop with five other EU agencies and the European Commission was organised by the EMCDDA on this topic in September.

Work was also scaled up in the field of drugs and prison, the importance of which is underlined in the new EU Drugs Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2025. In this regard, the EMCDDA published an in-depth overview (Insights) and a technical report, in addition to holding a webinar on the topic in June.

The information and analysis provided by the EMCDDA in the health area were supported by the ongoing underlying monitoring work carried out by the agency throughout the year. The core monitoring activity (based on the five EMCDDA key epidemiological indicators) was further strengthened, with a significant contribution from the Reitox network of NFPs, the agency's main data providers in the Member States. This year, once again, all meetings took place online.

New data sources also continued to be developed and implemented. These leading-edge indicators provide useful, timely and complementary data that offer valuable insights into drug use in Europe. To that end, the EMCDDA enhanced its collaboration with innovative initiatives, including the Sewage Analysis CORe Group Europe (SCORE) on wastewater analysis (in 2021, 82 European cities participated in the project, the highest number to date), the European Web Survey on Drugs (a record number of around 350 000 people, from 21 EU countries, five IPA7 project partners and three EU4Monitoring Drugs (EU4MD) project partner countries participated in the survey in 2021), the European Drug Emergencies Network (Euro-DEN), the European Syringe Collection and Analysis Project Enterprise (ESCAPE) and the Trans-European Drug Information Project. Data collected from the agency's collaboration with these initiatives fed into many of the EMCDDA analyses that were produced and published during the year.

Security area

Significant work in 2021 was dedicated to the reconceptualisation, in close collaboration with Europol, of the next edition of the joint *EU Drug Markets Report*. This joint EMCDDA-Europol flagship publication, a key reference for EU policymaking, will be presented in a new online, modular format. The development of the first two modules, on the methamphetamine and cocaine markets, started in 2021, for launch in 2022. These will be followed by five more modules, which will be launched in 2023 as part of the revamped report.

In 2021 the agency issued a study exploring links between drug supply, associated violence and exploitation of vulnerable groups in Denmark. While the data in this field are not included in routine monitoring activities, the EMCDDA's pioneer project suggests that appropriate investment is needed to inform effective responses to this growing form of criminal exploitation.

To support the comprehensive analytical effort in the security area, work continued in 2021 on improving the quality and availability of core supply data, in close collaboration with the Reitox NFPs and with our EU partner Europol. In terms of new sources of data and innovative monitoring approaches, the EMCDDA further developed its capacity for open-source information (OSI) and darknet monitoring, which have been gaining importance in relation to understanding the rapidly evolving and increasingly tech-savvy drug market.

Important efforts in this area have been dedicated to the implementation of the technical assistance projects with third countries, namely IPA7 and EU4MD. Two special reports were released during the year, on the threats to the EU of emerging methamphetamine developments in Afghanistan and Iran, including research on the Balkan and southern trafficking routes into the EU.

Several training events on the use of the EU data-collection instruments were organised for IPA7 project partners in an effort to enhance their capacity for drug monitoring.

In the policy area, much of the work of the agency was carried out to ensure its contribution to the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT) operational action plans (OAPs) of the EU policy cycle on organised and serious international crime. The agency implemented all its tasks under the 2021 OAP on Cannabis, cocaine and heroin and the OAP on Synthetic drugs and NPS, and further contributed to the planning and drafting of the respective OAPs for 2022.

The EMCDDA delivered drug-related training activities for a record number of 641 law enforcement professionals from the EU and technical cooperation project partners, alongside the European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL).

Contribution to policy also involved technical input and advice provided throughout the year, on request, to EU institutions, on issues such as the preparation of the EU Agenda to tackle Organised Crime, input to the Commission's activities on drug precursors, and briefing notes on emerging international drug issues.

Business drivers

Institutional and strategic developments

At governance level, following the elections held in December, Franz Pietsch (Austria) and Xavier Poos (Luxembourg) were elected to the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair, respectively, of the EMCDDA Management Board.

In 2021 the agency embarked on the second phase of implementing the *EMCDDA Strategy 2025*, and its work will now be guided by the next roadmap — *Roadmap 2025*. The new strategic document, which was adopted by the EMCDDA Management Board in June, defines 67 key milestones to be reached by the end of the *EMCDDA Strategy 2025*.

A major organisational development in 2021 was the adoption by the EMCDDA Management Board of the Reference Framework and accompanying implementation plan for a new business model for the agency**,** further to a proposal presented by the Director.

The new business model aims to enable the further evolution of the EMCDDA as a customer-centric and data-driven organisation, through sustainable organisational change measures and activities to support the agency's digital transformation.

This will enable the EMCDDA to deliver more value to its customers and support its transition to a future new mandate, as applicable following the ongoing discussions by the EU institutions.

Communication and service delivery to meet evolving EMCDDA customer needs

In 2021 the transformation in this area continued, along the following drivers of change: customer centricity, boosted by the new business model initiative; digital transformation, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic; and reimagined

internal communication, prompted by changing organisational needs.

A significant organisational effort was involved in the further definition of a customer-first approach (making use of the results of the customers' needs project carried out in 2018-2020), including the setting up of Innovation fora on customer needs. These fora involved EMCDDA staff (more than 50 % of all the agency's staff participated), who brought their complementary perspectives and engaged in a common effort towards building a new customer-centric EMCDDA culture.

Much of the work in this area during the year was dedicated to ensuring that timely products and services were provided to EMCDDA customers, often in a redesigned format and via digital channels. These efforts were accompanied by activities to enhance engagement with the agency's audiences, mainly via online communication channels. Among other effects, this resulted in a 10 % increase in the number of visits to the EMCDDA website (the major dissemination channel of the agency) and the continuation of the upward trend in the number of social media followers, with double-digit increases (as compared with the figures for 2020) for two key social media channels, namely LinkedIn (+32 %) and Instagram (+43 %). Some 273 media requests were also serviced in the course of the year, an average of 1.5 requests per working day.

Working in partnership

In fulfilling its tasks, the agency relies on a large number of partners, in particular the Reitox network of NFPs, which plays a critical role in sustaining the EU core monitoring system. In 2021 the NFPs adopted the second *Reitox Development Framework Roadmap* (2021-2025), which was subsequently endorsed by the EMCDDA Management Board and will guide the work of the network in the coming years.

In performing its work and achieving its objectives, the EMCDDA relies on its other EU and international partners. Together with the eight other EU agencies that are members of the Justice and Home Affairs (JHA) Agencies' Network, the EMCDDA signed a joint statement on the EU Green Deal, reaffirming its commitment to contribute to a safer and cleaner environment.

The EMCDDA was also an active member of several EU Agencies Network sub-networks. For example, the agency led the 'Futures' cluster of the EU Agencies Network on Scientific Advice (EU-ANSA), which brings together agencies that are conducting foresight activities in their respective areas of competence.

In terms of international organisations, the EMCDDA has continued to enhance its collaboration with the United Nations (UN) system, as well as with other key partners such as the Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission (CICAD).

Regarding cooperation with third countries, the agency continued to cooperate with candidates and potential candidates to the EU and to implement a technical cooperation project under the IPA. In this regard, the IPA7 project entered its third year of implementation. The IPA 7 technical cooperation project has a total budget of EUR 1 million and is planned to run until December 2022 (extended from June 2022). It aims to support the IPA beneficiaries in their approximation to the EU *acquis* in the field of drugs information, as well as to enhance the capacity of the EU and the six IPA beneficiaries to detect, analyse and report on emerging drug-related health and security threats.

Cooperation with European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) partner countries continued at regional level through the EU4MD technical assistance project, financed by the European Neighbourhood Instrument. The project, which has a total budget of EUR 3 million, will run until December 2022 (extended from June 2022), with the objective of supporting national and regional readiness in the ENP area (for 14 partner countries) to identify and respond to drug-related health and security threats.

In 2021 the EMCDDA started its first technical assistance project at bilateral level, the EMCDDA for Georgia (EMCDDA4GE) project, which aims to contribute to enhanced national responses on drug-related health and security threats in Georgia. The project has a budget of EUR 800 000, granted by the EU, and a duration of 24 months.

A significant amount of training took place during the year, and project outputs were released under the projects mentioned, including trendspotter briefings on the impact of COVID-19 in partner countries and studies on the threats to the EU of methamphetamine production in Asia.

Corporate performance

Despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, in 2021 the EMCDDA managed to achieve a very good level of performance, reaching the targets set for its work programme implementation for all the three priority levels, starting with the level 1 priority results, which were 100 % implemented (see Annex Ib).

(*) 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.

However, a few activities could not be fully implemented, or had to be cancelled, due either to a lack of resources or to specific conditions, including the restrictions relating to COVID-19 (see Annex Ia).

In terms of the budget execution, once again the agency reached an outstanding level, with 100 % of commitment appropriations executed.

The ongoing evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic has meant that EMCDDA staff have continued to work remotely, or in hybrid mode. Ensuring that the information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure could support the new organisational arrangements for staff was critical to achieving the agency's excellent performance in 2021. To this end, during the year the ICT operations were focused on ensuring that the specific needs of the Business Continuity Plan (BCP) (which was in place until 18 October) could be fulfilled. Top priority was also given to the implementation of the EMCDDA workstation transformation programme, which aimed to create a modernised digital workplace, and which was successfully completed in 2021.

PART I

Report of activities: key achievements of the year

Main area 1: Health

Core monitoring

The annual core data-collection and management activities are key tasks set up in the EMCDDA's founding regulation. These are implemented every year in close collaboration with the agency's main data providers, namely the Reitox network of NFPs in the EU Member States, Norway and Turkey.

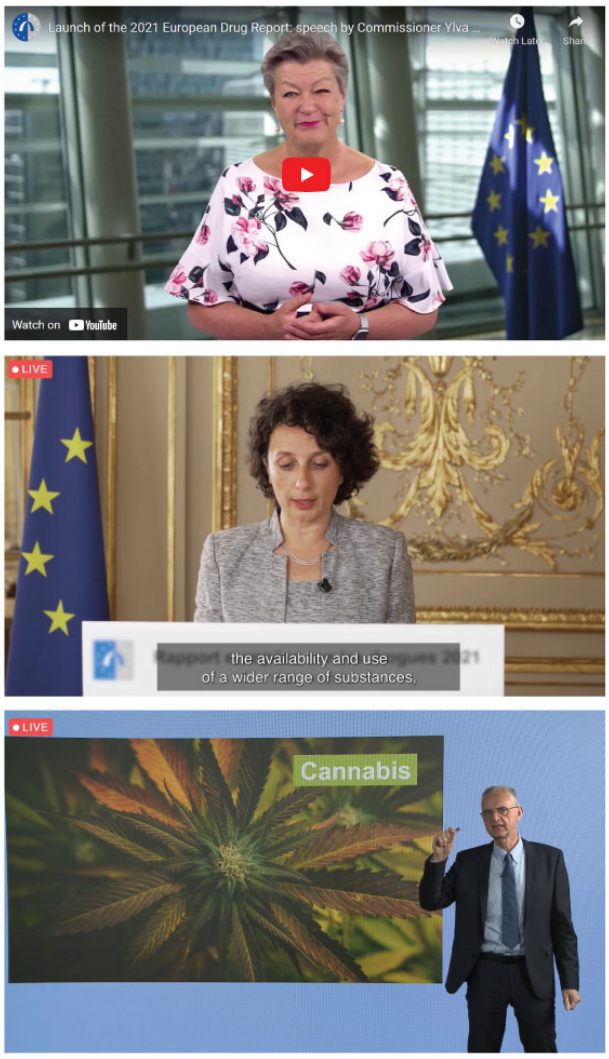
Revolutionary changes, both in the extent and nature of the drugs problem and in the world in which we live, have called for constant reflection, innovation and agility to keep pace with new developments and to rethink existing routines. This is why, in its response to a fast-moving drugs problem, the EMCDDA adopts a multi-indicator approach to monitoring.

Central to this core monitoring activity are the five key epidemiological indicators:

- GPS: prevalence and patterns of drug use among the general population;
- PDU: problem drug use;
- TDI: treatment demand indicator;
- DRD: drug-related deaths and mortality among drug users;
- DRID: drug-related infectious diseases.

European Drug Report 2021: in the spotlight

FIGURE 1. **Screenshots of EU Commissioner Ylva Johansson, Chair of the EMCDDA Management Board Laura d'Arrigo and EMCDDA Director Alexis Goosdeel at the launch of the *European Drug Report 2021***



For more than 25 years the EMCDDA has published its annual report on drug problems in Europe. The European Drug Report 2021 was listed as one of the key publications of the European Union catalogue by the official publisher of EU institutions and bodies.

The latest annual review of the drug situation in Europe, published in June, is based on data from 29 countries (EU 27, Turkey and Norway) and offers new insights into the health and security implications of a complex and evolving drugs problem and of a drug market resilient to COVID-19 disruption.

The report was officially launched virtually in Brussels, Paris and Lisbon, with a panel comprising: European Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva Johansson; Chair of the EMCDDA Management Board Laura d'Arrigo; and EMCDDA Director Alexis Goosdeel. The three speeches were followed by a special session for journalists.

The report warns of the risks to public health posed by the availability and use of a wider range of substances, often of high potency or purity. Drawing on the latest EMCDDA trendspotter study, the report also explores the recent effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on drug markets, use and services.

New benzodiazepines, which are not controlled by international drug laws, were under the spotlight in a new report released by the agency alongside the *European Drug Report 2021*.

The Statistical Bulletin 2021, containing the European dataset underpinning the report, was also made available. In addition, a video and two news releases ('Taster' in English and 'Highlights' in 24 languages) were produced by the agency to mark the launch of the *European Drug Report 2021*.

Drug monitoring in times of COVID-19

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is likely to have a profound impact on the lives of high-risk drug users and on the services responding to their needs in at least two important ways: first, through the restrictive measures introduced to mitigate the spread of the virus, and second, as a result of the extensive economic downturn.

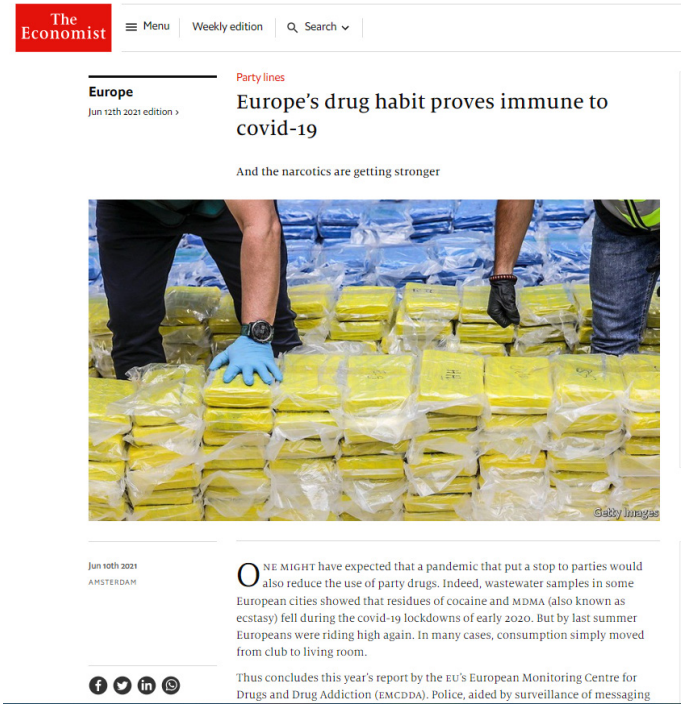
To respond to information needs during the ongoing public health emergency, the EMCDDA has worked with other EU agencies and national data providers to create resources for the rapid identification and sharing of information relevant to its stakeholder groups.

A scientific article released in January in *European Addiction Research* explores the double effect of COVID-19 confinement measures and economic recession on high-risk drug users and drug services.

As a component of Health and Social Responses to Drug Problems: A European Guide 2021 (see section on 'Drug interventions' for details), the EMCDDA published a spotlight that outlines the main impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on drug availability and use in Europe and discusses how services established to tackle drug-related problems have responded to emerging challenges.

In April the EMCDDA released its third report in the series of rapid trendspotter studies entitled **Impact of COVID-19 on drug markets, use, harms and drug services in the community and prisons**. The results from this study provide a first glimpse into new developments emerging both during and in response to the pandemic, which could have important implications for the future. The findings were communicated by prestigious international media, such *The Economist* (see Figure 2).

FIGURE 2. **Article released in The Economist, 12 June 2021**


The Economist

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Europe
Jun 12th 2021 edition

Party lines

Europe's drug habit proves immune to covid-19

And the narcotics are getting stronger

Getty Images

Jun 10th 2021
AMSTERDAM

ONE MIGHT have expected that a pandemic that put a stop to parties would also reduce the use of party drugs. Indeed, wastewater samples in some European cities showed that residues of cocaine and MDMA (also known as ecstasy) fell during the covid-19 lockdowns of early 2020. But by last summer Europeans were riding high again. In many cases, consumption simply moved from club to living room.

Thus concludes this year's report by the EU's European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA). Police, aided by surveillance of messaging

An additional resource on this topic was published to mark International Overdose Awareness day on 31 August. The **Frequently asked questions** (FAQs) pulls together the most recent data on drug-related deaths (DRD) in Europe to raise awareness on the nature and scale of the problem.

A paper published by EMCDDA staff in the *European Journal of Pain* addresses the question of whether **Europe is facing an opioid epidemic** and utilises data from the European monitoring system on opioid use, harms and availability to help assess the situation.

The EMCDDA brought together more than 60 European and international experts for the annual meeting on the key indicator DRD. The online meeting provided a space for sharing and discussing new data, studies and experiences at regional, national and European level. The meeting report, **Drug-related deaths (DRD) in Europe: updates from the annual meeting of the EMCDDA DRD expert network 30 September – 1 October 2021**, which was released in November, provides an overview of the presentations and discussions. **An update on DRD in Europe,** based primarily on presentations and discussions held at the 2019 meeting of the EMCDDA expert network on DRD, was published in May.

In July the EMCDDA and the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD) published **the methodology** used in the **2019 ESPAD survey**, the project's seventh data-collection round. The report is an essential resource supporting ESPAD's main strengths: data comparability and consistency across countries and over time, following a common methodology.

New trends and health threats

To improve the timeliness of reporting, it is crucial that new and flexible monitoring tools complement the EMCDDA's core monitoring system. To that end, in 2021 the agency further developed and strengthened its system for monitoring and understanding new and emerging trends in drug use and drug markets.

Data from hospital emergency departments show that every year in Europe, thousands of individuals experience drug-related toxicity that results in emergency presentation to hospital. A **Euro-DEN Plus technical kick-off meeting** took place in January to discuss the expansion of the network in 2021 to new hospital 'sentinel' centres in European cities outside the EU.

The **latest findings from the largest European project in the emerging science of wastewater analysis** were presented in May by the Europe-wide SCORE, in association with the EMCDDA. The **project analysed wastewater in 82 European cities** (18 countries) to explore the drug-taking behaviours of their inhabitants. This is the highest number of cities participating to date, despite COVID-19 disruption.

The agency analysed and published **new findings from the ESCAPE network**. **The results** are based on two data-collection campaigns carried out in 2018 and 2019 and have also been made available as a **scientific article** published in the *International Journal of Drug Policy*. The **European Syringe Collection and Analysis Enterprise (ESCAPE) – generic protocol**, released in February, documents the new approach that has been developed to monitor substances injected by PWID through analytically confirmed data at the local level: the analysis of residual content of used syringes.

In March the EMCDDA published its **latest European Web Survey on Drugs**. Targeted at people aged 18 and over who have used drugs, the survey aims to improve understanding of patterns of drug use in Europe and to help shape future drug policies and interventions. The voluntary, anonymous survey — one of the agency's targeted 'leading-edge' monitoring

methods — was conducted in 2021 in 31 countries, including non-EU countries, and in 28 languages. Around 350 000 people engaged with the European Web Survey on Drugs 2021, which closed in May. For the 2021 survey round, the agency produced 29 **promotional videos** in different languages to encourage people to answer the survey. During the year the agency also worked on an Insights publication on the topic, which will be released in 2022.

A new **EMCDDA briefing**, published in February 2021, examines the impact of COVID-19 on drug use and drug services in the Western Balkans. Published under the IPA7 project, the report presents the results of studies conducted using the agency's trendspotter methodology.

In addition, in April the EMCDDA released the third in a series of **rapid trendspotter studies exploring the impact of COVID-19 on the drug situation and responses** to it. Revisiting and reviewing findings from two studies that were carried out in 2020 on the effects of the pandemic on drug use and services, the report identified new trends and developments that may have implications for policy and practice.

Responding to new psychoactive substances: EU Early Warning System and risk assessment

In 2021 the EMCDDA continued to ensure the robust implementation of the EU EWS on NPS, under the EU legislative framework on NPS ([1]), and in close collaboration with its partners in the Member States (the Reitox network of EWS correspondents), Europol, the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and partner EU agencies (the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA) and the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA)).

Key outputs from the EWS included risk communications issued to the EWS network, namely rapid formal notifications of the first detection in Europe of new substances, public health alerts on NPS, the exchange of forensic and toxicological analytical data, and outputs relating to the implementation of the new NPS legislation.

In a nutshell, the EMCDDA's main activities in this area were as follows.

- Case reports on 52 NPS detected for the first time in the EU were received, processed and analysed; literature available for each of those substances was assessed, and available information was appraised prior to issuing the formal notifications to the EU EWS network. This represents an almost 15 % increase on figures for the previous year (46 NPS notified in 2020).
- Around 880 NPS were monitored by the EU EWS, as of the end of 2021.
- Seven risk communications, including four alerts, were issued to the EU EWS network.
- Two situation reports were issued, in June and in December. These reports provide guidance, highlight to the network the most relevant findings, and contribute to the strengthening of preparedness and responses to NPS.
- Two initial reports — on 3-methylmethcathinone (3-MMC) and 3-chloromethcathinone (3-CMC) — were launched, prepared and submitted to the Council and the Commission within the deadlines stipulated by the NPS regulation.
- Risk assessments for 3-MMC and 3-CMC were carried out by the EMCDDA, and the respective technical reports and risk assessment reports were submitted to the Council and the Commission within the deadlines stipulated by the NPS regulation.

FIGURE 3. **New psychoactive substances monitoring in 2021**

Operation of the EU Early Warning System

Network management and the provision of technical assistance on a daily basis to the members of the Reitox EWS network continued to be among the EMCDDA's central activities. This was particularly important within the context of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, which continued to affect the work of the EMCDDA and its partners. Notwithstanding these constraints, the EU EWS continued to run without interruption.

(1) From 23 November 2018, Council Decision 2005/387/JHA was replaced by Regulation (EU) 2017/2101 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 November 2017 amending Regulation (EC) No 1920/2006 as regards information exchange on, and an early warning system and risk assessment procedure for, new psychoactive substances.

The 21st annual meeting of the Reitox EWS network took place via videoconference on 22 and 23 June, with the participation of the 27 EU Member States, Norway and Turkey, and invited speakers from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the National Institute on Drug Abuse and the United States Drug Enforcement Administration. All the presentations given at this meeting and the minutes of the proceedings were published in the European Database on New Drugs.

Dissemination of knowledge and expertise on NPS

In 2021 the EMCDDA participated in a record number of 20 meetings organised (online) by forensic science and toxicological networks (including the European Network of Forensic Science Institutes, the European Association of Poisons Centres and Clinical Toxicologists, and the International Alliance of Clinical and Forensic Toxicologists). As the EU centre of excellence on drugs, the agency provided keynote presentations and contributed its knowledge to the rich scientific exchange in this area.

The EMCDDA played an important role in the organisation of the **VIII International Conference on Novel Psychoactive Substances**, jointly with the International Society for the Study of Emerging Drugs, the UNODC, the World Anti-Doping Agency, the University of Hertfordshire and the Center for Forensic Science Research and Education. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, once again the conference was held online, on 17-19 November. The EMCDDA, as a key member of the Scientific Conference Committee, designed the scientific programme and contributed several keynote presentations.

The EMCDDA released two new reports during the year. The rapid communication **New benzodiazepines in Europe – a review** was published on 9 June, alongside the *European Drug Report 2021* (see also the earlier section on core monitoring under this main area). Often marketed as 'designer benzodiazepines', these substances are sold as 'legal' replacements for controlled benzodiazepines and are becoming increasingly available in Europe. They are monitored by the agency as NPS through the EU **EWS**.

This was followed by the launch, in September, of the rapid communication **Synthetic cannabinoids in Europe – a review**. It provides a technical review of the current body of knowledge regarding synthetic cannabinoids that are monitored by the EU EWS. The aim of this report is to strengthen situational awareness of synthetic cannabinoids in Europe and to help stakeholders prepare for, and respond to, public health and social threats caused by such substances.

Reflecting the world-leading expertise of the EMCDDA and its role in the NPS area, particularly in relation to early warning, each year the agency provides information, expertise and advice to the UNODC and the World Health Organization (WHO). To that end, periodic submission of data took place in 2021, on behalf of the EU Member States, on NPS formally notified by the EU EWS in 2020 and 2021, and submission of data on all NPS detected in 2020, by country, through annual situation reports.

The EMCDDA also provided the WHO Expert Committee on Drug Dependence (ECDD) with data for the prioritisation process and for the preparation of critical reviews, which informed the discussions held at the 44th ECDD meeting.

The agency's work with EU priority third countries, namely candidate and potential candidates to the EU, continued in 2021 under the framework of the IPA7 project (see 'Business driver 2: Partnership'). In that regard, all 52 formal notifications on NPS detected in Europe were issued in a timely manner to the IPA7 beneficiaries, as required. Furthermore, the IPA7 national early warning systems coordinators from Serbia and Kosovo ([2]) attended the online annual meeting of the Reitox EWS network.

A special EU EWS meeting was held on 24 June, with 31 participants from IPA7 beneficiaries and ENP partner countries (within the EU4MD project) (see 'Business driver 2: Partnership').

Risk assessments on new psychoactive substances, and control measures within the EU

The extended Scientific Committee of the EMCDDA met on 18-19 November to risk assess two NPS from the synthetic cathinone family, 3-MMC and 3-CMC. The risk assessments explored the health and social risks of NPS, as well as related international trafficking and the involvement of organised crime. In line with the applicable legislation, the risk assessments were conducted on the basis of information provided to the Scientific Committee by the Member States, the EMCDDA, Europol, the EMA, the ECDC, the ECHA and the EFSA.

The two risk assessment reports were subsequently submitted to the European Commission and the EU Member States, two weeks in advance of the six-week deadline stipulated by Article 5c of the amended Regulation.

The EMCDDA initial reports on the NPS **3-CMC** and **3-MMC** were released in December.

(2) 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.

Earlier in the year, in March, two reports were released: **Risk assessment report** *of a new psychoactive substance: methyl 2-{[1-(4-fluorobutyl)-1H-indole-3-carbonyl]amino}-3,3-dimethylbutanoate (4F-MDMB-BICA) in accordance with Article 5c of Regulation (EC) No 1920/2006 (as amended)*; and **Risk assessment report** *of a new psychoactive substance: methyl 3,3-dimethyl-2-{[1-(pent-4-en-1-yl)-1H-indazole-3-car- bonyl] amino}butanoate (MDMB-4en-PINACA) in accordance with Article 5c of Regulation (EC) No 1920/2006 (as amended)*.

These risk assessment reports present the summary findings and the conclusion of the risk assessments carried out by the Scientific Committee of the EMCDDA on 4F-MDMB-BICA and MDMB-4en-PINACA, respectively, on 7 December 2020.

Based on the information provided by these risk assessments, on 12 March 2021 the European Commission proposed to control the two harmful NPS — MDMB-4en-PINACA and 4F-MDMB-BICA — across the EU. The substances are sold as 'legal' replacements for cannabis, or already controlled synthetic cannabinoids, and can pose a high risk of severe poisoning.

On 20 May a European Commission delegated directive to control MDMB-4en-PINACA and 4F-MDMB-BICA was published in the **Official Journal of the European Union (OJ L 178)**. The directive entered into force on 9 June, after which EU Member States had six months to enact the ban into national law.

As a further recognition of the relevance of NPS on EU drugs policy, the European Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva Johansson, visited the **Belgian National Institute of Criminalistics and Criminology (NICC)** in Brussels on 6 December, accompanied by the EMCDDA Director, Alexis Goosdeel. The delegation was welcomed by the NICC Director-General, Dr Pierre Van Renterghem.

Edith Hofer
Former coordinator of the Drugs policy team, DG Migration and Home Affairs, European Commission

> "I wanted to use this opportunity to thank you for all your hard and excellent work on the initial reports and the risk assessment reports and for all your support to the Commission in the preparation of this delegated act. And all this under difficult circumstances due to the ongoing pandemic. Without you, I could not do any of the work related to NPS. A very big thank you to all of you!"

Commissioner for Home Affairs Ylva Johansson and EMCDDA Director Alexis Goosdeel visiting the NICC in Brussels

The institute has a forensic laboratory linked to the Belgium NFP of the EMCDDA Reitox network, directly working with the EMCDDA on the EWS for NPS.

The purpose of the visit was to gain an insight into the work of the institute and its state-of-the-art drug laboratory. With new substances from diverse chemical groups emerging rapidly in Europe, and often sold in combination with other drugs, the first step in responding effectively to this phenomenon is their forensic identification.

Drug interventions

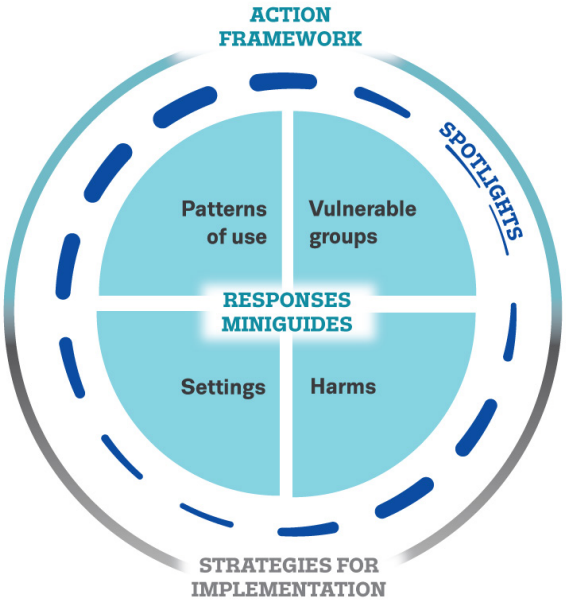
Health and social responses to drug problems

The EMCDDA has an important responsibility to act as a catalyst for improving the quality and delivery of responses to reduce the health and social consequences associated with drug use.

Health and Social Responses to Drug Problems: A European Guide 2021

In October the **EMCDDA published Health and Social Responses to Drug Problems: a European Guide 2021**, which examines some of the key public health challenges in the drugs field today and offers timely and practical advice to practitioners and policymakers on designing, targeting and implementing effective responses.

FIGURE 4. **European Responses guide package**



The guide is composed of four sets of miniguides focusing on patterns of use, harms, settings and vulnerable groups.

Drawing on insights from 29 countries (EU 27, Turkey and Norway), the miniguides provide an overview of the most important aspects to consider when planning or delivering health and social responses, and review the availability and effectiveness of the responses.

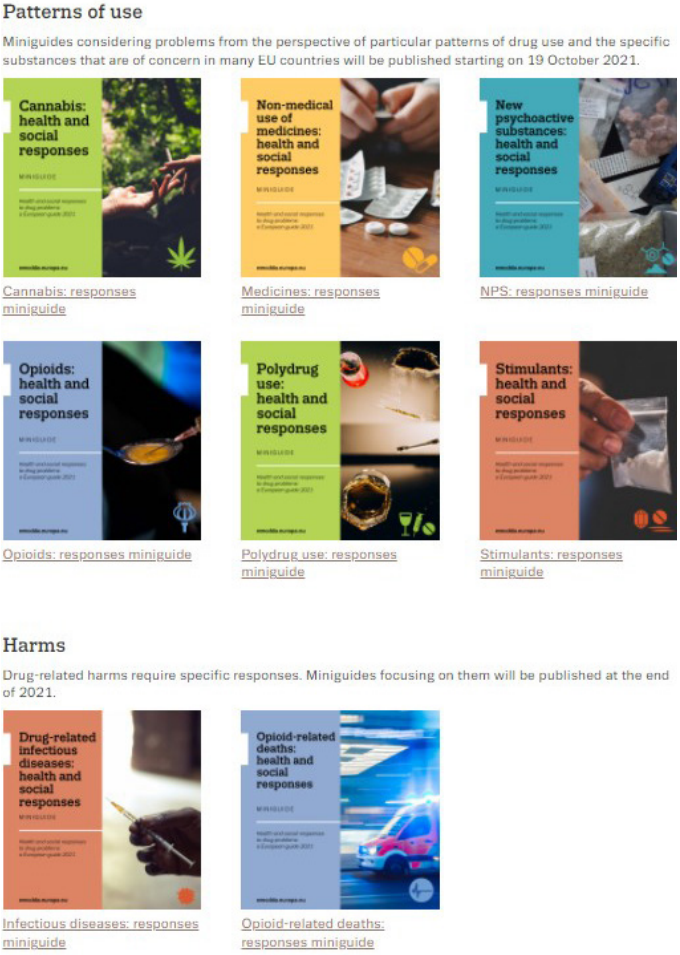
The first bundle of miniguides, released in October, focus on responses to particular patterns of drug use and on specific substances that are of concern in many EU countries. They cover: cannabis; non-medical use of medicines; opioids; polydrug use; stimulants; and NPS.

Bundle 2, comprising miniguides focusing on harms (drug-related infectious diseases and opioid-related harms), was published in December.

Framing the miniguides are two central resources: an action framework for developing responses (published in October 2021) and a set of strategies for successful implementation (to be published in 2022).

The Action framework for developing and implementing responses to drug problems is designed to clarify current thinking about the response process and the factors to consider at each stage.

FIGURE 5. **Responses miniguides**



Published alongside the miniguides are a series of spotlights shining a light on a number of hot topics from a health and social responses perspective. These are:

- Addressing sexual health issues associated with drug use
- Comorbid substance use and mental health problems
- Fentanils and other new opioids
- Health and social responses to drug problems during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Non-medical use of benzodiazepines
- Performance- and image-enhancing drugs
- Synthetic cannabinoids
- Understanding and using evidence

With the publication of the first Responses miniguides, the EMCDDA took a big step towards digital transformation. The new modular guide is the first flagship publication to

be transformed into an entirely digital product, integrating accessible layout, data visualisation and other functionalities such as PDF on-the-fly creation, and it has laid the groundwork for digital publishing processes.

Best practice portal

The EMCDDA continues to identify best practices among interventions across the EU and beyond, and the factors determining their effectiveness. The main dissemination channel for this information is the best practice portal. In 2021 existing modules were kept updated and new modules were added, including on the following topics:

- Psychotherapy to improve mental and treatment outcomes in patients with comorbid bipolar and substance use disorders
- Adjunctive formal psychotherapy to contingency management to improve outcomes
- Physical exercise to improve drug-related outcomes
- School-based eHealth interventions to prevent risk behaviours
- Digital interventions to reduce cannabis use among adolescents and young adults

In addition, the portal has been updated regularly with new evidence on various other subjects.

In September the EMCDDA published a new manual entitled Implementing quality standards for drug services and systems: a six-step guide to support quality assurance. The publication offers practical advice for professionals implementing quality assurance in the area of drug demand reduction.

An important additional task is the further consolidation of the EMCDDA's online databases on interventions in nightlife settings and evidence- based prevention programmes with online training tools.

Early in 2021 the agency released a technical report, Balancing access to opioid substitution treatment (OST) with preventing the diversion of opioid substitution medications in Europe: challenges and implications, which highlights the various dimensions of the issue and the importance of balanced policies that maximise access to treatment while minimising diversion and misuse.

In 2021 the agency continued to follow up on work in the public health priority areas of drug prevention, treatment for drug problems, the reduction of infectious diseases associated with drug use, and drug-related mortality. Special attention was given to developing resources in areas where drugs have a significant impact on European public health, such as HCV prevention and treatment, as envisaged in the EMCDDA

FIGURE 6. **Six key steps to implementing quality standards**

Hepatitis C: in the spotlight

On 28 July, World Hepatitis Day, the EMCDDA launched a new set of resources to help European countries meet health targets to eliminate viral hepatitis.

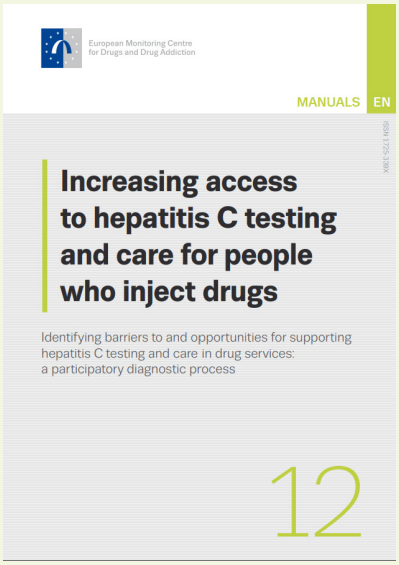
These resources, presented in an online toolkit, are part of a wider EMCDDA harm-reduction initiative supporting countries in their efforts to prevent and control infectious diseases among PWID.

The new online toolkit, Increase access to hepatitis C (HCV) testing and care in drug services, which aims to help European countries meet health targets to eliminate viral hepatitis, was released. Resources in the toolkit include an interactive elimination barometer, a manual, a knowledge questionnaire and innovative models of care that have increased access to HCV testing and treatment through drug services in some countries.

The new manual, Increasing access to hepatitis C testing and care for people who inject drugs (see Figure 7) is designed to help improve access to HCV testing and care for PWID via drug services. Hepatitis testing services tend to be located in hospitals or specialist clinics that are often 'out of reach' for PWID.

Also in July, the EMCDDA guide to holding a stakeholder round-table on supporting hepatitis C testing and care in drug services was launched. This guide is aimed at supporting teams organising stakeholder round-table meetings as part of their regional or national diagnostic processes for identifying barriers to and opportunities to increase HCV testing and care in drug services.

FIGURE 7. **Hepatitis C testing manual**



In addition, two miniguides on specific responses to drug-related harms were published in November in the framework of Health and Social Responses to Drug Problems: A European Guide 2021.

Strategy 2025 (Action area 3.4). This area has been identified as having a major impact on the health of people in the EU and is closely connected to United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Sustainable Development Goal 3), which calls for specific action to ensure adequate coverage of drug treatment and to combat viral hepatitis.

Training and capacity building

Another effective means of disseminating best practices is through training activities. During the year, several such events took place, mainly virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In 2021, for the first time, the EMCDDA and the University Institute of Lisbon offered a European Drugs Winter School in addition to the traditional European Drugs Summer School. The Winter School took place as a virtual event in March and explored the theme 'Responses to, and preparedness for, health-related threats (COVID-19 lessons learned)'. The Summer School took place in June and July with a focus on 'Vulnerable groups'. More than 50 students from almost 20 nationalities attended the two online courses.

In 2021 the EMCDDA successfully piloted its first e-learning platform. PLATO, a multilingual integrated platform, is designed to facilitate online training, e-learning and discussion through a virtual community of practice. The pilot phase ran from June to November 2021 and underwent a 360º evaluation in December.

PLATO hosts the EUPC, a programme targeting decision-, opinion- and policymakers at local and regional level. The platform is intended as a step forward in the agency's digital transformation and is one of the pioneering outputs of its new customer-centric business model. It will enable faster, broader and virtual access to scientific content, promote active stakeholder involvement in the production and use of contents, and facilitate the sharing of experiences. PLATO can be accessed via the EMCDDA's best practice portal for training purposes.

During the piloting phase, 20 professionals from 10 countries took part in training courses, including partners from Western Balkan and ENP countries.

Participants of meeting EUPC — ToT (Training of Trainers), 6-10 December

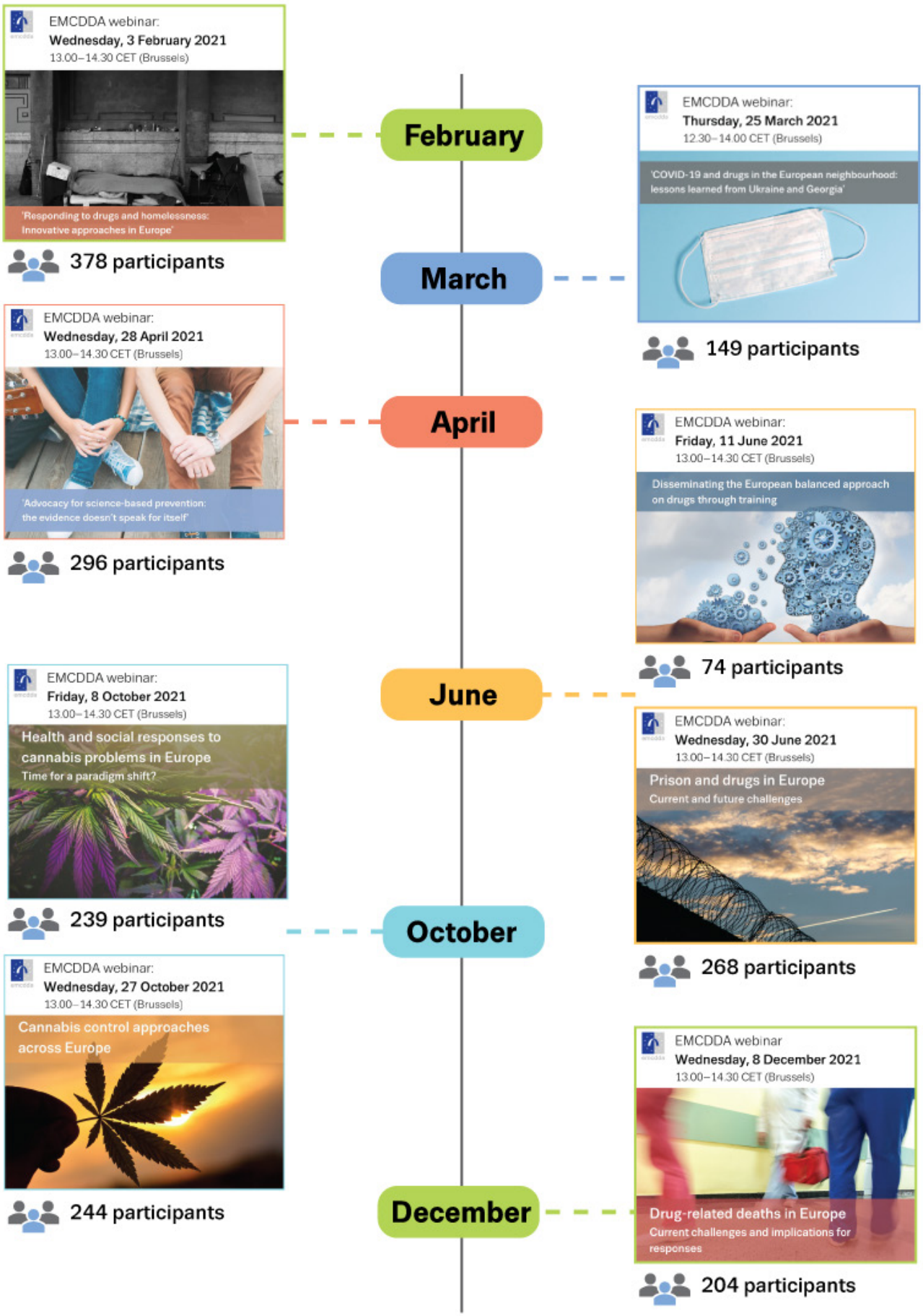
The piloting phase was completed by a face-to-face technical meeting in Lisbon on 6-10 December.

In addition, the **EUPC handbook**, launched in 2019, is now available in French and Portuguese, bringing the total number of languages to nine.

The EMCDDA continued to organise webinars, which are designed to give a voice to professionals working in the drugs field and are conceived as conversations around key topics of interest and emerging challenges. During 2021 around 2 000 professionals working in the drug field all over the world attended **EMCDDA webinars** (see Figure 8 for details). Video recordings of some of the webinars are available in the **EMCDDA Media library**.

> **"It has been very useful to attend the EMCDDA webinars throughout this year... As a civil servant working in the Spanish National Plan on Drugs, this is an excellent tool to be updated and know more about the complex issue of drug policy."**
>
> **Daniel Pero-Sanz**
> Head of Service of Multilateral Relations, Subdirectorate-General for Institutional Relations, Spanish Government Delegation for the National Plan on Drugs

FIGURE 8. **2021 EMCDDA webinars**



Drug policies

Support for drug policy at the EU level

Throughout the year, the EMCDDA provided technical input and advice to drug policymakers at the EU level, namely the European Parliament, the Council of the European Union and the European Commission.

The EMCDDA Director had meetings with members of the European Parliament and presented the main findings of the *European Drug Report 2021* remotely to the Committee for Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs (LIBE). He also discussed recent developments in the drugs situation in the EU and the responses to it, in particular with regard to crack cocaine and the possible impact of international policy developments on the drugs situation, as well as on the EMCDDA's budgetary needs for 2022 (see 'EMCDDA Director: main external activities').

Concerning the Council, the EMCDDA provided support to the Portuguese and Slovenian Presidencies. The agency attended institutional and technical meetings by invitation. These included attendance at 10 meetings of the Horizontal Drugs Group (HDG), two meetings of the National Drugs Coordinators, and the policy dialogues of the EU with China, USA, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), Russia, the Western Balkans, the Dublin Group and the Civil Society Forum on Drugs. The agency also contributed to the meetings of the Council's Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security (COSI) and the Dialogue on Justice and Security EU-Mexico. Two briefing notes were produced for the EU Presidency, the members of the HDG and the European Commission on two topics, namely an overview of the drug situation in the Western Balkans and an overview of the drug situation in Montenegro.

In terms of further collaboration with the European Commission, the Director had regular meetings throughout the year with the Commission's services (see 'EMCDDA Director: main external activities').

In April the European Commissioner for Home Affairs, Ylva Johansson, paid her first visit to the agency during a day of events relating to the fight against organised crime. The EMCDDA Director, Alexis Goosdeel, welcomed the Commissioner to the agency for talks on its current priorities and challenges.

The EMCDDA attended the 64th session of the Commission on Narcotics Drugs (CND) to provide technical support to the European Commission and the EU Member States, and participated in a series of side events. The Director gave presentations at the side event organised by the Russian Federation as well as at the EU side event organised by the Portuguese Presidency on the EU Drugs Strategy 2021-2025.

EU Drugs Action Plan 2021-2025: in the spotlight

The EMCDDA provided technical support to the Commission and the Council, as required, on the preparation of the new EU Drugs Action Plan 2021-2025.

On 21 June, the Council of the EU (Foreign Affairs) approved the EU Drugs Action Plan 2021-2025. The new plan presents the concrete actions needed to achieve the priorities of the EU Drugs Strategy adopted in December 2020. The plan was prepared by national and EU representatives on the Council's HDG under the Portuguese Presidency of the EU.

The action plan sets out a specific timetable for these actions, a list of responsible parties and a series of indicators to measure effectiveness. The EMCDDA is mentioned as a responsible party in numerous key actions of the plan.

With the current EU Drugs Strategy, the EU and its Member States reaffirm their commitment to a balanced, evidence-based approach to addressing the drug phenomenon in Europe, with the preservation of human rights at its core.

The strategy draws on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic in the drugs area and takes a future-oriented approach, promoting research, innovation and foresight to respond more effectively to, and anticipate, forthcoming challenges.

FIGURE 9. **Logo of Portuguese EU presidency**

The EMCDDA contributed further to the enlargement package adopted by the Commission. The package contains reports in which the Commission presents its detailed annual assessment of the state of play in each candidate and potential candidate to the EU. The EMCDDA provided a briefing note and a roadmap for each candidate and potential candidate country, assessing the progress made and challenges met in developing a drug information system comparable with that in the EU.

Monitor and report on key policy developments

The EMCDDA monitors and follows up on important policy developments. The drug situation in Europe is increasingly influenced by developments occurring internationally. One key example is the changes in the ways in which several countries and jurisdictions outside Europe are now regulating the recreational use of cannabis.

These developments have generated interest among policymakers and the public in Europe. In response, the EMCDDA has reported on the latest developments through a wide range of channels, including the EMCDDA's cannabis news alert, which provide policymakers with timely updates on cannabis policies.

On 5 November the EMCDDA contributed to the an event on the latest developments of Cannabis in Cyprus, organised by the Cyprus National Addictions Authority in cooperation with the Drug Law Enforcement Unit of the Cyprus Police. The keynote speech delivered by the EMCDDA, 'Laws on cannabis: the prohibition/regulation confusion', was highly appreciated.

> "Your support is greatly significant in better understanding the issue and address the challenges that lie ahead by adjusting our national legal framework."
>
> **Dr Christos Mina**
> Member of the EMCDDA Management Board
> Chairman of the Cyprus National Addictions Authority

In October the agency released a miniguide, Cannabis: Health and social responses, in the framework of Health and Social Responses to Drug Problems: A European Guide 2021. It provides an overview of the most important aspects to consider when planning or delivering health and social responses to cannabis-related problems, and reviews the availability and effectiveness of the responses. It also considers implications for policy and practice.

In addition, a series of webinars on the topic were organised:

- Health and social responses to cannabis problems in Europe — time for a paradigm shift? (8 October);
- Cannabis control approaches across Europe (27 October).

A meeting on cannabis took place in September, with the participation of five other EU agencies (the EMA, the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, the Community Plant Variety Office, the European Union Intellectual Property Office and the EFSA) as well as various directorates-general (DGs) of the European Commission. The meeting gathered important information for the update of the *Cannabis Legislation in Europe* report, which is currently in preparation for publication in 2022.

To satisfy the interest in this topic in various regions, the EMCDDA publication Low-THC cannabis products in Europe (released in 2020) was translated into German, Spanish and French.

The EMCDDA has been monitoring the field of drugs and prison as a central component of its work over the past few decades. The importance of the prison setting for tackling drug problems is underlined in the new EU Drugs Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2025.

In June the EMCDDA released a new EMCDDA in-depth study (Insights), Prison and drugs in Europe: current and future challenges. The study takes an in-depth look at a wide range of issues in the prison setting, including drug use and harms, health and social responses, and drug supply. A webinar to discuss the results of the report with key customers was organised in June.

In October the EMCDDA published another report on this topic, *European Questionnaire on Drug Use among People living in prison (EQDP)*.

Evelina Pridotkienė
Head of Lithuanian National Focal Point

> "It is undeniable that the *Prison and drugs* Insight is useful. Firstly, it allows us to see the situation in other European countries, as well as to see what harm-reduction services are being applied, and helps in making decisions. Secondly, it is useful that it provides a scientific basis so that proposals for harm-reduction measures are taken more seriously."

Additional information on the subject can be found on the **EMCDDA prisons topic page**.

Gender plays a role in patterns and levels of drug consumption in Europe, but should also be considered in relation to how responses to drug problems are planned and implemented.

A European group on gender and drugs, coordinated by the EMCDDA and the Pompidou Group, has been established as a follow-up to the Lisbon Addictions Conference in 2019. The group of experts on gender and drugs meets regularly to highlight and respond to the need to include a gender perspective in the drug field and to increase the scientific evidence in this area.

An online technical meeting, 'Gender and drugs: including gender perspective in the drug issue. Current knowledge and information gaps', took place in November with the objective of identifying key issues in the area of gender and drugs, with a focus on the European context. More than 50 experts from 14 European countries representing national authorities, European and international organisations, as well as users' representatives, attended the meeting. More resources on the topic can be found on the **EMCDDA gender and drugs topic page**.

Support for drug policy in the Member States and priority third countries

National policymakers are one of the key customer groups outlined in the *EMCDDA Strategy 2025*, and several activities were carried out by the agency in relation to this group in 2021.

The EMCDDA provides support to national policymakers through the evaluation of national drug strategies and action plans, through technical support provided on request and through proactive capacity-building activities. In 2021 specific support for the development of drug strategies was provided to the EU Action Against Drugs and Organised Crime for Georgia and North Macedonia. In addition, as a support activity under the current IPA7 project, the EMCDDA provided feedback on the final evaluation of Serbia's national drugs strategy 2014-2021. The agency also provided drugs strategy briefings for Slovenia, Portugal, Hungary and Ireland.

During the year the EMCDDA Director had high-level contact with authorities in several Member States (see 'Business driver 4: Management').

For example, in April the **Austrian Federal Minister for the European Union and Constitution, Karoline Edtstadler, visited the EMCDDA** accompanied by a delegation of Austrian dignitaries, including the Austrian Ambassador to Portugal, Robert Zischg.

Austrian Federal Minister for the European Union and Constitution, Karoline Edtstadler, and EMCDDA Director, Alexis Goosdeel

The minister received a briefing on the agency's ongoing activities under the *EMCDDA Strategy 2025* and how it contributes to a healthier and more secure Europe through better-informed drug policy and action.

'**What is drug policy evaluation and why is it important?**' is a question the agency is reviewing on its topic page, which was updated in 2021. This page provides access to a rich pool of materials, including a seven-step guide, examples of strategies and evaluations in Europe and potentially useful data sources for all those considering or involved in commissioning, managing or undertaking policy evaluations.

The legal and policy correspondents network held its annual meeting on 14 October (online) to review and discuss, among other matters, recent developments concerning legislation and policies controlling drugs at national and EU level. Discussions focused on controls of non-THC cannabinoids and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on incarceration practices. For the first time, 16 participants from 14 IPA7 and EU4MD countries attended a dedicated session to discuss and share information on how penalties are defined in their national drug laws.

Main area 2: Security

Drug market monitoring and identification of new trends

To support the comprehensive analytical effort in the security area, work continued in 2021 on improving the quality and availability of core supply data, in close collaboration with the Reitox NFPs and with the agency's EU partner, Europol.

This core monitoring was complemented by new sources of data and innovative monitoring approaches, such as OSI and darknet monitoring. These have become increasingly important within the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, which further accelerated the development of the rapidly evolving and increasingly tech-savvy drug market. In that regard, regular OSI monitoring reports were produced and distributed internally to support EMCDDA analysis. Furthermore, data on darknet markets were analysed and integrated into routine EMCDDA reporting, while national darknet drug dashboards, underpinned by darkcloud data, were piloted in 2021.

Much of the work in 2021 was dedicated to the reconceptualisation, in close collaboration with Europol, of the next edition of the joint *EU Drug Markets: In-depth analysis*.

This flagship publication will be presented in an online, modular format and with a new structure, following a co-creation approach. This will ensure that the report continues to provide ever more useful recommendations and enhance its role as a key resource for policy and action.

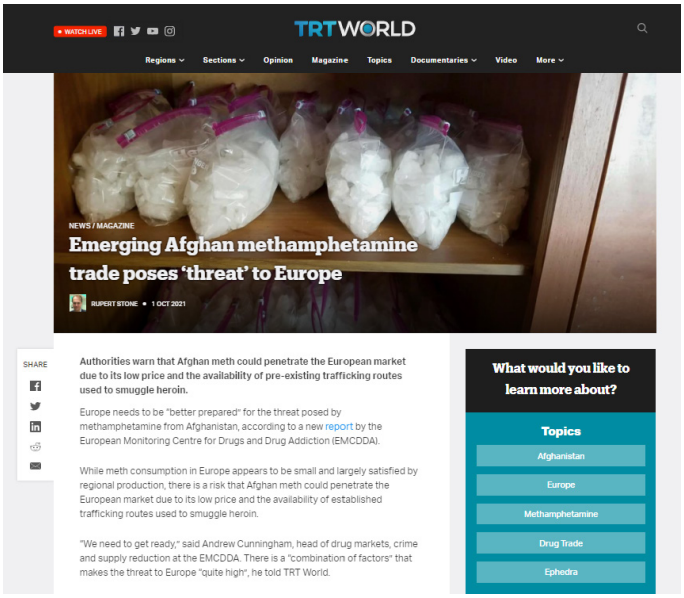
The development of the first two modules, on the methamphetamine and cocaine markets, started in 2021, for launch in 2022. These will be followed by five more drug modules — cannabis, NPS, MDMA, heroin and amphetamine — and two additional modules, drivers and responses, which will be launched in 2023 as part of the revamped report.

In 2021 the EMCDDA also explored links between drug supply, associated violence and the exploitation of vulnerable groups. This resulted in a new **report**, which was released in May and which analyses current drug supply models and the related violence and exploitation of vulnerable groups in Denmark. Recent years have seen a growth in criminals' exploitation of vulnerable groups for drug-related crimes. This development appears to be driven by several structural factors, including increased drug market competition and a proliferation of more labour-intensive supply models. The study underlines the need for future research to help understand the impact of digital developments in retail-level drug distribution on vulnerable individuals and to inform responses in order to reduce criminal exploitation.

As part of the research conducted under the EU4MD and IPA7 projects, funded by the European Commission (see 'Business driver 2: Partnership'), in September the EMCDDA released the report **Methamphetamine from Afghanistan: signals indicate that Europe should be better prepared**.

The report examines the recent emergence of methamphetamine production in the country and identifies actions that may be taken in Europe to mitigate the risks.

FIGURE 10. **Article released in TRT World, 1 October 2021**



The findings were further referenced and disseminated by the specialised media (see Figure 10).

A new EU4MD special report, **Methamphetamine developments in South Asia: the situation in Iran and the implications for the EU and its neighbours**, was released in April. Iran is a key transhipment point for illicit drugs along the Balkan and southern trafficking routes. The new report examines the threats posed by its potential emergence as a transhipment point for Afghan methamphetamine ('shisheh'). The study is based on interviews with Iranian drug treatment practitioners, law enforcement officers, UN officials and key informants involved in drug supply. It also draws on an analysis of Iranian, Turkish, Kurdish and Australian news articles to outline the scale of methamphetamine trafficking from the country.

COVID-19 and drug markets

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic continued to be analysed by the EMCDDA in this area in 2021. In that regard, ongoing monitoring work was carried out to understand the evolution of the drug markets during the second year of the pandemic.

A new EMCDDA trendspotter briefing, **Illicit drug markets and supply in the Western Balkans: impact of COVID-19**, was published in June. The report examines the impact of COVID-19 on illicit drug markets and supply in the Western Balkans. Published under the IPA7 project, the report presents the results of studies conducted using the agency's trendspotter methodology.

Training and capacity building

A series of training events were organised in 2021 for the beneficiaries of the EU-funded technical cooperation projects. For details, see 'Business driver 2: Partnership'.

Support policy and operational responses to drug security challenges

In the policy area, the EMCDDA provided technical input and advice to its key partners, in particular the European Commission. The analyses provided drew heavily on the analysis, evidence and recommendations contained in the *EU Drug Markets Report 2019*.

This included:

- three briefing notes produced for the European Commission on the following topics: an overview of the drug situation in the Western Balkans; Afghanistan's illicit drugs economy and the Taliban takeover: assessing the impact; and Mexican involvement in methamphetamine production and trafficking in the EU;
- input provided to the European Commission for the preparation of the EU Agenda to tackle Organised Crime;
- participation at and input to the Commission's ad hoc group on designer precursors.

The agency continued to contribute to key EU policy documents and initiatives, such as the EU Drugs Strategy and Action Plan 2021-2025 and the EMPACT OAPs of the EU policy cycle on organised and serious international crime. In that regard, the EMCDDA implemented all its tasks under the 2021 EMPACT OAP on Cannabis, cocaine and heroin, and the OAP on Synthetic drugs and NPS. The agency also contributed to the planning and drafting of the respective OAPs for 2022, with several proposals that were accepted and supported by the drivers of the OAPs.

The EMCDDA joined several activities related to the drafting of the 2022 OAP on High-risk criminal networks, which is the new EMPACT priority for the new policy cycle.

The EMCDDA, together with its partner CEPOL, continued to organise and deliver training activities for law enforcement professionals. A total of 641 such professionals attended these training activities (online or residential), as follows (see also Figure 11):

- 'Drug crime and markets — strategic analysis' (online), 35 participants;
- 'Synthetic drugs and NPS' (online), 59 participants;
- 'Drug trafficking' (online), 48 participants;
- Coffee talks with the EMCDDA and CEPOL Directors (online), 122 participants;

FIGURE 11. **CEPOL-EMCDDA online training course 2021**

- 'Synthetic drugs', for EU4MD countries (online, Arabic), 6 participants;
- 'Illicit drug markets and supply in the Western Balkans: Impact of COVID-19' (webinar), 201 participants;
- 'Drug markets and crime: strategic analysis' (residential), 29 participants;
- 'Implications of recent developments in Afghanistan on drug markets' (webinar), 141 participants.

The annual meeting and proceedings of the Reference Group on Drug Supply Indicators took place on 23-24 November, online due to COVID-19 travel restrictions. The meeting included a national update session with partners from the ENP and Western Balkans areas, as well as a co-production session on the new methamphetamine module to be published in 2022 as part of the next edition of the *EU Drug Markets: In-depth analysis*.

Main area 3: Business drivers

Business driver 1: Institutional

Governance and institutional developments

In 2021, after six years at the helm of the EMCDDA Management Board, the Chair of the Board, Ms Laura D'Arrigo (France), and the Vice-Chair, Mr Franz Pietsch (Austria), reached the end of their mandate.

Following the elections held by the Management Board on 16 December, Franz Pietsch was elected to the position of Chair for the next three years. Xavier Poos (Luxembourg) was elected to the position of Vice-Chair.

In addition, Claude Gillard (Belgium), founding member of the agency, was re-elected as member and Chair of the EMCDDA Budget Committee. Dr Joan Villalbí Hereter, Delegate of the Spanish Government for the National Plan on Drugs and national drug coordinator, was elected member of the Executive Committee.

For more details on the activity of the EMCDDA Management Board in 2022, see 'Part IIa. Management' in this report.

The EMCDDA Management Board elected its new Chair and Vice-Chair: in the spotlight

In December 2021, Franz Pietsch was elected to the position of Chair for three years (1 January 2022 to 31 December 2024).

Mr Pietsch, who had served as Vice-Chair since 2016 and has been the Austrian member of the board since 2002, is currently Deputy Director-General and Head of the Human Medicines Law Group at the Austrian Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection. He is also President of the Board of Trustees of the Anton Proksch Institute Foundation (one of Europe's largest addiction clinics).

'I see my election as a sign of special recognition of the expertise with which I have already contributed to European and international drug issues. I am looking forward in this position of responsibility to making a significant contribution to the implementation of the *EMCDDA Strategy 2025* for a healthier and safer Europe in the coming years,' Franz Pietsch explained on the occasion of his election.

Xavier Poos was elected as Vice-Chair for the same period. Mr Poos has served on the Board since 2014 and is Deputy Health Director within the Luxembourg Health Directorate. He is currently Vice-President of the Board of Directors of the Luxembourg Institute of Health.

Commenting on the results, EMCDDA Director Alexis Goosdeel said: 'I congratulate the candidates on their success today and thank them for their commitment and motivation. I look forward to working with them in accomplishing the *EMCDDA Strategy 2025*, implementing a new business model and, together, contributing to a healthier and more secure Europe.'

New EMCDDA business model adopted

A major organisational development in 2021 was the adoption by the EMCDDA Management Board of the Reference Framework and accompanying implementation plan for a new business model for the agency.

The new framework was put forward by the EMCDDA Director, based on the work that started in 2020 and continued throughout 2021 with support from an external contractor.

The key principles of the new business model are as follows.

Guided by the *EMCDDA Strategy 2025*, it aims to ensure that the agency delivers more value to its customers, within an increasingly demanding external environment characterised by a high level of volatility and a rapidly evolving technological landscape.

In doing so, the new business model will necessarily pursue a customer-first approach.

To achieve its purpose, it will enhance the EMCDDA's digital maturity and promote the essential organisational change and development, to support the alignment of the agency's people, processes and technology with the new business objectives.

Importantly, the transformation will need to be sustainable and scalable, to enable a smooth transition to a new EMCDDA mandate, as per the agreement that will be reached by the EU institutions and the Member States ([3]).

The respective activities will be carried out until 2025, in line with the approved implementation plan, and the *EMCDDA Roadmap 2025*, which was adopted by the Management Board in June 2021 (see also 'Business driver 4: Management' in this report).

These activities will be implemented in several phases, along the following streams: business transformation; customer experience; employee experience; data foundation; and enterprise architecture.

The concrete projects will be detailed in the EMCDDA SPDs and the corresponding internal annual management plans.

Follow-up on the fourth external evaluation of the EMCDDA

In line with the established procedure, in December the EMCDDA presented to the Management Board an assessment of the status of implementation of the action plan following the fourth external evaluation of the agency, which was carried out by the Commission in 2018 (for details, see 'Part IIb. External evaluations' in this report).

(3) On 12 January 2022 the European Commission put forward a proposal for the strengthening of the mandate of the EMCDDA. This proposal, whose main elements can be found at **https://ec.europa.eu/commission/press-corner/detail/en/ip_22_302**, will be subject to the adoption of the European Parliament and the Council.

The EMCDDA by 2025: in the spotlight

Organisational transformation, driven by a 'customer-first' approach

The period 2021-2025 will see the second stage of the EMCDDA's transformation into a customer-centric, data-driven, learning and growing organisation.

Building on the foundations established during 2016-2020, the agency will now complete the process by putting in place a novel approach for creating and delivering value to its primary customers: the EU institutions; national decision-/policymakers; and professionals working in the drugs field.

Framed within the EMCDDA's business model transformation initiative, which is planned to run until 2025, this organisational change effort will entail aligning the EMCDDA's people, culture, structure and technology.

In the context of unparalleled technological disruption, which has been accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic, this work will allow the EMCDDA to model its services in line with evolving, data-driven customer needs, thus increasing the value it brings to them.

An action plan accompanies the EMCDDA business model transformation initiative, complementing *Roadmap 2025*.

New mandate

A revision of the EMCDDA's mandate is planned to take place during the implementation of *Roadmap 2025*. This is expected to redefine the agency's remit, key priorities and available resources.

The agency will be required to align its work to these developments and revise *Roadmap 2025* accordingly.

Overarching commitments

Over the period 2021-2025, the EMCDDA commits to contributing to ongoing EU initiatives that aim to make the EU more sustainable, digital and inclusive. These initiatives include the European Green Deal, the policies for shaping Europe's digital future and the related Web Accessibility Directive (Directive (EU) 2016/2102).

FIGURE 12. **The EMCDDA by 2025**

Communication and service delivery to meet evolving EMCDDA customer needs

As an information agency, the EMCDDA has communications at its core. In 2021, the area continued its transformation, along the following drivers of change:

- customer centricity, boosted by the new business model initiative;
- digital transformation, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic;
- reimagined internal communication, prompted by changing organisational needs.

The *EMCDDA Strategy 2025* defined customer centricity as one of the agency's core values. The strategy gives 'central importance to identifying our customers' needs, developing services and effective communication, as these all represent essential elements for our work to have impact'. This is a prerequisite for the EMCDDA to fulfil its vision for a 'healthier and more secure Europe' through better-informed drug policy and action.

While this was taken forward by the 'Customers' needs' project, which was carried out between 2018 and 2020, it was in 2021 that the new business model initiative put customer centricity at the heart of a newly imagined organisational change effort.

This included the setting up of three Innovation fora on customer needs, which was given a mandate by the EMCDDA Director to use novel techniques (e.g. personas, customer journeys) to identify the needs of the EMCDDA's key groups of customers, as they were defined in the *EMCDDA Strategy 2025*: drug policymakers within the EU institutions; national drug decision-/policymakers; and professionals working in the drugs field. The Innovation fora were made up of staff from different business units (over 50 % of the agency's staff participated), who brought their complementary perspectives and engaged in a common effort towards building a new customer-centric EMCDDA culture.

The work carried out by these fora informed the proposal for a new business model, which was put forward by the EMCDDA Director for adoption by the Management Board in December (see the related section under this Business driver, above). This proposal will guide the work in this area in the years to come, in line with the approved implementation plan.

While customer centricity is the guiding principle in the agency's effort to increase value delivery to our key customers, the digital transformation enables it.

In that regard, enhancing the EMCDDA's digital maturity allows the agency not only to increase this value delivery, but also to thrive, as an organisation, in the fast-evolving technology-driven environment.

The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this trend and brought with it significant changes in the way the world has been communicating. Importantly, it has also reshaped the needs of the EMCDDA's key customers. To that end, priority continued to be given in 2021 to ensuring that timely products and services were provided to these customers via digital channels. This included online training courses and events (e.g. webinars —

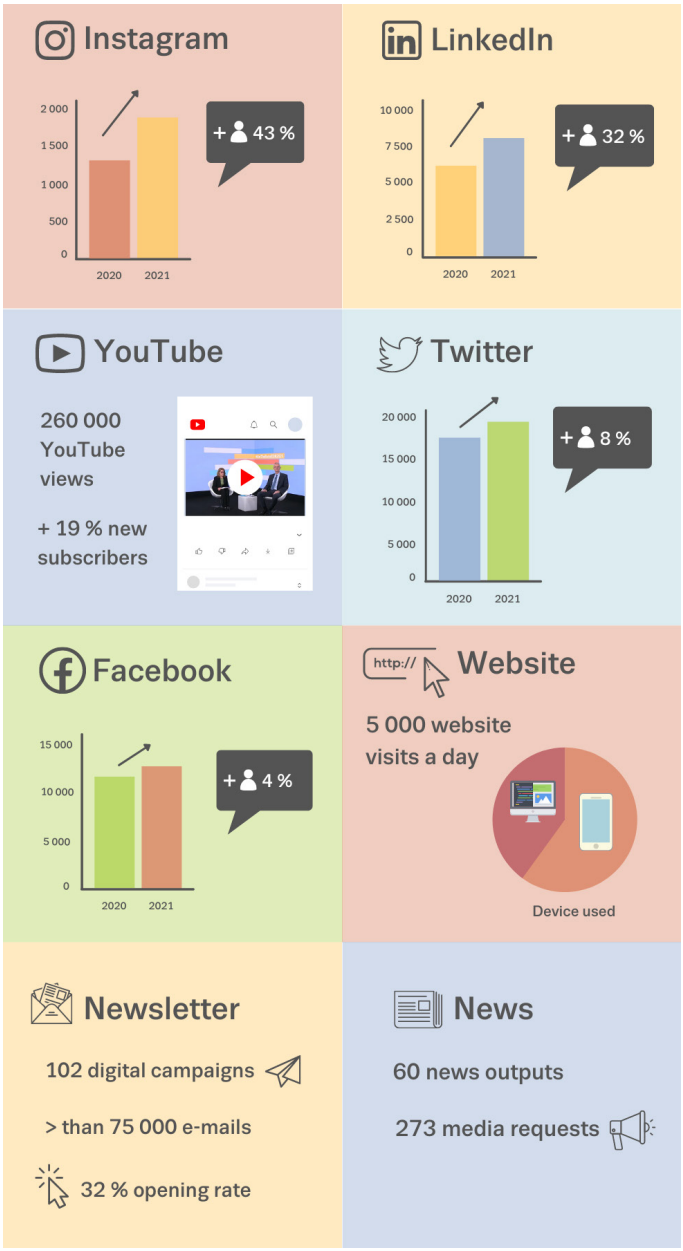
FIGURE 13. **EMCDDA communication: drivers of change**

see 'Main area 1: Health' and 'Main area 2: Security') and product launches (e.g. the launch of the *European Drug Report 2021* — see 'Main area 1: Health' — and many COVID-19-related products).

The EMCDDA's communication efforts were focused on ensuring the production of high-quality publications, and a total of **49 scientific and institutional publications** were produced in 2021. The agency also authored or co-authored 26 scientific articles and book chapters.

These efforts were accompanied by activities to enhance engagement with the agency's audiences, mainly via online communication channels (see Figure 14 for details).

FIGURE 14. **EMCDDA online communication channels**



This included 1 821 774 unique visitors to the **EMCDDA website** during the year (i.e. an average of almost 5 000 unique visitors per day).

The upward trend in the number of social media followers continued in 2021, with a double-digit increase (compared with the figures for 2020) for two key social media channels, LinkedIn (+32 %) and Instagram (+43 %).

The number of views of EMCDDA videos also rose in 2021, with an overall increase in lifetime views of some 27 % compared with 2020.

Positive engagement with the media also continued in 2021. The EMCDDA serviced 273 requests in the course of the year, slightly above the number of requests serviced in 2020.

More data on communications metrics can be found in Figure 14 and Annex Ib.

Considerable progress was made on the agency's multilingual work. As well as revising existing processes, in 2021 the EMCDDA started using new services offered by the Translation Centre (automatic translation, summarisation and light post-editing) to provide more translated content to its audiences. Work will continue on this in 2022.

More translated news content was also provided in 2021 (there were 60 news outputs and 138 outputs counting translations, compared to 53 news outputs and 84 counting translations in 2020).

Regarding internal communication and collaboration, 2021 brought some important developments that ensured that emerging organisational needs — the COVID-19-driven hybrid working mode for EMCDDA staff in particular — could be met. To that end, the Extranets, Collaboration, Intranet and Document Management (ECID) project was successfully rolled out (see also 'Business driver 4: Management', section on Information and communication technology support services). This brought a new internal platform for communication and information sharing (HumHub) and collaborative working (Documenta). The project will continue in 2022 and is expected to bring benefits in terms of both organisational culture and work efficiency.

Business driver 2: Partnership

Reitox network activities

The Reitox network was set up in 1993, when the EMCDDA was established, and is composed of NFPs in the EU Member States, Norway and Turkey, as well as a focal point at the

European Commission. The NFPs — from which the agency draws the bulk of its data — collect and analyse national information on drugs, drawing on various sectors including health, justice and law enforcement. They form the backbone of the agency's work.

The activities of the network are defined every year in the grant agreement signed between each NFP and the EMCDDA, while longer-term strategic options are guided by the RDF, which was adopted by the network in 2017.

Ongoing support was provided to the Reitox network in 2021 to assist the NFPs in the implementation of the RDF and overall in their activities. Among others, 11 coordination meetings were held by the EMCDDA with the Reitox and external partners (RTX) unit spokespersons, and minutes were made available to the entire network.

Similar to other activities, work in this area continued to be implemented under the constraints imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic. In that regard, the EMCDDA had to cancel travel to the Member States for its staff, including any visits to the NFPs, and carry out most of its activities remotely.

This work included the two HFP meetings. The first took place fully online on 25-26 May (64th meeting), while the second had a hybrid format (with most of the participants attending in person at the EMCDDA premises and the rest attending online) on 15-17 November (65th meeting). Two Reitox technical meetings took place via teleconference, one on 10-11 March (24 NFPs attended) and one on 12 October (18 NFPs and the European Commission's representative attended).

During the technical meetings, which benefited from strong participation from the Reitox network, part of the discussions focused on the new EMCDDA business model initiative (including a presentation by the EMCDDA Director on the concept and implications for the work of the NFPs). Workshops on the needs of national decision-makers and practitioners were also carried out as part of the spring technical meeting.

An important topic that was discussed at the autumn technical meeting and the 65th HFP meeting was the reduction by 25 % of the EU share of the future Reitox co-financing, as a result of resource constraints faced by the EMCDDA. This included the impact of this funding reduction on the work of the NFPs and the support that could be provided by the agency to mitigate or neutralise this impact.

The Reitox network takes stock of the progress made in implementing the Reitox Development Framework and adopts a new roadmap, to guide the work until 2025: in the spotlight

In 2017, when the RDF was prepared and adopted, one of the key issues underlined by the EMCDDA and the network alike was the need to ensure its execution through the definition of concrete implementing activities; and that the implementation of those activities would be evaluated by undertaking a final assessment shortly after the end of the implementation period.

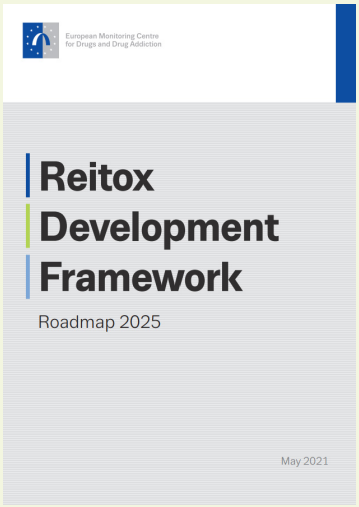
In line with this, a first roadmap setting 30 milestones to be implemented by December 2020 was adopted as an annex of the RDF.

As its implementation came to an end, an evaluation of this roadmap was carried out to assess the extent to which it had been implemented through the defined objectives, activities and accompanying milestones. The outcome of this evaluation was presented and published in 2021. It showed good progress overall, with more than half of the milestones having been clearly achieved, seven partially achieved, and five not achieved (for which further work is planned under *Roadmap 2025* — see below).

Taking stock of progress made in the implementation of *Roadmap 2020*, as reflected by the above-mentioned evaluation, the next RDF roadmap, to 2025, was defined, adopted by the Reitox network at the heads of NFP (HFP) meeting in May, and endorsed by the EMCDDA Management Board in June.

This new document provides an outline of the work of the Reitox network for 2021-2025.

FIGURE 15. **Reitox Development Framework**



Capacity building

Significant progress has continued to be made in implementing the EMCDDA Reitox certification process, which formally acknowledges the competence of an NFP and confirms that it meets the minimum criteria to fulfil the tasks of an NFP as set out in the EMCDDA regulation. Certification aims to increase the legitimacy of each NFP at national level by demonstrating how well it contributes to the EMCDDA's core tasks of collecting and reporting consistent, harmonised and standardised information on drugs in Europe. It is also designed to increase the degree of assurance at EU level that the NFPs are fulfilling their role as national interfaces with the agency. Certification covers the institutional context, NFP mandate, data collection, analysis and interpretation, reporting and dissemination.

In that regard, the support to NFPs engaged in the implementation of the certification system was a key task in 2021. Dialogues took place during the year with several NFPs and the topic was also discussed at the meetings of the Reitox network.

The Irish NFP obtained its certification in 2021, joining the Austrian and Greek NFPs, which had been certified previously, on the list of NFPs that have formally completed the process.

In terms of the training activities, while no Reitox academies were organised in 2021 for the network — due to the overall resource constraints, COVID-19-related restrictions and the need to wait until the new business model had matured — various activities to enhance the national reporting capacity took place during the year (see 'Main area 1: Health' and 'Main area 2: Security').

Brian Galvin
Head of the Irish NFP,
Health Research Board

"The work on the RDF and the certification process marks a real milestone in the development of the network. I think we're in a much stronger position to face the challenges ahead. The evaluation of the implementation of the RDF Roadmap 2020 showed how well we work together, while respecting very different outlooks on some topics. I also think that the cohesion of the network is reflected in the very supportive treatment of the focal points by the European Commission when preparing a proposal to review the EMCDDA regulation."

In addition, a Reitox Academy on Writing Drug Reports was designed and started to be organised in collaboration with the Austrian NFP for the IPA7 beneficiaries (see the later section under this Business driver area of the report).

Management of the Reitox grants

An important part of the EMCDDA's work with the network relates to the management of the Reitox grants. The 2021 grant applications were assessed and grants were awarded, committed and signed, for a total value of more than EUR 2 million.

In parallel, all of the financial and narrative reports relating to the 2020 grants were analysed, the balance payments were executed and the grants were subsequently closed, in line with the applicable procedure. Due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, no field verifications (on-site audits) were carried out by the EMCDDA. This activity will resume in 2022, depending on the evolution of the pandemic.

Cooperation with EU agencies and international partners

EU agencies

Cooperation with EU agencies continued to be strengthened in 2021. Key EMCDDA partners included the ECDC, the ECHA, the EFSA, the EMA, Europol and CEPOL.

Cooperation with the ECDC, the ECHA, the EFSA, the EMA and Europol took place in line with the working arrangements concluded with the five agencies in 2018 and 2019 for implementing Regulation (EU) 2017/2101 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 November 2017 amending Regulation (EC) No 1920/2006 as regards information exchange on, and an early warning system and risk assessment procedure for, new psychoactive substances (see 'Main area 1: Health').

Cooperation with the ECDC also took place on the subject of drug-related infectious diseases (see 'Main area 1: Health'). In 2021 the two agencies launched their work on the update of the joint guidance *Prevention and control of infectious diseases among people who inject drugs*, which was originally published in 2011. The updated edition will reflect the new policy context, important biomedical advances and new evidence from research, and will feature good-practice case studies to guide the implementation of effective interventions. It is expected to be launched in 2022.

Joint work is also taking place around the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals of eliminating viral hepatitis and ending the HIV epidemic (both of which are major health risks for PWID). This includes joint work on a set of indicators that are included in the European hepatitis monitoring system and the monitoring implementation of the Dublin Declaration on HIV/AIDS. Examples include collaboration on the development of the viral hepatitis elimination barometer (in July); the EMCDDA's contribution to the ECDC report *The sustainable development goals and hepatitis B and C in the EU/EEA* (March); the paper 'Monitoring progress towards elimination of hepatitis B and C in the EU/EEA', which was jointly co-authored by the two agencies (August); and the provision of data by the EMCDDA within the Dublin Declaration monitoring framework.

Another key EU partner is Europol. In addition to their collaboration within the framework of the EU EWS, the two agencies carry out joint work within EMPACT (see 'Main area 2: Security'), including collecting data on the production of synthetic drugs (European Reporting Instrument on Sites related to Synthetic Production).

In 2021 the EMCDDA and Europol initiated joint work on the next edition of *EU Drug Markets: In-depth analysis*, which will be published in a new modular format in 2022 and 2023. The EMCDDA has also been collaborating closely in the context of the newly established EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security, with Europol acting as secretariat of the hub.

Ms Catherine De Bolle, Executive Director of Europol, visited the EMCDDA and met with the Director on 13 April.

Cooperation with CEPOL has developed as part of the EMCDDA's contribution to the EMPACT OAP (see 'Main area 2: Security'). A record number of 641 law enforcement officers participated in the training organised jointly by the two agencies within that framework. Overall, CEPOL, the EMCDDA and Europol developed seven training modules (courses, programmes, webinars and online modules) — with CEPOL leading on five of them and the EMCDDA and Europol leading on one each — relating to the EWS, NPS, heroin and cocaine smuggling, synthetic illicit laboratories dismantling, synthetic drugs, etc.

In 2021 the EMCDDA also contributed to the work of the JHA Agencies' Network ([4]). On 22 November the nine EU agencies came together to wrap up the activities of the network in 2021 and present key achievements. In 2021, under the network presidency of the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (Frontex), the agencies focused on two strategic EU priorities: contributing to the European Green Deal and digitalisation. Over the year, the agencies discussed the impact of climate change on migration and organised crime, looked at EU and international efforts in fighting environmental crime, and explored digital solutions to make the agencies more effective. During the meeting, the heads of the nine bodies signed a **joint statement** on the EU Green Deal, reaffirming their commitment to contribute to a safer and cleaner environment.

More on the EMCDDA's work in this area is presented below.

(4) The JHA Agencies' Network connects the EU agencies protecting the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice. It includes nine agencies: CEPOL, European Institute for Gender Equality, EMCDDA, EU Agency for the Operational Management of Large-Scale IT Systems in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice, EU Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation, Europol, EU Agency for Fundamental Rights and Frontex.

Cooperation between the EMCDDA and other Justice and Home Affairs agencies in the areas of security and migration: in the spotlight

EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security

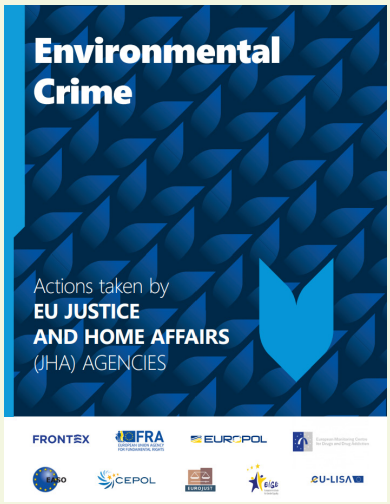
The EMCDDA is a member of the newly established EU Innovation Hub for Internal Security, which aims to contribute to the establishment of a common innovation picture for internal security and the promotion of the alignment of innovation and security research efforts across the EU. The EMCDDA was involved in the development of the concept and the modalities of work for the Hub Team in 2021, and provided its expertise in areas relating to innovation and research in the drugs field. Moreover, the agency, together with the Joint Research Council and Europol, is implementing the EU-coordinated pilot project on darknet monitoring to counter criminal activities, which aims to develop a flexible online multi-user software framework for monitoring darknet criminal activities, including the online drug markets.

JHA Agencies' Network

The year 2021 was an exceptionally intense one for the work of the JHA Agencies' Network. The EMCDDA was heavily involved in JHA working groups, key events, expert groups and thematic analysis, for example the JHA report on environmental crime. The cooperation mechanism established between the agencies led to the development of other important bilateral projects such as the EMCDDA and CEPOL work on training, and the EMCDDA and EU Agency for Asylum work on addressing substance use and related responses in the EU reception setting.

FIGURE 16. **Members of the JHA network**

FIGURE 17. **Actions taken by JHA network on environmental crime**



EMCDDA tenancy of CEPOL training platform LEEd

CEPOL offered the EMCDDA the opportunity to have a dedicated space ('tenancy') within its training platform (LEEd), to store content and run its own training activities there. This project aims to ensure autonomy for the EMCDDA to manage its learning content independently but using existing technological solutions provided by CEPOL. The preparations were progressing, with training organised for EMCDDA staff in 2021 and the testing phase to follow in 2022.

EMCDDA and EU Agency for Asylum addressing substance use and related problems in reception settings in Europe

The agencies conducted the first European study exploring substance-use-related problems and existing responses among professionals in the European reception context. The study consisted of a review of the literature, and an online survey and focus groups with over 100 professionals and volunteers working with applicants for international protection in reception settings in 27 EU+ countries, including national-authority-based service providers and local and international non-governmental organisations. The results of the study will provide insight into substance use patterns, provision of services to applicants for international protection, existing barriers and facilitators to implementing responses in those settings, and priorities for action.

Throughout the year, the EMCDDA contributed to the work of other technical networks of EU agencies, including the Coordination Group on Trafficking in Human Beings, the EU Agencies Network on Scientific Advice, the EU Joint Taskforce on Artificial Intelligence, the Performance Development Network, the Heads of Communication and Information Network, the Information and Communication Technology Network and the JHA networks on external relations.

Cooperation with international organisations

Global organisations

The EMCDDA's main partners at the global level are the UNODC and the WHO.

On a general basis, the EMCDDA contributes to technical discussions with the UNODC and other international partners on how to improve data collection and how to facilitate inter-agency collaboration. The EMCDDA is also an active member of the international expert working group on drug epidemiological statistics led by the UNODC and the WHO.

Since 2014, the EMCDDA and the UNODC have collaborated regularly with respect to data on NPS, in line with an agreement from the Member States on data sharing and in the context of international discussions for increased cooperation and exchange of information on NPS (see 'Main area 1: Health'). Each year, the EMCDDA provides the UNODC Early Warning Advisory with a list of NPS notified to the EU EWS and a list of the NPS seized by each EU Member State, Norway, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

The EMCDDA is a member of the Steering Committee of the Synthetics Monitoring: Analyses, Reporting and Trends (SMART) project (on improving amphetamine-type stimulants data) and the Scientific Advisory Group for the *World Drug Report*.

The EMCDDA participated in various meetings that took place in 2021, including the 65th session of the CND (April, hybrid); the Global SMART Advisory Group meeting (April, online); the first intersessional meeting of the 64th session of the CND (October, hybrid format); and the regional meeting of the Global SMART Programme on NPS and Early Warning Systems in Latin America and the Caribbean (October).

The EMCDDA cooperates with both WHO headquarters (in Geneva) and the WHO Regional Office for Europe. Cooperation with WHO Europe in recent years has covered prison and infectious diseases, while cooperation with WHO headquarters has focused on intervention quality standards and the monitoring of treatment systems.

The EMCDDA, WHO Europe and the ECDC have been working closely to assist countries in the elimination of viral hepatitis in line with the WHO hepatitis elimination agenda.

Cooperation with WHO Geneva also takes place in the area of NPS. The EMCDDA regularly assists the WHO ECDD with data for the prioritisation process and for the preparation of critical reviews. In 2021 the EMCDDA provided data to the ECDD and assisted it with the prioritisation of substances, and this informed the discussions held at the 44th ECDD meeting, which took place on 11-15 October.

In September the EMCDDA requested that the WHO provide information on the NPS 3-MMC and 3-CMC, as required by Article 5d of amended Regulation (EC) No 1920/2006 (see 'Main area: Health').

Finally, the Regional Consultation for Developing Global Health Sector Strategies on HIV, Viral Hepatitis and STIs, 2022-2030, took place virtually in June and the EMCDDA was involved as a key partner, along with other relevant agencies.

Regional organisations

The main EMCDDA partners at regional level are the Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe and CICAD.

Cooperation with the Pompidou Group is based on the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in 2001, and annual work programmes indicate the core areas of cooperation. An appendix to the MoU signed in 2010 was adopted in February 2020. The cooperation areas include drug policies, precursor control, prison, cybercrime, cooperation with non-EU countries and support for training.

On 28 October the Pompidou Group marked its 50th anniversary at the Pompidou Centre in Paris at an event looking back over its history and successes. During a thematic session on 50 years of Pompidou Group history, EMCDDA Director Alexis Goosdeel spoke on the agency's cooperation with the group over the past 25 years.

The EMCDDA continued to cooperate with CICAD within the framework of the MoU signed in October 2000 and in line with the new work programme for 2019-2024 that was signed on 21 January 2020 in Washington. The cooperation involves the participation of the EMCDDA as an observer in CICAD regular sessions on an ad hoc basis, and that of CICAD experts in EU expert meetings, also on an ad hoc basis.

Cooperation with third countries

At the technical level, cooperation with third countries was carried out mainly within the EU-funded technical cooperation

TABLE 1. **Technical cooperation projects with third countries implemented by the EMCDDA in 2021**

Technical cooperation projects with third countries implemented by the EMCDDA in 2021			
Title	**IPA7**	**EU4MD**	**EMCDDA4GE**
Beneficiaries	Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia	Algeria, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus ([a]), Egypt, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Moldova, Morocco, Palestine ([b]), Tunisia and Ukraine	Georgia
Objective	To support the IPA beneficiaries in their approximation to the EU *acquis* in the area of drugs information and to enhance the capacity of the EU and the IPA beneficiaries to detect, analyse and report on emerging drug-related health and security threats	To support national and regional readiness in the ENP area to identify and respond to drug-related health and security threats	To contribute to enhanced national responses on drug-related health and security threats in Georgia
Duration	36 + 6 months (no-cost extension) (July 2019 to December 2022)	36 + 12 months (no-cost extension) (January 2019 to December 2022)	24 months (3 May 2021 to 2 May 2023)
Total budget	**EUR 1 million**	**EUR 3 million**	**EUR 800 000**

([a]) Due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and in line with the EU position, ongoing and planned bilateral engagement between the EMCDDA and representatives of Russia and Belarus has been suspended from early April 2022.

([b]) This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Member States on this issue.

projects IPA7, EU4MD and EMCDDA4GE (see 'Cooperation with third countries within the framework of EU-funded technical assistance projects' below).

At the institutional level, work was guided by the EMCDDA's *International Cooperation Framework*, which charts the direction of work in this area for the period 2018-2025, and by the *EMCDDA Strategy 2025*, which identifies partnerships as one of the agency's main business drivers.

Cooperation also took place within the framework of the working arrangements signed between the EMCDDA and third countries, and in line with the EU priorities in the area. These working arrangements allow the active participation of the partners' experts in EMCDDA expert meetings and other relevant EMCDDA events. On this basis, in 2021 experts from Switzerland and Russia attended several EMCDDA expert meetings.

In 2021 renegotiations over the MoU signed with Ministry of Justice of Georgia in 2015 were carried out. Further to the official opinion received from the European Commission and the mandate given by the Management Board in December, the new working arrangement will be signed between the EMCDDA and Georgia in 2022.

Cooperation with third countries within the framework of EU-funded technical assistance projects

In 2021 the EMCDDA implemented three EU-funded technical cooperation projects that have as beneficiaries six candidate and potential candidate countries (under IPA7) and 14 ENP partner countries ([5]) (for more details, see Table 1).

(5) Initially, EU4MD had 15 partner countries, including Egypt, which decided to withdraw from the project in 2019.

EMCDDA4GE: in the spotlight

As noted earlier in this report, 2021 marked the launch, on 3 May, of the EMCDDA's first technical cooperation project at bilateral level, the EMCDDA4GE, which aims to enhance national responses to drug-related health and security threats in Georgia.

The project focuses primarily on knowledge transfer and capacity building in the areas of drug monitoring, reporting, prevention and treatment. The EMCDDA4GE is building on the achievements and results of previous, and current, EMCDDA technical cooperation projects involving the country and will support the strengthening of the newly created National Drug Observatory (NDO).

A two-year work programme on bilateral cooperation with Georgia was agreed on 28 September at the first advisory committee meeting of the EMCDDA4GE project, hosted virtually by the agency.

Further development of the Georgian National Drug Observatory

One of the main activities of the project in 2021 was the launch of the self-assessment process regarding the institutional capacity of the Georgian NDO. The objective was to allow the NDO, through dialogue and interaction with the EMCDDA, to better understand its strengths and weaknesses in relation to the EMCDDA's core tasks of collecting and reporting consistent, harmonised and standardised information on the drug phenomenon, with a view to further developing its activities in line with EMCDDA standards, and ultimately strengthen its credibility and legitimacy.

Focus on building capacity for drug prevention and drug treatment

In order to improve the national drug prevention and treatment capacity, the process of translating and adapting the EUPC manual and other related materials to the Georgian context and language was launched. The final objective of this activity is to provide essential prevention knowledge to decision-, opinion- and policymakers about the most effective evidence-based prevention interventions and approaches.

Nine prevention professionals attended the EMCDDA EUPC training and the first national EUPC trainer was accredited (see later section under this area).

The EMCDDA4GE project also aims to strengthen the training system for national drug treatment practitioners. In 2021, a horizon scanning exercise was conducted that identified and described recent and upcoming projects related to treatment — especially to training — in Georgia. Based on this, project staff started to develop a needs assessment and the content outline of possible training modules, primarily in line with the European Responses Guide.

Other project activities are presented below.

Main outputs and results in 2021: IPA7, EU4MD, EMCDDA4GE

Knowledge exchange and capacity building

In line with the projects´ main objectives, 2021 saw an important number of training activities, which were implemented by the EMCDDA based on a synergies and efficiency gains creation approach. In that regard, it is worth noting that many of these activities involved participants from all the projects. Furthermore, where possible, these initiatives were integrated with the training activities that were organised by the EMCDDA for drug policy and practice professionals in the EU Member States.

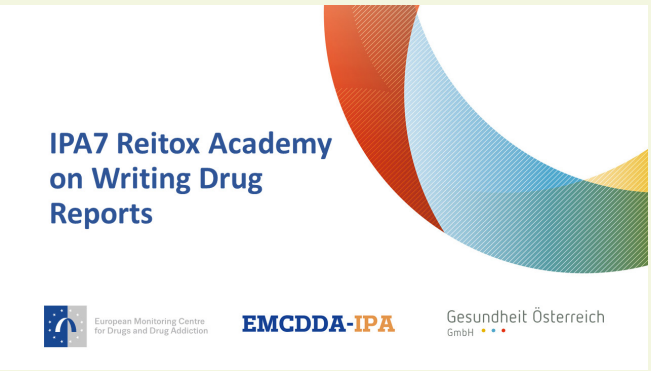
In total, some 233 professionals from the three projects beneficiaries (namely: 140 IPA7 participants; 83 EU4MD participants; and 10 EMCDDA4GE participants) attended capacity building activities which were organised by the EMCDDA, alone or in collaboration with its partners, in 2021.

A key activity was the Reitox Academy on Writing Drug Reports, which was organised in the framework of the IPA7 project.

The IPA7 Reitox Academy on Writing Drug Reports: in the spotlight

In 2021 the EMCDDA, working with the Reitox Austrian NFP, launched a six-module training course on writing drug-related reports to support the partners in developing and/or strengthening the existing NDOs and assisting national experts on core health and security indicators.

FIGURE 18. **IPA7 Reitox Academy**



By the end of the training, the participants will better understand the basics of good report writing, the specific requirements of different types of outputs for different audiences and, in particular, what makes a good annual monitoring report. They will also gain an overview of the EMCDDA key indicators, reporting procedures and tools. Ultimately, this training course will contribute to increased availability of routine monitoring data in the areas of both health and security in line with the project's specific objectives.

Three modules were organised in 2021, for a total of 24 IPA participants, as follows:

- Module 1: Introduction (28-29 October);
- Module 2: Policy and prevention (18-19 November);
- Module 3: Prevalence and patterns of drug use (9-10 December).

The remaining three modules were scheduled to take place in early 2022.

Another important event was the EUPC course. Following the successful first edition of this training, which took place in 2020, a second online edition was organised on 13-17 September 2021, in the framework of the EMCDDA4GE project. Nine Georgian professionals attended the training and the first national EUPC trainer was accredited. Participation in this activity was extended to professionals from other countries, including IPA7 and EU4MD beneficiaries.

Law enforcement professionals (police and customs) participated in training organised by the EMCDDA and CEPOL (see 'Main area 2: Security'). Although these were for professionals in the EU Member States, participation was extended to the EMCDDA's technical cooperation project partners, as follows:

- online training course: 'Drug crime and markets – strategic analyses' (25-29 January) (IPA7 and EU4MD);
- training course: 'Drug crime and markets – strategic analysis' (30 November-3 December, Budapest) (IPA7 and EMCDDA4GE).

Thirteen law enforcement authorities working in anti-drug units from police and customs in IPA7 beneficiaries attended the regional workshop 'Darknet drug-related investigations in the Western Balkans' (26-28 April).

IPA7 experts participated in several training sessions on the EMCDDA drug monitoring instruments: drug-related homicide data collection (23 April and 7 May); drug law offences (29 June); drug seizures (30 June); drug purity/potency (21 September); drug composition (22 September); and drug prices (23 September). In total, 72 participants from IPA beneficiaries attended these training sessions.

A training session on 11 January on how to report drug-related emergencies to Euro-DEN was organised jointly by the IPA7 and EU4MD projects.

Finally, thanks to a specific bursary, one participant from Albania (IPA7), six participants from Algeria, one from Armenia, one from Belarus and one from Georgia (EU4MD) attended the 2021 online European Drugs Winter and Summer Schools.

In addition to the training activities, 90 experts from the IPA7 (37 experts), EU4MD (47 experts) and EMCDDA4GE (6 experts) beneficiaries participated in the EMCDDA key expert meetings held in 2021 (GPS, DRID, DRD, TDI, PDU), in the annual meeting of the Reference Group on Drug Supply Indicators, and in the dedicated workshops of the Legal and Policy Correspondents and the EU EWS. For details on these expert meetings, see 'Main area 1: Health' and 'Main area 2: Security'.

Publications and communication

While the main focus of the technical cooperation projects is capacity building and knowledge transfer to the relevant EMCDDA partners, the projects produced some other important results in the course of the year.

Examples are presented below.

Publications (for details, see 'Main area 1: Health' and 'Main area 2: Security'):

- Methamphetamine from Afghanistan*: signals indicate that Europe should be better prepared* (IPA7 and EU4MD);
- Methamphetamine developments in South Asia*: the situation in Iran and the implications for the EU and its neighbours* (EU4MD);
- EMCDDA trendspotter briefing – *Illicit drug markets and supply in the Western Balkans: Impact of COVID-19* (IPA7);
- EMCDDA trendspotter briefing*: Impact of COVID-19 on drug use and drug services in Western Balkans* (IPA7).

Videos:

EMCDDA beyond EU borders: *spotlight on pre-accession partners (IPA)*

A video showcasing the project was launched on the EMCDDA's YouTube channel on 7 December, coinciding with the second meeting of the project advisory committee.

The video (in English) explains how the agency's collaboration with the Western Balkan region since December 2007 has helped strengthen drug monitoring systems and the sharing of best practice.

FIGURE 19. **IPA video screenshot**

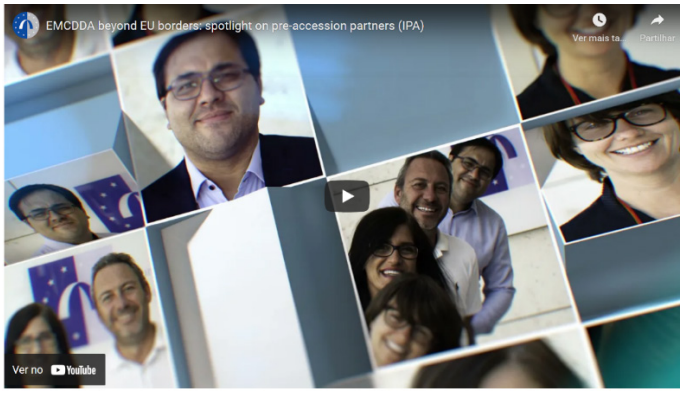


FIGURE 20. **EU4MD vídeo screenshot**

EMCDDA beyond EU borders: *spotlight on countries neighbouring the EU (EU4MD)*

Coinciding with the third project advisory committee meeting, which took place online on 30 November, a video showcasing the project was launched on the EMCDDA's YouTube channel.

The video is available in English with subtitles in Arabic, French and Russian.

The projects also further developed their other communication and promotion activities, including via social media channels, news items and newsletters.

Celebrating the International day against drug abuse and illicit trafficking with key partners

On #WorldDrugDay (26 June), EMCDDA Director Alexis Goosdeel reflected on today's pervasive drugs problem. For more on these reflections, see the Director's message (in 24 languages) in the *European Drug Report 2021*.

Business driver 3: Scientific capacity

Scientific Committee activities

As the guardian of the EMCDDA's reputation for scientific excellence, the Scientific Committee plays a key role in ensuring and improving the quality of the work carried out by the agency.

During the year, the committee — composed of 15 high-level scientists selected from the EU Member States, Norway and Turkey — adopted a formal opinion on the EMCDDA's SPD 2022-2024, and provided input on the agency's main projects and scientific publications, in line with the guiding principles for the review of selected publications. The Scientific Committee also contributed to the HDG's annual dialogue on research.

In 2021 the committee continued to make a significant contribution to upholding the agency's scientific integrity, covering the most relevant scientific fields linked to the problems of drugs and drug addiction today. Importantly, fulfilling one of its key roles, in 2021 the committee also assessed the risks associated with two NPS (see 'Main area 1: Health').

Further to the implementation of the EMCDDA action plan to follow up on the recommendations of the EMCDDA's external evaluation (recommendation 4: 'Polydrug use should be better monitored and explored'), the Scientific Committee prepared a position paper, 'Extending the EMCDDA's monitoring and reporting framework to cover the substance misuse topic and its consequences for European policies and responses in a more holistic manner'. This paper supports a more holistic framework for the concept of polydrug use and was presented to the Management Board at its 64th meeting.

Enhancing the EMCDDA's scientific capacity

The Lisbon Addictions Programme and Organising Committee, which the EMCDDA co-chairs, met throughout the year to organise the Lisbon Addictions 2022 Conference, which will take place on 23-25 November 2022. The new call for abstracts was launched on 27 October 2021 and was followed by a record number of 973 submissions.

The EMCDDA also played a key role in the activities that were carried out in 2021 by the EU-ANSA. In that regard, the EMCDDA attended the two regular network meetings that were organised (online) on 28 May and 25-26 November. The agency actively participated in the EU-ANSA scientific quality cluster and led the EU-ANSA Futures cluster, gathering agencies that are conducting foresight activities in their respective areas of competence. The EMCDDA contributed its knowledge in this innovative area at the technical meetings that took place online on 19 April and 25 October.

The EMCDDA enhanced its foresight portfolio by developing its competence in applying futures methods and tools and conceptualising the innovation framework with a regular EMCDDA horizon scanning approach. The agency also supported national initiatives in this field; for example, it contributed to the national foresight event 'Foresight, preparing for uncertainty in drug use, markets and responses', organised in Ireland in November 2021.

The agency has been developing an EMCDDA foresight toolkit for future exercises carried out either within the agency or by its stakeholders. The toolkit will be published in 2022.

Finally, in 2021 the EMCDDA continued to contribute to EU and international research, activities and projects. In that regard, the agency's staff served on the Drug Policy Initiative (call 2020) evaluation committee, during which over 60 projects were assessed and a list of projects for funding, as well as a reserve list, was drafted.

FIGURE 21. **National Drugs Forum 2021**

The Data Quality Board adopted an updated version of the EMCDDA data quality management framework. This document outlines the framework for managing the quality of EMCDDA quantitative data produced within the scientific work of the agency. It brings together the existing practice and documentation on quantitative data management processes under a common, high-level structure based on four models: governance, resources, operations and technology.

Business driver 4: Management

EMCDDA Director: main external activities

The Director, through his external activities, has contributed to increasing the visibility of the EMCDDA and consolidating the credibility of its work by building and improving partnerships. Some examples are listed below.

The purpose of these activities was twofold: to inform on the performance of the EMCDDA in delivering on its mandate and implementing its annual work programme; and to communicate the scientific evidence resulting from the agency's monitoring and analytical work.

These high-level communication efforts, which mainly involved participation by the EMCDDA Director in online events and some missions later in the year, were focused on the agency's

key customers, namely the drug policymakers at EU and Member State level, and the practitioners working in the field. Important institutional exchanges also took place with high-level representatives of some international organisations and third countries.

EU bodies

In terms of EU policymakers, the Director presented the main findings of the *European Drug Report 2021: Trends and Developments* to the members of the LIBE Committee of the European Parliament on 9 June and at the HDG meeting of the Council on 8 June.

The Director gave a presentation at the first EU Dialogue with China, and at the 3rd High-Level Dialogue on Justice and Security EU-Mexico. He also participated in the EU-CELAC XXIInd High-Level Meeting of the Coordination and Cooperation Mechanism on Drugs on 22 June.

On 20 May Mr Goosdeel took part in the National Drug Coordinators meeting under the Portuguese Presidency, where he delivered a keynote address, 'EU Drugs Strategy: do the (human) right thing'. On 22 September he delivered a keynote address at the EU National Drug Coordinators Meeting under Slovenia's Presidency of the Council of the EU.

The Commissioner for Migration and Home Affairs, Ms Ylva Johansson, was involved in several EMCDDA activities during the year. On 12 April she visited the EMCDDA. In June, Ms Johansson discussed the future mandate of the EMCDDA with the Chair of the EMCDDA Management Board and the Director. She participated in the virtual launch of the *European Drug Report 2021* with a video message. Ms Johansson and the Director also paid a visit to the NICC in Brussels on 6 December.

With regard to relationships with other EU agencies, in February Mr Goosdeel participated in the meeting of Heads of EU Agencies and the extraordinary meeting on Brexit with the Commission UK Task Force. On 3 April he welcomed to the EMCDDA Ms Catherine De Bolle, Executive Director of Europol, and her Head of Cabinet. The Director also participated in the annual meeting of Directors of JHA agencies organised by Frontex on 22 November.

The Director had regular meetings with representatives of the European Commission during the year.

EU Member States

The EMCDDA Director had extensive contacts with representatives of the EU Member States, including an intervention in a hearing at the French Parliament on 'Regulation and impact of the different uses of cannabis' on 27 January.

Mr Goosdeel had a meeting with Dr Christos Mina, Chairman of the Cyprus National Addictions Authority; a preparatory meeting with Dr Jože Hren, from the Ministry of Health of Slovenia, concerning the priorities of the Slovenian EU Presidency in the second half of 2021; and a meeting with Dr João Goulão, Director General of SICAD of the Portuguese Ministry of Health, to discuss issues relating to the Portuguese Presidency.

On 23 April the Federal Minister for the EU and Constitution from Austria, Ms Karoline Edtstadler, visited the EMCDDA. In May the Director met with the Head of the Department for Anti-Drug Policies of the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers, Mr Flavio Siniscalchi, and with the Head of the Italian NFP, Ms Elisabetta Simeoni. Mr Goosdeel also had a meeting with Ms Zoe Rafti, Deputy Minister for Mental Health, Ministry of Health of Greece. On 16 July he met with the Spanish national drug coordinator and Government Delegate for the National Plan on Drugs, Mr Joan R. Villalbí Hereter, on the elaboration of a new Plan on Addictions for the City of Madrid 2002-2026.

The Director participated in the VI National Conference on Addictions organised by the Italian government in Genova on 27-28 November, and in the online National Conference on Illicit Drugs organised by the Drug Policy Department of the Government Office of Czechia on 2 December.

Mr Goosdeel gave a few lectures during the year, at the Faculty of Law of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, as part of its Master's programme Criminal Law and Addictions, along with the University of Nicosia and KETHEA, and a course to the students of the Master in Addictions organised by the Medical School of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens.

International organisations and third countries

The Director participated in the 3rd EU HCV Virtual Policy Summit, 'Securing wider EU commitment to the elimination of HCV in Europe' and gave a keynote address, 'The EMCDDA's contribution to advance the elimination of HCV in Europe'.

He attended the 64th session of the CND and gave speeches at several side events.

On 28 April the Director discussed with the programme director, Mr Javier Sagrado, and the programme administrator, Ms Teresa Fuente, the EMCDDA's participation in the new COPOLAD programme (Cooperation Programme between Latin America and the European Union on Drugs Policies).

On 15 December Mr Goosdeel presented the situation and perspectives of use of medical cannabinoids and other substances at the 2nd Pompidou Group Symposium on experience with new evolutions in drug policy.

EMCDDA operational response to the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic continued to unfold in 2021. The EMCDDA had already put in place the necessary measures to tackle its impact on the work of the agency. Nevertheless, due to the related external constraints, particularly the travel restrictions that applied throughout the year, some of the agency's activities remained greatly affected by the pandemic.

Internally, the BCP, which had been activated on 13 March 2020 at the onset of the pandemic, remained in place until 18 October 2021. During the almost nine months of its application in 2021, the BCP involved the following measures:

- EMCDDA staff performed their activities in either full or partial teleworking mode (in line with the evolution of the situation in Portugal at different points in time during the year).
- Regular meetings took place of the Incidence Response Team, consisting of the Director, the business continuity manager, the agency's medical adviser and other key staff. During these meetings, the situation at the EMCDDA and in Portugal was analysed, and updates were then sent to all the agency's staff.
- Clear protocols and procedures were established for accessing the EMCDDA premises and for communicating on COVID-19-related events. These procedures were kept updated and published on a dedicated intranet page, including a section on questions and answers.
- Steps were taken to ensure that the ICT infrastructure would support the organisation's teleworking arrangements (see later section under this business driver).

While the BCP was deactivated on 18 October, the EMCDDA has continued to apply the COVID-19 safety measures at its premises, in line with the corresponding rules in Portugal and the guidelines received from EU institutions.

In parallel, the agency started preparing its policy for the future of work at the EMCDDA, informed by the developments at the European Commission.

Data protection activities

Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 on data protection was fully observed during the year and the activities required regarding data protection records in particular were carried out. At its meeting in June the EMCDDA Management Board approved a decision on a review of the internal rules concerning the processing of personal data in the framework of the functioning of the EMCDDA.

Strategic planning and corporate performance monitoring and reporting

In 2021 the EMCDDA embarked on the second phase of implementing the *EMCDDA Strategy 2025*, and its work will now be guided by the next roadmap, *Roadmap* 2025 (see also 'Business driver 1: Institutional' in this report). The new strategic document, which was adopted by the EMCDDA Management Board in June, defines 67 key milestones to be reached by the end of the *EMCDDA Strategy 2025*.

In terms of operational planning and monitoring, the EMCDDA ensured the efficient implementation of the annual work programme, which is part of the **SPD 2021-2023**. The agency reached 100 % of the results defined in the work programme as level 1 priorities, 82 % of the level 2 priority results and 65 % of the level 3 priority results, thus fulfilling its applicable key performance indicator (KPI) targets (KPI 7) (see Annex Ia and Annex Ib).

The next SPDs — for 2022-2024 and 2023-2025 (preliminary draft) — were delivered in a timely manner to the EMCDDA's stakeholders and both documents were adopted by the Management Board in December 2021.

With regard to corporate reporting, the main output was the **General Report of Activities 2020**, which was adopted by the EMCDDA Management Board through written procedure, and was published on 15 June. Resilience, agility and innovation were among the recurring themes in the report.

Financial resources management

The priorities in the field of financial resources management were effective and timely planning, monitoring and execution of the EMCDDA budget, and optimisation of all the related processes. These were complemented by the efficient use of material resources. In this context, the EMCDDA reached the maximum level of performance in terms of budget execution, with 100 % of commitment appropriations executed (see Table 2). In terms of procurement execution, the procurement plan was put in place and successfully executed in close collaboration with all units.

TABLE 2. **Budget execution**

Commitment appropriations	100 %
Payment appropriations	96.35 %
Consumption of 2021 (C8) credits	98.80 %

The Final EMCDDA Annual Accounts for the Financial Year 2020 were drawn up and signed off by the Accounting Officer on 31 May and approved by the Director on 1 June. The opinion of the Management Board was given favourably on 24 June. The present annual accounts, together with the opinion of the Management Board, were sent to the Commission's Accounting Officer, the Court of Auditors, the European Parliament and the Council on 25 June.

Human resources management

The sound management of existing processes, as required by the applicable staff regulations and their implementing rules, remained key in 2021.

Another priority was the organisation of appropriate training for the agency's staff, to support the effective implementation of the EMCDDA's new long-term strategy. The target of providing an average of three training days per staff member (KPI 2.3; see Annex 1b) was not achieved (the average reached was 1.2 training days). This was the result of the travel restrictions relating to the COVID-19 pandemic, which were in place throughout the year and which prevented EMCDDA staff from attending more training in 2021.

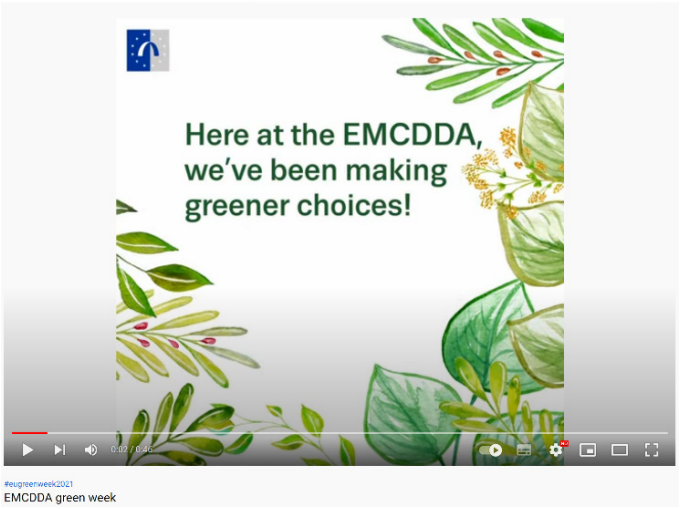
Facilities support services

In the area of logistics and infrastructure management, ensuring a healthy and safe working environment remained key in 2021.

To that end, the identification of health and safety risks for staff remained one of the main priorities for the agency, as did increasing effectiveness, efficiency gains and cost savings, including through further synergies with the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA). The information included in the risk registry was adapted following the annual risk assessment exercise that was delivered in 2021.

The agency also implemented further measures to guarantee the efficient use of the EMCDDA infrastructure, with special attention paid to controlling utilities-related costs and to building possible further synergies with EMSA, as well as measures to ensure a safe working environment; in this respect, it is worth noting that the agency managed a reduction in utility costs of 22.8 % as compared to 2020.

FIGURE 22. **EMCDDA Green Week video screenshot**



In line with the policy in place at the EMCDDA, this was complemented by environmentally friendly measures (an internal environmental report was delivered in 2021; see Annex VII).

EMCDDA makes greener choices

To mark this year's EU Green Week (31 May to 4 June), the EMCDDA created a short video showcasing some of the simple steps it is taking to reduce its carbon footprint.

The EMCDDA recognises that, as a public institution, it needs to actively monitor its environmental performance and implement measures to reduce any negative environmental impact. The agency publishes a yearly environmental report, which is featured in its *General Report of Activities*. The EMCDDA joined other EU JHA agencies during the week to present a compilation of the agencies' green activities on social media.

Information and communication technology support services

The EMCDDA's ICT programmes and services are developed and delivered in line with the triennial objectives, which are to implement and support core business and corporate projects and processes and to provide a continuously stable environment that supports existing basic and advanced services.

The optimal allocation and prioritisation of ICT resources was supported by the internal ICT Steering Committee, by refining priorities and deciding on the intensity of work to be devoted to each activity, depending on the most critical organisational needs.

With regard to providing support for core business areas, in 2021 the priority continued to be to respond to the significant changes in the organisation of work brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic since 2020.

To that end, during the year the ICT operations were concentrated on ensuring that the specific needs of the BCP could be fulfilled. Furthermore, and looking to the future, the EMCDDA prioritised the implementation of the EMCDDA workstation transformation programme. This initiative, which aims to create a modernised digital workplace that will enable the agency's staff to make full and efficient use of teleworking as an increasingly established work practice, was successfully completed in 2021.

Another key priority in this area was the implementation of the ECID programme (see also the section on communication activities in 'Business driver 1: Institutional'). The programme, which will run until 2025, aims to transform the internal EMCDDA platforms for communication and collaboration, with a view to allowing more interactivity, better information technology security and overall more work efficiency and transparency. This complements the workstation transformation programme, is particularly relevant in a work environment that has been reshaped by the COVID-19 pandemic and is in line with the new digital vision of the EMCDDA.

Another initiative that aims to increase the EMCDDA's digital maturity is the business enterprise architecture project. This made further progress in 2021, with support from an external contractor, and in close synergy and complementarity with the new business model initiative.

Finally, in 2021 the EMCDDA increased its efforts towards ensuring the cybersecurity of its operations, in line with the applicable EU institutions' policies and directives.

Synergies and efficiency gains

Synergies with EMSA were further pursued in the areas of staff training, infrastructure management and ICT.

II

PART IIA
Management

2.1. Management Board

Main decisions

As usual, the Management Board met twice during the year. The first meeting took place on 24 June by videoconference due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The second was held on 16-17 December in hybrid format (in Lisbon and by videoconference).

At the June meeting, the Management Board held an exchange of views on the EMCDDA's 'futures' exercise and its main results, and discussed future challenges for the agency. The Director presented the key concepts and results expected from the reflections on a new business model for the EMCDDA, with a view to ensuring that the agency is best prepared to meet the needs of its stakeholders in the context of the rapid changes in the external environment, and informed by the ongoing discussions on the future mandate of the EMCDDA. The main reference for the change of business model is the *EMCDDA Strategy 2025*.

The Management Board adopted a favourable opinion on the EMCDDA's final annual accounts for 2020 and congratulated the Director and his staff on the excellent budgetary execution.

Due to administrative changes in Georgia, the Management Board mandated the Director to renegotiate a working arrangement with the Ministry of Justice of Georgia.

The *EMCDDA Strategy 2025*, as adopted by the EMCDDA Management Board in December 2016, was accompanied by a roadmap that set out key milestones up to 2020 (*Roadmap 2020*). The progress made by the agency on reaching these milestones was presented to the Management Board in December 2020. In 2021, the agency embarked on the second phase of implementing the *EMCDDA Strategy 2025* and its work will now be guided by *Roadmap 2025*, which was adopted by the Management Board.

The Management Board endorsed the *RDF Roadmap 2025*.

In restricted session, the Management Board unanimously elected Mr Stelios Sergides, substitute member for Cyprus on the EMCDDA Management Board, as member of the Budget Committee for a mandate from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2024.

At its 64th meeting on 16-17 December, the Management Board held an exchange of views on new trends in the drugs situation in the EU during the COVID-19 pandemic. As usual at the December meeting, the Management Board adopted the EMCDDA's 2022 budget and preliminary draft budget for 2023.

In line with the provisions of Article 32 of the Framework Financial Regulation applicable to EU agencies and of the EMCDDA Financial Regulation, the Management Board adopted the EMCDDA's SPD for the period 2022-2024, including the 2022 work programme. The board also adopted the EMCDDA's preliminary draft SPD for 2023-2025, which includes the preliminary draft work programme for 2023.

In restricted session, the Management Board elected Mr Franz Pietsch (Austria) as Chair and Mr Xavier Poos (Luxembourg) as Vice-Chair of the Management Board for a mandate from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2024. Mr Joan Ramon Villalbí Hereter (Spain) was elected as Executive Committee member for a mandate from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2024. Mr Claude Gillard (Belgium) was unanimously re-elected as member and Chair of the Budget Committee for the same period.

The Management Board unanimously adopted the conceptual framework and implementation plan of the new EMCDDA business model.

The Management Board agreed the working arrangement between the EMCDDA and the Ministry of Justice of Georgia and mandated the Director to sign the working arrangement on a date and place to be jointly decided.

Furthermore, the board adopted the EMCDDA's updated anti-fraud strategy, and endorsed the EMCDDA action plan further to the 2020 Internal Audit Service (IAS) audit on human resources and ethics at the EMCDDA.

2.2. Major developments

The COVID-19 pandemic continued throughout 2021. While the EMCDDA had put in place measures to mitigate its impact, the pandemic still had a significant impact on the activities implemented by the agency and its partners.

At organisational level, major developments were the adoption by the EMCDDA Management Board of the second roadmap of the *EMCDDA Strategy 2025* (*Roadmap 2025*) in June and of the EMCDDA new business model in December. The documents will guide the work of the agency in the years to come.

2.3. Budgetary and financial management

Information on budgetary and financial management is provided by the report included in the EMCDDA's annual accounts for 2021 (see Annex VIII).

In terms of procurement execution, the 2021 procurement plan was put in place in line with the EMCDDA 2021 management plan, and was successfully executed in close collaboration with all units.

The negotiated procedures launched during the course of the year are outlined in Tables 3 and 4 below.

TABLE 3. **EMCDDA negotiated procedures in 2021**

Tendering	2021 figures	Number of direct contracts	Number of framework contracts
Negotiated procedures — see Annex I, Section 11.1(a) of the financial regulation applicable to the general budget of the Union (exceptional procedures)	0	0	0
Negotiated procedure — single tender (*)	83	82	1
Negotiated procedure — at least three candidates	10	9	1
Negotiated procedure — at least five candidates	4	3	1
Open procedures	2	1	1
European Commission frameworks joined	0	0	0

(*) Including appointment letters and very-low-value contracts.

TABLE 4. **EMCDDA negotiated procedures' values in 2021**

	Works		Supplies		Services		Total for 2021			
	Number of contracts	Volume of contracts (EUR)	Number of contracts	Volume of contracts (EUR)	Number of contracts	Volume of contracts (EUR)	Number of contracts	%	Volume of contracts (EUR)	%
EUR > 1 000 and ≤ 15 000	5	11 738	13	73 614	65	572 293	83	85 %	657 645	42 %
EUR > 15 000 and ≤ 60 000	0	0	0	0	11	498 503	11	11 %	498 503	32 %
EUR > 60 000 and ≤ 144 000	0	0	0	0	4	400 000	4	4 %	400 000	26 %
Total	**5**	**11 738**	**13**	**73 614**	**80**	**1 470 795**	**98**	**100 %**	**1 556 147**	**100 %**

Summary of budgetary operations, revenue and expenditure

The information about the appropriations transferred in 2021 can be found in the report on budgetary and financial management, as included in the EMCDDA's annual accounts for 2021 (see Annex VIII).

The results achieved under the main financial/performance indicators for 2021 are 100 % execution of commitment appropriations, 96.35 % implementation of payment appropriations, 98.80 % execution of appropriations carried forward from 2020 and 0.62 % cancelled/unused payment appropriations.

Information on grants, contribution and service-level agreements

Pursuant to the decision taken by the relevant EU authorities, in 2021 the EMCDDA received EUR 795 219 from the EU budget as the third instalment of EU financing for the third year of execution of the EU4MD project (for more details, see 'Business driver 2: Partnership'). This technical assistance project aims to enhance the capacity of eastern and southern ENP countries (it can also cover, on an ad hoc basis, the 'neighbours of the neighbours') to monitor drug markets and contribute to improving national and regional responses to security and health-related threats posed by contemporary drug markets and related issues. The project will run from 1 January 2019 to 31 December 2022, and the appropriations allocated from the EU budget for its execution amount to a total of EUR 3 000 000. In accordance with the relevant financing agreement, these appropriations are provided by annual instalments, to be entered into the EMCDDA budget as assigned appropriations.

Pursuant to the decision taken by the relevant EU authorities, in 2021 the EMCDDA also received an additional EUR 800 000 from the EU budget for the implementation of a new project for technical assistance to Georgia. The overall objective of this project is to contribute to enhancing national responses in Georgia to health and security threats posed by contemporary drug markets and related issues. Its implementation will entail activities for knowledge transfer and capacity building, and will aim to further familiarise the Georgian partners with the key EU drug-related policies and with the EU drug information system, methodologies, tools and best practices. The execution of the project will cover a total period of 24 months (two years) from 1 January 2021. The appropriations allocated from the EU budget for this execution amount to EUR 800 000.

In accordance with the relevant financing agreement, these appropriations are provided by a single instalment, to be entered into the EMCDDA budget as assigned appropriations.

Concerning service-level agreements (SLAs) concluded by the EMCDDA, the following were in force in 2021:

- SLA between the EMCDDA and the European Commission (DG Human Resources and Security) for the provision of services (upon agreed compensation whose amount depends on the actual services provided) relating to staff's training, health/medical services, safety and security;
- SLA between the EMCDDA and the European Commission (Office for the Administration and Payment of Individual Entitlements) for the provision of services (upon agreed compensation whose amount depends on the actual services provided) relating to the management of staff's pecuniary rights;
- SLA between the EMCDDA and the European Commission (DG Budget) for the provision of services (upon agreed compensation whose amount depends on the actual services provided) relating to the use of the electronic management and accounting system (ABAC) system;
- SLA between the EMCDDA and the European Commission (DG Informatics) for the provision of services (upon agreed compensation whose amount depends on the actual services provided) relating to the hosting of the ABAC, ICT procurements, e-procurement (e-Prior services) and secure connectivity/access to Commission-hosted applications (Rachel);
- SLA between the EMCDDA and the European Commission (DG Informatics) for the provision of services by the EU Computer Response Team — CERT-EU — relating to ICT security (computer emergency response);
- SLA between the EMCDDA and EMSA relating to the shared management of the premises of their headquarters and the sharing of the associated services and costs;
- SLA between the EMCDDA and EMSA relating to synergies for the sharing of ICT services and equipment;
- SLA between the EMCDDA and Europol (Siena) relating to access to the Europol database.

Further information can be found in Annex VI.

2.4. Delegation and sub-delegation of the powers of budget implementation to the agency's staff

The EMCDDA has set its internal procedures for budget execution and internal control while defining and implementing a partially decentralised management model, in accordance with the EMCDDA financial regulation, which transposes in its entirety the text of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 2019/715.

As a consequence, both the operational and financial decisions required for the implementation of the EMCDDA's SPD and budget have been delegated to the heads of unit. The administration unit provides support to managers for budgetary and financial management execution and the implementation of financial transactions, as well as for internal budget planning, monitoring and reporting.

These procedures have been codified, and all of the EMCDDA's deputy authorising officers have received specific training and information on their roles, duties and liabilities, in accordance with the provisions of financial regulation and the Staff Regulations.

The key actors in all steps of the EMCDDA's procedures for financial execution can be summarised as follows (see also Tables 5 and 6 below).

- Project manager: initiates and provides operational input for the administrative and financial operations related to project implementation (e.g. technical specifications for procurement procedures, cost estimates and 'certified correct' for payments).
- Financial management team: undertakes financial and procurement planning and monitoring, checking for consistency with the programming document. Financial and contractual support officers provide assistance in the preparation of administrative, financial and contractual documents with the input of the project manager involved. Specifically, financial initiating officers carry out operations using the EMCDDA's ABAC system, prior to decisions of the authorising officer.
- Executive office unit: the verifying officer carries out *ex ante* financial verification.
- Accounting officer: executes and records payments and recovery orders.

The procedures presented above are consistent with the EMCDDA's project-based working methods, which aim to integrate activity and resource management, in accordance with activity-based management. In this context, the EMCDDA has established procedures for planning, monitoring and reporting, with a clear indication of the actors involved and their roles and responsibilities.

According to the 'Operating framework for the Reitox system' (January 2003) agreement model for annual co-financing activities by Reitox NFPs, an external audit may be carried out each year by an independent body or expert, in order to certify that any financial documents submitted to the EMCDDA comply with the financial provisions of the agreement, that the costs declared are the actual costs and that all receipts have been declared.

TABLE 5. **Key features of the EMCDDA's partially decentralised management mode**

Level of operations (and actors)	Role/operations
Decentralised level (operational and technical units)	Operational initiative/input and operational and financial decisions by delegation in order to implement the work programme and budget
Central level (executive office unit and administration unit)	Coordination and management of executive planning, monitoring, reporting and assessment of the implementation of the work programme and budget. Administrative and financial support, management and control of implementation

TABLE 6. **Key actors involved in implementing the EMCDDA's partially decentralised management model**

Level of operations	Actors	Role/operations
Decentralised level (operational and technical units)	Project manager and head of the unit concerned	Initiates and provides operational input into the operations required to implement projects
Central level (administration unit)	Budget planning and monitoring team	Checks the consistency of operations with the adopted work programme and budget. Budgetary appropriations to be committed are set aside
	Human resources management team	Defines rights and checks compliance with Staff Regulations for staff-related management and expenditure
	Financial management team	Prepares the required administrative and legal supporting documents, controls compliance with applicable regulations and processes the required financial operations
Central level (executive office unit)	Verifying officer	*Ex ante* verification
Decentralised level (operational and technical units)	Head of unit / deputy authorising officer	Authorises budgetary and legal commitments and payments
Central level (directorate)	Accounting officer	Executes and records payments and recovery orders

In order to effectively tackle the constraints entailed by the COVID-19 pandemic and meet the need to operate remotely in this context, the process for the management of the EMCDDA financial operations has been digitalised as much as possible, conveying all steps, procedures and actors involved.

The EMCDDA's activities and operations are scrutinised by several processes and actors:

- external audits by the European Court of Auditors (ECA) (twice a year);
- external audits for specific projects (IPA-funded projects, etc.);
- discharges by the European Parliament (once a year);
- internal audits by the IAS of the European Commission (once a year);
- opinions of the European Commission's services on the agency's SPD (once a year);
- external periodic evaluations (set at every six years in the EMCDDA founding regulation);
- agreements by the European Commission on implementing rules for the Staff Regulations (one agreement for each rule);
- consent by the European Commission on the possible deviation of the EMCDDA financial regulation from the Commission's framework financial regulation for decentralised agencies;
- the European Data Protection Supervisor, for compliance with Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 (by prior notification and upon complaint);
- the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF) (upon complaint);
- the Ombudsman (upon complaint);
- the Court of Justice of the European Union (upon complaint).

Ex ante controls of financial transactions were applied exhaustively throughout 2021 to verify their compliance with the EMCDDA financial regulation and the corresponding implementing rules. These controls were carried out swiftly to ensure that payment deadlines were met, legal commitments were concluded in a timely manner and income was recovered promptly, without prejudice to the application of corrections, if required.

Financial workflows were properly defined and a sound system of authorisation of access to the ABAC was put in place. The manual of procedures was applied and updated, as required.

2.5. Human resources management

Human resources developments

The work to align the EMCDDA's human resources processes and policies with the reform of the EU Staff Regulations continued in 2021. As in previous years, the EMCDDA participated in the work carried out by inter-agency working groups in this area.

As regards the EMCDDA 2021 establishment plan, the total number of authorised posts was equal to that in the EMCDDA establishment plan for 2020 (i.e. 76 posts), pursuant to the relevant decision of the EU budget authority.

Brief description of the results of the screening/ benchmarking exercise

The results of the EMCDDA 2021 staff screening exercise reflect the EMCDDA's efforts to ensure the effective and efficient allocation and use of its resources (see Annex IV). The results show that 71.77 % of the EMCDDA's human resources capacity was devoted to operational activities in 2021 and only 18.65 % was allocated to administrative support and coordination; the remaining 9.58 % was assigned to operations considered neutral.

2.6. Strategy for efficiency gains

As far as efficiency gains are concerned, and as they result from the EMCDDA's past and present performance in the use of assigned resources, the EMCDDA is committed to constantly improving the effectiveness and efficiency of its activities and to maximising the use of its resources. In this context, the EMCDDA has pursued action to further rationalise and reduce the running costs of its premises — namely through measures aimed at reducing energy consumption — to offset the impact of the extension of staff working time pursuant to the entry into force of the revised Staff Regulations (e.g. by installing solar shading on glass areas, solar power panels, climate-control switches on windows and an intelligent lighting system, and by optimising heating and cooling cycles at the EMCDDA's premises).

Cooperation and synergies with EMSA have been intensified beyond those resulting from the implementation of the agreement in force between the two agencies to share the use of common areas in the compound where their headquarters are located (namely the canteen, underground parking area and conference facilities). Further cooperation and synergies have been developed, in a common effort to proactively exploit the opportunities provided by the geographical proximity of the two agencies, while safeguarding the autonomous legal personality and capacity assigned to each agency by the EU legislature. These developments concern in particular the joint procurement of shared services to increase critical mass and obtain better conditions (e.g. for maintenance, security, cleaning, the canteen and cafeteria, catering, travel agency, interim staff and medical services); the joint organisation of training activities of common interest for the staff of both agencies; and the sharing of some services/bodies, such as the EMCDDA medical officer and the invalidity and disciplinary committees. Following up on the economies achieved with the common implementation of a business continuity facility with EMSA, the EMCDDA is committed to extending the agreement.

As the new digital workplace programme develops, the EMCDDA will seek to match technological developments and to achieve further economies by updating its current infrastructure architecture. Progress in this area will depend, however, on the availability of resources.

2.7. Assessment of audit and *ex post* evaluation results during the reporting year

Internal Audit Service

The IAS strategic internal audit plan 2020-2022 includes two prospective audit topics for the EMCDDA: human resources management, and strategic planning and programming. The audit plan also includes follow-up activities and a reserve audit topic on international cooperation ([6]).

The IAS started the preliminary interviews for the audit on human resources management in November 2020. The fieldwork was carried out in January 2021 and the final audit report was issued in July 2021. The objective of the audit was to assess the design, effectiveness and efficiency of the internal control system put in place by the EMCDDA in managing its human resources and promoting an ethical environment. The audit also assessed the centre's compliance with the relevant human resources rules and procedures. The audit report included three 'very important' recommendations on ethics management, workload and performance management, and security controls over personnel files, plus three 'important' recommendations on selection and recruitment: conflicts of interest, training and development policy and internal communication. The EMCDDA prepared an action plan to implement the recommendations which the IAS considered adequate to mitigate the risks identified. It was endorsed by the EMCDDA Management Board in December 2021 and is being executed as planned.

(6) Following its risk assessment for the 2022 audit plan, the IAS has decided to prioritise the audit on international cooperation instead of the prospective audit topic of strategic planning and programming. The audit is due to start in 2022 and will be finalised in 2023. It includes a multi-entity audit on coordination and working arrangements with EU decentralised agencies in DG Migration and Home Affairs, to be finalised in 2022.

European Court of Auditors

The report of the ECA on the EMCDDA's 2020 annual accounts confirmed their reliability and the legality and regularity of the transactions underlying them. In this context no finding was mentioned or issued.

2.8a. Follow-up of recommendations and action plans for audits and evaluations

In its report on the EMCDDA's 2020 annual accounts, the ECA did not mention any findings or express any observations requiring follow-up action by the EMCDDA.

Regarding the IAS of the Commission, as at December 2021 there were three 'very important' open recommendations from the IAS audit on human resources management, mentioned in section 2.7.1. above. The audit report was issued in July 2021 and the EMCDDA is implementing the recommendations according to the action plan.

2.8b. Follow-up of recommendations issued following investigations by the European Anti-Fraud Office

The EMCDDA Management Board approved the anti-fraud strategy in June 2016, reflecting OLAF's methodology and guidance, including the rules on internal investigations, the initiatives for awareness-raising on staff ethics, the rules on gifts and hospitality offered by third parties, the guidelines on serious wrongdoing and whistleblowing. The strategy considered the priorities set by the European Commission within the framework of the Common Approach on EU decentralised agencies, especially the proper handling of conflicts of interest and the development of anti-fraud activities through prevention, detection, awareness-raising and closer cooperation with OLAF.

The Management Board adopted a revised anti-fraud strategy in 2021, with three strategic objectives ([7]) and an action plan for implementation in 2022.

Since its creation, there have been no cases of fraud in the centre and the degree of exposure of the EMCDDA to the risk of fraud can generally be considered as relatively reduced.

The EMCDDA has not been the subject of an OLAF investigation in previous years and, therefore, there are no standing recommendations.

2.9. Follow-up of observations from the discharge authority

Measures taken in light of the observations accompanying the decision on the discharge to the EMCDDA for 2019

Observation No 8 of the discharge decision

Notes that the Centre partially achieved its target for utility costs, despite a reduction of water consumption (–20 %); notes that the utility costs for electricity (+ 19.6 %) and gas (+ 44 %) increased due to additional use of air-conditioning as a result of atmospheric conditions in Lisbon, which is the Centre's seat; recommends that the Centre focus on energy saving and keep the discharge authority informed about the achievements in this regard;

Measures taken by the EMCDDA to follow up on Observation No 8

The EMCDDA has adopted a series of implementing measures and has steadily progressed to a continuous reduction of its CO_2 emissions per person over time, as can be seen in Figure 24 below.

To that end, measures have been successfully taken to reduce heating- and cooling-related CO_2 emissions; these include, in particular, the reduction of air-conditioning operating hours and the installation of solar window films, intelligent lighting systems, LED lights and charging stations for electric cars in the garage of the EMCDDA premises. Solar panels have been installed on the roof of the EMCDDA premises for the production of electric power for the operation of the agency.

In 2020 the EMCDDA carried out a procurement that resulted in the conclusion of a contract for the provision of 100 % green electric power, thus reducing to zero the related CO_2 emissions.

Observation No 10 of the discharge decision

Notes with appreciation that the Commission's report of 14 May 2019 on evaluation of the Centre (COM(2019)0228)

(7) The strategic objectives are: (1) Promote further and maintain the EMCDDA's commitment to ethics and integrity; (2) Raise awareness and promote prevention of fraud; and (3) Strengthen the EMCDDA's internal controls for fraud prevention, detection and reaction.

concluded that the Centre is working well; welcomes the report's other conclusions that the Centre is recognised as a hub of excellence in Europe and internationally, that the information produced by the Centre is factual, objective, reliable and robust, that the Centre's activities are relevant at Union level and to a varying extent at national level, that the Centre's work is coherent with the work of the Union institutions, other Union agencies and international organisations, and that the Union added value of the Centre's work is high; notes the recommendations made in the report and the action plan put in place by the Centre; calls on the Centre to keep the discharge authority informed about the implementation of the recommendations;

Measures taken by the EMCDDA to follow up on Observation No 10 (see also PART IIb. External evaluations)

The EMCDDA has carried out a series of activities to address and implement the referred recommendations, in particular the following.

- In order to foster engagement with the scientific community, the EMCDDA continued contributing to and participating in online virtual scientific meetings and conferences. It also hosted a number of technical meetings and webinars in which the scientific community participated.
- The EMCDDA strived for forward-looking products by identifying future trends and risks to better support EU preparedness and response in the ever-changing drugs landscape, as well as communicating more directly with national stakeholders.
- The EWS continues to follow up rapidly on new drugs identified in Europe, and remains an important tool in identifying the appearance of new substances and supporting the EU's legislative actions on control measures.
- To increase the comparability of information and data, further the use of visual aids and improve the quality of translation, a new graphic-rich product, *European Drug Report 2020 – Key Issues*, was developed to accompany the main trends and developments report, and was published in 24 languages.
- A number of technical and scientific reports have also been translated to increase their dissemination potential. Activities in this area have benefited from opportunities provided by the EMCDDA's capacity-building work conducted in non-EU countries to translate key reports and guidance documents into local languages.
- Improving the understanding and reporting on polydrug use has been given greater focus throughout the EMCDDA's technical work programme, insofar as this has been possible in the context of the current resources and mandate. In particular, greater attention has been paid to this issue in the agency's work on monitoring fatal and non-fatal drug overdoses.
- The EMCDDA's triennial SPD continues to include activities developed in cooperation with partners, and underlines the added value this joint work provides to the EU. In the context of the EWS on NPS, information exchange has been ongoing with the Reitox network of EWS correspondents, the ECDC, the ECHA, the EFSA, the EMA and Europol. Some international partners have also been involved in these activities on an informal basis. The latest edition of the EMCDDA-Europol *EU Drug Markets Report* addressed the international dimension of the drug problem, as does the preparatory work for the forthcoming edition of this publication. Similarly, *Health and Social Responses to Drug Problems: A European Guide*, a new version of which is also in preparation, includes consideration of the international evidence base. The EMCDDA continues to develop partnerships and synergies with relevant international organisations and third countries and its key activities in line with the EMCDDA's *International Cooperation Framework 2018-2025*.
- To avoid duplication of work, the EMCDDA continues to hold technical discussions with the UNODC and other international partners on how to improve data collection and how to facilitate inter-agency collaboration. The agency has participated in discussions on the revision of the annual report questionnaire.
- The EMCDDA adopted the PM^2 project management methodology and deployed an ICT tool to simplify its activity-based management planning and monitoring system.
- Streamlined ICT tools relating to staff's time management and appraisal have been developed and fully deployed, along with an annual training policy/plan. Furthermore, and within the context of the constraints entailed by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the processes for managing the EMCDDA's financial operations (namely payments) have been further digitalised and streamlined.
- Further improvements were made to reach national stakeholders, policymakers, practitioners and the general public. The best practice portal continued to be revised and updated with the latest evidence and tools, with a new focus on implementation experiences.

- In the area of drug supply, the focus remained on improving the quality and coverage of data collected in the Member States. In the security area, significant progress has been made in addressing methodological needs and knowledge gaps in the use of darknet markets for the supply of drugs and the use of OSI (in cooperation with the Commission and Europol).

- Ongoing information exchange and collaboration with DG Health and Food Safety is quite intensive. This includes work on infectious diseases, on the Early Warning and Response System on outbreaks, on alcohol (CNAPA) and on health indicators (DRD indicators of EMCDDA on the list).

Observation No 18 of the discharge decision

Notes with concern a high level of disparity in the geographical balance of staff, with a significant proportion of around 50 % of officials, temporary agents and contract agents representing nationals of the hosting Member State; calls on the Centre to urgently address this issue and improve the geographical balance of staff;

Measures taken by the EMCDDA to follow up on Observation No 18

The EMCDDA is engaged in ensuring, as much as possible, the geographical balance of its staff. For this purpose, special attention is given to this balance within the context of the recruitment policy, as a criterion (along with the gender balance) for priority choice in the case of suitable candidates who are equally placed in terms of compliance with the established selection requirements.

Observation No 28 of the discharge decision

Notes the fact-finding mission of the IAS on potential internal control weaknesses in the Centre related to human resources management; welcomes the fact that these potential weaknesses were not fraud related; calls on the Centre to swiftly address the issues identified by, and the recommendations of, the IAS and to inform the discharge authority about the status of progress in relation to implementation of the recommendations by June 2021;

Measures taken by the EMCDDA to follow up on Observation No 28

The EMCDDA has provided the necessary follow-up for the implementation of the referred recommendations. For this purpose, and in particular, the EMCDDA has adjusted the template documents required to ensure the effective handling of potential conflicts of interest through the recruitment process; has clarified the method and process for the correct verification of the eligibility requirements of applicants (namely the professional experience); and has adjusted the method for the scoring of the staff eligible for promotion/reclassification to avoid the risk of inequality of treatment in accordance with the rules that apply to the EMCDDA on this matter.

Observation No 31 of the discharge decision

Notes that the Centre's anti-fraud strategy dates back to August 2016 and has been reported as fully implemented in the Centre's consolidated annual activity report; recommends that the Centre update its anti-fraud strategy, considering its exposure to fraud risks, and update its action plan accordingly; calls on the Centre to report to the discharge authority by June 2021 on the state of play of the update;

Measures taken by the EMCDDA to follow up on Observation No 31

At its meeting of December 2021, the EMCDDA Management Board formally adopted the EMCDDA updated anti-fraud strategy and its action plan, as required by the relevant decision-making procedure.

2.10. Environment management

The EMCDDA has actively monitored its environmental performance and CO_2 footprint since 2014. Continuous improvement cycles have reduced its CO_2 footprint over the years in comparison to the baseline established in 2014 (as described in 'Measures taken by the EMCDDA to follow up on Observation No 8' above).

Annex VII to this report provides further details on this matter.

2.11. Assessment by management

Based on the information provided in the previous subsections, the conclusion of the management assessment is that the EMCDDA's internal procedures for budget execution and internal control, including the definition and implementation of a partially decentralised management model, in accordance with the EMCDDA financial regulation, which transposes in its entirety the text of Commission Delegated Regulation (EU) No 2019/715 on the framework financial regulation for EU agencies (see Section 2.4. above), are fully effective and function well.

PART IIB
External evaluations

As a follow-up to the external evaluation of the EMCDDA carried out during 2018, the European Commission, on the basis of the report presented by an independent consultant (ICF International), made a series of recommendations for follow-up. At its meeting of 12-13 December 2019, the Management Board adopted an EMCDDA action plan to follow up on these recommendations. The actions envisaged considered the current EMCDDA mandate, as the full improvement of some areas may entail carrying out activities not necessarily covered by the existing regulation. Within this framework, the EMCDDA carried out a series of activities to address the recommendations made. The Management Board is annually informed about the implementation of the EMCDDA action plan. Below is a non-exhaustive description of the main areas covered.

The EMCDDA engaged actively with the scientific community through the Lisbon Addictions Conference, for which preparatory work for the 2022 edition of this major scientific event has been carried out. This work was based on a co-production model that allowed for close collaborative work with the major scientific networks in the drugs area. The EMCDDA continued to participate in online virtual scientific meetings and conferences, and hosted a number of technical meetings and webinars in which the scientific community participated. The EMCDDA summer school was also conducted virtually, and it is planned to extend this activity to hold a winter technical training course online. The agency has also continued to produce scientific outputs submitted to learned journals and has had papers accepted in high-ranking scientific journals. The agency has continued to co-organise the International Conference on NPS, the eighth edition of which took place on 17-19 November 2021.

The EMCDDA strived for forward-looking products by identifying future trends and risks to better support EU preparedness and response in the ever-changing drugs landscape, as well as communicating more directly with national stakeholders. The EWS continues to be fully operational and highly active in issuing rapid notifications and following up on new drugs identified in Europe, and remains the unique European tool to identify the appearance of new substances and to support the EU legislative actions on control measures. Two formal risk assessment exercises were requested by the Commission and took place in November 2021.

Three development laboratories were established in the Public health unit in 2020-2021 to increase preparedness in areas of drug trends, policy and practice, and ongoing work in this area is planned up to 2024. The EMCDDA leads on a Futures cluster in EU-ANSA, involving 12 EU scientific agencies, the Joint Research Council and the DG Research and Innovation.

A number of trendspotting exercises were launched in response to COVID-19, enabling rapid monitoring of developments in drug use, help seeking and the drug market during the pandemic. A number of rapid analyses have been produced in the context of EMCDDA capacity-building projects. A new modular, digital edition of *Health and Social Responses to Drug Problems: A European Guide* was launched in autumn 2021 with the aim of supporting national stakeholders with state-of-the-art information in the health and social responses area. The EMCDDA/IPA 7 and EU4MD technical cooperation/assistance projects with priority third countries implemented a series of activities to identify and report on future trends in the drug market.

Furthermore, a customer needs project to improve how the agency engages with its primary customer groups and to ensure that their feedback informs decision-making and service development has become a core element of the new business model. The main goal is to be able to offer customers tailored services and products in a way that delivers the greatest value.

To increase the comparability of information and data from its main data source, the Reitox NFPs, the EMCDDA continued to implement the RDF and the roadmaps for 2020 and 2025. Milestones include the certification of the Reitox NFPs system, the promotion of the Statistical Code of Practice and the implementation of quality assurance procedures at national level.

The EMCDDA continued its stepwise approach to improving the quality and data representations available in the *European*

Drug Report and supporting online resources. In 2021, the report was published in 24 languages and included new graphical elements.

Work on the agency's digital strategy has highlighted ways in which the EMCDDA can optimise its channels and engage more with customers. Various projects were initiated with the EU Translation Centre to leverage developments in translation technologies to increase the amount of EMCDDA translated content available. A number of technical and scientific reports have also been translated to increase their dissemination potential, including documents into several local non-EU languages across the European neighbourhood area (e.g. Arabic, Georgian, Russian and Ukrainian).

The EMCDDA explored definitional issues with respect to better elaborating polydrug use and how it might be measured and reported. Prompted by the findings of the external evaluation, the EMCDDA Scientific Committee issued, on its own initiative, a draft position paper entitled 'Extending the EMCDDA's monitoring and reporting framework to cover the substance misuse topic and its consequences for European policies and responses in a more holistic manner'. The EMCDDA has again collaborated with the ESPAD group on reporting on drug, alcohol and tobacco use among school students.

The EMCDDA's triennial programming documents, the SPDs, continue to include activities developed in cooperation with partners, and underline the added value this joint work provides to the EU. Within the EMCDDA's *International Cooperation Framework 2018-2025*, the agency was increasingly involved in technical cooperation projects for non-EU countries, and started a new project with Georgia in 2021 (EMCDDA4G). This project, the first bilateral one managed by the EMCDDA, aims to familiarise the Georgian partners with the EU drug information system, its methodologies and its tools, as well as with best practices in terms of interventions.

To avoid duplication of work, the EMCDDA continues to hold technical discussions with the UNODC and other international partners on how to improve data collection and how to facilitate inter-agency collaboration. The agency has participated in discussions on the revision of the annual report questionnaire. The agency is represented on the Expert Steering Group of the *World Drug Report*. Data from the EWS on NPS has continued to be shared routinely with the UNODC and the WHO ECDD, and submitted annually in a structured way.

In autumn 2021 the EMCDDA launched the new edition of *Health and Social Responses to Drug Problems: A European Guide*, which aims to provide the latest evidence and data on the range of policy and practice intervention options to respond to drug-related problems. A rolling launch programme has been implemented with targeted information campaigns and related webinars for decision-makers and practitioners.

The agency strengthened its policy evaluation package, including both reactive responses to specific requests and proactive capacity-building activities. One of the priorities is to provide targeted support to drug policy evaluations upon request, as well as to develop policy evaluation workshops aimed at building knowledge of those engaged in managing and making use of drug policy evaluations.

The EMCDDA started piloting a new online learning platform, PLATO, to enable practitioners to learn together, share knowledge and engage in a virtual community. PLATO will be used to provide the certified distance learning on the EUPC, a European adaptation of the Universal Prevention Curriculum.

In the security area, focus has continued to be placed on improving the scope, quality and coverage of data collected in the Member States on drug supply (drug markets, drug-related crime and drug supply reduction). In 2021 the ad hoc (voluntary) indicator developed by the EMCDDA on drug-related homicide was introduced for pilot implementation by selected Member States and some IPA7 countries.

The EMCDDA now participates more actively in (informal) COSI and COSI Support Group meetings and has been highly active in the process of defining the EU crime priorities for 2022-2025. The EMCDDA actively participates in the implementation of the Council conclusions, setting priorities in the fight against organised crime for 2022-2025 through its contribution to all EMPACT activities; specifically, the agency participates in three drug-related/-relevant OAPs. Significant progress has also been made in addressing methodological needs and knowledge gaps in the use of darknet markets for the supply of drugs and in the use of OSI (in cooperation with Europol and the Commission). The EMCDDA darknet monitoring resulted in a new initiative that offers a service to interested Member States to produce (a prototype) country-specific darknet markets dashboard.

III

PART III

Assessment of the effectiveness of the internal control systems

3.1. Effectiveness of the internal control systems

The EMCDDA Management Board formally adopted the Internal Control Standards (ICS) in July 2010 and the new Internal Control Framework (ICF) in December 2017. Both documents were transposed by analogy and are fully consistent with the equivalent standards, principles and guidelines laid down by the European Commission. The ICS and the ICF constitute the basis for assessing the effectiveness of the internal control system at the EMCDDA, as provided for in Article 30 of its financial regulation.

The ICF consists of five interrelated components and 17 principles aimed at providing reasonable assurance in relation to the: 1. effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the operations; 2. reliability of reporting; 3. safeguarding of assets and information; 4. prevention, detection, correction and follow-up of fraud and irregularities; 5. adequate management of risks relating to the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.

The overall assessment of the internal control system depends on the assessment at the level of the principles and components. Besides the ongoing monitoring of internal control, embedded in the business processes of the centre, the EMCDDA performs a yearly assessment of the state of play of the ICS/ICF, which covers all control principles and components: control environment; risk assessment, including the risk of fraud; control activities; information and communication; and monitoring activities.

A comprehensive document that reviews and sets out the progress made in implementing the EMCDDA's ICS was drawn up in early 2013. This document was updated regularly after that point, until 2017. Following the adoption of the ICF, a document with a full repository of the state of play of implementation of the 17 ICF principles was drafted in 2018. This document is updated regularly on the basis of needs and opportunity.

The result of the 2021 assessment is that all components are present and functioning. The assessment identified five principles where some improvements may be needed, in relation to the components 'control environment', 'control activities' and 'information and communication'. These shortcomings, which were also highlighted by the IAS audits, are not deemed to affect the overall effectiveness of the internal control system. The EMCDDA has adopted an action plan to address the shortcomings and is already implementing the underlying corrective actions.

In 2021 the EMCDDA, like all other EU institutions and bodies, continued to face the effects of an unforeseen pandemic (COVID-19). With the activation of the BCP, and within its framework, the EMCDDA further improved certain areas in order to carry out control activities and to ensure the efficient and effective circulation of information and communication at both the internal and the external level. This involved adapting the EMCDDA's activities at both the operational and the support level to fulfil the EMCDDA's mission.

The Director established an EMCDDA task force to coordinate the agency's public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic in early March 2020, which continued its activities throughout 2021. This was after activating the agency's contingency management plan and putting in place measures to ensure the safety of the EMCDDA's staff and business continuity.

At the transversal level, the EMCDDA developed a flexible and overarching framework to help address the issue in a structured manner. This involved focusing on the impact of the pandemic and responses to it on the agency's plans and work programme, along with prioritising information-provision and impact-monitoring activities in a way that is flexible, rapid and useful for its different stakeholders.

This framework has a number of overlapping pillars.

1. Providing an immediate response to support stakeholders and to facilitate communication on drug-related issues by establishing a dedicated set of online resources.

2. Starting a process to review the impact of the situation on the agency's current substantive activities and planning to ensure core activities are protected and risks and problems are mitigated.

3. Considering the implications of the current situation on the need to monitor and respond on:

   (a) impact on service provision and help-seeking behaviour;

   (b) patterns of drug use and associated problems;

   (c) drug markets.

4. Ensuring coordination and synergy between substantive activities in this area and implementing a number of rapid outputs and services.

An overview of the activities focusing on the EMCDDA's role as a conduit for rapid, objective and reliable information on this swiftly evolving situation, along with rapid assessment and monitoring activities, is presented in other sections of this report.

Ultimately, the internal controls have proved effective and resilient throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. After the activation of the BCP, within that framework, the agency:

- set teleworking as the default working mode, except for critical functions;
- ensured regular contact with staff and provided them with guidance via email and virtual meetings;
- created a dedicated intranet page for COVID-19;
- launched a staff well-being survey online;
- used remote tools to conduct recruitment;
- prepared 'Guidelines for returning to work on the premises';
- deprioritised some lower-level priorities;
- participated in the EU Agencies Network's COVID-19 working group to ensure the use of resources among agencies was maximised.

While constantly monitoring the COVID-19 pandemic, the evolution of the situation allowed the EMCDDA's Director to deactivate the BCP mode in October 2021. The EMCDDA intends to carry out an exercise of lessons learned in 2022.

The risk management process was a central element in the system of internal control and, as in previous years, a comprehensive risk identification and assessment exercise aimed at improving risk management at the EMCDDA was carried out in 2021. The central risk register was kept up to date and linked significant risks with action areas of the annual work programme. This register identifies, for each area, the estimated risk level, impact and response, with mitigating measures to further reduce the residual risk. Risk assessment was carried out continuously at the EMCDDA throughout the year, while a comprehensive analysis was performed by managers in the context of preparing the SPDs.

The following developments in 2021 contributed to the overall effectiveness of the internal control systems.

- Measures aimed at improving project management in the EMCDDA, particularly in the ICT sector, were implemented.
- The performance model was consolidated based on a limited number (10) of composite KPIs, that is, KPIs built on and measured by sets of underlying lower-level performance indicators. This new performance model was first presented in the EMCDDA's Programming Document 2019-2021.
- Matrix was progressively deployed as a corporate management information system for operational planning, monitoring and reporting of activities.
- Internal EMCDDA coordination mechanisms (e.g. the heads of unit meetings, editorial board meetings, product coordinating meetings, ICT Steering Committee meetings and scientific coordination meetings) further contributed to strengthening risk management processes by enhancing the capacity of managers and other key staff to closely monitor all major issues relating to the timely and effective implementation of planned activities, the delivery of outputs and the achievement of results.
- The strategy for the organisational management and internal control systems, included as an annex to the SPD 2021-2023, was drafted and formalised, in line with the applicable guidelines issued by the Commission.
- The EMCDDA's revised anti-fraud strategy was adopted at the December 2021 meeting of the Management Board. For further information on the EMCDDA's anti-fraud strategy, please refer to Section 2.8b above.

- A number of communication activities relating to the management of publications were finalised in 2021 and will enable a better alignment of EMCDDA products with stakeholders' needs (framework for identifying main customer needs, framework for standard product management, Publication Initiation Request, Guide to producing EMCDDA scientific publications).

In terms of the prevention and management of conflicts of interest, the EMCDDA Management Board adopted a revised policy in December 2014 that reflects the common approach endorsed by the Parliament, the Council and the Commission in July 2012, calling for the development and application in all EU decentralised agencies of a coherent policy on preventing and managing conflicts of interest concerning the members of the Management Board, the members of the Scientific Committee and the agencies' directors.

The policy took into account the main recommendations addressed to agencies in this area by the European Parliament (namely within the framework of the discharge process), the ECA (in its Special Report No 15/2012 – Management of conflict of interest in selected EU agencies), the European Ombudsman (on the occasion of the Ombudsman's visits to several agencies, as part of a programme launched in May 2011) and the Commission's IAS, in its capacity as the internal auditor for the agencies.

The Commission worked closely with the agencies to prepare a model for guidelines on the prevention and management of conflicts of interest in EU decentralised agencies. In particular, the network of the Heads of EU Agencies contributed to this preparation by gathering information about agencies' experiences and best practices in this field.

The agency also has in place conflict-of-interest policies applicable to its statutory staff, who are bound by the Staff Regulations (e.g. at the moment of taking up duty, conflict of interest of spouses, during recruitment processes).

Cost and benefits of controls

Overall, the EMCDDA considers that there is a satisfactory ratio between the cost and benefits of the controls in place in the centre. It has put in place an effective system of internal controls that has been able to lead the centre into the achievement of its main outputs and strategic objectives while complying with the applicable regulatory framework and sustaining a sound control environment. The EMCDDA performs exhaustive *ex ante* controls on the operational and financial aspects of all transactions, as well as *ex post* on-the-spot checks on a limited selection of NFPs. Referring to its objectives, risk profile and available resources, the EMCDDA has developed a balanced approach that ensures that the actions and tools used are adequate and proportionate to the quantity and quality of the centre's deliverables, as set out in the programming documents. This is without prejudice to further adjustments that the future perspectives of the EMCDDA may render convenient or necessary.

3.2. Conclusions of the assessment of internal control systems

Based on the information provided under Section 3.1 above, the overall result of the management assessment of the effectiveness of internal control system as a whole is that it is fully effective and functioning well.

3.3. Statement of the manager in charge of risk management and internal control

Statement of the Manager in charge of risk management and internal control

I, the undersigned,

In my capacity as Manager in charge of risk management and internal control within the EMCDDA, declare that in accordance with the EMCDDA's Internal Control Framework, I have reported my advice and recommendations on the overall state of internal control in the agency to the Executive Director.

I hereby certify that the information provided in the present *General Report of Activities* and in its annexes is, to the best of my knowledge, accurate, reliable and complete.

Done in Lisbon on 6 May 2022

Hélder Vasco Travado
Risk Assessment Management Officer

IV

PART IV
Management assurance

4.1. Review of the elements supporting assurance

The declaration of assurance of the authorising officer is based on the following combination of external and internal oversight and control procedures over the EMCDDA's organisation and activities:

- the assessment of the effectiveness of the internal control system;
- the risk management exercise;
- the statement of the manager in charge of risk management and internal control;
- the accounting officer's certification of the 2021 provisional accounts;
- assurance provided by the ECA audit: no preliminary observations as regards the 2021 audit and no open observations from prior years ([8]);
- assurance provided by the IAS audit: no 'critical' recommendations outstanding from the IAS audits, at year-end, and an action plan is ongoing to address 'very important' recommendations stemming from the IAS audit on human resources management;
- progress in implementing the recommendations of the external evaluation;
- *ex ante* controls;
- the register of exceptions;
- the EMCDDA's anti-fraud strategy and the policy for the prevention and management of conflicts of interest.

The aforementioned building blocks do not identify any significant weaknesses that could impact the declaration of assurance of the authorising officer.

4.2. Reservations

A reservation in the declaration of assurance is prompted by the occurrence of significant internal weaknesses or external events that lead to the materialisation of critical risks.

At the EMCDDA, critical risks are events that have the potential to:

- jeopardise the realisation of major policy objectives;
- cause serious damage to the centre's stakeholders;
- require critical intervention from the Parliament, the Council or the Commission regarding the centre's performance;
- result in critical observations/recommendations from the ECA, the IAS and OLAF;
- result in the breaching of laws and the pervasive infringement of regulations;
- result in material financial loss;
- put the safety of the centre's staff at risk;
- seriously damage the centre's reputation and image;
- cause any other event that, due to its likelihood and impact, is assessed by the management as critical to the achievement of the organisational objectives.

(8) As at February 2022. There is one observation in relation to which 'The ECA takes account of the existence of a pending case before the CJEU, addressing several questions concerning the application of Directive 2008/104/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 November 2008 on temporary agency work to EU agencies. Since the reply to those questions by the CJEU may have an impact on the ECA's position as regards the use of interim workers by the EMCDDA, the ECA refrains from making follow-up on observations from previous years concerning this matter, until the CJEU rendered its ruling in that case.'

None of these risks materialised at the EMCDDA in 2021.

The assessment of materiality involves a qualitative and a quantitative judgement, and the occurrence of any critical risk is material per se. Qualitative elements taken into account include the nature of the event, its recurrence, its duration and its effect on the activities and programmes of the EMCDDA. Quantitative elements are assessed based on budgetary considerations. The EMCDDA is continuously looking to adjust and refine the concrete criteria to assess materiality.

In 2021 the EMCDDA identified medium to high risks that included: reduction in the capacity to deliver of the NFPs, Member States and other networks; insufficient funding of the EMCDDA budget; lack of political agreement on EMCDDA's future perspectives; disruptive events (COVID-19 pandemic, cybersecurity threats, etc.); reduction of EMCDDA's capacity for data collection, analysis and monitoring of the drug situation; malfunctioning and underperforming information technology system; and insufficient organisational planning/change in support of the new business model. To tackle each of these risks, the EMCDDA has taken all necessary mitigating actions. A clear demonstration of the efficiency and effectiveness of the measures taken is evidenced by the performance achieved by the EMCDDA in 2021, as described in Section 2.3, 'Budgetary and financial management', above.

V

PART V
Declaration of assurance

Declaration of assurance by the authorising officer

I, the undersigned, Director of the EMCDDA,

In my capacity as authorising officer,

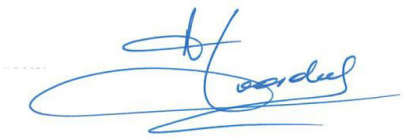
Declare that the information contained in this report gives a true and fair view.

State that I have reasonable assurance that the resources assigned to the activities described in this report have been used for their intended purpose and in accordance with the principles of sound financial management, and that the control procedures put in place give the necessary guarantees concerning the legality and regularity of the underlying transactions.

This reasonable assurance is based on my own judgement and on the information at my disposal, such as the results of the self-assessment, *ex post* controls, the work of the Internal Audit Service and the lessons learned from the reports of the Court of Auditors for years prior to the year of this declaration.

Confirm that I am not aware of anything not reported here which could harm the interests of the agency.

Done in Lisbon on 12 May 2022



Alexis Goosdeel
Director

Annexes

Annexes

Annex I.
Core business statistics

Annex Ia.
Implementation of the 2021 work programme by objectives and expected outputs/results

This annex is **available online**.

Annex Ib.
Key performance indicators

This annex is **available online**.

Annex II.
Statistics on financial management

Calculation of budget outturn

TABLE 7. **Budget outturn and cancellation of appropriations**

Budget outturn	2019	2020	2021
Reserve from the previous years' surplus (+)	22 251	20 639	108 036
Revenue actually received (+)	18 195 649	18 058 665	18 979 543
Payments made (–)	–16 525 529	–16 972 131	–17 937 215
Carryover of appropriations (–)	–1 777 308	–2 494 470	–2 624 764
Cancellation of appropriations carried over (+)	12 561	23 407	9 701
Adjustment for carryover of assigned revenue appropriation from previous year (+)	115 167	1 494 794	1 687 750
Exchange rate differences (+/–)	99	–2 229	–1 360
Adjustment for negative balance from previous year (–)	–22 251	–20 639	–108 036
TOTAL	**20 639**	**108 036**	**113 656**

Descriptive information and justification

1. Use of commitment appropriations

The rate of execution of 2021 commitment appropriations (C1) amounts to 100 % (95 % is the KPI mentioned in the EMCDDA programming document and the rate considered by the EC as the threshold below which a 2 % budget penalisation can be applied). In this context, EUR 17 379 572 was committed out of EUR 17 379 572 available **(= EUR 0 remained uncommitted in 2021).**

2. Cancellation of payment appropriations

The rate of cancellation of 2021 payment appropriations amounts to 0.62 % (0.65 % in 2020), corresponding to the cancellation of EUR 113 272 (5 % is the KPI mentioned in the EMCDDA SPD and the rate considered by the EC as the threshold above which a 2 % budget penalisation can be applied).

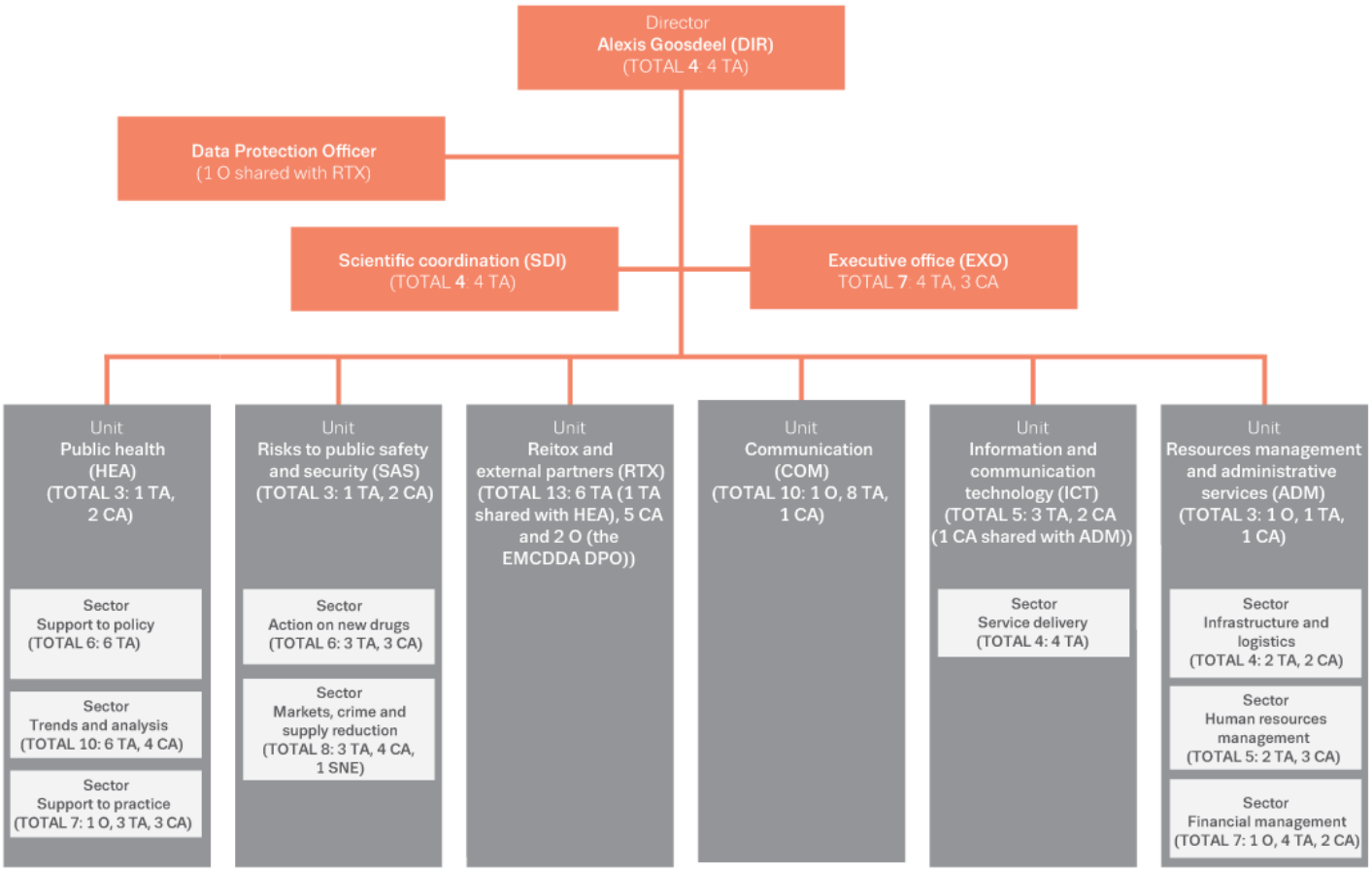
Concerning the use of 2021 Payment Appropriations, the following are data/indicators on the 2021 execution (these data/indicators do not belong to/concern the aforementioned KPIs).

- For 'C1' payment appropriations, the 2021 rate of execution amounts to 96.35 % (94.73 % in 2020), corresponding to EUR 16 745 421 paid out of EUR 17 379 572 available.
- For 'C8' payment appropriations, the 2021 rate of execution amounts to 98.80 % (91.55 % in 2020), corresponding to EUR 797 019 paid out of EUR 806 720 available.
- This performance allowed the EMCDDA to limit its 2021 budget outturn result to EUR 113 655.59.

The aforementioned elements confirm the information already anticipated about the capacity of the organisation to keep ensuring an excellent performance on the matter at stake, despite the exceptional and extremely demanding circumstances and constraints entailed by the ongoing pandemic.

Annex III.
Organisational chart

FIGURE 23. **Organisational chart**



Reference date: 31 December 2021

Annex IV.
Establishment plan and additional information on human resources management

TABLE 8. **Information on recruitment grade/function group for each type of post**

Key functions	Type of contract (official (O), temporary agent (TA) or contract agent (CA))	Function group (FG), recruitment grade	Indication whether the function is dedicated to administrative support or operations (subject to definitions used in screening methodology)
1 – Director	TA	AD 15 (external)	Operational
2 – Head of unit	O, TA	AD 9 (internal, inter-agency, external)	Operational
3 – Head of sector	O, TA	AD 7 (internal, inter-agency, external)	Operational Administrative Neutral
4 – Principal administrator	O, TA	AD 8 (internal, inter-agency, external)	Operational Administrative Neutral
5 – Administrator	O, TA	AD 5 (internal, inter-agency, external)	Operational Administrative Neutral
6 – Senior assistant	O, TA	AST 10 (internal, inter-agency, external)	Operational
7 – Team leader	O, TA	AST 7 (internal, inter-agency, external)	Operational
8 – Assistant	O, TA	AST 1 (internal, inter-agency, external)	Operational Administrative Neutral
Head of Administration unit	O, TA	AD 9 (internal, inter-agency, external)	Administrative
Head of Human resources sector	O, TA	AD 8 (internal, inter-agency, external)	Administrative
Head of Finance sector	O, TA	AD 8 (internal, inter-agency, external)	Neutral
Head of ICT	O, TA	AD 9 (internal, inter-agency, external)	Operational
Secretary	O, TA, CA	AST 1, FG II (internal, inter-agency, external)	Operational Administrative
Mail clerk	CA	FG II	Administrative
Editor	O, TA	AD 5 (internal, inter-agency, external)	Operational
Data protection officer	O, TA	AD 5 (internal, inter-agency, external)	Administrative
Accounting officer	O, TA	AST 7 (internal, inter-agency, external)	Neutral
Internal auditor	O, TA	AD 6 (internal, inter-agency, external)	Neutral
Secretary to the Director	O, TA, CA	AST 1, FG II (internal, inter-agency, external)	Operational

TABLE 9. **Job screening/benchmarking against previous year's results (as per methodology for agencies job screening (2014))**

Job type (sub)category	Year *n*–1 (%) 2020	Year *n* (%) 2021
Administrative support and coordination	**18.25**	**18.65**
Administrative support	17.61	18
Coordination	0.64	0.65
Operational	**72.24**	**71.77**
Top-level operational coordination	4.19	4.22
Programme management and Implementation	57.10	56.51
Evaluation and impact assessment	0	0
General operational	10.95	11.04
Neutral	**9.50**	**9.58**
Finance/control	9.50	9.58
Linguistics	0	0

Annex V.
Human and financial resources by activity

TABLE 10. **Human and financial resources per activity**

Work programme action areas	Main actors for implementation/ cost objects	Assigned human resources (HR) (full-time equivalent)					Initial allocation of budget resources – non-assigned appropriation	Final allocation of budget resources – non-assigned appropriation	Executed budget – non-assigned appropriation
		Official	TA	CA	SNE	Total HR	Total budget (EUR)	Total budget (EUR)	Total budget execution
Main area: Health	HEA, SAS, SDI, RTX&EP, COM, ICT, DIR/EXO	3.20	31.85	14.05	0	49.10	5 532 341	5 532 908	3 968 662
Main area: Security	SAS, SDI, HEA, RTX&EP, COM, ICT, DIR/EXO	0.95	13.31	4.25	1	19.51	3 283 295	3 283 631	2 278 501
Main area: Business drivers	DIR/EXO, SDI, COM, RTX&EP, ADM, ICT, HEA, SAS	2.85	20.84	8.70	0	32.39	8 203 703	8 204 544	10 773 883
Total		7	66	27	1	101	17 019 339	17 021 083	17 021 046

Annex VI.
Contribution, grant and service-level agreements. Financial framework partnership agreements

TABLE 11. **Contribution, grant and service-level agreements in 2021**

	General information				Financial and HR impacts				
	Actual or expected date of signature	Total amount (EUR)	Duration	Counterpart		2020		2021	
Grant agreements									
						CA	PA	CA	PA
Grant RTX – Austria	20.5.21	79 590	31.12.21	GESUNDHEIT OSTERREICH GMBH	Amount CA/ PA (*) (EUR)	79 590	78 921	79 590	81 937
					Number of CA				
					Number of H11				
Grant RTX – Belgium	28.4.21	79 590	31.12.21	SCIENSANO	Amount CA/ PA (EUR)	79 590	83 570	79 590	79 590
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Bulgaria	28.4.21	79 590	31.12.21	NATIONAL CENTER OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND ANALYSIS NCPHA	Amount CA/ PA (EUR)	79 590	49 520	79 590	79 589
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Cyprus	5.5.21	79 590	31.12.21	CYPRUS NATIONAL ADDICTIONS AUTHORITY	Amount CA/ PA (EUR)	79 590	63 672	79 590	95 508
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Czechia	8.10.21	79 590	31.12.21	CESKA REPUBLIKA	Amount CA/ PA (EUR)	79 590	83 570	79 590	79 590
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Denmark	7.7.21	79 590	31.12.21	DANISH HEALTH AUTHORITY	Amount CA/ PA (EUR)	79 590	83 570	79 590	79 590
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Estonia	6.5.21	79 000	31.12.21	NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH DEVELOPMENT	Amount CA/ PA (EUR)	79 000	81 359	74 533	77 956
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				

	General information				Financial and HR impacts				
	Actual or expected date of signature	Total amount (EUR)	Duration	Counterpart		2020		2021	
Grant agreements									
						CA	PA	CA	PA
Grant RTX – Finland	6.5.21	79 590	31.12.21	FINNISH INSTITUTE FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE	Amount CA/ PA (EUR)	79 590	83 570	79 590	79 590
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – France	19.5.21	79 590	31.12.21	OBSERVATOIRE FRANCAIS DES DROGUES ET DES TOXICOMANIES GIP	Amount CA/ PA (EUR)	79 590	79 590	79 590	79 590
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Germany	5.5.21	79 590	31.12.21	IFT INSTITUTE FOR THERAPY RESEARCH	Amount CA/ PA (EUR)	79 590	79 590	79 590	79 590
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Greece	4.5.21	79 590	31.12.21	UNIVERSITY MENTAL HEALTH, NEUROSCIENCES AND PRECISION MEDICINE RESEARCH INSTITUTE COSTAS STEFANIS	Amount CA/ PA (EUR)	79 590	83 570	79 590	79 590
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Hungary	17.5.21	79 590	31.12.21	MAGYARORSZAG	Amount CA/ PA (EUR)	79 590	83 569	79 590	79 590
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Ireland	19.5.21	79 590	31.12.21	THE HEALTH RESEARCH BOARD	Amount CA/ PA (EUR)	79 590	83 570	79 590	79 590
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Italy	6.5.21	79 590	31.12.21	REPUBBLICA ITALIANA	Amount CA/ PA (EUR)	79 590	82 898	79 590	78 606
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Latvia	6.7.21	72 760	31.12.21	SPKC DISEASE PREVENTION AND CONTROL CENTRE OF LATVIA	Amount CA/ PA (EUR)	72 760	76 398	72 760	72 760
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				

	General information				Financial and HR impacts				
	Actual or expected date of signature	Total amount (EUR)	Duration	Counterpart		2020		2021	
Grant agreements									
						CA	PA	CA	PA
Grant RTX – Lithuania	6.5.21	79 590	31.12.21	DRUG TOBACCO AND ALCOHOL CONTROL DEPARTMENT NTAKD	Amount CA/ PA (EUR)	79 590	83 570	79 590	79 590
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Luxembourg	6.5.21	79 590	31.12.21	GROUSSHERZOGTUM VU LETZEBURG GRAND DUCHY OF LUXEMBOURG	Amount CA/ PA (EUR)	79 590	83 570	79 590	79 590
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Malta	6.5.21	53 770	31.12.21	REPUBBLIKA TA MALTA	Amount CA/ PA (EUR)	55 375	54 460	53 770	42 282
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Netherlands	12.5.21	79 590	31.12.21	STICHTING TRIMBOS-INSTITUUT, NETHERLANDS INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION	Amount CA/ PA (EUR)	79 590	83 570	79 590	79 590
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Poland	16.6.21	79 590	31.12.21	KRAJOWEGO BIURA DO SPRAW PRZECIWDZIALANIA NARKOMANII	Amount CA/ PA (EUR)	79 590	83 570	79 590	79 590
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Portugal	12.5.21	79 590	31.12.21	SICAD GENERAL DIRECTORATE INTERVENTION ADDICTIVE BEHAVIOURS DEPENDENCIES	Amount CA/ PA (EUR)	79 590	83 570	79 590	79 590
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Romania	15.3.21	79 590	31.12.21	THE NATIONAL ANTI-DRUG AGENCY	Amount CA/ PA (EUR)	79 590	86 671	79 590	76 239
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Slovakia	16.6.21	79 590	31.12.21	SLOVENSKA REPUBLIKA	Amount CA/ PA (EUR)	79 590	92 103	79 590	85 281
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				

	General information				Financial and HR impacts				
	Actual or expected date of signature	Total amount (EUR)	Duration	Counterpart		2020		2021	
Grant agreements									
						CA	PA	CA	PA
Grant RTX – Slovenia	12.5.21	79 590	31.12.21	NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC HEALTH	Amount CA/ PA (EUR)	79 590	92 431	79 590	69 942
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Spain	12.5.21	79 590	31.12.21	REINO DE ESPANA	Amount CA/ PA (EUR)	79 590	83 570	79 590	79 590
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Sweden	9.7.21	79 590	31.12.21	THE PUBLIC HEALTH AGENCY OF SWEDEN	Amount CA/ PA (EUR)	79 590	83 570	79 590	79 590
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Grant RTX – Croatia	12.5.21	32 300	31.12.21	CROATIAN NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC HEALTH	Amount CA/ PA (EUR)	46 100	52 805	32 300	36 883
					Number of CA				
					Number of SNEs				
Total RTX grant agreements Number of CA Number of SNEs					**Amount CA/ PA (EUR)**	**2 083 805**	**2 140 390**	**2 063 933**	**2 070 423**
ENI/2018/401-149 EU4Monitoring Drugs	12.12.18	3 000 000	31.12.22	EUROPEAN COMMISSION	Amount CA/ PA (EUR)	1 007 367	1 007 367	795 219	795 219
					Number of CA	5	5	5	5
					Number of SNEs				
ENI/2021/423-588 EMCDDA4GE	3.5.21	800 000	31.12.22	EUROPEAN COMMISSION	Amount CA/ PA (EUR)			800 000	800 000
					Number of CA			3	3
					Number of SNEs				

(*) CA: Commitment appropriations; PA: Payment appropriations

Service-level agreements							
	Total amount (EUR)	**Counterpart**		**2020**		**2021**	
SLA-PMO	72 894	EUROPEAN COMMISSION	Amount CA/PA (EUR)	66 133	66 133	72 894	72 894
			Number of CA				
			Number of SNEs				
SLA-DIGIT (HOSTING, PROCUREMENT, E-PRIOR, RACHEL, ETC.)	35 547	EUROPEAN COMMISSION	Amount CA/PA (EUR)	38 844	38 844	35 547	35 547
			Number of CA				
			Number of SNEs				
SLA-DG BUDG (ABAC)	62 000	EUROPEAN COMMISSION	Amount CA/PA (EUR)	48 000	48 000	62 000	45 000
			Number of CA				
			Number of SNEs				
SLA-Training	3 000	EUROPEAN COMMISSION	Amount CA/PA (EUR)	3 500	3 676	3 000	2 081
			Number of CA				
			Number of SNEs				
RENT JOINT CENTRE - SLA EMCDDA/EMSA AGREEMENT	90 000	EUROPEAN MARITIME SAFETY AGENCY	Amount CA/PA (EUR)	18 000	18 000	90 000	90 000
			Number of CA				
			Number of SNEs				
SLA ID CARDS	1 814	EUROPEAN COMMISSION	Amount CA/PA (EUR)	1 652	635	1 814	1 414
			Number of CA				
			Number of SNEs				
SLA EMCDDA - Europol SIENA (MoU)	2 885	EUROPEAN UNION AGENCY FOR LAW ENFORCEMENT COOPERATION (EUROPOL)	Amount CA/PA (EUR)	2 466	1 815	2 885	2 815
			Number of CA				
			Number of SNEs				
SLA CERT-EU/EMCDDA 2020	24 970	EUROPEAN COMMISSION	Amount CA/PA (EUR)	24 480	24 480	24 970	24 970
			Number of CA				
			Number of SNEs				
Total service-level agreements			**Amount CA/PA (EUR)**	**203 075**	**201 583**	**293 110**	**274 720**
			Number of CA				
			Number of SNEs				

Annex VII. **Environment management**

Context of the agency and its environmental management strategy

The EMCDDA is part of the Group of JHA Agencies under DG Migration and Home Affairs. As such, the EMCDDA has no direct mandate related to the environment. The EMCDDA recognises that the agency, as a public institution, needs to actively monitor its environmental performance and implement appropriate measures to reduce its impact on the environment. Following the adoption of the **environmental policy of the EMCDDA**, a yearly policy compliance report and a report on the progress on environmental measures will be conducted as part of the annual work plan review process. In addition, a Working Group on Environment has been appointed by the Director.

Environment policy of the EMCDDA

The EMCDDA, in response to the growing need to preserve and improve the environment, and to the calls for its protection made by an increasingly environmentally aware and concerned society, is committed to reducing its negative environmental impact and to continually improving its environmental performance as an important part of its operating methods.

For this purpose, the key principles and objectives of the EMCDDA's environmental policy can be summarised as follows:

- comply with or exceed the requirements of current environmental legislation, in particular the legislation applicable to the EMCDDA;
- minimise waste by evaluating operations and ensuring they are as efficient as possible, and actively promote reuse or recycling, both internally and among the centre's visitors and suppliers;
- encourage efficient use of energy, utilities and natural resources, especially where these are non-renewable;
- operate and maintain the vehicle(s) of the agency and adopt a travel policy with due regard to environmental issues; encourage the use of alternative means of transport and car sharing as far as reasonably practical;
- purchase and procure products that do the least damage to the environment, namely those with eco labels or from suppliers with environmental certificates, where possible, in order to minimise the environmental impact of production, distribution and consumption;
- promote environmentally conscious behaviour by the staff of the EMCDDA and contribute to raising the awareness of others by adding environmental statements to work emails and publications;
- establish procedures for the periodic review of environmental compliance, measures taken and goals achieved;
- be an environmentally responsible neighbour in the community where the agency operates, and seek to identify and correct incidents or conditions that endanger health, safety or the environment;
- participate in efforts to improve environmental protection and understanding;
- share appropriate pollution-prevention technology, knowledge and methods with other EU agencies;
- consider obtaining an environmental certification for the EMCDDA in the long run, with due regard to the available resources.

Overview of the agency's environmental management system

The EMCDDA's environmental management system is loosely based on the EU eco-management and audit scheme.

The environmental policy frames the intention of the agency and creates the legal framework defining the scope of the environmental management system. The Director appointed a Working Group on Environment with a mandate to review, communicate and propose measures related to the environmental performance of the agency. The main service providers — the Infrastructure and Logistics sector and the ICT unit — plan, implement and improve the measures approved by the Director. There are two reporting lines within the envisaged environmental management system that include all mapped stakeholders. The environmental performance of the EMCDDA is reported within the annual work plan review process in the form of KPIs, and through the annual publication of the agency's environmental report. The findings and targets of the environmental report are reviewed by the Working Group on Environment, which then issues recommendations. Environmental matters are promoted and published through the Working Group on Environment. The use of green public procurement is required.

Environmental aspects, indicators and targets

The annual environmental report of the EMCDDA is produced by the Infrastructure and Logistics sector. It covers the following indicators, which are usually key points for public administrations working mostly in an office environment and are based on the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change standard for the calculation of an organisation's CO_2 footprint:

- energy consumption;
- water consumption;
- paper consumption;
- waste production and sorting;
- canteen;
- official vehicles;
- staff transport to and from work;
- missions;
- CO_2 emissions.

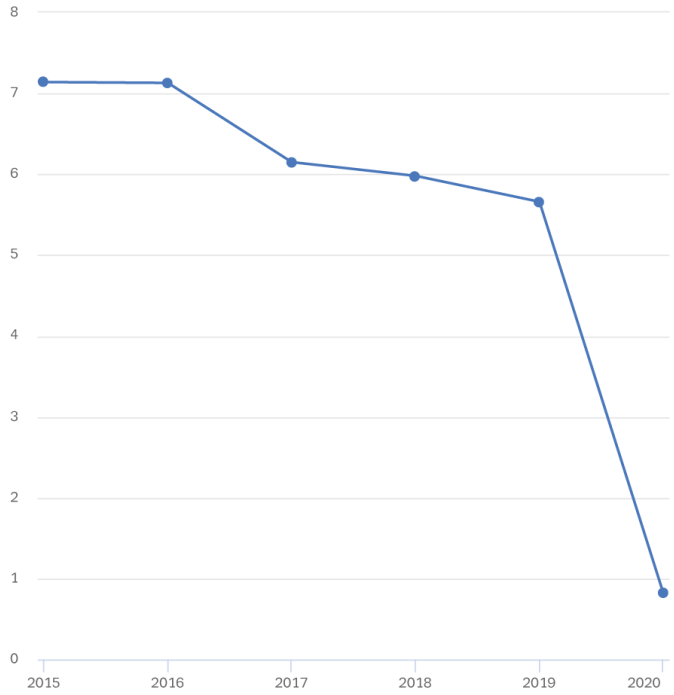
The EMCDDA has been actively monitoring its environmental performance and CO_2 footprint since 2014 (see Figure 24). Continuous improvement cycles have reduced its CO_2 footprint over the years in comparison to the established 2014 baseline. The following results were published in 2021 relating to data from 2020.The exceptionally good result for 2020 was achieved partly due to the COVID-19-related reduction in missions and transport as well as the switch to CO_2-neutral electricity generated from renewable energy sources.

Actions to improve and communicate environmental performance

The Working Group on Environment has its own HumHub page with information on its mandate and measures to be implemented. It posts the yearly environmental report on this page. Frequent awareness-raising communications promote environmentally friendly behaviour to staff.

Due to the application of green public procurement measures, contract renewals relating to utilities and consumables may take into account more environmentally friendly solutions, such as contracting electricity from 100 % renewable energy sources, compared with the 60–40 mix of the previous provider.

FIGURE 24. **Evolution of the EMCDDA's CO_2 emissions between 2014 and 2020 (tonnes per person)**



The Working Group on Environment recommended that electricity consumption be improved, that solar power cells be installed on the roof of the building and that the vehicle fleet be replaced with electric or hybrid vehicles. In addition, the installation of electric car-charging stations was recommended to promote the purchase of private electric cars. All three projects were approved by the Director.

The environmental policy states that the EMCDDA is striving to obtain environmental certification in the long run, with due regard to the available resources. So far, the lack of a direct mandate and the size of the EMCDDA have prevented any such implementation due to lack of financial and staff resources. The same lack of resources prevents the offsetting of the agency's CO_2 footprint beyond the offsetting achieved by the solar-panel-based electricity production on the roof of the building. The EMCDDA is intending to offset its mission CO_2 in the near future.

Annex VIII. **EMCDDA provisional accounts – Financial year 2021**

This annex is **available online** ([9]).

(9) Final accounts available once adopted in accordance with the relevant financial rules.

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About this report

The *General Report of Activities* is an annual publication providing a detailed progress report of the EMCDDA's activities over a 12-month period. It catalogues the Centre's achievements in each area of its annual work programme. The report is a useful information source for all those seeking comprehensive information on the Centre and its work.

About the EMCDDA

The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction is the hub of drug-related information in Europe. Its mission is to provide the European Union and its Member States with 'factual, objective, reliable and comparable information' on drugs and drug addiction and their consequences. Established in 1993, it opened its doors in Lisbon in 1995, and is one of the European Union's decentralised agencies. The Centre offers policymakers the evidence base they need for drawing up drug laws and strategies. It also helps professionals and researchers pinpoint best practice and new areas for analysis.

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