



FACT SHEET from the EU drugs agency in Lisbon

NEW TREATMENT DEMAND PROTOCOL PUBLISHED TODAY

EU drugs agency publishes new guidelines for monitoring drug users entering treatment

(20.9.2012, LISBON) The **EU drugs agency (EMCDDA)** launches today new guidelines for monitoring drug users entering treatment in Europe — updating a previous data-collection protocol adopted in 2000 ⁽¹⁾. Published in the **EMCDDA Manuals** series, the guidelines have been revised to better reflect the realities of today's drug situation and changes in treatment services and data monitoring systems. They follow a three-year revision process involving experts from the EU Member States, Croatia, Turkey, Norway and Switzerland.

The **EMCDDA** uses a variety of monitoring methods and tools to help countries speak a 'common language' when interpreting Europe's drug phenomenon. Its **treatment demand indicator (TDI)** — one of **five key epidemiological indicators** — collects harmonised information from 30 European countries on the number and profile of those entering specialised drug treatment every year ⁽²⁾. TDI data are routinely used in the **EMCDDA's** analysis of the drug situation in Europe, helping to identify trends and patterns in problem drug use and to assess the use and uptake of treatment facilities.

The **new TDI guidelines** will be presented today to over 50 European and international experts at the annual TDI meeting at the **EMCDDA** (20–21 September). Targeted at professionals and researchers, the 74-page protocol offers a common European methodology for collecting and reporting core data on those in contact with treatment services. The guidelines are part of a broader TDI toolbox of resources available online ⁽³⁾.

The updated protocol introduces a number of improvements and clarifications in the definition of 'case' and of 'drug treatment' and in the description of treatment centres ⁽⁴⁾. It also applies international standards in relation to socio-demographic information (e.g. labour status, education).

Reflecting the nature of today's drugs problem, the protocol presents a number of new items on polydrug use, new psychoactive substances, infectious diseases, risk behaviours and substitution treatment. With these changes, it is designed to achieve a more valid and reliable description of the profile and patterns of drug use of those entering specialised treatment in Europe today.

The TDI is one of the EMCDDA's most established monitoring tools. Over the last 10 years, it has been used in presentations and training activities as an example for international organisations and as a benchmark for countries outside Europe.

Notes

⁽¹⁾ *TDI Standard protocol — Version 3.0 — Guidelines for reporting data on people entering drug treatment in European countries*. Available in English at www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/manuals and www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/2012/fs-8.

⁽²⁾ The EMCDDA's five key epidemiological indicators are a set of standards allowing countries to measure the extent and effects of drug use and its consequences in a harmonised way. They contribute to the agency's overall mission to provide 'factual, objective, reliable and comparable information' on drugs and drug addiction at European level. For more, see www.emcdda.europa.eu/themes/key-indicators.

⁽³⁾ See toolbox at www.emcdda.europa.eu/themes/key-indicators/tdi

⁽⁴⁾ See Annex 3 for a full comparison between TDI protocol version 2.0 and 3.0.