emcdda

Minutes

Meeting	**57th meeting of the Scientific Committee**
Date	**2—3 March 2023**
Venue	**EMCDDA's headquarters**
Present	**See the participants list (Annex 1)**

1. Adoption of the agenda

The Chair of the Scientific Committee, Catherine Comiskey, opened the 57th Scientific Committee meeting and welcomed the Scientific Committee members, the spokesperson of the Reitox network (Mateja Jandl) and the EMCDDA staff present. She thanked the former member of the Scientific Committee, Anne Line Bretteville-Jensen, for chairing the 56th Scientific Committee meeting, and proceeded to introduce the agenda (Annex 2) that was adopted unanimously.

In preparation of item 6 of the agenda, the Chair announced the list of candidates for Chair (only candidate: Catherine Comiskey) and Vice-chair (only candidate: Henri Bergeron) of the current mandate of the Scientific Committee and asked if there were any additional candidates. No other candidates were announced.

2. Introduction of new members of the Scientific Committee (for information)

The Chair of the Scientific Committee welcomed the newly appointed members of the Scientific Committee (Thomas Clausen, Charlotte Colman,Laura Ferrer-Wreder and Jo-Hanna Ivers) and opened a short round of introduction for all the attendees of the meeting.

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

The Chair updated the attendees on Lisbon Addiction 2022, highlighting the work done by members of the Scientific Committee, both as reviewers of abstracts and as session chairs, and mentioned the dates for the next conference (23-25 October 2024).

The Chair then provided feedback from the Annual Dialogue on Research of the Horizontal Working Party on Drugs, held in October 2022, where she presented the recommendations of the Scientific Committee on research priorities according to the new Delphi methodology (Annex 3). She pointed out that currently funded research does not seem to be fully aligned with the research priorities presented and that the Presidency asked the Commission to provide further information to the HDG on that topic.

Finally, the Chair updated the attendees on the Management Board meeting held in December 2022 (Annex 4), where she presented the Scientific Committee's formal opinion on the 2023-2025 Single

Programming Document. She further noted the response to Ukrainian refugees on treatment, the preparatory work towards the new mandate, the interest of the Swedish presidency in children affected by drugs and the importance of including people with lived experience.

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

The EMCDDA Director, Alexis Goosdeel, welcomed all the attendees and updated the Scientific Committee on the ongoing developments at the EMCDDA (Annex 5). The Director started by introducing the latest updates regarding the proposal for a new Regulation of the European Union Drugs Agency (Annex 6) informing the Committee that a final agreement on the text coming from the trialogue is expected by the end of March 2023.

The Director highlighted the importance of the Scientific Committee in the mission of the new European Union Drugs Agency and in its new role in monitoring, preparedness and capacity building. He then proceeded to consider developments and challenges ahead, mentioning the importance of a more customer- and public value-centred approach, as well as the new upcoming tasks, especially those focused on preparedness.

Following the updates, the Director opened the floor for the Scientific Committee members to share their thoughts and questions. Comments and questions focused on the expected time frame for implementation, the importance of change management to prepare the staff for the challenges ahead, and of better integrating a public health approach dimension across all topics on which the agency works. More direct collaboration between the agency and other stakeholders, such as universities, local communities, civil society and people with lived experience was also discussed.

5. Draft EMCDDA Single Programming Document 2024-26 (for discussion)

The EMCDDA Scientific Director, Paul Griffiths, introduced the draft single programming document (SPD) 2024-26 (Annex 7) giving an overview of the document and stating that the goal of this consultation procedure is to provide input needed for drafting the formal opinion of the Scientific Committee on the SPD 2024-26 and to consider the implications for preparing for the new mandate. The emphasis was placed on the sound scientific basis needed to ensure maintain scientific excellence and independence.

After the general overview from the Scientific Director, members of the Scientific Committee shared their general comments on the SPD 2024-26. In addition to the need to continue ensuring scientific excellence and independence, the members of the Scientific Committee agreed with the importance of the following cross-cutting areas 1) training, education, and capacity building; 2) communication and stakeholder management, including a clear strategy for how new digital platforms will reach their respective target groups; 3) the new agency's mandate on research, innovation and foresight; 4) change and continuity management; 5) more synergies between the security and health pillars.

After the initial round of comments, the members of the Scientific Committee split into two groups (Annex 8) covering the two main areas of the draft SPD 2024-26, Health and Security and Safety for more in-depth discussion around the document. The following are non-exhaustive lists of key topics for consideration regarding the formal opinion on the SDP 2023-25 and for possible inclusion in future SPDs.

The health break-out session was facilitated by the Head of the Public Health Unit, Jane Mounteney. The Head of Support to Policy sector, Liesbeth Vandam and the Head of the support to practice sector, Marica Ferri also joined the session. The rapporteur for this session was Jo-Hanna Ivers.

The group focused their discussion on the following points:

- Increased focus on interventions, particularly on prevention, and the need for more indicators in this area;
- Increased focus on the lifespan approach, intergenerational health, the role of trauma, and co-morbidities, including from mental health issues;
- Further dissemination of EMCDDA's products and indicators on how EMCDDA data is cited in publications;
- Increased interest in the characteristics of drug use and its influence on specific sub-populations;
- Further working with relevant European agencies in terms of the health consequences of drugs and regulation of psychoactive substances.

The security and Safety break-out session was facilitated by the Head of the Drug Markets and Crime sector, Andrew Cunningham and by the head of Actions on New Drugs, Ana Gallegos, representing the Risk to Public Safety and Security Unit. The rapporteur for the session was Kim Moeller.

The group focused their discussion on the following points:

- More efforts to address all relevant topics with both a security and health perspective;
- Continue the work on the conceptualization of drug-related crimes and further improve the quality of supply indicators;
- Support a foresight approach, considering global warming, the growth of the global south, and other mega-trends;
- Consider options for supporting research on the darknet and social media marketplaces;
- Consider drug-related violence and the environmental impact of production as research priorities.

After the breakout sessions, members returned to plenary, where the rapporteurs from each break-out session shared their respective feedback.

On the basis of all the input provided, a draft formal opinion on the EMCDDA SPD 2024-26 will be prepared and circulated for discussion. The item will be re-scheduled for the autumn meeting of the Scientific Committee, so that members can review the draft after the regulation of the new agency is published (planned for June 2023).

6. Election of Chair and Vice-chair for the current mandate of the Scientific Committee (restricted session, for decision)

This session was chaired by Fernando Rodriguez de Fonseca. The Scientific Committee Secretariat introduced the formal procedure for the elections (Annex 9), and the members of the Scientific Committee voted for the new Chair and Vice-Chair. Catherine Comiskey and Henri Bergeron were unanimously re-elected, respectively as Chair and Vice-Chair of the Scientific Committee for the duration of the current mandate.

7. Updates from the Reitox and International Partner unit (for information)

The Vice-chair of the Scientific Committee, Henri Bergeron, replaced Catherine Comiskey as Chair of the 57th Scientific Committee meeting from item 7 onward.

The Head of the Reitox Unit, Gonçalo Felgueiras e Sousa, presented the organisation and work of the Reitox network to the members of the Scientific Committee (Annex 10).

Mr. Felgueiras e Sousa started by introducing the mission and responsibilities of the Reitox National Focal Points, stressing their role as the main EMCDDA data collection partners but also as representatives of the EMCDDA at national level and as key partners in disseminating EMCDDA data and publications. He provided the members of the Scientific Committee with an overview of the strategic objectives and roadmap for the network, including the certification/assessment of National Focal Points as a quality assurance measure.

The members of the Scientific Committee exchanged some consideration regarding the limited financial and human resources of National Focal Points and whether this will create constraints in the expected increase in tasks and responsibilities under the new regulation, where the Reitox network will become a formal part of the administrative and management structure of the agency, as per the current draft proposals. Preparatory work for the transition period is already under way and the Committee emphasised the importance of further strengthening communication among all national focal points and between the network and the agency during this challenging period.

8. Updates from the COM unit (for information)

The Head of the Communications Unit, Rosemary Martin de Sousa, updated the Scientific Committee members on the strategic communications goals for the EMCDDA and the preparatory work towards the European Union Drugs Agency (Annex 11).

Ms. Martin de Sousa informed the members of the Committee about the priority to increase multilingual outputs via the use of new and more efficient translation technologies. She also mentioned the transition towards a more user-friendly website, with additional quality assessment steps, announced the publication of the 2023 European Drug Report as an HTML product, to increase efficiency and accessibility for users and gave an overview of the upcoming products and the increased availability of data for users.

The members of the Scientific Committee showed great appreciation for the ongoing work in this area, emphasised its importance and were particularly interested in the projects around data for multilayer analysis and data visualization.

9. Updates on foresight activities and Lisbon Addictions 2024 (for information)

Klaudia Palczak, principal scientific manager, updated the members of the Scientific Committee on the EMCDDA's foresight activities planned for 2023 and informed them that the sense-making workshops announced to the Scientific Committee in the 56th meeting and planned for this year will only take place in 2024 due to budgetary constraints. She also informed the Committee about the upcoming EU-ANSA Futures cluster meeting that the EMCDDA is leading, and stressed the crucial role of foresight in the better regulation framework, as proposed by the European Commission (Annex 12).

Members of the Scientific Committee manifested their interest on foresight activities and stressed how important they are under the upcoming new regulation. They exchanged comments about the EU Innovation Hub for Security, research trends and new monitoring tools, and how that is linked to the future role of the agency in research, foresight and innovation.

Maria Moreira, principal scientific manager, then updated the Scientific Committee on the Lisbon Addiction 2024 conference and the foreseen timeline. She again thanked the members of the Committee for their work as reviewers of abstracts and session chairs in Lisbon Addictions 2022, highlighted the planned dates for the launch of the call for abstracts (October 2023) and the abstract review process (March 2024). She invited the members to send input and contributions for keynote topics and speakers.

10. Feedback to and from the Director

Under the final item of the agenda, the Director of the EMCDDA received feedback from the members of the Scientific Committee.

The conversation revolved around the customer-centric model and its potential impact on the workload of the agency, the need for a continuity plan considering the huge effort which will take place around recruitment and the upcoming retirement of key staff members, challenges placed on the staff and on the Reitox network during the upcoming transition and implementation periods and while ensuring the same or higher levels of scientific excellence and integrity.

11. AOB

Maria Moreira informed the Scientific Committee about the planned publication of a Call for Expression of Interest for members of the Scientific Committee after the new regulation is published (subject to the approval of the Management Board in June 2023).

The Vice-Chair reminded the members of the Scientific Committee that their 58th meeting will take place 25–27 October 2023, thanked everyone for their attendance, and closed the meeting.

Annexes:

Annex 1. List of participants (SciCom/01.4/57)

Annex 2. Draft Agenda (SciCom/01.1/57)

Annex 3. The Annual Dialogue presentation on HDG (SciCom/03.1/57)

Annex 4. Adopted minutes of the last Management Board meeting (SciCom/03.2/57)

Annex 5. Preparing for the new mandate (SciCom/04.1/57)

Annex 6. Proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the European Union Drugs Agency (SciCom/4.2/57)

Annex 7. EMCDDA Single Programming Document 2024–2026 – consultation version (SciCom/05.1/57)

Annex 8. Composition of break-out session (SciCom/05.2/57)

Annex 9. Formal procedure for election of Chair and Vice-chair (SciCom/06.2/57)

Annex 10. Updates from the Reitox Unit (SciCom/07.1/57)

Annex 11. Updates from the COM unit (SciCom/08.1/57)

Annex 12. Updates on foresight activities (SciCom/09.1.1/57)