

## **Minister Ó Ríordáin welcomes launch of the European Drug Report 2015: trends and developments**

Aodhán Ó Ríordáin, T.D., Minister of State with responsibility for the National Drugs Strategy, today (4<sup>th</sup> June 2015) welcomed the publication of the European Drug Report 2015.

The report, which is undertaken by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), is the 20<sup>th</sup> annual analysis of the drugs situation in Europe. It contains a comprehensive overview of Europe's drug problem and the measures being taken to tackle it. This is of significant value to policy makers and legislators in the EU in developing strategies to tackle the phenomenon and helping to assess the effectiveness of current approaches. However, care has to be taken in drawing comparisons between countries in view of the varying timelines and, in some cases, varying quality of the data from Member States on which the report is based.

Welcoming the cooperation at European level which facilitated the production of the report, Minister Ó Ríordáin said "The report highlights the evolving nature of the global drugs phenomenon and the pace of change over the past two decades. Like other European countries, Ireland faces major challenges ahead due to the rapid emergence and spread of new psychoactive substances, the changing nature of the heroin market, the ageing population of heroin users and the increased demand for treatment by those with cannabis-related problems."

"As we begin the process of developing a new National Drugs Strategy in Ireland, the information in this report will provide us with an opportunity to learn more about what works in other jurisdictions and what evidence-based approaches might be considered in an Irish context".

"The online interactive articles accompanying the report, which provide insight into specific issues in the drugs field, will be a valuable resource in this context", concluded Minister Ó Ríordáin.

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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 on this premise, and in the face of an escalating drug 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.

The EMCDDA will publish the European drug report 2015: trends and developments today. The report is based on information provided to the EMCDDA by the EU Member States, the candidate country Turkey and Norway, in the form of a national report and data submissions. The purpose of the report is to provide an overview and summary of the European drugs situation and responses to it.

The Health Research Board (HRB) provides the Irish information for the EMCDDA report.