

# [Euro-DEN Plus network prepares to expand beyond the EU](#)

Data from hospital emergency departments show that every year in Europe thousands of individuals experience drug-related toxicity and other harms, resulting in emergency presentations to hospital <sup>(<sup>1</sup>)</sup>. Supported by the EMCDDA, the European Drug Emergencies Network (Euro-DEN Plus) monitors [drug-related emergency](#) presentations across Europe to provide unique insight into acute health harms related to drug use <sup>(<sup>2</sup>)</sup>.

A Euro-DEN Plus technical [kick-off meeting](#) is taking place today to discuss the expansion of the network in 2021 to new hospital 'sentinel' centres in European cities outside the EU (see below).

New centres will be located in countries participating in the EU-funded [EU4Monitoring Drugs](#) (EU4MD) project, developed and managed by the EMCDDA as part of its ongoing commitment to strengthening cooperation and sharing expertise with partners in the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) area. The project supports national and regional readiness to identify and respond to drug-related security and health threats ([see map of EU4MD countries](#)).

Also expected is the enrolment of new centres in candidate countries and potential candidates to the EU, in the framework of technical cooperation projects financed by the European Commission's Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA). The ultimate goal of these projects is to familiarise the beneficiaries with EU policies and working methods and to support them for participating in the work of the EMCDDA (see [IPA 7 project](#) and [map of IPA 7 beneficiaries](#)).

The Euro-DEN Plus network already includes a total of 28 sentinel centres in 18 EU Member States, Norway, the UK and Switzerland. New centres in candidate countries and potential candidates, and in neighbouring countries, will not only expand geographical coverage of data monitoring, but will also reinforce the network, and strengthen the policy-oriented monitoring of acute drug-related harms in new regions.

## **Euro-DEN Plus technical kick-off meeting**

The EMCDDA and Euro-DEN Plus are holding the first network meeting today with selected experts from the EU4MD and the IPA7 partners. The meeting, involving 25 experts from 12 countries, aims to provide representatives of the forthcoming centres with an overview of the Euro-DEN Plus project and its data-collection model.

During the meeting (conducted in English, French and Russian), the participants will take part in a roundtable on Euro-DEN Plus data collection and discuss the timeline and work plan for the contribution of the new centres. This first technical meeting with the interested centres and practitioners will support the deployment of the network and formalise the

recruitment of the new centres into the project in 2021.

The participants will include: members of the Euro-DEN Plus Steering Group; representatives of the EMCDDA; clinicians in hospital emergency rooms, poison centres and other emergency settings who receive patients presenting with acute drug-toxicity. This broad participation is designed to facilitate discussions on how the Euro-DEN Plus data collection can serve as a novel data source, feeding into more established monitoring of drug use and drug-related harms in the respective countries.

The EMCDDA adopts a multi-indicator approach to drug monitoring on the principle that no single measure can provide a full picture of the drug situation and of the quickly changing drug-related health threats <sup>(3)</sup>. This was discussed with experts from the EU4MD countries, in the margin of the last annual expert meeting on drug-related deaths <sup>(4)</sup>, where the benefit and value of the Euro-DEN Plus projects were presented. The EMCDDA views hospital emergency data-collection as a useful addition to its monitoring toolkit. The agency is confident that enriched by six years of contributing to drug monitoring and responses in Europe <sup>(5)</sup>, the Euro-DEN Plus project can support local experts in developing the network in their respective cities.