



News release

from the EU drugs agency in Lisbon

'TESTING THE WATERS 2017': THIRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON WASTEWATER ANALYSIS

Leading experts to review latest developments in detecting illicit drugs in wastewater

(18.10.2017, LISBON) Leading European and international experts will meet in Lisbon from 26–27 October to review the state of the art of the rapidly developing scientific area of wastewater-based epidemiology ⁽¹⁾. They will be gathering at '**Testing the waters 2017**', the third international conference on wastewater analysis, organised by the **SCORE** group and the **EU drugs agency (EMCDDA)** ⁽²⁾. The conference takes place in the margins of **Lisbon Addictions 2017** ⁽³⁾.

Wastewater analysis is a novel scientific discipline with the potential for monitoring near-real-time, population-level trends in illicit drug use. By sampling a known source of wastewater, such as a sewage influent to a wastewater treatment plant, scientists can now estimate the quantity of drugs used in a community by measuring the levels of illicit drugs and their metabolites excreted in urine.

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. It views wastewater analysis as a valuable additional tool in its epidemiological toolkit and one which can provide timely information on a wide spectrum of substances. Echoing this rationale, the conference will look at bridging the fields of wastewater-based epidemiology and conventional drug epidemiology and examine the current applications and future perspectives for this innovative drug monitoring approach.

The three **keynote speeches** at the conference will focus on:

- 'Wastewater-based epidemiology and its practical implications in Finland' — Teemu Gunnar, Finland
- 'Using multiple data sources including wastewater analysis to understand a local drug market' — Frank Zobel, Switzerland
- 'Application of wastewater-based epidemiology in China: from wastewater monitoring to drug control efforts' — Xiqing Li, China

The conference participants will present case studies and explore novel uses of wastewater analysis (e.g. early detection of new psychoactive substances on the drug market). During the event, the organisers will award prizes for 'Best poster' and 'Best paper' to young researchers working in this field.

The **EMCDDA** and the **SCORE** group have been collaborating in this area since 2011, the year when SCORE began its annual wastewater monitoring campaigns. SCORE's latest project analysed wastewater in over 50 European cities in 18 European countries in March 2016 to explore the drug-taking behaviours of their inhabitants. The findings offered a valuable snapshot of the drug flow through the cities involved ⁽⁴⁾.

⁽¹⁾ www.emcdda.europa.eu/activities/wastewater-analysis — www.emcdda.europa.eu/topics/pods/waste-water-analysis www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/insights/assessing-drugs-in-wastewater — <https://youtu.be/SbdiuEL2r4k>

⁽²⁾ Sewage analysis CORE group — Europe (SCORE) <http://score-cost.eu/network-activities/meetings/ttw2017>
See full programme at <http://score-cost.eu/wp-content/uploads/sites/118/2016/10/ES1307-TTW3-25092017.pdf>
The event will be held at the Lisbon Congress Centre and is closed to the media.

⁽³⁾ Lisbon Addictions 2017 — full programme at www.lisbonaddictions.eu/lisbon-addictions-2017
Structured session 22 is dedicated to wastewater analysis — 25 October (11.00–12.30).

⁽⁴⁾ www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/2016/12/latest-data-reveal-drug-taking-habits-in-over-50-european-cities_en