European Commission
Joint Research Centre - Ispra Site

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Mission Report

Name	*Institute/Unit/Project*
   	Competencies Directorate/Text and Data Mining Unit/EMM

Object of the mission

Give a presentation on the EMM OSINT Suite and brief on the cooperation between JRC and the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) in the context of customisation of MEDISYS for EMCDDA during the 4th Annual meeting of the EMCDDA Reference Group on Drug Supply Indicators.

Place, date, organizations visited and contacted persons
(Please continue on a separate sheet, if necessary)

8.-9.11.2016 European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), Lisbon, Portugal	_____, EMCDDA _____, EMCDDA various representatives from MS' authorities

Other Participants		Distribution List
Of the establishment	*Other services of the Commission*	*Obligatory(*) + Messrs.*
		_____ (*), JRC I.3 Unit, JRC i3@jrc.ec.europa.eu
		For sensitive mission reports, distribution must only be only to persons indicated by (*) and relevant staff members of the GlobeSec Unit

Main Results of the mission:
(Please attach as many separate sheets as necessary)

Background

The development of indicators in the area of drug supply has been identified as a priority at the EU level and is the key area of work of the EMCDDA. The EMCDDA Reference Group on drug supply was created in order to: (a) foster and facilitate a harmonised EU-level drug-relevant information gathering, (b) incrementally improve information quality, comparability and availability over time, and (c) support the development of drug supply indicators and analysis of reported findings, etc.

The main focus of the meeting was to discuss: (a) drug supply indicators in the European context, (b) experience related to the process of collecting relevant data, (c) alternative and new ways of gathering information, e.g., through the utilisation of OSINT solutions, and (d) recent trends and external threats

that might impact drug market in Europe (e.g., observed phenomena in the context of trafficking drugs from third countries to the EU).

The meeting was attended by EU MS representatives, associated MS (including Turkey and Norway), EUROPOL, DG HOME, JRC and EMSDDA participants.

In the context of this event I had an opportunity to directly discuss with EMCDDA staff currently using MEDISYS and News Desk in order to gather feedback and identify potential areas of improvements and future developments in the context of an ongoing cooperation with EMCDDA.

Salient Points

- Although EMCDDA established instruments for gathering relevant information there are still some major problems as regards the uniformity, consistency and availability of data received through official channels from MSs directly, which resulted in an ever-growing interest of exploiting tools for open source intelligence gathering as an alternative and complementary instrument,

- EMCDDA is particularly interested in collecting structured information on drug seizures and drug-related homicides from online media and other open information sources. While EMM News Desk provides the basic functionality to do this, a highly desirable functionality would be to automatically extract event related information in form of tables (e.g., event type, amount of seized drugs, location, perpetrators, authority involved, etc.) for a set of selected content items (e.g., news articles) and to potentially link related event information over time (e.g., linking new facts reported with prior events),

- Some law enforcement authorities in MS do actually report on drug-related events on dedicated publicly accessible web pages (e.g., The Polish Police is using this portal: http://www.policja.pl/pol/tagi/15 narkotyki.html to inform on drug seizures),

- OSINT Suite could also be potentially exploited to retrieve complementary information to drug seizures and drug-related homicides of interest not covered by conventional media,

- EMCDDA has carried out a study on Internet drug markets in order to better understand the online supply of drugs and undertake a mapping of the range of internet drug markets. While the major drug sale and advertising activities are carried out on deep/dark web a nice-to-have functionality would be a tool that would allow to automatically identify specific terms and expressions used when referring to certain new drugs, purchase thereof and consumption experiences by people who share such information on discussion fora and social media,

- EUROPOL was interested in knowing whether OSINT Suite will be equipped with any functionalities for facilitating mining the deep web.

Way ahead

- Consider the above list of remarks (not exhaustive though) on automated event extraction, term extraction and exploitation of OSINT Suite while planning new Service Level Agreement with EMCDDA for 2017 and beyond,

- Consider as a future development integration of an on-demand event extraction service in the News Desk that would be run on a list of selected news articles by the user and would produce extracted information in form of a table,

- It would be worthwhile to consider rejuvenating research on automated linking of information on the same event over time (i.e., linking provision of new findings and facts with prior events).