



*Check against delivery*

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**Prevention of alcohol and drug use in the workplace**  
*From a declaration of intent to the implementation of a policy*

Wednesday 15 October 2014

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to open today the conference on ***Prevention of alcohol and drug use in the workplace: From a declaration of intent to the implementation of a policy***. This represents for me, as President of the Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe, and for those of you who have provided input to this work, a fundamental step towards our common goal of fostering a change to the legal framework for addressing addiction in the workplace.

Since 2011 and the firm commitment of 12 member states to the reflection which led, in 2012, to the adoption of a reference framework, we have witnessed an increase in problems relating to the use of alcohol and drugs by employees both in their workplace and in their private life, as evidenced by research carried out at international level. We have reached a consensus on the need to take into account the occupational factors underlying this addictive behaviour. We have recognised

the risks and dangers arising from such behaviour which have an adverse effect on health and safety at work.

It is on this basis that we have sought to go beyond the differences that shape our national or regional policies to prevent addiction at work. At the same time, we have focused on the points of convergence to build this reference framework, adapted to the specific cultural features of individual states and companies. The main points of this framework will be presented to you in the next few minutes and I am delighted to say that it has been adopted by 18 countries and by the International Labour Office and the World Health Organisation Regional Office for Europe.

Over the past two years, this approach has attracted further interest and an additional five countries have joined us in the process of producing an inventory of the national prevention practices deployed following the adoption of the reference framework, a summary of which you have been provided with this morning.

Similarly, it is with considerable satisfaction that I note the active participation of international organisations in this work.

I am thinking first and foremost of the International Labour Office, without which this conference would not be as substantive. I am also thinking of the European Union, and more particularly, the Commission, of the directives it issues and its new Occupational Safety and Health Strategic Framework 2014-2020. In a supporting role, the specialised agencies are also a major resource. The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, commonly referred to as the Bilbao Agency, which will give a presentation tomorrow by videoconference, and the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions have provided us with the results of their work in the form of a comparative study on alcohol and drug consumption in the 28 EU member states. Lastly, I would like to pay tribute to the European Union of Medical Specialists and the International Organisation of Employers.

This work was designed in accordance with a pragmatic approach to the framing of public policies – an approach based first of all on the sharing of best practice, as the first common denominator, before moving on to what is more general, to what is incumbent on everyone, the law. On this sensitive issue, this presupposes not only getting states and international organisations on board, but also broad consultation of all the key stakeholders – employers, the social partners, occupational health professionals, human resources directors and researchers.

The programme before you today is based on this positive process of comparing and contrasting the practices actually in place and the approaches we would like to see pursued. It comprises four subject areas or axes for discussion:

**Axis 1: policies to prevent alcohol and drug use in the workplace**

The aim here is to measure the impact of the reference framework adopted in 2012 based on feedback and assessing the relevance of the prevention policies pursued by states.

**Axis 2: best practice.**

The aim here is to involve SMEs in the reference framework process by means of studies and presentations of best practice.

**Axis 3: evaluation and monitoring of prevention policies in the workplace**

The aim here, via case studies, is to highlight success factors and capitalise on prevention measures that have been judged positive in order to foster further improvement.

**Axis 4: the determinants of addictive behaviours in the workplace.**

Lastly, the aim here is to delve deeper into the life of the company and its key players by seeking to identify more clearly the determinants of the consumption of psychoactive substances.

The conference will end with a round-table discussion which I hope will lead to a debate on including addictive behaviours in the analysis of risk prevention and its various protocols.

Throughout this process, the goal pursued by the French Presidency of the Pompidou Group has been to help promote balanced policies based on responsibility, respect for individual and collective freedoms and solidarity within working communities. The Council of Europe's Pompidou Group is the ideal forum for discussing these ethical, political and, ultimately, legislative issues.

All that it remains for me to do is to thank all those who have helped ensure the success of this work and of this conference and to hope that the discussions you will have will be fruitful. Unfortunately, I am unable to attend all of your deliberations, but Dr Gilles Lecoq and Mr Michel Massacret will be with you throughout these two days.

Thank you.