



Co-operation Group to Combat Drug Abuse and Illicit trafficking in Drugs

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“Stavanger Declaration” adopted at the 17th Ministerial Conference of the Pompidou Group

The Ministers participating at the 17th Ministerial Conference of the Pompidou Group in Stavanger, Norway, on 27 and 28 November 2018, make the following declaration:

The Pompidou Group is an important bridge between countries in Europe at large and beyond, thus proving its added value as an enlarged partial agreement of the Council of Europe.

We reaffirm our support to the Group which

- underlines human rights as a fundamental cornerstone in drug policy, in line with the Council of Europe's core mission;
- provides added value through innovation, implementation of operational solutions, pro-active approaches and cross-sectoral cooperation;
- constitutes a unique Pan-European mechanism for intergovernmental cooperation in the field of drug policies;
- links research, conceptualisation and the implementation of drug policies;
- contributes to highlighting the choices of decision-makers in promoting effective and coherent responses to drug-related issues;
- has proven its flexibility and ability to react timely and adequately to emerging challenges and changes;
- plays an important role in the international drug policy sphere and promotes the interplay of European and international organisations involved therein;
- acknowledges the importance of the role and participation of civil society in drug policy related democratic processes;
- welcomed three new member States (Bosnia and Herzegovina in 2015, Monaco in 2016 and Mexico in 2017), bringing the total number of member States to 39.

We congratulate the Pompidou Group under the Norwegian Presidency and Italian Vice-Presidency, for the results achieved under its 2015-2018 Work Programme, and we endorse the documents adopted by the Permanent Correspondents of the Pompidou Group;

- Statement on bringing human rights into drug policy development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation;
- Policy paper on government interaction with civil society on drug policy issues: Principles, ways and means, opportunities and challenges;
- Statement on costs and spillover consequences of drug policies;

and we take note of the

- Statement on access to opioid agonist medicines for the treatment of opioid dependence syndrome.

We acknowledge the relevance and concrete results of Pompidou Group activities, both permanent and ad hoc, including the Executive Training on Drug Policy, the dialogue and cooperation among airport, police and customs authorities (the Airports Group), the International Network on Precursor Control, regional platforms such as the Mediterranean Network (MedNET) and the SEE cooperation network, various work related to gender issues, as well as statements made at the UN General Assembly Special Session on the World Drug Problem (UNGASS) in 2016, the Commission on

Narcotic Drugs (CND) and other efforts to increase the influence and visibility of the Pompidou Group and signal the synergies among international and regional organisations.

We are concerned about

- the fact that the availability and use of drugs and related harms, including the number of drug related deaths, continues to be high, despite the important efforts to tackle the problem;
- challenges from new communication and information technologies, new modes of distribution, as well as new psychoactive substances, significantly affecting demand and supply reduction measures in drug policy;
- global challenges caused by war, conflict, terrorism and economic/financial instability;
- the risk of discriminatory and stigmatising attitudes towards people who use drugs, as such attitudes can undermine risk and harm reduction, drug treatment, social re-integration and the potential for recovery.

We recall the obligations of States under the United Nations and the Council of Europe Conventions to protect fundamental rights and freedoms, in particular the right to life and human dignity, the right to protection of health, the prohibition of any type of discrimination as well as the right of children to be protected from the illicit use of narcotic drugs and psychoactive substances.

We welcome the provisions of the outcome document of the 2016 Special Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations that the world drug problem requires a comprehensive, integrated and balanced response, in the full respect of human rights and dignity of all individuals in the context of drug programmes, strategies and policies. Consequently, it would be important to consider adapting the descriptive title of the founding resolution of the Pompidou Group, which today reads 'Co-operation Group to Combat Drug Abuse and Illicit Drug Trafficking', to more adequately reflect today's drug policy evolution and challenges, and subsequently to initiate a broader reflection on the Group's mandate, operation and working methods.

We reaffirm

- our commitment to ensure that drug policies are fully respecting human rights, thus underlining the importance of the Council of Europe's role in this field;
- our intention to further pursue the consolidation of the bridging role of the Pompidou Group between European countries, their neighbourhood and beyond, in particular in the countries of the Southern Mediterranean rim and the countries in the South East and East of Europe;
- our determination to provide added value and complementarity to the international efforts to address the world drug problem by cooperation and concerted action with other European and international organisations.

We encourage governments

- to further develop drug policy with a comprehensive, integrated and balanced, scientific evidence-based and human rights respecting approach, including measures aimed at preventing risks and reducing harms associated with the use of psychoactive substances, as well as initiatives and measures aimed at minimizing the adverse public health and social consequences of drug abuse;
- to actively work for the abolition of the death penalty for drug-related offences and to condemn extra-judicial executions;
- to contribute to and embrace neutral and non-stigmatising language;
- to further develop a meaningful co-operation and dialogue with civil society actors, including representatives of people who use drugs;
- to guarantee broad coverage, accessibility and quality of essential services for all, and to ensure access to and availability of controlled medicines for medical and scientific purposes whilst preventing their diversion;
- to mainstream a gender perspective into the design and implementation of drug policies;
- to highlight public health and the importance of scientific evidence-based prevention;
- to further consolidate their efforts to effectively react to the emergence of new challenges, such as new psychoactive substances and fentanyl;
- to continue international cooperation on effective precursor control and effective prevention of precursor diversion;
- to increase the effectiveness of international efforts to prevent trafficking of illicit drugs through enhanced cooperation between different sectors of law enforcement, including police, customs and border control agencies, as well as other relevant sectors, with full respect of human rights;
- to continue promoting participation in networks, joint initiatives and professional training as a meaningful and practical form of international cooperation as demonstrated by Pompidou Group

activities such as the Airports Group, the International Network on Precursor Control, MedNET, and the Executive Training on Drug Policy;

- to actively contribute to close collaboration between States and relevant regional and international organisations, as well as to a constructive dialogue with the numerous NGOs working in the area;
- to implement the recommendations in the UNGASS outcome document adopted in 2016, the most recent consensus, as a milestone in the efforts of the international community to effectively address the world drug problem;
- to contribute to the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 by promoting a global approach to drug policies, as efforts to achieve the relevant Sustainable Development Goals and to effectively address the World Drug Problem are complementary and mutually reinforcing.

We mandate the Pompidou Group to

- focus its activities around the principles of the work programme 2019–2022, which we adopted today, and on the programme's three thematic priorities (good governance, international drug policy development and new challenges); hereunder to :
- ensure the implementation of and respect for human rights in all aspects of drug policy;
- support members States in their efforts to develop and implement drug policies using a balanced, scientific evidence-based and comprehensive approach which fully respect all human rights and protect the health, safety and well-being of individuals, families, vulnerable members of society, communities and society as a whole;
- promote drug policies that take the importance of gender and age into account, and policies that address new challenges in drug policy;
- explore the connections between dependencies related to the new communication technologies, such as on-line gambling;
- continue capacity building towards the development, implementation and evaluation of effective and evidence-based drug policies;
- further develop the involvement of civil society and promote active co-operation between the governmental and non-governmental sector;
- facilitate debate for the yearly sessions of the CND and other relevant international and regional processes, including the follow-up of the Sustainable Development Goals.

We invite the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, as a first step, to consider changing the wording of the title of Resolution (80) 2 to “International cooperation group of the Council of Europe on responses to the global drugs problem – Pompidou Group”.

We instruct our Permanent Correspondents to initiate a process aimed at reviewing the Group's mandate, operation and working methods, with a view to the possible adoption of a revised Statutory Resolution by the Committee of Ministers on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the Group's foundation, to be celebrated in 2021. We take note of the preparation of an expected Council of Europe report on “Drug policy and human rights in Europe: a baseline study”, which may provide a useful input to this process.

We pledge our support for the 2019-2022 Work Programme on “Sustainable drug policies respectful of human rights”. To ensure an effective implementation of the work programme, we commit to actively participate in the Pompidou Group's activities and to make the best use of the Group's products and results with a view to creating a significant impact on society.