

P-PG/Med (2021) 25
17 December 2021 WEB

MedNET¹

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Mediterranean network for co-operation on drugs and addictions

MedNET 2021 Activity Report

Report without financial data

¹ Web page: <https://www.coe.int/en/web/pompidou/activities/mednet>.

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Foreword

Prof. Nabil BEN SALAH (TUNISIA)

President of the MedNET network (year 2021)

The years 2020 and 2021 have been exceptional because of the successive waves of the Covid-19 pandemic and the impact on health and human lives (approximately 4 million people affected and more than 2 million deaths worldwide).

In some countries of the network, economic, social and political crises have added to the instability in the decision-making spheres, which has slowed down, if not paralyzed, the evolution of the number of projects budgeted by the steering committee, for the benefit of member countries. Should we be discouraged by this? In my opinion, on the contrary, we should rather consider the true dimension of the effects of the pandemic and accept to continue to move forward in small steps rather than stopping!

In Tunisia, the glimmer of hope resulting from the "fed up" gesture of the president of the republic and leading to the transitional freezing of the assembly of the people's representatives and the dismissal of the president of the government, on July 25, 2021, the date of the commemoration of Tunisia's independence, encourages us to look at the full part of the glass, which allows us to value the achievement of some projects such as "the cycle of in-depth training of trainers dealing with motivational interviewing" or the launch of the MedSPAD III survey of Tunisia whose interpretation of the results will be available before the end of the year.

Another key event in Tunisia, resulting from the dynamics induced by the MedNET network, is the adoption of "the national strategy for prevention, harm reduction and management of illicit psychoactive substance use disorders in the community and in prisons for the period 2021 - 2025" as well as the setting up of the steering committee of the action plan of this strategy (order of the Minister of Health of 28 June 2021).

In this respect, I cannot stress enough the importance of the involvement of prison health workers in the effective management of prisoners with substance use disorders, which remains very patchy, if not absent, in many MedNET countries, due to the denial of these situations, which are classified as delinquency and not as illness. Whereas in other countries, the absence of treatment is tantamount to torture! In fact, even if the road ahead for these countries may seem long and full of pitfalls, we consider that it is better to start as soon as possible, after having become aware of this reality, by encouraging the exchange of information between the countries of the network and the programming of training courses for all the actors of the prison environment, including the prisoners, in order to offer the concerned among them the possibility of breaking with the vortex of addiction in which they were carried away and to support their efforts of abstinence at the exit of the penitentiary institution by organizations guaranteeing the supervision of this critical phase.

Introduction: the MedNET Network

Pompidou Group

The Pompidou Group provides a multi-disciplinary forum where policymakers, professionals and researchers from Greater Europe and beyond can share experiences and information on drug use and drug trafficking. Formed at the suggestion of the French President Georges Pompidou in 1971, it became a Council of Europe partial agreement in 1980. Today, in 2020, it encompasses 41 countries: 36 of the 47 member states of the Council of Europe, Mexico, Morocco and Israel, as well as the European Commission.

In 2021, Pompidou Group adopted a new statute and extended its mandate to include addictive behaviours related to licit substances (such as alcohol and tobacco) and new forms of addiction (such as internet gambling and gaming) and put a strong focus on human rights. The Group changed its official name from the "Cooperation Group to Combat Drug Abuse and Illicit Drug Trafficking" to the "Council of Europe International Cooperation Group on Drugs and Addiction."

MedNET

MedNET is the Pompidou Group's Mediterranean network for co-operation on drugs and addictions.

In 2017, it adopted a consensus document (P-PG/Med (2017) 24 E) which was approved by the Pompidou Group Permanent Correspondents. MedNET is an integral part of the Pompidou Group's work programme.

MedNET promotes co-operation, exchange and mutual transfer of knowledge between countries on both sides of the Mediterranean, while respecting human rights and gender equality.

Set up in 2006 following a feasibility study spearheaded by France and the Netherlands, the group is highly regarded and has steadily expanded, geographically and thematically, contributing to the development of effective and appropriate responses. Its terms of reference are adopted within the framework of the Pompidou Group work programme.

The network consists of seventeen countries: Algeria, Cyprus, Croatia, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Palestine², Portugal, Tunisia, Turkey and since 2019 Spain and Switzerland. Of these 17 countries, 10 are also members of the Pompidou Group.

The European Commission and the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) attend meetings as observers.

Since 2006, MedNET countries have worked together to initiate and conduct ambitious projects, drawing on South-South, North-South and South-North co-operation to ensure their success. The MedNET network aims to promote interaction between policy, practice and science, by enabling project implementation to be adapted to conditions in different countries.

The issue of addictive behaviours represents a major challenge for our societies and calls for a comprehensive, human-rights-based response that combines prevention, health, action against drug trafficking and law enforcement, as well as training and research. It is therefore crucial to develop dynamic co-operation, including with civil society, which reflects the commitment entered into by all members of the network.

²This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of Council of Europe member states on this issue.

The consensus document sets out the basic principles of this co-operation and defines common objectives. It is not intended to create legal rights or obligations for the participating countries and is based on consensus.

Main objectives of the co-operation The long-term objective of MedNET is to promote the development and delivery of coherent policies on drugs and addictive behaviours, based on scientifically validated knowledge.

Participating countries undertake to submit projects where the network's involvement will provide genuine added value. All the projects have to be designed and implemented with a special focus on human rights and due regard to gender equality issues.

Priorities

Priority is given to the following topics:

- Prevention of addictive behaviours
- Promotion of the collection of reliable, objective and comparable data and creation of or support to national observatories
- Development of well-balanced national strategies
- Social support and health care for people with addictive behaviours, risk and harm reduction
- Law enforcement and fight against drug trafficking
- Training and research

Participation

Accession to MedNET presupposes a voluntary commitment and a mutual interest. Any Mediterranean country and any other country interested in this co-operation can become a member. To join the network, the Minister responsible for drug policy sends a letter of commitment to the Pompidou Group's Executive Secretary and appoints a national representative with the authority to enter into commitments on behalf of his/her government.

Chair

The positions of Chair and Vice-Chair are held for a period of one year by a Northern Mediterranean country and a Southern Mediterranean country alternately. In order to ensure continuity in the work, the Vice-Chair is expected to take over the position of Chair the following year. Election is by consensus.

Secretariat

The Pompidou Group secretariat is responsible for the implementation of the work programme and the smooth running of the network and seeks to ensure synergy between the work of the Pompidou Group and other Council of Europe entities.

It manages the MedNET budget, made up of voluntary contributions from Pompidou Group member countries and other sources of funding (Council of Europe, European Commission, etc.).

Meetings

The Steering Committee made up of the representatives of the participating countries meets at least once a year to adopt the work programme based on projects submitted by each country, to review the implementation of on-going projects and to discuss future activities.

The EMCDDA participates in the steering committee and shares its expertise, in particular as regards data collection and analysis and support for national observatories.

In 2021, the Steering Committee met just once because of the covid-19 pandemic. Communication continued throughout the year with all members of the network, however.

Working methods

MedNET facilitates the recognition, dissemination and appropriation of good practices and tried-and-tested approaches in partnership with other key national and international actors working in the region. Thus, participating countries, through their representatives, share their knowledge and know-how, providing the network with scientifically validated data in all relevant fields.

Participating countries undertake to alert their competent national authorities to any activities conducted by MedNET.

The national and regional projects implemented are outlined in the annual activity report. All the work done by the MedNET network is subject to a regular and thorough evaluation.

Funding

Participating countries undertake to contribute to the MedNET budget, financially or by making resources available, in order to ensure project implementation.

Each project is funded in part by the requesting country, through a financial or an in-kind contribution.

I. Country-specific activities

Next to the participation of MedNET countries in the MedNET steering committee, and in the MedSPAD committee, countries from the South rim of the Mediterranean undertake country-specific activities following the acceptance of the activity country proposals by the steering committee.

In 2020 due to the pandemic, only one MedNET steering committee meeting, instead of two, was held, on 16 and 17 November in Tunis.

The country-specific activities appear below. In 2021, in order to adapt to the sanitary situation and to reply to emerging needs, some activities could not be held and were postponed or replaced by others.

• Algeria

In 2021, the activities proposed by the National Office for the Fight against Drug Abuse and Drug Addiction at the 26th MedNET meeting on 18 November 2020 could not be implemented with the exception of the participation of Algeria in the MedSPAD committee.

However, thanks to the cooperation initiated by the National Office for the Fight against Drug Abuse and Drug Addiction with the Ministry of Health and the MedNET Secretariat, a series of online training on motivational interviews was organized with a training agency in Paris for 48 psychiatrists and psychologists, distributed in 4 groups from June to December 2021. These trainings on motivational interviews were offered in agreement with the Ministry of Health and a doctor from the hospital of Oran.

Date of implementation for groups 1 and 2 from 01/05/2021 up to 30/09/2021

Date of implementation for groups 3 and 4 from 01/09/2021; extension of implementation up to 31/12/2021

• Croatia

Participates in the MedSPAD committee.

• Cyprus

Participates in the MedSPAD committee.

Hosted an online study visit on emergency and intermediate care services date from 20-21 April for an Egyptian delegation.

• Egypt

Participates in the MedSPAD committee.

In 2021, Egypt continued on-going projects and started new ones.

1. Development of a community-based model of care for substance abuse

Project objectives: To develop a model of care and training curriculum for community-based services for patients / people with substance abuse. The available programmes were reviewed.
Status of the project:

A desk review of different models of community-based services from different countries has been realised; to consolidate the information a study visit was planned as from November 2019. Because of COVID19 pandemic along with other unforeseen circumstances the study visit first postponed for March 2020 was finally organised online in May 2021

The evaluation of this study visit showed that the training program was very useful. So far as it has facilitated the integration of the new services in the existing programmes that operate in the GSMHAT hospitals and centres. The upcoming community-based services will be culturally adapted using the Czech Republic's model and a Manual will be developed to serve as a guide for the mental health professionals in the GSMHAT hospitals.

Date of implementation of activity: 1/4/2019 to 31/12/2019 with extension up to 31/12/2021

Online Study visit co-organised with SANANIM centre, Prague, Czech Republic from 25 to 27 May 2021

2. Development of a specific model of care for juveniles with substance abuse problems in correctional facilities

Date of implementation: 1/04/2019 to 31/12/ 2019 with extension of implementation up to 31/12/2020. The project was finalized in December 2020.

Follow-up in 2021: Organisation of a peer training. The GSMHAT organised a 2 day peer training for 60 professionals from the Ministry of Social Solidarity, social workers and psychologists from corrective facilities, psychiatrists and psychologists from the mental health hospitals of the GSMHAT as well as for NGOs that run interventions in corrective facilities in Egypt. In addition, the GSMHAT is planning to meet with representatives of the Ministry of Justice to ensure the implementation and the process of the programme, as well as to assess a possible follow-up.

3. Development of model of care for patients with dual diagnosis

Project objectives: To develop a comprehensive service for dual diagnosis patients within the mental hospital of GSMHAT through a training course on a specific model of care.

Status of the project:

The local project team a 3-month desk review of the existing models of care and facilities in Europe. The project team faced difficulties to identify the most suitable European country that could be used as a model of effective interventions for patients with dual diagnosis. The project team finally concluded that the countries that meet the best their criteria were: Ireland, Italy and Finland.

A study visit to Italy was initially planned for June 2020. Because of COVID19 pandemic and the all the relevant restrictions the study visit was implemented as 2 days online on 29 September and 01 October 2021.

Date of implementation: 1/04/2019 to 31/12/2019 with extension up to 31/12/2021. The project needs to be extended to 31st of March 2022.

Date of study visit with Italy 29 September – 01 October with CeIS (Centro Italiano di Solidarieta don Mario Picchi)

4. MedSPAD national survey

Egypt launched the country's first nationwide MedSPAD survey end of 2020 following a local MedSPAD survey in 2015.

Project objectives: The aim of the proposed 2nd (MedSPAD) project (2020) is to detect the prevalence of Tobacco, Alcohol and Other Drugs use and internet gaming addiction in an extended study sample to cover all the 27 Egyptian governorates, and include all types of schools (primary, preparatory and secondary schools: governmental as well as private schools).

Status of the project: The field work that carried out in 2020 included 1000 schools covering all the 28 governorates of Egypt. The data collection has been finalised, and at this stage the team is in the process of data entry.

Date of implementation: 1/03/2020 to 28/02/2021 with extension of implementation up to 31/01/2022.

*Supplementary number of questionnaires,
Date of implementation: 15/10/2020 to 15/02/2021*

5. Development of addiction emergency and intermediate care services program.

Project Objectives:

- Capacity building of psychiatrists on Addiction intermediate care services and other general healthcare providers on emergency situations in substance use disorders (SUD) to provide the proper levels of observations and medication prescription.
- Raising public awareness on emergency situations in patients of SUD.

Status of the project: Following the desk review and the online training that was held in April 2021, in Cyprus, the manual is in the process of production, as well as gaining consensus between project team members about the awareness campaign tools and content.

The project was launched in January 2021 and is expected to finish in November 2021

Date of implementation: 1/01/2021 to 30/11/2021

Date of the online visit with Cyprus, 20-21 April 2021

6. Development of Addiction treatment and Crisis Management Strategic plan 2021-2025

Project Objectives :

- To develop a work plan of the governmental prevention, treatment and rehabilitation for drug users.
- To introduce a chapter for dealing with emergency situations and adversities

Project status:

- The task one of the Desk Review for the strategic approaches for addiction treatment and dealing with emergency situations is in process and 2 meetings were done by the project coordinator and team and will be finalized by the 1st of December.

The project was launched in September 2021 and is expected to finish on 31 August 2022.

- **France**

Participates in the MedSPAD committee, is the main donor to MedNET. Was ready to host a study visit in 2020 but the pandemic situation prevented it.

The 2021 series of training on motivational interview which was attended by a group of 12 Tunisian psychiatrists and 4 groups of 48 Algerian medical staff were provided by a French training agency.

- **Greece**

Participates in the MedSPAD committee.

- **Italy**

Participates in the MedSPAD committee, with the MedSPAD scientific consultants being from the CNR Institute in Pisa. Italy is the second donor for MedNET.

Italy hosted an online study visit on dual diagnosis for an Egyptian Delegation in Autumn 2021.

Italy held its VIth National Conference on Addictions, Beyond Fragility, in Genova, Palazzo Ducale, 27-28 November 2021. The Executive Secretary of the Pompidou Group informed on the European Prevention Prize in the session on Drug addiction, Prevention modalities and early intervention. The Deputy to the Executive Secretary participated in the session on Prevention and Harm reduction and presented the work of MedNET in the prevention field.

- **Jordan**

Participates in the MedNET steering committee. The training workshop and study visit on prevention have been postponed to 2022 due to the pandemic.

- **Lebanon**

Participates in the MedSPAD committee.

1. Implementation of the drug law

The objective of the project was to increase the understanding of articles 193 and 194 of the Lebanese Drug law among public prosecutors and law enforcement officials.

The outcome was the agreement to place posters informing people arrested for substance use of their “Right to Treatment as an Alternative to Prosecution”, and the insistence by the International Security Forces to have their logo on the poster, the Ministry of Interior and Municipality recognized one of the main gaps in the implementation of the law, mainly the non-implementation of articles 193 and 194 which allow public prosecutors to refer people to treatment from the onset of arrest instead of prosecuting them and the lack of knowledge of people under arrest of their right. The implementation of article 194 is key in diverting people who use drugs away from the criminal justice system and into a system that offers them the support they might require.

Furthermore, the inclusion of posters in detention centers highlights the role of law enforcement in respecting and promoting the rights of people under arrest especially in situations where they need them most. These posters thus make law enforcement a main actor and a partner

in the protection and the promotion of the rights of people who use drugs in Lebanon in empowering people who use drugs to know their rights and demand them; it also makes each officer personally responsible for the implementation of the law.

At the request of the Head of the Central Drug Bureau who was adamant on providing the most information to his officers and to people under arrest, posters will be supplemented by a brochure which further details how to reach the Drug Addiction Committee, and which centers are habilitated to receive cases referred by the judiciary

Date of implementation: 1/11/2018 to 30/11/2019 with extension of implementation up to 31/12/2021

In light of the political and economic crisis in Lebanon and the increasing instability in the run-up to the elections scheduled for March 2022, it was decided to end this activity.

2. Paving the way for evidence Informed Policies

The project started in March 2021. The first step was to communicate with the Head of the Drug Addiction Committee to inform on the steps of implementation of the project and secure her agreement. The project was very positively received and assessed as important for the functioning of the DAC. She asked that we request official permission from the Ministry of Justice.

A meeting was held with the Director General of the MOJ who expressed interest in the project but due to the nature of the support offered to the Ministry through this project, an official approval from the part of the Minister was required. The team is currently working on securing a meeting with the new Minister of Justice appointed in September.

The first version of the literature review and indicators has been finalized, and the project team is currently collecting input from the National Mental Health Program and the Head of the Drug Addiction Committee.

In parallel, technicians are being consulted to build a data collection program specifically for the Addiction Committee.

Date of implementation: 1/03/2021 to 31/10/2021 with extension of implementation up to 28/02/2022

3. Needs of women with substance use disorders

This topic was introduced in 2019 is in line with one of the strategic objectives of the “Inter-Ministerial Substance Use Response Strategy for Lebanon 2016-2021” and with international and national concerns about the specific needs of women.

It follows a qualitative approach: focus group discussions and in-depth interviews. The recommendations are to increase funding for women-specific substance use services, expand treatment centres to improve access and reduce stigma and discrimination, work on properly framing substance use disorder as a health condition, encourage self-support groups support the development of policies related to child custody of women with substance use disorders receiving any type of service, include a gender-based violence (GBV) sensitive approach when working with women with substance use disorder, increase outreach to vulnerable and stigmatised women and ensure that they are referred to the appropriate services and, lastly, include partners and families in the treatment programmes.

A study visit to France originally scheduled for the spring 2020 has been postponed to 2021.

4. Beirut en route

The project was proposed after the explosion in Beirut and is intended to build resilience among the survivors.

To achieve this, the project proposed advanced awareness trainings in substance abuse and life skills with psychosocial support. The aim being to provide support to the survivors of Beirut explosion and to help them process their disaster experience and improve their resilience away from risky behaviors.

In addition, the project developed a prevention/awareness booklet to do this. This booklet is also an awareness booklet on drug abuse and self-care tips about actual risks and impairments in the country.

Although this booklet was written after the explosion in Beirut, it is not exclusively addressed to the survivors. It is more generally relevant to every parent, child, teenager and young person who may be suffering mentally and who are more at risk of falling into addiction. Especially in the face of the difficulties encountered following the COVID-19 crisis and the financial crisis.

It is therefore a booklet that could serve as an inspiration for other countries.

Date of implementation: 1/02/2021 to 30/6/2021 with extension of implementation up to 30/09/2021

5. MedSPAD survey

After a first survey conducted in 2008, Lebanon decided to conduct a second national MedSPAD survey, based on the new methodology and the revised 2020 questionnaire. The survey design and questionnaire based on the new methodology and the 2020 questionnaire are ready for the launch of the survey in autumn 2021, health conditions permitting. The person responsible for the MedSPAD survey in Lebanon participated in the meetings of the international MedSPAD working group.

Date of implementation: 1/05/2020 to 28/02/2021 with an extension of implementation up to 30/04/2022 due to the very difficult circumstances in the country.

6. "Formation Diplômante in Addictology in Beirut

This training in addictology will cover two academic years. It will cover comprehensively the different biological, psychological and social aspects of substance use disorders and behavioural addictions. It will also cover methods of prevention in addiction as well as the different national legislations and the protection of human rights.

This training will introduce a gender dimension in its curriculum and will pay particular attention to the specificities and needs of women, which has never been included in any specific addictions training in Lebanon, as well as to vulnerable populations, including the LGBT population, adolescents and the prison population.

This will be the only solid training in addictology available in Lebanon that will be provided free of charge

It will be delivered by the Association Francophone pour les Maladies Mentales (AFMM), by the Heads of the Department of Psychiatry of the University of Lebanon and the University of St Joseph, whose reputation and seriousness are unanimously recognised in Lebanon.

Date of implementation: October 2021 to June 2023

- **Morocco**

1. ***National guide and e-learning module for the reinforcement of capacity of civil societies in psychoactive substance use prevention interventions adapted to the Moroccan context***

Publication of the guide was done in early 2021.
The e-learning module is currently being prepared.

Date of implementation: 1/09/2019 to 31/03/2020 with an extension of implementation up to 31/03/2021

2. ***“Réseau Maroc Addicto Remad”, the first network of practitioners working in the addiction field***

Set up at an initial meeting on 17 September 2019, the network met online in 2020 and in 2021.
Text to develop by the Moroccan partners

Date of implementation: 1/05/2019 to 30/04/2020 with an extension of implementation up to 15/06/2021.

3. ***Addictology Diploma awarded by the Rabat Faculty of Medicine***

Under this scheme set up in 2009 with the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Health with support from MedNET, more than 100 grants have been awarded over the years to recipients selected by the Ministry of Health from among psychiatry students, psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, general practitioners working in the health and prison sectors.

The 2020-2021 addictology diploma was carried out on-line. Graduates of the course will go on to work in addiction prevention and treatment centres all over the country.

Date of implementation of 2020-2021 Addictology Diploma 1/11/2020 to 30/6/2021

The 2021 2021 session

Date of implementation of 2021 2022 Addictology diploma: October 2021 to June 2022

4. ***Addictology diploma, Casablanca***

The **2020-2021** intake (first year) marks the 5th year of this diploma, with 15 students funded by MedNET. The classes now take place at the *Institut marocain de thérapie cognitive et comportementale*.

Date of implementation of 2020-2021 contract: 1/10/2020 to 30/6/2021

2021 2022

The number of students

Date of implementation of 2021-2022: October 2021 to June 2022

5. Addictology diploma, Marrakech

A new diploma was launched at the Marrakech Faculty of Medicine for 15 students in 2019-2020. In 2020-2021, the course was held online.

For the 2019-2020 academic year, all three university diplomas in addictology introduced a specific module on the “gender dimension of drug use”, dedicated to prevention and treatment for women drug users.

Date of implementation 2020-2021: 1/10/2020 to 30/6/2021

2021 2022

Date of implementation 2021-2022: October 2021 to June 2022

6. MedSPAD IV

Morocco has undertaken all the necessary preparations for launching the fourth MedSPAD survey at national level. The person in charge of the survey attended meetings of the international MedSPAD working group. The survey plan and questionnaire based on the new methodology and the 2021 questionnaire will be launched in Autumn 2021 due to Covid-19 situation.

Date of implementation: 30/06/2020 to 30/06/2021 with an extension of implementation up to 30/04/2022 due to the very difficult circumstances in the country.

- **Malta**

Participates in the MedSPAD committee.

- **Palestine³**

Participated for the first time in 2021 in the MedSPAD committee.

Training sessions on addictology and prevention:

These sessions with international speakers which were to take place during a training seminar in Palestine* in 2020 had to be cancelled because of the pandemic and are now expected to take place in 2021 or 2022.

Two projects started in 2021.

³ This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of Council of Europe member states on this issue.

1. Equipment of Substance Use Disorders facilities with two methadone dispenser machines.

The project aims at responding to the needs of people who use drugs in Palestine⁴ in terms of addiction care and treatment and thus to improve the mental health and well-being of the population.

In particular, this project responds to an urgent need in Palestine⁵ to develop practices for evidence-based treatment procedures, strategies and medications. Providing these machines give support to the persons who suffer from an opioid dependence and are using methadone as opiate agonist treatment

Date of implementation: 1/04/2021 to 31/12/2021

2. Support to the implementation of Harm Reduction programme

This project responds to an urgent need in Palestine⁶ to implement Harm Reduction program in order to reduce the substance use complications and overdose among patients who use drugs.

It covers take home naloxone kits, developing existing mental wellness and healing support programs, training on cognitive behavioural therapy, training of trainers, developing support to patients through visits, medications, monitoring of patients treatment and school health education programmes.

Two workshops on training of trainers on primary prevention and early detection for students and youth who use drugs and raising awareness of school children, teachers and university students also the civil society will take place on 23/24/11 and 27/28/11 2021.

Date of implementation: 1/5/2021 to 31/12/2021

• Portugal

Participates in the MedSPAD committee.

Portugal is the organizer of Lisbon Addictions. Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic context and for the safety of all, the Fourth Lisbon Addiction Conference was rescheduled to 23-25 November 2022.

• Spain

Spain hosted study visits within the framework of MedNET in 2017, 2018 and 2019. In June 2019, Spain officially acceded to MedNET and joined the MedSPAD committee and has been attending meetings of the MedNET steering committee ever since.

In December 2020, Spain gave a Voluntary Contribution to MedNET and in particular to MedSPAD.

⁴ Idem.

⁵ Idem.

⁶ Idem.

- **Switzerland**

Switzerland joined MedNET in 2018 and gave a voluntary contribution in 2021.

- **Tunisia**

Participates in the MedSPAD committee and has been chairing the MedNET steering committee in 2020 and 2021.

An important step forward, resulting from the dynamics induced by the MedNET network, is the adoption of "the national strategy for prevention, harm reduction and management of illicit psychoactive substance use disorders in the community and in prisons for the period 2021 - 2025" as well as the setting up of the steering committee for the action plan of this strategy (decree of the Minister of Health of 28 June 2021).

Several projects are being conducted over the period 2019-2021:

- 1. Addictology diploma awarded by the Faculties of Medicine of Tunis, Monastir, and Sfax***

Introduced in 2011, the course in the faculty of Medicine of Tunis is intended for general practitioners, doctors working in schools, universities and prisons, psychiatry students, psychiatrists working in the private and public sectors, clinical psychologists and psychologists working in NGOs.

The courses in Tunis, were suspended during the 2020-2021 academic year due to COVID 19.

The courses resumed in November 2021 in Tunis and, in order to meet the needs, were followed by two additional courses organized by the faculties of Monastir and Sfax.

Date of implementation of addictology courses in Tunis (October 2021-June 2022)

Date of implementation of addictology courses in Monastir (October 2021-June 2022)

Date of implementation of addictology courses in Sfax (October 2021-June 2022)

- 2. Training on motivational interview.***

12 psychiatrists followed the on-line training on motivational interview provided by a French training agency.

Date of implementation with the agency: 9/10/2020 to 15/02/2021

It is an online training of 3 days spread over 2 months (Dates: December 4, 2020; December 18, 2020; January 8, 2021) for 12 participants (including psychologists, addictologists and psychiatrists) followed by two online supervision sessions, the last one in February 2021. The success of this training was expressed by the fact that it corresponds completely to the needs of the candidates who requested that it be repeated in other regions of the country in the project of activities scheduled in 2022.

- 3. Prevention of addiction among adolescents involved in sport activities***

Date of implementation: 15/03/2021 to 31/07/2021 with extension of implementation up to 30/11/2021

This project, which has progressed well in terms of design and distribution of roles, unfortunately could not be realized by August 28, 2021, due to the impact on educational institutions of the pandemic Covid - 19 in Tunisia. However other actions took place during the November school holidays.

4. Day care center for women who use drugs

Date of implementation of contract: 01/04/2021 to 31/12/2021

This project has also suffered from a delay in the signing of the agreement between Stadd and the Razi psychiatric hospital that is supposed to host it, due to instability within the decision-making authorities.

5. MedSPAD III

Together with Egypt, Lebanon and Morocco, Tunisia attended meetings of the MedSPAD working group to prepare the launch of MedSPAD III in the spring 2021 and successfully managed to do it despite all the difficulties linked to COVID 19.

The national MedSPAD III study started on schedule, despite administrative difficulties related to political instability and measures taken following the epidemic peak during the April-May period in Tunisia.

The study was conducted among a representative national sample of high school students enrolled in the first and second years of secondary school (327 classes in both the public and private sectors). It involved about 6000 high school students aged 16-18 years among those who participated in the survey.

The analysis of the data and the drafting of the report are in progress.

Date of implementation: 01/4/2021 to 31/12/2021

6. Raising awareness of prevention among peers (students, pupils) through the use of new technologies in schools and universities in Sfax, Tunisia

The Association "l'Université et l'Environnement" in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, the University of Sfax and a number of other stakeholders made a proposal to conduct the project from September to November which was accepted.

The objectives are :

Prevention by raising awareness of peers to addictions (pupils and students) with the use of traditional educational means (lectures, role-playing games ...) **and production of new materials** adapted to the new generation of young people and our national context (in Arabic) and based on new technologies (videos, facebook, serious games, virtual reality ...) (brainstorming and graduation projects) and dealing with the most widespread addictions in Tunisia (glue, Cannabis ...). These new technologies have increasingly widespread applications and will be a very useful means in the field of addictions.

Methodology:

- training of a group of students on addictions and
- production of new materials in collaboration with the University of Sfax and the Higher Institute of Computer Science and Multimedia of Sfax.

These activities, which will take place over 3 months, from September to November 2021, will include:

*a 1-day training on addictions for a collective of (560) people (in small groups) comprising, essentially, pupils and students but also teachers, trainers and staff of university institutions, the center of vocational training and high schools in Sfax. The goal is, among other things, to strengthen the awareness of peers (students).

*Four half-days of feedback and consolidation (one half-day per group of 20 people, i.e. 80 people) for students and frontline health professionals who participated in 2019 in the training provided by ADREMED with the support of the Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe

*The initiation of awareness and prevention through new technologies with the collaboration of teachers of the Higher Institute of Computer Science and Multimedia of SFAX: production of media / serious games, platforms, virtual reality, and this, within the framework of the final projects (PFE). For that, two days of Brain storming will be programmed including two groups of 20 persons each, that is to say 40 persons in all.

These trainings will be coordinated by the Association University Environment and will take place, especially, in the room equipped in 2019 (under the first project) at the Faculty of Medicine of Sfax and the Office of University Works for SFAX and the Tunisian South.

The target audience: secondary school students, vocational training and students (university): adolescents and young adults.

The funding will be used to:

-Ensure the conduct of these days of training and feedback and consolidation: remuneration of teachers, secretariat, coffee breaks, catering on site and purchase of hydro-alcoholic solution.

-Ensure the development of Brain storming days for the production of awareness materials using new technologies: remuneration of facilitators, secretariat, coffee breaks.

-The purchase of computer material and equipment (computers, cameras, glasses for virtual reality and TV) for the production and use of the supports: PC of serious games and accessories adapted for virtual reality, 2 cameras and 2 TV.

Expected outcomes:

*training of peers able to detect cases of addiction in high schools, vocational schools and higher education institutions (faculties, colleges and university hostels) and to sensitize their peers about this topic

*Production of awareness materials based on new technologies (videos, serious games, virtual reality ...) more attractive to young Tunisians and focused on the most common addictions in Tunisia which would allow their wider use in our country. These supports will be realized within the framework of the PFE projects of the higher schools of computer science of the university of SFAX (the computer material is bought for this purpose) and of the activities of the complementary Certificate of Addictology at the Faculty of Medicine of SFAX and the center of addictology of SFAX

Date of implementation: 01/09/2021-30/11/2021

7. Analysis of used waters

a. Objectives

The overall objective of the project is to compare two approaches of metabolomic profiling for the estimation of addictions in the community in Tunisia through the analysis of illicit drugs in two different matrices

In biological fluids via immuno-rapid screening tests + GC-MS for confirmation.
In an alternative environmental matrix (Wastewater) via LC-MS/MS techniques.

b. Tasks performed

- Production of forensic data of toxicological analysis of illicit drugs in urine from the year 2016, 2017 ,2018 and 2019.
- Publication of an article on the analysis of illicit drugs in the biological matrix urine.
- Sampling of wastewater from wastewater treatment plants located in the Greater Tunis area (MedNET Project Phase I).
- First sampling campaign on 3 wastewater treatment plants. These are automatic samples averaged over 24 hours on 7 consecutive days according to European standards for the analysis of illicit drugs in wastewater.
- Development of a method for the analysis of illicit drugs and/or their major metabolites in wastewater influents by LC-MS/MS.
- Extraction of the totality of samples with the SPE Off-line technique
- Analysis of the samples with the already optimized and validated LC-MS/MS method.
- Estimation of the consumption of drugs found (analyzed) at the level of the selected geographical area (Grand Tunis) from their concentrations found in the wastewater
- Confirmation of the results found from the wastewater (alternative matrix) that can better reflect the consumption levels compared to the data from the toxicological investigation on the biological matrix (urine).
- Future writing of a second paper on illicit drugs in wastewater for submission to an indexed and impacted journal.
- Signature of an extension of the first collaboration agreement with ONAS from the date of 17.07.2021 allowing us to benefit from wastewater samples from all Tunisian wastewater treatment plants (north, center and south)

c. Tasks to be carried out

- Within the framework of the MedNET Phase II project and in order to have a representative sampling of the majority of the Tunisian wastewater treatment plants (north, center and south), our work will be extended to other sites (stations) located in the coastal regions such as, Nabeul, Sousse, Monastir, Sfax and Gabes
- Estimation of the consumption of drugs examined in the selected geographical areas from their concentrations found in the wastewater
- Interactive mapping of illicit drug consumption in Tunisia.

Implementation Date: According to the decision of Professor Nabil Ben Salah and Professor Hedhili Abderrazek, this activity has been postponed to 2022.

II. MedSPAD

The MedSPAD committee held his meeting online on 21 April and adopted new guidelines and rules for data sharing.

These new MedSPAD 2021 Guidelines were drafted in view of meeting MedSPAD long term objective of

- Reaching a common methodology
- Producing a MedSPAD school surveys regional report based on a database containing clean and ready-for-analysis data.

They include detailed instructions for a standardized data collection, a project plan to be submitted explaining how the survey will be done, a report to illustrate the methodological aspects after the survey is performed, a classroom report to collect information about the survey administration in schools, two standard datasets to be filled with survey data.

For the first time the countries performing the MedSPAD Survey are using a common questionnaire, which shares a considerable amount of questions in common with the ESPAD one.

Rules for data sharing allow to set up a MedSPAD database which will contain the data of the MedSPAD surveys conducted in 2020-2021 and the ESPAD surveys conducted in 2019 by those countries which will agree to share their data.

The following “**Modus Operandi**” was also adopted:

1. Name and purpose of the MedSPAD (Project)

The Mediterranean School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (MedSPAD) is a research project, initiated in 2003, in Rabat, Morocco, by the Pompidou Group, Council of Europe, International Governmental Organization. It is comprised of experts nominated by the MedNET Committee (MedSPAD Members) who want:

- (1) to conduct a school survey in their country based on the MedSPAD methodology and
- (2) to share their valid and reliable results with other countries on school surveys to obtain a high quality, comparable school survey report on substance use and related behaviours within the Mediterranean region.

MedSPAD is open to the MedNET countries:

10 MedNET PG countries: Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, France, Italy, Malta, Morocco, Portugal, Spain is a MedNET, former PG country, Switzerland

7 MedNET countries: Algeria, Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine⁷, Portugal, Tunisia, Turkey

1 PG Country, non-MedNET representative: Israel

MedSPAD is also open to EMCDDA, which is an observer to MedNET.

The working language of MedSPAD is English.

⁷ This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Council of Europe member states on this issue.

2. Setting up and Purpose of the MedSPAD Committee

The MedSPAD Committee met first in 2014 after a decision by the MedNET Committee to give the opportunity to this group to discuss the findings of the MedSPAD surveys and their potential use in prevention policy.

The purpose of the MedSPAD committee is to share experiences between the MedNET countries who have conducted the MedSPAD and those who may wish to do so. The ESPAD experts who represent the MedNET European countries are part of MedSPAD.

The long-term objective is to produce a MedSPAD school surveys regional report based on a database that would contain clean data, ready for analysis with the aim to provide evidence-based information to the participating countries.

3. MedSPAD Achievements

So far, the following MedSPAD country reports have been produced in the following countries:

- Algeria (2016)
- Egypt (2016)
- Lebanon (2008)
- Morocco (2009, 2013, 2017)
- Tunisia (2013, 2017)

3 regional reports have been produced: 2015 and 2017 and 2019.

The 2019 report provided an insight into the perceived availability, early onset, prevalence of substance use among adolescents and its socio economic and policy context in the Mediterranean Region and covers 13 countries.

4. MedSPAD Coordination/Secretariat

Coordination of MedSPAD is assured by the MedNET Coordinator who is a member of the Pompidou Group/Council of Europe MedNET Secretariat based within the Council of Europe who oversees the MedNET programme and budget within the Pompidou Group. The MedNET coordinator ensures the sustainability of the MedSPAD project. Consultation fees and country MedSPAD school surveys costs are borne by the MedNET budget.

The MedNET coordinator is in charge of all the administration related to the contracts with the different MedSPAD country surveys and the logistical organization of the MedSPAD meetings. Since MedSPAD is an activity which is part of the MedNET work programme, the MedNET coordinator also reports to the MedNET Committee on the MedSPAD developments. As MedNET is part of PG, reporting to the PG Permanent Correspondents also takes places via the MedNET annual activity report which contains information on MedSPAD.

The MedSPAD Scientific Advisors are chosen by the MedNET Coordinator, Pompidou Group Secretariat on the basis of their expertise and get a two year contract which is renewable according to the acceptance of the project by the MedNET Steering Committee and funded on the MedNET budget.

The co-ordinator works jointly with the MedSPAD Scientific Advisors.

5. MedSPAD Scientific Advisors

To conduct MedSPAD, the MedNET coordinator works with the renowned National Research Council of Italy (CNR). CNR is represented within MedSPAD by Sabrina Molinaro, Research Director and Head of the Epidemiology and Health Research Unit, and Elisa Benedetti, a researcher within the same Unit. Both have been MedSPAD Scientific Advisors since 2018. Sabrina Molinaro has held the position of ESPAD Coordinator since 2017 and Elisa Benedetti is part of the ESPAD Coordination team. This ensures a strong link between the MedSPAD and ESPAD project.

The roles of the MedSPAD Scientific Advisors include:

- co-chairing and preparing MedSPAD meetings, which may take place face to face or online;
- communicating with the MedSPAD committee and external partners;
- ensuring the production of the MedSPAD databases, working documents, regional report.
- presenting the MedSPAD regional reports during MedNET meeting and other international events, such as the Lisbon Addictions Conference, when invited.

The PG/CE is the institutional international governmental body that hosts a copy of the MedSPAD database. The CNR manages the MedSPAD database as long as the contract with this research center and the MedSPAD Scientific Advisors is in place with MedNET/PG/Council of Europe. The MedSPAD website is hosted by the PG/CE.

6. MedSPAD Members

The MedSPAD Members are appointed by the MedNET Steering Committee members based on their ability to complete a national school survey using the MedSPAD methodology for the representatives from the South Mediterranean countries. For the European countries, members of MedNET, the representatives are the ESPAD country representatives. In some cases, they are nominated by the Permanent Correspondent of a PG country which is not a MedNET member (eg Israel). MedSPAD members should in principle be a well-established researcher with a strong academic background in a relevant field.

6.1 Advantages of belonging to the MedSPAD Committee

It enables its members to:

1. Undertake MedSPAD country surveys and with receiving partial or full funding for the survey from MedNET budget and scientific support (eg for Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco and Tunisia);
2. Describe the situation and monitor trends in substance use among students in their country and in the long term to make comparisons between countries and between groups of countries through the use of a common high-quality methodology;
3. Support MedSPAD members through the preparation and guidelines for data collections, support in solving practical problems, data cleaning and the production of international reports with comparable data;
4. Exchange knowledge between MedSPAD members;
5. Discuss the results of the ESPAD and MedSPAD school surveys in terms of prevention.

6.2 Responsibilities of a MedSPAD member

A MedSPAD member conducting a MedSPAD, is responsible for promoting and disseminating MedSPAD results at the national level. MedSPAD members are also responsible for the planning, implementation and reporting from national MedSPAD data collections. Activities shall include:

- Securing local funding next to the MedNET funding to conduct a MedSPAD;
- Obtaining the agreement of relevant authorities such as the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education;
- Implementing the data collection in line with the MedSPAD Handbook, drafted in 2021, and which will be updated as needed;
- Adhering to all dates and deadlines for submitting information, documents and data to the MedSPAD Scientific Advisors;
- Ensuring continuity of the country MedSPAD over time in order to repeat the survey;
- Participating in MedSPAD meetings: committees and working groups;
- Organizing the communication of MedSPAD results with the Ministry in charge, NGOS, etc.

Among MedSPAD members, other participants with expertise in the use of school surveys in policy and prevention programmes are welcome to participate in the discussions in particular on the use of surveys results in policy and prevention. They contribute to ensure the link between research, policy and practice. Other MedNET countries who wish to join MedSPAD may also attend to become acquainted with the project methodology.

6.3 Withdrawal from MedSPAD

Withdrawal from MedSPAD may take place following:

- a. Voluntary withdrawal from the project
- b. Inability to undertake a country MedSPAD and contribute data to the MedSPAD Regional Report and database
- c. A change in professional position resulting in a cessation of activities related to the MedSPAD

7. The annual MedSPAD Committee

This is made up of all the MedSPAD members.

The annual MedSPAD meeting is the main forum for MedSPAD discussions. It brings together the MedSPAD members, EMCDDA, representatives from MedNET countries that plan to join MedSPAD as well as other invited organisations.

8. MedSPAD working groups

They are organized specifically for the countries which decide to undertake a MedSPAD and which need specific guidance and training for the different survey's stages.

Date of implementation of contract for MedSPAD scientific coordination :01/01/2020 to 31/12/2021; extension of contract up to 30 June 2022.

MedSPAD-ESPAD Bridge Project on the use of data in prevention, a totally new activity was launched in July 2021.

To be implemented by CNR on an idea proposed by MedNET, the project proposal aims at the following:

- investigate and assess the use of school survey data (ESPAD and MedSPAD mainly and other school surveys if possible) in the European and Mediterranean regions
- Drafting a report on the actual and potential use of school surveys in policy and prevention planning and evaluation

Date of implementation for MedSPAD-ESPAD Bridge project :01/07/2021 to 31/12/2022

Impact of MedNET: at the occasion of the 15th MedNET anniversary, the Secretariat invited a consultant to draft a report on MedNET impact to be presented in Tunis, in November 2021.

Date of implementation :01/09/2021 to 17/11/2021

III. MedNET and participation in Pompidou Group activities

Drug Policy Executive Course

Participation: Lebanon; Egypt.

This advanced course of the International Drug Policy Academy is designed for professionals who work as managers or senior team members in the area of drug policies and addictions. The course contains all key competency areas required for exercising managerial duties related to drug policy development, implementation and evaluation. The course is offered to a maximum of 20 participants.

Learning format: Each module includes a 4-day in-residence seminar. Between modules, participants will work on a research assignment under the mentorship of a designated supervisor. The working format during seminars is highly interactive and the course language is English.

Program:

Module 1 - Competency Area Policy: Health, Safety, Human Rights

Module 2 - Competency Area Science: Substances, Behaviour, Addictions

Module 3 - Competency Area Practice: Monitoring, Evaluation, Communication

Dates and venue:

Module 1: 24-27 August 2021, European Youth Center, Strasbourg, France

Module 2: 30 November – 3 December 2021, Venice International University, Italy

Module 3: April/May 2022, University of Malta, Valletta – Malta

Outcome:

Upon successful completion of the course, participants will be awarded the 'Certificate in Advanced Drug Policy Management' by the International Drug Policy Academy.

Drug Related Challenges for Migrants, Refugees, and Internally Displaced Persons

Following the 2017-2018 two PG international seminars for professionals working in different fields from CoE member states, Middle East and North Africa and other European and International organisations, the Drug Related Challenges for Migrants, Refugees and IDPS project was included under the Pompidou Group 2019-2022 Work Programme.

In October 2019 (8-11 October, Athens, Greece), the Pompidou Group Secretariat co-organised with the Office of the National Greek Coordinator the first Capacity Building Seminar on "Responding to drug-related challenges for refugees, migrants & IDPS". The seminar focused on refugees' status and human rights, the historical perspective on migration, and mental health in the context of the realities of countries in Europe, the Middle East and Northern Africa. In addition, during the seminar four thematic workshops were held which focused on: (a) physical health, (b) in-campus daily activities, (c) cross learning between services for homeless people with mental health problems and addictions, and (d) street work and refugees; observed changes in local drug markets and resulting challenges. On that event, nominees from the following MedNET countries participated: Algeria, Croatia, Cyprus, Egypt,

Greece, Italy, Jordan, Malta, Palestine*, Portugal, Tunisia, Spain and Switzerland along with nominees from 4 PG Member States.

In December 2019, a “Support Network of Professionals (SNP)” working in the field of addictions and/ or with refugees and migrants was set up. Since December 2019, the working group of the SNP developed an online platform for cooperation and exchange, drafted a policy paper on the impact of “COVID19 on migrants, refugees and internally displaced persons who use drugs” (January 2021) and is working on the development of a “Handbook for health and social professionals and law enforcement agents working with people who use drugs and/or refugees/migrants”. This Handbook is part of the Council of Europe Action Plan on Protecting Vulnerable Persons in the Context of Migration and Asylum in Europe (2021-2025) and it should be finalised by the end of 2021. Algeria and Spain are part of the working group of the SNP.

In September 2021 (21-23 September, Palermo, Italy), the Pompidou Group Secretariat under the patronage of the City of Palermo and with the support of the Fondazione Falcone organised the 2nd international capacity building on that topic. Policy makers, legal, health and social professionals along with law enforcement agents working in drug prevention and treatment, as well as professionals working with refugees and migrants from 15 countries covering Europe, Latin America, Middle East, Northern Africa, and International Organisations, had the opportunity to meet and exchange experiences and practices as well as to enhance their intercultural competencies, and their verbal and non-verbal communications and cooperation skills. The participants also acquired a better understanding of the interrelation between migration, mental health, and substance misuse. On that event, nominees from the following MedNET countries participated: Algeria, Cyprus, Greece, Italy, Jordan, Palestine*, Portugal and Spain along with nominees from 6 PG Member States.

Law Enforcement activities:

1) AIRPORTS GROUP MEETING –15 June 2021

Participation: Palestine, Tunisia

Police, customs, border forces, prosecutors, judges and other law enforcement officers, participated along with Representatives from international organisations, regulatory authorities, commercial aviation and experts.

Objective:

To develop and harmonize tools and systems to improve drug detection in European airports. Meeting once a year, the group primarily acts as a forum for the exchange of practical and operational practices on drug trafficking through commercial aviation.

Outcome:

The overall aim is to reduce illegal trafficking by sharing information on improving control, risk management, profiling, detection and investigative measures.

2) GENERAL AVIATION MEETING – 16 June 2021

Participation: Algeria; Palestine; Tunisia.

Police, customs, border forces, prosecutors and judges who are tasked with the control, investigation or prosecution of general aviation trafficking and organised crime Experts from International organisations, the private sector, researchers and regulatory authorities.

Objective:

Law enforcement and border officials are increasingly confronted with criminal groups that are using non-commercial flights and aircraft such as ultra-light aviation, private jets, helicopters, and drones to smuggle drugs migrants, firearms and proceeds of crime worldwide. The objective is to raise awareness that General Aviation remains too much of a blind spot in law enforcement approaches.

Outcome:

The overall goal is to reduce illegal trafficking and to prevent the abuse of general aviation traffic through improved control, risk management profiling, and detection and investigative measures. The Pompidou Group created the European Handbook on General Aviation which will be distributed during this meeting.

3) 8th Annual Meeting of the expert group on Drugs Online, 23-24 November 2021

Participation: Palestine.

Customs, police, prosecutors, judges, computer crime specialists and relevant international organisations and the private sector, notably IT companies and internet providers.

Objective:

To examine specific threats to society regarding on-line drug crime, distribution and delivery of illicit psychoactive substances using postal and express courier services, and related money laundering in view of emerging anonymising techniques and darknet facilities.

IV. MedNET and the Council of Europe's neighbourhood policy

The Council of Europe's neighbourhood policy was adopted by foreign affairs ministers from the 47 member states in Istanbul on 11 May 2011. It is aimed at promoting dialogue and co-operation with countries and regions in the vicinity of Europe which request Council of Europe assistance, based on the common values of human rights, democracy and the rule of law.

The South Programme was launched in 2012 as a joint strategic initiative between the European Union and the Council of Europe to support democratic reforms in the Southern Mediterranean and meet the needs of countries in the region. MedNET has received funding under the South Programmes I and II and III.

Under the South Programme I (2012-2014), MedNET received funding in the amount of €161 939, representing 4 % of the total budget (€4 048 660).

Under the South Programme II (2015-2017), MedNET received funding in the amount of €268 319, representing 4 % of the South Programme II budget (€6 886 828).

Under the South Programme III (2018-2019), MedNET received funding in the amount of €50 000, representing 1.4% of the South Programme III budget (€3 334 000).

MedNET is also receiving funding, for a second time, under the Council of Europe's neighbourhood partnerships with Morocco and Tunisia: €193 000 (2019-2021).

PG Secretariat submitted project proposals for the next Council of Europe's neighbourhood partnerships with Morocco and Tunisia (2022-2025) which are currently being examined.

V. MedNET and other international organisations

1) Co-operation with the EMCDDA

MedNET has been working with the EMCDDA since the MedNET high-level conference in 2009. Since then, the EMCDDA has taken part in all MedNET activities involving the establishment of national monitoring/resource centres on drugs and drug addiction and has been attending MedNET steering committee meetings as an observer.

The MedNET secretariat participates as an observer in advisory committee meetings of the **EU4 Monitoring Drugs** project which is being funded by the EU and implemented by the EMCDDA. The objective of this project is to make the link between drug-related problems, security issues and health threats in the European Union and neighbouring countries. The project covers 15 potential countries of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) with a budget of €3 million over 3 years (2019-2021). Half of the potential countries are also Southern countries which belong to the MedNET network.

2) Co-operation with the European Commission through the Council of Europe

Co-operation under the South Programme IV: Council of Europe/European Commission co-operation

Under the Council of Europe's neighbourhood policy, MedNET benefits from the joint South Programme IV funded by the EU and implemented by the Council of Europe (see paragraph above).

3) Co-operation with UNICRI (United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute)

MedNET is involved in the ***UNICRI project on the role of families in drug use prevention and in building pathways for resilience and rehabilitation among young people***. MedNET supported the UNICRI project on the needs of families for preventing drug use among young people. The project aimed at identifying and exploring the priority aspects to support and consolidate the protective role of the family in the prevention of drug use among young people. The pilot project, based on a context-specific approach, has included research activities in three countries (Italy, Lebanon and Tunisia) involving families, government institutions, organizations of the civil society, national experts and other key stakeholders currently working in the field of prevention and treatment.

4) Cooperation with WHO

Cooperation with WHO started with the MedNET meeting of November 2020 when WHO was invited to participate as an observer.

VI. MedNET and Human Rights

At the meeting of the MedNET steering committee on 19 November 2019, chaired by Prof Nabil Ben Salah, and at the instigation of Prof Jallal Toufiq from Morocco, a discussion on **“Human rights and people who use drugs in the Mediterranean region: current situation, challenges and the future”** took place on the basis of some initial research carried out in this area by the Pompidou Group secretariat in the 17 MedNET countries.

Prof. Jallal TOUFIQ moderated the discussion, focusing on the following points: *drug use as a medical condition; the need for treatment to be available, accessible, affordable and science-based; the need for rehabilitation and social reintegration; the need to fight against stigma and promote the right of people who use drugs to create their own NGOs and self-help groups, and to promote a strategy aimed at reducing the health, economic, social and legal consequences of drug use.*

The publication **P-PG/MedNET (2020) 4 of 22 April 2020 “Human rights and people who use drugs in the Mediterranean region: current situation in 17 MedNET countries”** provides an overview of the subject.

The discussion helped participants to better understand the meaning of human rights in drug policies and to share ideas and best practice in this area.

This objective ties in with the “Stavanger declaration” adopted at the Pompidou Group’s Ministerial Conference in 2018, and which underlines **“human rights as a fundamental cornerstone in drug policy”**, in line with the Council of Europe’s core mission.

It was foreseen to continue the discussion, in presence, and most probably in 2022 after development of a self-assessment tool on Human Rights in Drug Policy by Pompidou Group.

VII. MedNET and the gender dimension in drug policies

At the initiative of Italy, MedNET was involved in the following activities supporting the integration of a gender dimension in drug policies:

- Nine MedNET countries contributed to the 2015 publication on the gender dimension of non-medical use of prescription drugs (Cyprus, Egypt, France, Greece, Italy, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco and Tunisia).
- MedNET countries participated in a seminar on drugs, women and violence held in Rome in December 2015, and in 2016 in a survey on date-rape drugs.
- On June 2017, MedNET countries participated in a Rome seminar on “Women and Drugs: from policy to good practice.”

From 2018 to 2021, MedNET countries continued to include a gender dimension in their activities, especially in the following projects:

- Lebanese project to identify the needs of women with substance use disorders
- Tunisian project on prevention and treatment of addiction in adolescents
- Egyptian project focusing on a model of care for patients with dual diagnosis
- Egyptian project to help juveniles in correctional facilities
- Tunis project on a specific treatment center for women?
- Within the framework of the addictology diplomas, the curricula in Tunis, Rabat, Casablanca and Marrakech include a module devoted to the prevention, treatment and care of women drug users. The new courses to be launched in 2021 in Sfax, Monastir and Beirut will also include such a module.

All of the above reflects the desire of MedNET and the Pompidou Group to integrate the gender dimension in any activities undertaken.

VIII. Role of the MedNET secretariat in administration and co-ordination of the Network

In 2021, the MedNET team consisted of three staff members. It should be noted, however, that the total working time was equivalent to **two persons working full time**.

Two permanent staff: 85% which salaries are covered by PG Ordinary Budget

- the Head of Unit who devoted 70% of their time to MedNET.
- the person in charge of finances within PG who devoted 15% of their time to MedNET

Two temporary staff members: 100%

- a project officer, working 7 months for MedNET
- a legal assistant, working 6 months for MedNET

The team saw to it that the network functioned smoothly and that the work programme was implemented, while seeking to ensure synergy with the Pompidou Group's other activities and other entities of the Council of Europe.

The team performed the following tasks:

- co-ordination with the 17 MedNET correspondents, the experts appointed to the various MedNET activities and the observers;
- management of the MedNET budget consisting of 5 sources of funding:
 - a. voluntary contributions from the donor countries
 - b. South Programme IV implemented by the CoE and funded by the EU
 - c. CoE Neighbourhood Partnership Grant
 - d. Direct funding of activities by the countries
 - e. PG Ordinary Budget allocated to the MedNET steering group
- management of staff;
- Use of Project Management Methodology as required by the Council of Europe for all External Budget Funding
- drafting of 50 contracts and extension of contracts for all the projects which are carried out in the countries due to the pandemic;
- preparation of an annual activity report
- implementation and revision of the work programme, in accordance with political developments and other unforeseen events;
- co-ordination of the MedSPAD committee;
- participation in the Permanent Correspondents and the Bureau meetings in order to brief them on MedNET activities;
- ensuring MedNET's involvement in PG activities;
- fundraising from regular MedNET donors and also from other potential donors;
- Submission of project proposals to the next Council of Europe's neighbourhood partnerships with Morocco and Tunisia (2022-2025).
- preparation of reports and participation in South Programme IV meetings,
- co-operation with other international organisations, in particular with the EMCDDA under the EU 4MD programme
- regular updating of MedNET and MedSPAD pages on the Pompidou Group website, , communication on social media and contributions to the Pompidou Group's newsletters;
- publication of MedNET 2021 country-specific reports
- hiring of consultant for external review of MedNET impact.
- publication of MedNET 2021 impact report

IX. MedNET Budget and Expenditure

This report serves as a single reference document for all MedNET countries. Only those countries which have made a voluntary contribution and which have signed a contract with the Council of Europe, receives a specific financial report to one or more of the network's activities receive a specific report on those activities.

The MedNET budget has a multi-source funding

- Voluntary contributions from donor countries
- South Programme I, II, III and IV: programme funded by the European Union and implemented by the Council of Europe (2012-2022)
- Direct funding of activities by countries
- Council of Europe Neighbourhood Partnership with Morocco and Tunisia (2016-2021)
- Pompidou Group's Ordinary Budget since 2019

Appendix I

MedNET Activities launched in 2021

(It does not include activities ongoing from 2019 or 2020 because of Covid 19)

Funding sources:

MedNET: Voluntary contributions 2019-2021
Pompidou Group Ordinary Budget 2021

Co-ordination and implementation of work programme:

MedNET secretariat of the Pompidou Group

1. Activities per country

Algeria
Activities
Motivational interviews, online training, 50 participants
Online study visits on opioid substitution therapy (Spain, to be confirmed)

Egypt
Activities
Community based services research (2019) Online training, Czech Republic, 24-27 May 2021
Dual diagnosis 2019 research online training, Italy, 30 September – 1 October, 2021
Emergency and intermediate care services 2021
Emergency and intermediate care services study visit, Cyprus, 20-21 April 2021
Development of Addiction treatment and Crisis Management Strategic plan 2021-2025
MedSPAD questionnaires printing

Lebanon
Paving the Way for Evidence Informed Policies
BEIRUT EN ROUTE! :
Beirut addictology course (2021-2022)

Morocco
Activities 2021-2022
Addictology course in Rabat (2021-2022)
Addictology course in Casablanca (2021-2022)
Addictology course in Marrakech (2022)

Palestine⁸
Provide the Substance Use Disorders (SUD) facilities with Automated Liquid Methadone Dispenser Machines

⁸ This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Council of Europe member states on this issue.

Implementation of Harm Reduction Programme
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Tunisia
Activities
Prevention of addiction among adolescents involved in sport activities
Day care center for women who use drugs
Assessment of the consumption of illicit drugs through waste waters analysis phase 2
Awareness of prevention and referral to care structures for children and young people with substance use disorders in schools and universities in Sfax.
Addictology course in Tunis
Addictology course in Monastir
Addictology course in Sfax
Training of trainers to motivational interview replacing Addictology Diploma
MedSPAD III

2. Regional Activities

Activity
2021/2022 MedSPAD ESPAD Bridge project MedNET

3. Participations in MedNET committee meetings and PG events

Activity
Participation in PG 50 th Anniversary, 28 October Paris (Palestine, Jordan, Morocco, Egypt) Estimated cost

4. Others

Activity
Evaluation of MedNET Consultancy OB
7 MedNET Updated Country reports OB
Linguistic adaptation into Arabic of the publication on 50 th anniversary of the Pompidou Group "Human rights at the heart of drug policies"

Appendix II

List of MedNET documents for 2021

Reference	Title	Date	Nr of pages
1	MedSPAD Committee Meeting – Draft Agenda	12 January 2021	1
2	MedSPAD Working Group Meeting (3 March) – Draft Agenda	1 st February 2021	1
3	MedSPAD Modus Operandi	8 February 2021	
4	Final Report for “developing a model of care for juveniles with substance use problems in corrective facilities” in coordination with the General Secretariat of Mental health and Addiction Treatment Consultant of Psychiatry in Egypt	3 March 2021	21
5	27 th MedNET Plenary meeting: Draft Agenda	3 March 2021	
6	MedSPAD Working Group Meeting (3 March) – Meeting Report	5 March 2021	
7	Training workshop on interventions for the prevention of psychoactive substance use and addictive behaviours for community actors in Morocco: Report	16 March 2021	14
8	MedSPAD Survey Guidelines 2020-2021	17 March 2021	
9	Implementation of 2021 Palestine adopted activity proposals	13 April 2021	3
10	Online study visit – 20-21 April- Cyprus- Emergency & Intermediate care	20-21 April	
11	ESPAD - MedSPAD bridge project : DRAFT PROJECT PROPOSAL	19 April 2021	5
12	MedSPAD Committee Meeting 21 April 2021_Meeting Report	23 April 2021	
13	Proposal: Rules for the use of the MedSPAD database	28 April 2021	1
14	2021-2022 Activity proposal for Tunisia	4 May 2021	

15	Agenda Online Study visit community-based services Czech Republic Egypt	20 May 2021	
16	Morocco: MedNET 15 th anniversary country report	08 June 2021	
17	Jordan: MedNET 15 th anniversary country report	08 June 2021	
18	Egypt: MedNET 15 th anniversary country report	09 June 2021	
19	Lebanon: MedNET 15 th anniversary country report	09 June 2021	
20	Algeria: MedNET 15 th anniversary country report	09 June 2021	
21	Tunisia : MedNET 15 th anniversary country report	10 June 2021	
22	Report Egypt_ Online training emergency & intermediate services, 20-21 April, Cyprus	11 June 2021	
23	MedNET 2021 Work Programme	14 June 2021	
24	Palestine: MedNET 15 th anniversary country report	14 June 2021	
25	2021 MedNET Activity report	6 July 2021	
26	2021-2022 Activity proposal for Algeria	7 September 2021	
27	2022 Activity proposal for Malta	7 September 2021	
28	2022 Activity proposal for Jordan	7 September 2021	
29	2022 Activity proposal for Lebanon	13 September	
30	2022 Activity proposal for Egypt	14 September	

31	2022 Activity proposal for Portugal	14 September	
32	2022 Activity proposal for Palestine	15 September	
33	2022 Activity proposal for Morocco	16 September	
34	Online training on “Development of model of care for patients with dual diagnosis”, 30 Sept – 1 Oct 2021, Milan, Italy	29 September	
35	MedNET Summary of activities proposed for 2022	14 October	

Appendix III

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⁹ This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of the Council of Europe member states on this issue.

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