

MOROCCO and MedNET

**MedNET: the Pompidou Group's
network for cooperation
on drugs and addictions
in the Mediterranean region**

Council of Europe, Strasbourg

**Pompidou Group
Council of Europe
International Cooperation Group
on Drugs and Addictions**



Morocco



COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

MOROCCO AND MEDNET

Council of Europe

The opinions expressed in this work are the responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy of the Council of Europe.

The reproduction of extracts (up to 500 words) is authorised, except for commercial purposes as long as the integrity of the text is preserved, the excerpt is not used out of context, does not provide incomplete information or does not otherwise mislead the reader as to the nature, scope or content of the text. The source text must always be acknowledged as follows “© Council of Europe, year of the publication”.

All other requests concerning the reproduction/translation of all or part of the document, should be addressed to the Directorate of Communications, Council of Europe (F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex or publishing@coe.int).

All other correspondence concerning this document should be addressed to the to Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law – Pompidou Group.

International Cooperation Group
on Drugs and Addictions Department
Council of Europe
F-67075 Strasbourg Cedex
France

E-mail: Pompidou.Group@coe.int

Cover design and layout: Documents
and Publications Production Department
(DPDP), Council of Europe

This publication has not been
copy-edited by the DPDP Editorial
Unit to correct typographical
and grammatical errors.

© Council of Europe, October 2021
Printed at the Council of Europe

Contents

MEDNET: THE POMPIDOU GROUP'S NETWORK FOR COOPERATION ON DRUGS AND ADDICTIONS IN THE MEDITERRANEAN REGION	5
Priorities	6
How the network works	7
Cooperation with Morocco	9
IMPACT/CONTRIBUTION OF MEDNET IN MOROCCO	15
What is the impact of MedNET on Morocco?	15
What is MedNET's flagship action in your country?	15
What is MedNET's role in raising awareness and implementing drug policy in your country?	16
Role of MedNET in research, collection, analysis and interpretation of information, in creating and supporting a National Observatory	16
Role of MedNET in therapeutic management in Morocco	16
Role of MedNET in prevention in Morocco	17
Role of MedNET in South-South exchanges	17
Role of MedNET in North-South reciprocal exchanges	17

MedNET: the Pompidou Group's network for cooperation on drugs and addictions in the Mediterranean region

MedNET is the Mediterranean cooperation network on drugs and addictions of the Pompidou Group. It promotes cooperation, exchange and reciprocal transfer of knowledge between countries on both sides of the Mediterranean, while respecting human rights and integrating the gender dimension.

■ Created in 2006 around 5 countries: Algeria, France, Morocco, Tunisia and the Netherlands, following a feasibility study carried out by France and the Netherlands, the network has undergone constant geographical and thematic development, contributing to the promotion of effective and adapted responses to the issue of addictions.

■ Prior to the creation of the MedNET network, the Pompidou Group held a conference in Malta in 1999 on "Cooperation in the Mediterranean Region on Drug Use". Several years later, in 2003, in Rabat, the MedSPAD project, an adaptation of ESPAD in Europe, was launched with the aim of conducting the first school surveys in the region that will provide an overview of drug use among young people in schools and their attitudes towards drugs.

■ This MedSPAD project has evolved, setting up a committee to share experiences between European and Mediterranean countries, revising its methodology in 2021 and adopting a new questionnaire with questions common to the ESPAD 2019 questionnaire, broadening the questions to new psychoactive substances, gambling and the use of social media with the aim of achieving, in the long term, a level of comparability between the countries conducting the MedSPAD survey but also with the countries carrying out the ESPAD survey.

■ MedNET celebrated its 10th anniversary in Rabat in 2016.

■ At present the network has seventeen countries:

- ▶ Ten member countries of the Pompidou Group: Cyprus, Croatia, France, Greece, Italy, Malta, Morocco, Portugal, Switzerland, Turkey.
- ▶ Seven non-Pompidou Group countries Algeria, Egypt, Spain, Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine*, Tunisia.

■ The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), the European Commission and the WHO participate as observers in the meetings.

■ **The objective of MedNET is to promote cooperation and mutual exchange of knowledge between Mediterranean countries (North-South and South-North) as well as within Mediterranean countries (South-South).**

■ **The ultimate goal is to develop and implement coherent policies on addictive behaviours, based on scientifically validated knowledge.**

Priorities

- ▶ Prevention of addictive behaviour
- ▶ Promotion of the collection of reliable, objective, and comparable data and creation or consolidation of national observatories
- ▶ Development of balanced national strategies
- ▶ Socio-health care of addictive behaviours and risk and harm reduction
- ▶ Law enforcement and combating drug trafficking
- ▶ Training and research

* This designation should not be interpreted as recognition of a State of Palestine, without prejudice to the position of each Council of Europe member state on this issue.

How the network works

Participation

■ Membership of MedNET is voluntary and based on mutual interest. Any country around the Mediterranean and any country interested in this cooperation can join the network. The membership procedure consists in the sending of a letter of commitment by the Minister in charge of drug policy to the Executive Secretary of the Pompidou Group and the nomination of a national representative empowered to commit on behalf of his or her government.

Presidency

■ The Presidency and the Vice-Presidency are held for a period of one or two years in turn by a country from the northern shore and a country from the southern shore. In order to ensure the continuity of the work, the country in charge of the Vice Presidency assume the Presidency the following year. The election is by consensus.

Secretariat

■ The MedNET Secretariat ensures the implementation of the work program and the smooth running of the network, ensuring synergy with the work of the Pompidou Group and other Council of Europe entities.

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

Meetings

■ The Steering Committee, composed of representatives of the participating countries, meets at least once a year to adopt the work program based on the projects submitted by each country, to review the implementation of ongoing projects and to discuss future activities.

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

Working methods

■ The MedNET network facilitates the recognition, dissemination and appropriation of good practices and proven experiences in partnership with other key national and international actors working in the region. In this way,

member countries, through their representatives, share and exchange their knowledge and know-how, making available to the network the evidence collected in all the identified areas.

■ They commit themselves to raise awareness of MedNET's actions among the relevant national authorities.

■ An annual activity report presents the national and regional projects implemented.

■ All the work of the MedNET network is subject to regular in-depth evaluation.

Financing

■ MedNET participating countries commit themselves to contribute to the network's budget, either financially or by making their resources available, in order to ensure the implementation of projects.

■ Each project is funded in part by the requesting country and by a financial or in-kind contribution.

- ▶ Voluntary contributions 2006-2021, notably from France and Italy,
- ▶ South Program (2012-2021) funded by the EU and implemented by the Council of Europe
- ▶ Council of Europe Neighbourhood Policy funding since 2016 for the Morocco and Tunisia Action Plans.
- ▶ Funding from the Pompidou Group's Ordinary Budget for MedNET Steering Committee meetings

Added value of the network

- ▶ Adaptation of the methodology and recognized tools to the cultural context of the Southern Mediterranean such as MedSPAD;
- ▶ Support for the launch of national MedSPAD school surveys;
- ▶ First assessment of the situation between the countries of the southern shore of the Mediterranean by MedSPAD;
- ▶ Support for the implementation and/or change of legislation;
- ▶ Training in the field of health;
- ▶ Support for the creation of care centres;
- ▶ Bridging role between the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean;

- ▶ Support for the introduction of different treatment modalities, including opioid substitution therapy;
- ▶ Gender mainstreaming in health care services: women's specific needs in accessing care;
- ▶ Awareness raising and capacity building in the field of drugs through meetings of different agencies from different sectors of prevention, treatment and law enforcement;
- ▶ Flexibility in implementing programs to meet emerging needs;
- ▶ Evaluation of MedNET actions by stakeholders;
- ▶ Value for money and efficiency.

Cooperation with Morocco

■ Cooperation with Morocco began at the "Conference on Cooperation in the Mediterranean Region on Drug Use" in 1999 in Malta.

■ Morocco then participated in MedSPAD, a project launched in 2003, following a meeting between the Moroccan Minister of Health and the Executive Secretary of the Pompidou Group. A survey was conducted in Rabat in 2005, and then in 2009 and 2013 throughout the country.

■ On 1 July 2011, the Kingdom of Morocco formalized its membership of the group after 5 years of participation in MedNET. The Minister of Health of the Kingdom of Morocco recalls in his letter to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe that "Morocco is convinced that a partner and responsible cooperation is necessary to curb this scourge" and that "the interest shown by Morocco to join (...) is in line with this approach and shows its commitment to contribute to the efforts of the international community".

MedNET activities in which Morocco participated

2006

- ▶ Participation in the Conference on the role of research in drug policy development in Algiers with presentation of the experience of the MedSPAD survey in Rabat.
- ▶ Participation of Morocco as an observer in the Ministerial Conference of the Pompidou Group.

2007

- ▶ Theoretical training in opiate substitution therapy (OST), Rabat
- ▶ Practical training in opiate substitution therapy, Paris-Bordeaux
- ▶ Visit on substitution treatment for a delegation of the Moroccan Ministry of Health in France
- ▶ Reflection day on the evaluation of the OST pilot program in Morocco, Paris
- ▶ Participation in the international seminar on the valorisation of school survey results in West Africa, organized by the UNODC Regional Office, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
- ▶ Morocco participates in the conference on the role of the associative movement in the prevention of drug addiction, Algiers
- ▶ Study visit on substitution treatment for Morocco in the Netherlands
- ▶ Participation in the Pompidou Group Conference on Family and Prevention, Porto.

2008

- ▶ Audience of the Pompidou Group Secretariat with Mrs. Yasmina Baddou, Minister of Health, in Rabat, which confirms its commitment to the action plan of the Kingdom of Morocco in the framework of the MedNET network
- ▶ MedNET's support to a seminar on harm reduction organized by Menahra (Harm Reduction Association for the Middle East and North Africa).
- ▶ Participation of Moroccan experts in sociology and medicine conferences in Paris, December

2009

- ▶ Creation of a diploma in addictology in the faculties of medicine of Casablanca and Rabat
- ▶ MedNET's contribution to the training activities of the Arrazi knowledge hub
- ▶ Tripartite meeting NGOs, policy makers, researchers, Rabat
- ▶ National MedSPAD survey
- ▶ Participation of Morocco in the study on the creation of a Mediterranean observatory on drugs and drug addiction
- ▶ Participation in the MedNET High Level Conference

2010

- ▶ Reduction of HIV and HCV contamination risks among drug users: advocacy and support workshop for NGOs in the field of risk prevention among drug users;
- ▶ Continuation of courses in addictology (Rabat and Casablanca);
- ▶ Production of prevention materials for users, their families and the community
- ▶ Regional seminar to prepare the basis for the establishment of national observatories/resource centres on drugs 30 November - 2 December, Rabat

2011

- ▶ On 1 July 2011, the Kingdom of Morocco formalized its membership of the Pompidou Group
- ▶ Continuation of training in addictology in Rabat and Casablanca
- ▶ Dissemination of prevention materials to users, their families and the community
- ▶ End of the pilot phase of substitution treatment in the three centres of Rabat, Casablanca and Tangiers

2012

- ▶ Inclusion of opioid substitution therapy in the 2012 national program.
- ▶ Translation of prevention materials into Berber
- ▶ Continuation of addiction courses and placement of trainees in care centres
- ▶ Creation of the first National Observatory on Drugs and Drug Addiction

2013

- ▶ Continuation of courses in addictology in Casablanca and Rabat
- ▶ Second MedSPAD Survey

2014

- ▶ Support for the operation of the Moroccan Observatory on Drugs and Drug Addiction
- ▶ Addictology courses in Casablanca and Rabat
- ▶ Hosting a study visit on low-threshold centres
- ▶ Participation in regional activities

- ▶ Workshop on airport anti-trafficking and participation in the annual meeting of the Pompidou Group airport group with 36 countries, Strasbourg, 18-20 June 2014
- ▶ Participation in the Regional MedSPAD Committee
- ▶ Participation in the third international symposium “excessive gambling”, Neuchâtel, Switzerland.
- ▶ Participation in the fourth international francophone symposium on the treatment of opioid dependence, Brussels, Belgium, 18-19 December 2014

2015

- ▶ Support for the operation of the Moroccan Observatory on Drugs and Drug Addiction in 2015. First report of the Observatory
- ▶ Addictology course in Rabat
- ▶ Addictology course in Casablanca
- ▶ Training on “pathological gambling”, Lausanne, Switzerland 26 to 28 November 2015
- ▶ Participation in regional activities
- ▶ Participation in the MedSPAD Committee
- ▶ Contribution to the MedSPAD Committee report “First overview of the situation in the Mediterranean region on the prevalence of alcohol, tobacco and drug use among adolescents
- ▶ Participation in the Pompidou Group airport seminar, Strasbourg, 17-19 June 2015
- ▶ Participation first European Conference on Addictive Behaviours and Dependencies, Lisbon

2016

- ▶ Courses in addictology in Casablanca and Rabat between September 2016 and June 2017
- ▶ Support for the operation of the Moroccan Observatory on Drugs and Drug Addiction
- ▶ Prevention Manual
- ▶ MedSPAD III

- ▶ Organization of the 5th International Francophone Symposium on the Treatment of Opioid Dependence, Rabat, November 30, December 1 and 2, 2016.
- ▶ Member of the MedSPAD Committee

2017

- ▶ Courses in addictology in Casablanca and Rabat between September 2017 and June 2018
- ▶ Annual report 2017 of the Moroccan Observatory of Drugs and Addictions
- ▶ Rehabilitation workshop
- ▶ Pathological gambling workshop
- ▶ Participation in the MedSPAD committee
- ▶ Participation in the seminar “Women and drugs: from policy to good practice” in Rome

2018

- ▶ Addictology courses in Casablanca and Rabat 2018-2019
- ▶ Organization of the Congress of the Moroccan Association of Addictology
- ▶ Publication of the second report of the Moroccan Observatory of Drugs and Addictions
- ▶ Participation in the MedSPAD committee
- ▶ Meeting of the Pompidou Group’s working group on drug-related cybercrime, 18-19 April 2018, in Dublin, Ireland
- ▶ Participation in the 4th international multidisciplinary symposium “Gambling addiction: Science, Independence, Transparency” which took place in Fribourg, Switzerland on June 27-29, 2018
- ▶ Participation in the Pompidou Group airport seminar, Strasbourg, 6-8 June 2018

2019

- ▶ Seminar on 10 years of opioid agonist treatments in Morocco, Tangier, 22-23 February
- ▶ The establishment of the Morocco Addicto Remad Network
- ▶ Addictology courses in Casablanca and Rabat 2019-2020

- ▶ University degree in addictology launched in Marrakech for 15 students in 2019-2020
- ▶ Participation in the MedSPAD Committee
- ▶ Participation in the 34th Annual Meeting of the European Airport and General Aviation Drug Enforcement Services, 19-20 June 2019, Strasbourg
- ▶ Participation in the International Seminar on “Refugees and drugs: needs assessment, practice support, risk prevention”, 7-8 October 2019, Athens, Greece
- ▶ International Conference on Cooperation to Align Drug Policies with the Sustainable Development Goals, 30-31 October 2019, Mexico
- ▶ Lisbon Conference on Addictions, 23-25 October 2019 in Lisbon, Portugal

2020

- ▶ Publication of the National Guide and e-learning module for capacity building of civil societies in prevention interventions on psychoactive substances adapted to the Moroccan context
- ▶ Morocco Addicto Remad Network
- ▶ University diploma of addictology in Casablanca, Rabat and Marrakech
- ▶ Launch of MedSPAD IV
- ▶ Participation in the MedSPAD committee
- ▶ Participation in the Pompidou Group’s Airports Group meeting, 8 September, videoconference
- ▶ Publication “Human rights and people who use drugs in the Mediterranean region: current situation in 17 MedNET countries

2021

- ▶ Addictology courses in Casablanca, Rabat and Marrakech
- ▶ Participation in the MedSPAD committee
- ▶ MedSPAD IV

Impact/Contribution of MedNET in Morocco

Professors Jallal Toufiq and Fatima Elomari,
Moroccan Observatory of Drugs
and Drug Addiction

What is the impact of MedNET on Morocco?

- The impact of MedNET on Morocco is felt at different levels:
 - ▶ Networking of policy and field workers
 - ▶ Inclination towards harm reduction policy, in particular through the implementation of opiate antagonist treatment programmes (RDR)
 - ▶ Encouraging the evidence-based approach
 - ▶ Impact of MedSPAD surveys on data collection and prevention of drug use among 15-17 year old and beyond
 - ▶ Training of qualified resources through university diplomas in addictology (DU) and various training courses (France, Switzerland, Italy, Cyprus, etc.)
 - ▶ Strengthening the concept of users' rights as an integral part of human rights in general
 - ▶ Support to the Moroccan Observatory of Drugs and Addictions (OMDA) through the publication of the 1st report of 2014
 - ▶ Sustaining the mission of the OMDA
 - ▶ Upgrading of professionals through the REMAD network of treatment centre workers
 - ▶ Networking with other professionals from other countries in the region

What is MedNET's flagship action in your country?

■ Two key actions: the first is seen through the training of human resources with the support of the University Diplomas of Addictology in Rabat and Casablanca. MedNET has also promoted epidemiological research by providing technical and financial support for MedSPAD surveys and by encouraging the setting up of the OMDA.

■ The second flagship action was the springboard that MedNET provided for Morocco's visibility on the European scene as a pioneer country in the MENA region for the integrated management of drug use and, on that basis, for its application to the Pompidou Group. This application led to its accession as a member of the Pompidou Group in July 2011.

What is MedNET's role in raising awareness and implementing drug policy in your country?

■ With the completion of the MedSPAD surveys and the establishment of the Moroccan Observatory of Drugs and Addictions (OMDA), the policy on drugs and addictions is now based on scientific evidence. Similarly, the training of human resources is part of the strategy of the Ministry of Health.

Role of MedNET in research, collection, analysis and interpretation of information, in creating and supporting a National Observatory

- ▶ 4 MedSPAD surveys conducted in Morocco since 2006
- ▶ Conducting a seminar on the role of research in drug policy-making with a presentation of the experience of the MedSPAD survey in Rabat
- ▶ Setting up the OMDA
- ▶ Drafting of two OMDA reports 2014 and 2017. Preparation of the third 2021 Report underway.
- ▶ Supporting and sustaining the OMDA

Role of MedNET in therapeutic management in Morocco

■ MedNET supported the initiation of opioid agonist methadone treatment with:

- ▶ Organization of training seminars in Morocco
- ▶ Organization of internships abroad (France and Holland)
- ▶ Support for the RDR programme
- ▶ Support for the development of brochures on psychoactive substances
- ▶ Development of unified treatment guidelines for professionals through the REMAD network.

Role of MedNET in prevention in Morocco

- ▶ Development of prevention materials for adolescents, substance users and families
- ▶ Networking with NGOs involved in substance use prevention
- ▶ Organization of round tables on prevention
- ▶ Establishment of a tripartite conference including academics, politicians and NGOs
- ▶ Training seminars for NGOs
- ▶ Development of prevention materials and e-learning on prevention for professionals

Role of MedNET in South-South exchanges

- ▶ Sharing of information and experiences with the countries of the southern shore of the Mediterranean
- ▶ Participation of Morocco in scientific days, round tables in Algeria, Tunisia, Jordan, Egypt and Burkina Faso with knowledge sharing
- ▶ Support of neighbouring countries in the implementation of MedSPAD surveys, the DU of Addictology and opiate agonist treatment.
- ▶ Participation of Morocco in the international seminar on the valorisation of school survey results in West Africa, organized by the UNODC Regional Office, Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso
- ▶ Morocco participates in the conference on the role of the associative movement in the prevention of drug addiction, Algiers
- ▶ Networking between professionals from different South-South countries
- ▶ Participation of Moroccan professionals in DU in the South (Tunisia)
- ▶ Participation of Moroccan professionals in specific training courses in southern countries (Jordan)

Role of MedNET in North-South reciprocal exchanges

- ▶ Sharing of experiences with European countries with exchange of know-how
- ▶ Training of Moroccan experts on “pathological gambling” in Lausanne
- ▶ Participation of Moroccan experts in symposiums, congresses and seminars held in Europe, for example in France, Belgium, Portugal, Switzerland ...
- ▶ Participation of Moroccan professionals in DU in Europe (Greece, France)

Pompidou Group

The Pompidou Group is the Council of Europe's international cooperation group on drugs and addictions. It is a multidisciplinary forum at the wider European level where it is possible for policymakers, professionals, and researchers to exchange experiences and information on drugs and addiction. Formed in 1971 at the suggestion of the French President Georges Pompidou, it has become a Council of Europe partial agreement in 1980. In 2021, it gathers 41 countries: 38 among the 47th Member States of the Council of Europe as well as Morocco, Mexico and Israel.

MedNET

MedNET is Mediterranean network for cooperation on drugs and addictions of the Pompidou Group. Created in 2006, its objective is to promote cooperation, exchanges, and mutual transfer of knowledge between the countries on both sides of the Mediterranean Basin. It supports the development of drug policies which respect health and human rights and address gender equality issues, based on evidence gathered by national observatories. In 2021, seventeen countries are members of the network.



www.coe.int

The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It comprises 47 member states, including all members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law. The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states.

COUNCIL OF EUROPE



CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE