

ALGERIA 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**



Algeria



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ALGERIA AND MEDNET

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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 Algeria

■ It was during the «Conference on Cooperation in the Mediterranean Region on Drug Use: Networking in the Mediterranean Region» in 1999 in Malta that cooperation with Algeria began.

■ This conference was followed by Algeria's participation in MedSPAD with a survey conducted in Algiers in 2005.

MedNET activities in which Algeria participated

2006

- ▶ First cooperation activity in the framework of MedNET
- ▶ The Conference on the Role of Research in Drug Policy Development: Interpretation, Communication and Use of Results, was organized in Algiers in partnership with the National Office for the Fight against Drugs and Drug Addiction of Algeria. Experiences between the two sides of the Mediterranean on school surveys were exchanged.
- ▶ Algeria's participation as an observer in the Ministerial Conference of the Pompidou Group.

2007

- ▶ Contribution of expertise for the preparation of the population survey in Algeria: between the OFDT (French Office of Drugs and Drug Addiction), the CENEAP (National Centre of Studies and Analyses for Population and

Development) as well as the National Office for the Fight against Drugs and Drug Addiction and various European experts.

- ▶ Visit of an Algerian delegation in France to various organizations active in the fight against drug addiction.
- ▶ Theoretical training seminar on opiate substitution treatment in Morocco in March in Rabat with the participation of Algerian representatives.
- ▶ National conference on the role of the associative movement in the prevention of the scourge of drugs and drug addiction organized by the ONLDT with the participation of experts from the Pompidou Group.
- ▶ Participation in the Pompidou Group Conference on Family and Prevention, Porto.

2008

- ▶ Four training seminars on the management of drug addicts
- ▶ A total of 154 people were trained. These seminars in Algiers, Annaba and Oran are part of the national plan of action for the treatment of drug addicts, which includes the establishment of 15 detoxification centres and 53 intermediate care centres for drug addicts. Bilingual French/Arabic documents can be obtained from the National Office for Combating Drugs and Drug Addiction.
- ▶ Study visit for an Algerian delegation in Lisbon.
- ▶ Seminar on synthetic drug law enforcement, Algiers.

2009

- ▶ Training in project management for associative executives
- ▶ Four training sessions with French and Algerian trainers in four regions of Algeria (Algiers, Batna, Mascara and Ghardaia) trained 150 association executives.
- ▶ Participation in the feasibility study on the creation of a Mediterranean observatory on drugs and drug addiction.
- ▶ Participation in the high level conference of the Mediterranean Network of the Pompidou Group.

2010

- ▶ National population-based survey on attitudes and drug use
- ▶ National information and awareness seminar on precursors

- ▶ Three regional training seminars for doctors and paramedical staff in the treatment and follow-up of drug users in Algiers, Bechar and Ouargla.
- ▶ Three seminars on the implementation of the law on the prevention and repression of the illicit use of and trafficking in drugs and psychotropic substances in Algiers and Ghardaïa.

2011

- ▶ Using the results of the national population-based survey for the new national drug prevention and control strategy

2012

- ▶ Algeria's participation in the TDO symposium in Geneva on the treatment of opioid dependence
- ▶ Algeria's participation in the airports seminar in Strasbourg

2013

- ▶ Transition year, during which there were no activities in collaboration with MedNET

2014

- ▶ Development of an «Algeria» country profile
- ▶ Launch of the MedSPAD survey and workshop in Paris

2015

- ▶ Study visit on data collection and processing in Paris
- ▶ Study visit on the setting up of a forum for associations in Paris
- ▶ Participation in two MedSPAD Paris committee meetings
- ▶ Regional seminar on opiate substitution therapy, Algiers,
- ▶ Study visits on opiate substitution therapy in Morocco, Belgium and Lebanon
- ▶ Participation in the airport group, Strasbourg
- ▶ Participation in the 'precursor' network, Prague
- ▶ Participation in the Pompidou Group's project on recommendations on legislation regulating substitution treatments.

2016

- ▶ Seminar «Introducing opioid substitution treatment in Algeria», March 8-9, 2016
- ▶ National MedSPAD survey, April 2016
- ▶ Participation in the MedSPAD committee, Paris in February and Lisbon in September.
- ▶ National seminar on the communication of the MedSPAD school survey, 11 and 12 October 2016 in Algiers
- ▶ Training of ONLCDT staff in data collection, analysis and prevention, autumn 2016 in Lisbon
- ▶ Workshop «prevention tools», autumn in Algiers
- ▶ Participation in the 5th International Francophone Symposium on the Treatment of Opioid Dependence, Rabat, November 30, December 1 and 2, 2016.

2017

- ▶ Seminar on Women and Drugs, 8 March 2017, in Algeria
- ▶ Seminar «Support to staff working in Opioid Substitution Treatment centres», 11-12 April 2017, in Algeria
- ▶ MedNET workshop on prevention tools, 23-25 May 2017, Algiers
- ▶ Participation in the MedSPAD committee in Paris on 7 February and in Lisbon on 23 October
- ▶ Annual meeting of the Cooperation Group on Drug Control Services at European Airports and General Aviation (Airports Group), Strasbourg, 6-8 June 2017
- ▶ General Aviation Meeting, Madrid, 26-28 April 2017
- ▶ MedNET and the substitution treatment guidelines
- ▶ Participation in the 12th EXASS Net meeting «Refugees and Drugs: Estimating needs, support practices, preventing risks», 30 October-1 November 2017, Athens, Greece
- ▶ Participation in the «Listen First» campaign, Listen First - Listening to children and youth is the first step to help them grow healthy and safe

2018

- ▶ Standing Committee on Women
- ▶ MedSPAD I Algeria

- ▶ Participation in the MedSPAD Committee
- ▶ Seminar «New approaches to addiction prevention», 20-21 October 2018, Algiers
- ▶ International multidisciplinary symposium. excessive gambling: science, independence, transparency, 27-29 June 2018 in Fribourg, Switzerland
- ▶ Annual meeting of the Concertation Group of European airport and general aviation drug control services (Airport Group), 6-8 June 2018, Strasbourg France
- ▶ Study visit of the Algerian delegation on European quality standards in drug prevention, 18-19 June 2018 in Cyprus
- ▶ Participation in the MedNET Steering Committee

2019

- ▶ One-day training seminar for psychologists, 26 June, Algiers
- ▶ Participation in the MedSPAD Committee
- ▶ Annual meeting of the Pompidou Group International Precursor Control Network, 1-3 October 2019, European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), Lisbon
- ▶ International seminar on «Refugees and drugs: needs assessment, practice support, risk prevention», 7-8 October 2019, Athens, Greece

2020

- ▶ Participation in the MedSPAD Committee
- ▶ Participation in the MedNET Steering Committee

2021

- ▶ Participation in the MedSPAD Committee
- ▶ Training in motivational interviewing for 50 Algerian health professionals
- ▶ Opioid substitution therapy training (deferred)

Impact of MedNET by the National Office for Combating Drugs and Addictions in Algeria

Impact of MedNET on Algeria

■ The MedNET network is increasingly cited in Algeria, and its reputation in institutional circles involved in the fight against drug trafficking and addiction is well established. The intersectionality that characterizes its work as a whole has diversified and extended the list of people who have come into contact with the network and who have benefited from actions undertaken by it.

■ A reading of the balance sheet of cooperation with Algeria shows that since the elaboration of the Algeria profile in 2014, it has become denser.

■ More and more actions have been carried out in various segments, which means that there has been a definite impact on the fight against this scourge.

MedNET's flagship action in Algeria

■ The network's contribution to the introduction of OSTs in Algeria was undoubtedly the most important, as it was laborious and spread out over time. The network's contribution was decisive in the introduction of this therapy in the Algerian health system. Firstly, in the stage of raising the awareness of decision-makers, two seminars were organized for this purpose, and then in its implementation by planning the training of 60 doctors from the CISAs.

Role of MedNET in South-South exchanges

■ The sustained cooperation with MedNET before and after the MedSPAD survey was carried out made it possible, through the results obtained at the ONLCDT, to base the decisions taken in the framework of the national strategy to combat drugs and drug addiction on objective foundations. On the basis of these results, a sectoral strategy of the Ministry of Education has been put in place to combat violence in schools. A protocol has been drawn up for the protection of and fight against drugs in schools, which defines for the benefit

of those involved the measures to be taken with regard to drug dealers and the steps to be taken to deal with users.

■ Algeria is pleased with the results and remains convinced that Euro-Mediterranean cooperation, through the MedNET network, meets the immense need for exchanges of knowledge, experience and good practices that concerted action requires in order to meet the new challenges of a changing drug and addiction situation in our countries.

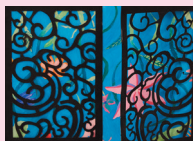
■ Algeria expresses its determination to continue to work with its partners within this regional cooperation mechanism and will support the MedNET network, which we hope will be continued, strengthened and expanded to include other countries of the Mediterranean basin, for the benefit of our respective countries and peoples.

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 addictions. 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.



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