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AD HOC EXPERT GROUP ON THE PREVENTION OF DRUG USE IN THE WORK PLACE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terms of reference of the ad hoc expert group on the prevention of drug use in the workplace

- 1. Name of Group:** Ad hoc Expert Group on the Prevention of drug use in the Workplace (P-PG/Work)
- 2. Type of group:** Ad hoc Expert Group
- 3. Source of terms of reference:** Pompidou Group Ministerial Conference (3 and 4 November 2010)
- 4. Purpose:** to raise awareness among the Pompidou Group's member countries about the consequences of drug use in the workplace (illicit drugs and poly-drug use)

Workers spend one third of their lives in the workplace and so this environment is directly affected by addictive behaviour. Drug consumption in the workplace is on the increase, as it is in society, but it is in the working relationships at the very core of the company, workshop, body or service concerned that it is most complicated to manage the risks involved. The risks take many forms. They are linked not only to the staff's health but also to safety aspects such as the safety of employees in relation to one another and the safety of people who purchase a company's products or services. They are related to the very purpose of businesses, which is to be productive and make as much profit as possible in order to continue functioning. Other issues are those of the decrease in productivity and the obsolescence of skills that can occur as a result of premature ageing due to drug consumption and changing patterns of international competition. Faced with this threat to health and safety at work, political leaders, company heads and managers may resort to unregulated monitoring practices, which may undermine personal freedoms, whereas arrangements could be made which protect individual and labour rights.

The purpose of the group's work will be to compile and share best practices to achieve the following:

- to understand, and hence deal better with, individual factors (such as personal vulnerabilities and skills) and environmental factors (such as the social, economic and cultural context) conducive to drug consumption in the workplace;
- to provide benchmarks for all active partners to strengthen the framework in which any monitoring or checks may be conducted, regulated or prohibited;
- to improve exchanges of information between member countries and co-operation with other international bodies active in this field, particularly the ILO and WHO, to make the entire body of texts and conventions which clarify or govern this matter at international level available;
- to rectify any shortcomings noted in prevention and safety measures.

Background issues

In the light of the as yet incomplete knowledge about the nature and scope of the problem, which can be resumed as follows:

- 15 to 20% of accidents, absenteeism and personal conflicts at work are said to be linked to the use of alcohol, drugs or psychotropic substances;
- cannabis is the most commonly taken of all the illicit drugs;
- the problem has grown in recent years;
- all occupational sectors are affected by the problem;
- in the 26-54 age bracket, unemployed people take far more drugs of all types than people with jobs;

the project will be based on:

- a) the Pompidou Group's recent work (in the Expert Committee on Ethical Issues and Professional Standards) on "Drug testing in the workplace: Inventory of European national legislations" (P-PG/Ethics(2006)4rev2) and on drug testing by insurance companies in Europe (PG/Ethics(2009)9);
- b) ILO Conventions Nos. 155 (occupational safety and health) and 161 (occupational health services);
- c) similar processes at national level:
 - consultation between the unions and management in France under the authority of the Ministry of Labour and the Joint Ministerial Task Force to Combat Drugs and Drug Addiction (MILDT), which resulted in a national conference in June 2010;

- a collective agreement on drugs in the workplace in Belgium (Agreement No. 100 of 1 April 2009);
- monitoring procedures in several other member countries (including Italy and Denmark).

5. Terms of reference of the Ad hoc Expert Group

The open-ended group will be made up of one expert of each of the member states of the Pompidou Group working in the occupational health sector (from the government departments concerned), two consultants (sociologists, occupational physicians or specialists in social law or ethics); representatives of the international organisations active in this field (ILO, WHO, EMCDDA, ETUC and UNICE) will also be invited; it will be assigned the following tasks:

- to compare available data and texts and highlight differences in approach and points of convergence to establish the basis for a shared culture;
- to review the structural, cultural and economic factors underlying prevention, treatment support, monitoring and safety approaches in all the member countries;
- to propose transferable prevention scheme models;
- to prepare an international conference based on the findings of these studies.

6. Expected results

At the end of the group's work, all of the good practices that have been catalogued, which will have been parametrised for use in various occupational, administrative and cultural contexts, will be made available on line. In each member state they will be used as the basis to set up a policy to prevent addictive behaviour with due regard for personal freedoms and a lever to improve working conditions. They will be presented to the ILO, which will look into the possibility of updating its existing conventions on occupational health and safety. The possibility of a joint ILO-Pompidou Group Convention could be explored.

Working methods

- The Secretariat will be responsible for organising meetings, collecting documents identified by the expert group, preparing summary documents, arranging for translation and interpretation services for the international conferences and putting information and recommendations on line.
- The Ad hoc Expert Group will make use of existing work and update monographs that are already available. It will manage the drafting of the documents to be used as the basis for the conference.
- The Ad hoc Expert Group shall carry out its work within its terms of reference and under the authority of the Bureau of PCs.
- PCs are asked to support the Group, particularly by enlisting the help of national representatives and encouraging recognised figures in the field and policy makers to participate in the international conference.

Timetable of activities:

- two meetings in 2011, including one in Paris;
- one meeting and one international conference in 2012;
- online posting of findings and recommendations in 2012.

8. Estimated costs

Travel and subsistence expenses of members of the Ad hoc Expert Group shall be covered by the national authorities of participating member states.

The Secretariat shall draw on the Pompidou Group's ordinary budget to finance the fees and travel and subsistence expenses of 2 consultants attending the meetings and the conference.

9. Duration

These terms of reference will be reviewed before 31 December 2012.

10. Organisation

Bureau supervision: Laura D'ARRIGO, France

Secretariat responsible: Eva Koprolin, e-mail: eva.koprolin@coe.int

Assistance: Audrey Tumulty, e-mail: audrey.tumulty@coe.int