DIRECTORATE GENERAL
HUMAN RIGHTS AND RULE OF LAW
POMPIDOU GROUP

Pompidou Group
Groupe Pompidou

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

ΚΥΠΡΙΑΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS
ΥΠΟΥΡΓΕΙΟ Δικαιοσύνης και Δημοσίας Τάξεως
MINISTRY of Justice and Public Order

DIRECTORATE OF SOCIAL RIGHTS,
HEALTH, AND ENVIRONMENT
Department for Health

Secretariat of the Council of Europe International
Cooperation Group on Drugs and Addictions
(Pompidou Group)

CYPRUS NATIONAL
ADDICTIONS AUTHORITY

CYPRUS PRISONS DEPARTMENT 1960

5th Plenary Meeting of the Cooperation Group

'Developing comprehensive drug treatment systems in prison in South-East Europe' (PRISEE)

Organised by the **Pompidou Group** in co-operation with the **Ministry of Justice and Public Order of Cyprus**, the **Cyprus National Addictions Authority** and the **Cyprus Prisons Department**

17 - 19 June 2025

Larnaca & Nicosia, Cyprus

Concept note and programme

CONCEPT

Background

In 2020, a new Activity was introduced in the Pompidou Group work programme at the request of its member states to reinforce regional co-operation in South-East Europe (SEE) on drug treatment and rehabilitation in prisons. The objectives of this Activity were set as follows:

- raising awareness about the needs of staff delivering drug treatment services in prison and of people with harmful drug use, as well as the importance of developing comprehensive drug treatment systems in places of incarceration;
- giving guidance, recognition and support to health professionals, social workers and security staff working in detention settings;
- providing a knowledge base for elaborating programmes and strategies for treatment and social re-insertion of detained people with substance use disorders; and
- establishing regular interaction at regional level to multiply capacities and exchange evidence-based practices on delivering treatment and rehabilitation services in prison.

With regard to the operational dimension of the Activity, three main areas for action were identified within the group:

- introducing/improving treatment structures targeting people with substance use disorders (SUD) in prison,
- enhancing knowledge and skills of correctional staff on substance use through training,
- improving continuity of care upon entry to and release from prison.

Operational assistance to the group is mainly financed under the Pompidou Group's Criminal Justice and Health in Prison Programme and is subject to availability of funding.

11 South-East European countries (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece, Hungary, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and Türkiye) appointed permanent members to the group following the two agreed profiles (one each per country):

- policy makers directly involved in the design, implementation and evaluation of policies related to drug treatment and rehabilitation in detention settings, and
- prison practitioners working directly with detained people with substance use disorders.

Prison professionals from other beneficiary countries of the Pompidou Group's Criminal Justice and Health in Prison Programme, notably Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine, have been invited into the Group's work from 2021 on to promote mutually beneficial exchanges.

A launching event (online amidst the Covid-19 pandemic) and four study visits (yearly meetings) already took place, hosted by the participating countries: in Slovenia (2021), Croatia (2022), the Republic of Moldova (2023), and by the Pompidou Group in France (2024) as part of its first international conference on drug treatment in prison. The events provided opportunities for the exchange of experiences among the permanently appointed prison professionals to the group and served to consolidate a unique regional network that provides a lasting thematic platform on drug-related issues.

Scope of the 5th PRISEE Plenary Meeting

The meeting, which will bring together policy makers and prison practitioners from 14 countries from Eastern and South-East Europe, will feature:

- A 2-day of meetings taking place in a conference-room setting, to showcase major achievements by the SEE members and implemented with support of the PRISEE co-operation group; discussions and presentations about topics of particular importance for the group within the

scope of its work; and presentation of treatment and rehabilitation of detained people with SUD in the Cypriot penitentiary system.

- A half-day field visit to the prison of Nicosia, that includes a presentation of the Cypriot penitentiary system, and a tour of the facilities for inmates with SUD. The field visit will allow participants to exchange with the prison's management and staff.

The meeting will be held in English and requires the ability to actively take part in discussions in English.

Topics of discussions and presentations

The presentations and discussions of the 5th Plenary Meeting will focus on addressing the interconnected challenges of managing New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) in prisons, introducing harm reduction strategies in correctional settings, and developing effective evaluation methods for ensuring sustainability and evidence base of these efforts.

The discussions will begin by exploring the growing issue of NPS in prisons, examining their impact on the health and safety of both detained people and staff within the prison environment. Participants will learn about:

- The specific challenges posed by NPS, and
- The vital and supporting role of forensic, medical and law enforcement professionals in the rapid detection, analysis and circulation of newly detected substances, to ensure an efficient coordinated action.

Participants will then explore implementing practical strategies for prevention and treatment, particularly harm reduction, through presentations of successful prison-based harm reduction programmes.

Finally, the meeting sessions will cover the critical role of evaluation in measuring the effectiveness of substance detection and harm reduction programmes, providing participants with the tools to create an evaluation plan that assesses the impact and sustainability of harm reduction and NPS management initiatives, and discuss the development of a set of indicators for measuring effectiveness of such programmes. This integrated approach will foster practical, evidence-based solutions to the complex challenges faced by prisons in the South-East Europe region.

A collaborative group exercise envisages to engage stakeholders, including state health authorities, prison administrations and civil society organisations, addressing common misconceptions and providing a toolkit for working together to ensure a comprehensive drug treatment system including harm reduction measures.

PROGRAMME

Tuesday, 17 June 2025

Opening of the meeting	
9:00 – 9:30	Welcome address ▶ Host authorities: ■ Mr Konstantinos STYLIANOU, Executive Director of the Cyprus National Addictions Authority ■ Mr Constantinos CONSTANTINIDES, Deputy Director of the Cyprus Prisons Department ■ Ms Natasa SAVVOPOULOU, Officer, Human Rights, Anticrime and Correctional Policy Department, Ministry of Justice and Public Order, on behalf of Mr Marios HARTSIOTIS, Minister of Justice and Public Order of Cyprus ▶ Council of Europe: ■ Mr Rafael BENITEZ, Director of Social Rights, Health and Environment, Council of Europe (video message) ■ Orsolya LIBIĆ, Programme Manager, Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe Introduction to the programme
Session 1: The criminal justice system of Cyprus and its approach to treatment and care of people who use drugs or have substance use disorders	
9:30 – 10:30	**Some aspects on the legal status of controlled substances in Cyprus- The Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances LAW 29/77** *Andreas HADJICONSTANTIS* *Counsel of the Republic of Cyprus* **Developing a Child-Friendly Justice System - The Children Law of 2021** *Natasa SAVVOPOULOU* *Officer, Human Rights, Anticrime and Correctional Policy Department, Ministry of Justice and Public Order* Presentations followed by Q&A
10:30 – 10:50	***Coffee break***
10:50 – 12:00	**Alternative measures to coercive sanctions for drug-related offences in Cyprus** *Konstantinos STYLIANOU* *Executive Director, Cyprus National Addictions Authority* **Introduction to the Institution of the Parole Board, of a mental health point of view** *Lampros SAMARTZIS* *Consultant Psychiatrist for the Ministry of Health of Cyprus, Head of the Cyprus Psychiatric Association* Presentations followed by Q&A
12:00 – 13:30	***Lunch break***

Session 2: Raising standards on treatment and care of people with substance use disorders in the criminal justice system	
13:30 – 14:50	**Relevant human rights standards and their state of implementation in Council of Europe member states** *Alan MITCHELL* *President of the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CPT)* **Implementation of the Pompidou Group guidance paper on raising standards on drug treatment in custodial settings in Cyprus – State of play of the intensive outpatient programme for people with substance use disorders** *Kostas KONSTANTINOU* *Psychologist, Department of Mental Health Services, Ministry of Health* *Josefina MAVROU* *Officer at the Policy Department, Cyprus National Addictions Authority* Presentations followed by Q&A ***New resource:*** **Pompidou Group Trainer's manual on treatment and care of people with substance use disorders in custodial settings** *Ismail RABIE* *Secretariat of the Pompidou Group*
14:50 – 15:10	***Coffee break***
Session 3: Health responses to New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) in the prison environment	
15:10 – 16:30	**The rise of NPS in prisons: a dangerous new chapter** *Maria AFXENTIOU* *Head of the Forensic Chemistry and Toxicology Department, State General Laboratory, Cyprus* **Reimagining prison health for the age of New Psychoactive Substances** *Rafaela RIGONI* *Head of Research at Correlation – European Harm Reduction Network* Presentations followed by discussion
16:30 – 17:00	Wrap-up of the 1st day

Wednesday, 18 June 2025

Session 4: Harm reduction services in custodial setting	
09:00 – 09:10	Introduction to the programme of the 2nd day
09:10 – 10:30	**Addressing the use of new psychoactive substances in penitentiaries in the Republic of Moldova for increasing the accessibility of harm reduction services** *Elena POPOVICI* *Head of Tuberculosis Section 2, Pruncul Prison No. 16* **Harm reduction services in custodial settings. Challenges and solutions and cooperation with civil society** *Rafaela RIGONI* *Head of Research at Correlation – European Harm Reduction Network* Discussion: current state of play in PRISEE countries on access to harm reduction services in prison
10:30– 10:50	***Coffee break***
10:50 – 12:00	**Group exercise – How to initiate advocacy by prison professionals for introducing harm reduction measures** Group work and debriefing in plenary
12:00 – 13:30	***Lunch break***

Session 5: Measuring effectiveness of drug treatment and harm reduction programmes in prison	
13:30 – 14:50	**Overview of the effectiveness of health interventions in European prisons by outcome** *Josefina MAVROU* *Officer at the Policy Department, Cyprus National Addictions Authority* **Evaluation in practice: lessons learned from the pilot phase of a comprehensive rehabilitation programme in Ukrainian prisons** *Pavlo MARCHENKO* *Head of Organisational and Methodological Support, Psychiatrist, Health Centre of the State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine* **What to measure – A human-rights based approach to determining success of drug treatment programmes** *Orsolya LIBIĆ* *Programme Manager, Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe*
14:50– 15:10	*Coffee break*
15:10 – 16:10	**Group exercise – How to use monitoring and evaluation to demonstrate success of interventions for people who use drugs** Group discussion and debriefing in plenary
16:30 – 17:00	Wrap-up of the 2nd day and announcement of the programme of the 3rd day
19:30	***Dinner offered by the host authorities***

Thursday, 19 June 2025

Field visit to the Nicosia prison	
8:00 – 9:00	***Travel to the penitentiary institution by bus***
9:00 – 9:30	Security clearance
9:30 – 10:00	Welcome address by the Cyprus Prisons Department
10:00 – 13:00	**Presentation and tour of available services and facilities in the prison** ■ Care section, treatment and harm reduction services ■ Detention section
13:00 – 14:00	***Lunch break***
14:00 – 15:30	**Main takeaways from the plenary meeting and discussion on work of the PRISEE group for 2026-2029** *Orsolya LIBIĆ* *Programme Manager, Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe* *Rafaela RIGONI* *Head of Research at Correlation – European Harm Reduction Network* Presentation and group discussion
15:30 – 18:00:	City tour of Nicosia
18:00 – 19:00	***Travel back to Larnaca***