



Florence Mabileau

A look back at her contribution to the Pompidou Group

After 35 years of service to the Council of Europe, we are delighted to share this article about Florence Mabileau, highlighting her career and her main contributions to the Pompidou Group. She will leave the Council of Europe on 31 May 2024. On this occasion, several of her colleagues have sent words of thanks and we have selected a few to share.

Before coming to the Council of Europe

Florence Mabileau, a French national, studied applied foreign languages and European law, and holds a postgraduate degree in international trade. Although her academic path initially pointed towards the private sector, she joined the Council of Europe in 1989. At the Council of Europe, she worked mainly with the Pompidou Group, except during a two-year sabbatical when she worked as a freelance translator of documents in the drugs field in the United Kingdom.

The cornerstone of MedNET, the Pompidou Group's Mediterranean network for co-operation on drugs and addictions

In the early 2000s, Florence initiated cooperation in the Mediterranean region by establishing [MedNET](#), a network for collaboration on drugs and addictions. As the Head of Unit for Research and Mediterranean Cooperation, she coordinates MedNET's activities, implements the annual work programme, maintains contact with correspondents in 19 countries, manages the budget, and oversees fundraising efforts. The article explains the implementation of the MedSPAD project.

Following a Mediterranean conference in Malta in 1999, the magnitude of the drug problem in Algeria, Morocco, and Lebanon was explored as part of the Mediterranean School Survey

Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (MedSPAD). This project, which is a modified version of ESPAD in Europe, was launched in Rabat in 2003 and provides an overview of drug use among young people in schools in the Mediterranean region and their attitudes towards drugs. In her words: “Pompidou Group experts from France, Malta and the Netherlands worked with their Algerian and Moroccan counterparts to develop the Mediterranean MedSPAD questionnaire and to overcome the taboos surrounding the issue of drugs, which is seen as a scourge not only by parents and pupils, but also by schools and health, education and justice services.”

We can't thank Florence Mabileau enough for her determination and hard work in the creation of MedNET, its maintenance and care over the years.

In addition, there is no better way to describe her contribution to the MedNET network than in the words of her colleagues. We have selected two of them anonymously:

Dear Florence,

If I was asked to name only one person symbolic of MedNET I would pick yours over all the others. You brought so much to it. On many occasions I reiterated again and again that without you and your involvement the program would have ended a long time ago. MedNET is small by its costs and so big by its impact in big part because of you. Thanks to you we have achieved a lot. Your sense of humility and dedication have comforted all of us in keeping up the good work. We had faith in the program for we had faith in you. Your departure will definitely have a toll on the program. I only hope whomever takes over to get inspired by you. It took a lot of culture-sensitivity and understanding. I wish you good health and happiness. I'm sure our paths will cross very often starting by Paris in a couple of weeks.

Your friend.

Dear Florence,

You created this network and it is thanks to your hard work that we reached all these important goals through the years.

I still remember vividly the impression of the first meeting , as it was clear that it was the beginning of an incredible journey: MedNET allowed us to interact, creating collaborations and friendships, and promoting powerful initiatives that would not have been able otherwise, with a genuinely positive impact on the territories and people interested by them.

We know that MedNET will go on, that it will still be a great network of collaboration and exchange, and we will be happy to keep working in this framework, but your departure really represents the end of an era for all of us. We are sincerely happy for your journey, as you enter this new, pleasant –and surely more relaxing- stage of your life, and we wish you all the best, since you deserve it.

I will be very happy to meet you in Naples.

Promoting a gender approach in drug policies

Florence has also contributed to the promotion of [gender perspectives into drug policies](#). She has developed initiatives and organized seminars for professionals to address this critical dimension, ensuring that gender considerations are incorporated into research and policy-making processes. The publication "[Implementing a gender approach in drug policies: prevention, treatment and criminal justice, handbook for practitioners and decision makers](#)" is the result of a 2020-2021 online consultation involving 13 countries taking place during the Covid 19 pandemic. This handbook for practitioners and decision-makers has been a success, as you can see from the words of one of her colleagues:

Dear Florence,

We can't thank you enough for your guidance regarding the project you mentioned. In my opinion, the gender handbook is a benchmark for those who want to address this issue. In the future, more and more work will be done, but this handbook collected meaningfully diverse contributions, still all of them with a powerful gender perspective, which until before was missed in drug policies and practice!

I wish you all the best for the next new chapter of your life!

Involved in the issue of children whose parents use drugs

In addition to her work on gender issues, Florence has focused on projects concerning [children whose parents use drugs](#). She has aimed to support this vulnerable group through targeted policies and research, collaborating with organizations such as the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) and the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD).

As the following feedback shows, her involvement in the project for children whose parents use drugs has had a significant impact:

Dear Florence,

I only got to know you for about one year but can just confirm what others have already said, how much I also enjoyed working with you on this project! You have provided the CoE backing for this whole process, which is too often seen as a rather niche topic but nevertheless so symptomatically important for our societies in order to protect human rights of women and children, especially in difficult life situations!

Wishing you all the best for your new life perspectives!

Warm regards!

The ability to unite

Finally, the Pompidou Group will greatly miss her remarkable personality and her ability to bring so many people together around important issues. Her colleagues can attest to this:

Dear Florence,

it was with great emotion that I read your farewell e-mail. I want to thank you for your unwavering support, your accurate positioning, your kindness and your ability to bring cultures together around this complex and passionate subject.

After 35 years at the Groupe Pompidou, how many bridges have you helped to build between different worlds: those of research, politics, gender equity, addictions, children at risk and so on?

I'm happy and proud to have been able to share a little of this journey with you.

Florence Mabileau will leave the Council of Europe on 31 May 2024, we would like to express our sincere gratitude for her invaluable contribution to the Pompidou Group. Her departure marks the end of an era, and we will deeply miss her exceptional leadership and unwavering commitment to our mission.