

## **The Pompidou Group role in integrating a gender dimension of drug policies**

The Co-operation Group to Combat Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in Drugs (the Pompidou Group) is an intergovernmental body formed in 1971. Since 1980 it has carried out its activities within the framework of the Council of Europe. Thirty seven countries are now members of this European multidisciplinary forum which allows policy makers, professionals and experts to exchange information and ideas on a whole range of drug misuse and trafficking problems. Its mission is to contribute to the development of multidisciplinary, innovative, effective and evidence-based drug policies in its member states. It seeks to link policy, practice and science.

The Pompidou Group, perceived as a pioneer in Europe regarding the integration of the gender dimension into drug policies, has always called for better understanding of both gender specific differences.<sup>1</sup>

In Athens, in November 2013, the Permanent Correspondents, who are appointed by their governments to represent them within the Pompidou Group, welcomed the initiative by Italy, namely the Department for Anti-Drug Policies Presidency of the Council of Ministers, of a gender-specific project to be funded on an Italian voluntary contribution.

The Pompidou Group decided to launch a gender-specific project analysing gender related problems to addiction among Pompidou Group member States, former Pompidou Group Member States and MedNET (PG network of cooperation in the Mediterranean Region) countries covering Europe and the Mediterranean Region.

Already in 2001, the Pompidou Group contributed partly on the subject with a study on the sensible use of benzodiazepines and the following CND Resolution 44/13 - Contribution to the appropriate use of benzodiazepines in 2001.<sup>2</sup>

In January 2014, Ms Elisabetta Simeoni, Permanent Correspondent for Italy and Gender Equality Rapporteur for the Pompidou Group within the framework of the Council of Europe 's Gender Equality Strategy which aims at moving from legal equality to real equality, agreed to focus first on the following topic : **The Gender Dimension of Non-Medical-Use of Prescription Drugs.**

The nomination of experts took place within a few weeks. The experts were then given a few months to reply to the survey. Marilyn Clark, presented the draft report in a conference in Roma in September 2014 opened by Counsellor Attorney Patrizia de Rose, General Manager, Department for Anti-Drug Policies, Presidency of the Council of Ministers and attended by the researchers from the countries which had participated in the study as well as UNICRI and EMCDDA.

During the 16th Pompidou Group Ministerial Conference in November 2014, the Media expressed a strong interest in this first study on the gender dimension of the Non-Medical Use of Prescription Drugs (NMPUD) in the Mediterranean Region and in Europe.

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<sup>1</sup>The gender dimension of drug policies was first discussed at the 1984 Ministerial Conference of the Pompidou Group

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.unodc.org/documents/commissions/CND-Res-2000-until-present/CND-2001-Session44/CND-Resolution-44-13.pdf>