

# O GRUPO POMPIDOU CELEBRA O SEU CINQUENTENÁRIO EM MOMENTO DE AUMENTO DO CONSUMO DE DROGAS NA EUROPA



Estrasburgo – O Grupo de Cooperação do Conselho de Europa sobre Drogas e Dependências (Grupo Pompidou) assinalará os seus 50 anos no próximo dia 28 de outubro, em Paris, no Centro Pompidou, com um evento que fará uma retrospectiva da sua história e sucessos, ao mesmo tempo que reafirmará a importância de colocar os direitos humanos no centro das políticas de drogas.

A celebração ocorre num cenário de aumento do consumo de drogas em França e noutras partes do mundo, particularmente após a crise da COVID. Por exemplo, o uso de crack, ganhou recente visibilidade, colocando muitos desafios em matéria de segurança e saúde.

O Grupo Pompidou, que recebeu o nome do antigo Presidente Francês que esteve na origem da sua criação, disponibiliza instrumentos para apoiar os decisores políticos na implementação de medidas eficazes para reduzir o tráfico de drogas, tratar melhor os distúrbios associados ao uso de substâncias e para abordar o impacto social negativo deste fenómeno.

Da descriminalização à utilização de salas de consumo assistido, muitos Estados Membros do Grupo Pompidou estão a adotar medidas para abordar a dependência de drogas como um problema de saúde e não como um crime.

A este respeito, o lema do Grupo Pompidou é “Os direitos humanos no centro das políticas de droga”. A título de exemplo, em julho passado, organizou conjuntamente com a cidade de Estrasburgo e a Associação Ithaque, que coordena a sala de consumo assistido Argos em Estrasburgo, um simpósio sobre “Salas de consumo assistido de baixo risco na Europa: manter a dinâmica face aos grandes desafios do século XXI”.

“Saudamos esta nova abordagem centrada nos direitos humanos que coloca a dignidade dos indivíduos no centro das atenções, juntamente com medidas para promover a saúde pública, combater a discriminação e o estigma e prevenir o crime organizado”, afirmou a Secretária-Geral do Conselho da Europa Marija Pejčinović Burić.

Com os seus peritos em política de drogas, o Grupo Pompidou é uma plataforma que promove a partilha de experiências entre os seus Estados

membros. Avalia a eficácia das várias iniciativas, para evidenciar, por exemplo, até que ponto as salas de consumo assistido reduzem os principais riscos de transmissão de doenças causadas por consumo endovenoso em condições não higiénicas; previnem mortes relacionadas com drogas (por overdose); e referenciar os consumidores de maior risco para unidades de tratamento ou outros serviços de saúde e acompanhamento social.

Este ano, o seu mandato foi alargado para abranger comportamentos aditivos relacionados com substâncias lícitas (como o álcool e o tabaco) e novas formas de dependência (como jogos de azar e as apostas online). As intervenções de abertura serão proferidas pela Secretária-Geral do Conselho da Europa, Marija Pejčinović Burić, pelo Ministro Húngaro dos Negócios Estrangeiros e Comércio e Presidente do Comité de Ministros do Conselho da Europa, Péter Szijjártó, pelo Secretário de Estado Adjunto e da Saúde de Portugal, António Lacerda Sales, e por um representante do governo francês.

Por ocasião deste evento em Paris, o Grupo Pompidou irá homenagear os vencedores do “European Drug Prevention Prize 2021” (10ª edição), um prémio atribuído a projetos de prevenção de drogas que envolvam jovens na sua conceção, implementação e avaliação.

Desde 1971, o Grupo Pompidou - que se tornou a referência internacional em matéria de inclusão dos direitos humanos nas políticas de drogas - tem desenvolvido muitas iniciativas, incluindo a “International Drug Policy Academy” (2020), o programa sobre drogas nas prisões (2012), o “Executive Training” (desde 2009), a rede MedNET – Rede mediterrânica de cooperação em matéria de droga e dependência (2006) e a criação do Grupo Aeroportos (1995).

O Grupo Pompidou é composto por 41 Estados Membros, incluindo três países não europeus (Marrocos, Israel e México). A Ucrânia notificou recentemente o Secretário-Geral do Conselho da Europa da sua adesão e em Janeiro de 2022 tornar-se-á o 42º membro do Grupo.





## António Lacerda Sales, Deputy Minister for Health of Portugal, on the Celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the Pompidou Group

Unfortunately, due to the process of discussion of the State Budget for 2022, I cannot be in person at the ceremony.

However, it is my great honour to participate virtually in this event celebrating the anniversary of the Pompidou Group and to express my congratulations for the 50 years of achievements in the international action addressing global drugs-related threats. It is now, I believe, the right moment to applaud the many accomplishments, while considering the challenges we still have ahead of us.

Created in 1971, on the initiative of the then French President Georges Pompidou, as an European cooperation framework to fight against drug abuse and drug trafficking, the Pompidou Group has developed into a key international player which promotes a multidisciplinary, evidence-based and humanistic approach of drug policies, in line with the values of the Council of Europe.

It has been instrumental in creating a platform for debate, exchange of knowledge and cooperation between countries, civil society and academia in order to protect health and promote human rights. By linking policy, research and innovation, it provided for a common ground to professionals, experts, researchers and policy decision makers, to develop improved and more humane drug policies.

In this line, one of the events marking the 50th Anniversary was the symposium "Low-risk drug consumption rooms in Europe: maintaining the momentum in the face of the major challenges of the 21st-century", organised last July in Strasbourg. It was a momentum to discuss the benefits of supervised drug consumption facilities namely their contribution to reduce the harm that drug use causes to the health, social wellbeing and security of individuals, communities and societies. In Portugal we have been promoting the opening of supervised drug consumption facilities as an integrated component of low-threshold services offered within drug treatment systems.

An important step towards the future was the adoption of the revised statute by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, on 16 June 2021. This new approach meets the required by the "Stavanger Declaration", adopted in November 2018, which instructed the Permanent Correspondents to launch the process of revision of the Group mandate, operation and working methods, in order to bring the statutory documents in line with the developments of the drugs phenomenon.

Outcome of a two years participative and inclusive process of consultations among the 41 members of the Group, international organizations, experts and civil society organizations, an important substantive realignment

of the new statute is the extension of the Group's mandate to include addictive behaviours related to licit substances (such as alcohol or tobacco) and new forms of addictions (such as internet, gambling and gaming). The revised statute would also strengthen the focus on the respect and promotion of human rights, while reaffirming the need for a multidisciplinary approach and the effective link of policy, practice and science.

Portugal also welcomes the new opportunities offered by the revised statute and by the EU Drugs Action Plan, adopted in June 2021 under the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the EU, to strengthen cooperation between the Pompidou Group and the European Union.

Allow me to thank the Chair of the Permanent Correspondents, Dr. João Goulão, for his leading role of the process towards the adoption of the new statute and the Executive Secretary of the Pompidou Group, Mr. Denis Huber, for his crucial contribution to this landmark achievement.

As Presidency, we have been concentrating our efforts in the implementation of the 2019-2022 Work Programme under the title "Sustainable drug policies respectful of human rights". During the last three years, the Pompidou Group successfully continued implementing its permanent and ad-hoc activities contributing to the priorities of the current Work Programme. Apart from the adoption of the revised statute, I would like to highlight the elaboration of an

important Human Rights Self-Assessment Tool, which continues the Group's ground-breaking work on drug policies and human rights in Europe.

Launched in 2020 at the initiative of the Portuguese Presidency, with this new self-assessment tool the Pompidou Group seeks to address the challenge of practically assessing human rights in drug policy. By linking key topics to human rights standards and more specific probing questions, its aim is to provide a practical framework to investigate and assess the human rights implications of drug laws, policies and practices. It is an honour for Portugal to chair the expert group entrusted with the elaboration of the tool, due to conclude its mandate in December 2022.

At this stage I would like to highlight some of the achievements of the current Work Programme:

- The launch of the International Drug Policy Academy last year, which is an important milestone consolidating the capacity building activities of the Pompidou Group
- The setting up a 'Support Network for Professionals' within the activity 'Responding to Drug Related Challenges for Refugees, Migrants and IDPS'
- The elaboration of the European Handbook on General Aviation
- The publication on 'Human Rights and people who use drugs in 17 Med-NET countries
- The signature of the supplementary arrangement to the existing Memorandum of Understanding between the Council of Europe and Organisation of American States which reinforced the collaboration with the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission, our partner institution within the Organisation of American States.

Of course, there is so much more to say and highlight. But it is not yet time of making stock of the results achieved. The current work programme is still underway, we have one more year to go. It is with great honour that we will present the results of our four years of Presidency during next year Ministerial Conference.

Portugal joined the Pompidou Group in January 1980 and since then has participated actively on its activities, holding the Presidency for the first time from 1997 to 2000. In 2000, when Portugal organized the Ministerial Conference, a new national approach to drugs phenomenon was in place following the adoption of the First National Drugs Strategy, a landmark in the national drug policy which included the proposal of decriminalisation of the use and possession for personal use of all drugs, below defined quantities.

Decriminalisation is the most known component of our policy, but I must stress that it's only one of the elements of a comprehensive and integrated

approach that includes prevention, treatment, harm reduction and social reintegration. At the same time, we reaffirmed the commitment on supply reduction and related measures, including law enforcement, money laundering and judicial cooperation and resources were directed from the prosecution of drug users to criminal networks which promote drugs trafficking.

Over the past 20 years, Portugal has been implementing an integrated and comprehensive drug policy, grounded in the principles of humanism and pragmatism. As Presidency, we aimed at promoting the exchange of lessons learned and knowledge of this public health centred approach, entirely in line with respect for human rights so valued by the Council of Europe and the Pompidou group.

Last but not least, it is my great pleasure to invite you all to attend the 18th Ministerial Conference, to take place in December 2022 in Lisbon.



## João Goulão, Chair of the Permanent Correspondents of the Pompidou Group

The process of adopting a revised statute for the Pompidou Group started almost 3 years ago, with the decision taken, at the end of November 2018, at the Ministerial Conference in Stavanger (Norway). When adopting their final declaration, the Ministers decided to launch a process of revision of the Group's mandate, functioning and working methods, in order to better reflect the current evolution of drug policy and the challenges to be met at national and international levels.

At the time, the Resolution that set out the mission and objectives of the Pompidou Group dated back to March 1980, when it was integrated into the institutional framework of the Council of Europe (with 11 participating States). This founding Resolution reflected the approach adopted when the Group was created in 1971 (on the initiative of Georges Pompidou) and had remained unchanged since then, even though the drug phenomenon and the way it is understood and dealt with have evolved considerably - as has the number of Pompidou Group member States: from 7 in 1971 to 39 at the end of 2018 (and 41 today, even 42 with the imminent accession of Ukraine).

The decision taken in Stavanger was endorsed by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe at the end of January 2019, thus allowing the process to be officially launched. We had a clear and ambitious objective: to have the Committee of Ministers adopt a Resolution including a new Statute for the Pompidou Group on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of its creation in 2021.

What happened afterwards is now part of history. I don't have time to share with you all the details (we may still be sitting here together this evening if I did so), but I will just recall the time schedule we have followed : two years of in-depth discussions within the Permanent Correspondents (from February 2019 to November 2020); wide-ranging consultations held in paral-

lel with our member (and interested non-member) states and with our main international partners, including civil society ; five months (from January to June 2021) of intense diplomatic negotiations within the relevant Rapporteur Group of the Committee of Ministers, dealing with social and health issues. And finally the unanimous adoption of the revised statute by the Committee of Ministers, on 16 June 2021.

This has been of course a major step, and it is for sure the main highlight of the celebration of the Pompidou Group's 50th Anniversary, as already mentioned by other speakers earlier this morning. The Portuguese presidency is proud of this achievement, and I want to thank all our member states for their constructive attitude and their spirit of compromise, which made this result possible. A special recognition should also be given to our Executive Secretary for his crucial role in the achievement of this landmark, closely working with the Presidency all along this process.

Let me share with you now the main highlights of the revised statute : Reaffirming the Group's multidisciplinary approach, which has been its major characteristic since its creation.

Extending the Group's mandate to include issues related to addictions and addictive behaviours linked to licit (and not only illicit) substances, but also to non-substance addictions (e.g., Internet gaming or gambling).

Priority focus on the respect and promotion of human rights in the design, adoption and implementation of drug policies.

Strengthening the identity of the Pompidou Group as an integral part of the Council of Europe by creating (or reinforcing) synergies with other relevant entities of the Organisation.

Highlighting the added value that the Group offers to its member states. Strengthening its co-operation with international partners, including civil society.

Opening the possibility for the European Union to become a member of the Pompidou Group.

The adoption of the revised statute by the Committee of Ministers had an immediate effect: the official name of the Pompidou Group is now "Council of Europe International Co-operation Group on Drugs and Addictions". In the longer term, it opens up new perspectives for the Group and provides it with an ambitious political and legal framework on which to base its development in the years and decades to come.

With its revised status, the Pompidou Group also strengthens its relevance and its attractiveness to enlarge to new member states. A first very important step has been taken with the accession of Ukraine, which was officially notified on 31 August 2021. The Pompidou Group will thus have 42 member states as of 1 January 2022, and it is hoped that other countries (either members or non-members of the Council of Europe) will join soon. We have a special hope of course that our five former members, which left the Group a decade ago, will be among them.

Today is a day of celebration, and we are grateful to the Pompidou Centre to host our 50th Anniversary event in such a prestigious setting. There can indeed be no better place to pay tribute to the memory of the former French President, who gave his name to both our Group and this beautiful Centre.

Thank you all for your attention and enjoy the lunch.



*Prêmio Europeu de Prevenção de Drogas: projetos vencedores da Bélgica, Polônia e Lituânia*