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Lisbon declaration

Adopted at the 18th Ministerial Conference of the Council of Europe Pompidou Group

We, the Ministers participating at the 18th Ministerial Conference of the Council of Europe Pompidou Group in Lisbon, Portugal, on 13 and 14 December 2022:

- reaffirm our support to the Pompidou Group, the Council of Europe international cooperation group on drugs and addictions, as a platform for dialogue and cooperation in the field of drug and addiction policies and a bridge between countries in Europe at large and beyond;
- recognize the important work done and the results achieved over the last four years under the leadership of the Portuguese Presidency and Polish Vice-Presidency, with the support and cooperation of all its members;
- welcome the accession of Armenia, Georgia and Ukraine, which brought the Pompidou Group to a 42 country membership in January 2022;
- fully support the decision taken by the Committee of Ministers in March 2022 to end the Russian Federation membership in the Council of Europe, and subsequently in the Pompidou Group, bringing its membership back to 41;
- express our strong support to Ukraine, the Pompidou Group's newest member, and our full solidarity with its people faced with the tragic consequences of a war which affects the whole of Europe;
- welcome the commitment shown by the Council of Europe member states, which accepted to financially compensate the loss of the contribution of the Russian Federation to the Organization's budgets, thus allowing its entities (including the Pompidou Group) to continue their important work;
- recall the obligations of States under the United Nations and the Council of Europe Conventions to protect human rights and fundamental freedoms, in particular the right to life and human dignity, the right to enjoy the highest attainable standards of health, the prohibition of any type of discrimination as well as the protection of all people, in particular children, from drugs and addictions;
- express our gratitude to the Pompidou Group members (France, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Switzerland) or non-members (Spain) which helped to finance the Group's activities through voluntary contributions between 2019 and 2022.

** This version takes into account the discussions held within the Bureau on 23 September 2022 and subsequent comments sent by PCs.*

We welcome in particular:

- the adoption of the Pompidou Group revised statute in June 2021 by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, which constituted the major highlight of the Group's 50th Anniversary celebration and makes it fit for the future not least by extending its mandate to addictions;
- the strong focus on human rights that was mainstreamed into all the Group's activities and led to the creation of an innovative human rights self-assessment tool, in line with the Council of Europe core mission and our Conference's motto "Human rights at the heart of drug and addiction policies";
- the continued expansion of the Mediterranean Cooperation Network (MedNET), which celebrated its 15th Anniversary in 2021 and welcomed Spain in 2019 and Slovenia in 2022 as new participants ;
- the creation of the International Drug Policy Academy in 2020;
- the pioneering work of the Pompidou Group during the Covid-19 crisis to set up an online platform giving a voice to people to share experiences for best possible delivery of services under challenging conditions.

We acknowledge the relevance and concrete results of other Pompidou Group activities, both permanent and ad hoc, including the executive training on drug policy, the dialogue and cooperation among airport, police and customs authorities, the international network on precursor control, the expert group on drugs on-line, the South-East Europe cooperation network, the criminal justice and prisons programme, and its innovative work on gender, children and migrants' issues.

The international context we operate in

70% of outbreaks of diseases to which the World Health Organization (WHO) responds, occur in fragile and in conflict-related contexts. Global increases in problems of drugs and addictions, as predicted by the WHO, reflect and contribute to international tensions, rooted in armed conflicts, climate changes, political disillusionment, reduced family and community cohesiveness, fragile living conditions, marginalization and increased crime. All this leads to the expectation that drugs and addictions will remain one of the main public health challenges in the future.

According to the European Monitoring Centre on Drugs and Drug Addictions (EMCDDA), we are now facing a more complex drug situation, characterised by high availability and greater diversity in patterns of drug consumption. Globalisation continues to drive innovation in drug trafficking and production, and international events have the potential to impact the drugs problems we face in Europe.

According to United Nations Organization on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), the conflict in Ukraine has an effect on existing drug trafficking routes and also exacerbates the instability that makes drug trafficking and manufacturing flourish. Previous experience shows conflicts can act as a magnet for synthetic drugs production.

The challenges we need to rise up to

While Internet offers new and positive possibilities, it can be a risk environment for developing behavioural addictions, such as excessive and compulsive video gaming, gambling, online

shopping, streaming or social networks use, which are often associated with other unhealthy behaviours, including the consumption of drugs and alcohol as well as physical inactivity.

There is a growing concern about an increased use of performance- and image-enhancing drugs. Widespread use of social media, in particular with visual enhancement filters, as well as use of algorithms is amplifying the phenomenon. This does not only concern currently illicit drugs, but also behaviours as well as psychoactive products.

Changes in consumption patterns and substances consumed call for adaption of public health approaches and responses. Such developments will need rethinking of public health approaches and responses.

The policy developments around the world with respect to internationally controlled narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, including information on cannabis developments, showed a variety of societal and political approaches whose impact and results will foster future drug policy debate.

Drug markets and organised crime are innovating all the time which results in increased number and availability of different substances, as well as their potency. Reducing trafficking and production will remain a key policy challenge, and increased international cooperation is needed to fight organised crime and trafficking everywhere, in particular on the waterways, in airports and on land.

The action we will undertake to make our societies fit and safe for the future

We reaffirm our commitment to fulfill the Pompidou Group mission, focusing on:

- A public health and human rights centred approach to more effective and humane responses to drugs and addictions and related disorders;
- Exploring strategies to address addictions related to the use of communication and information technologies and applications;
- Avoiding overlap of work with other actors in the field and finding synergies in cooperating with international partner organisations, in particular EMCDDA, WHO, UNODC and CICAD with whom the Pompidou Group has cooperation arrangements;
- Achieving further synergy effects and increasing visibility and relevance by engaging with and contributing to related activities of other Council of Europe entities, notably on issues concerning health in prison, children and other vulnerable groups, information society, money laundering and cybercrime;
- Addressing human rights, gender and civil society participation as transversal aspects in all Pompidou Group's activities;
- Enhancing capacity building activities that, where appropriate, may be implemented by the newly created International Drug Policy Academy to provide added value;
- Continuing the regional sustainable networks such as the Mediterranean network (MedNET), the Criminal Justice and Health in Prisons Programme and the South-East Europe Cooperation.

We mandate the Pompidou Group to implement the ambitious work programme we adopted for the period 2023-2025, in line with the priorities set up by the Committee of Ministers, by :

- (i) promoting sustainable drug and addiction policies in conformity with human rights;

- (ii) safeguarding democratic societies by addressing addictions that impact human autonomy;
- (iii) protecting the rights of persons belonging to vulnerable and risk groups with drug use and addiction problems, as well as
- (iv) reducing the availability of illicit drugs and preventing the diversion of precursors.

In implementing the work programme:

- COVID-19 adaptations and lessons learned will serve as a basis to improve drug-related services, accessibility and coverage, as well as being prepared for new health systems challenges;
- Government response to drug trafficking on the internet will be improved by forging public/private partnerships with internet service providers, tech companies, shipping and mailing companies;
- Stakeholders from civil society, research and the public sector should be involved in the design process of cost-effective prevention and risk reduction measures;
- A special attention should be dedicated to prevent further increases in the number of people suffering from internet addiction, online gambling, and gaming disorders.

We encourage governments to promote and further develop a meaningful co-operation and dialogue with civil society organizations, the scientific community, and other actors in the development and implementation of policies, programmes, projects and activities. This will be reflected throughout the implementation of the new work programme.

We entrust Italy and Switzerland, as the Pompidou Group's new Presidency and Vice-Presidency, to provide guidance and leadership in implementing the Pompidou Group new work programme, with the support of all its member states and the assistance of the Secretariat.

We call on the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to continue to provide the Pompidou Group with the necessary funding for its activities during the period 2023-2025, and we encourage all members which have the capacity to do so to provide additional resources through voluntary contributions.

We commit our relevant public authorities to actively participate in the Pompidou Group's activities and to make the best use of the Group's products and outputs with a view to create a significant impact on society.