

## **Thematic session: 50 years of Pompidou Group History (11h00-12h30)**

### **“The revised statute and the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary” – João Goulão, Chair of the Permanent Correspondents of the Pompidou Group**

Distinguished speakers and guests,

Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is an honour to be here as Chair of the Pompidou Group's Permanent Correspondent to present before you the revised statute.

Let me start by congratulating the Minister of Internal Affairs of Ukraine for the accession of his country that will be off January 2022 the 42nd member State of the Pompidou Group.

Also, let me address a warm salute to the previous speakers of this session, former Chairs and Vice Chairs of our Group as well as former Executive Secretaries, to Alexis Goosdell, Director of the EMCDDA and to my dear friend Denis Huber, our Executive Secretary.

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 parallel 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 50<sup>th</sup> 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 50<sup>th</sup> 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.