

Press Release

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Pompidou Group adopts "six-platform" anti-drug abuse programme, with focus on youth involvement

Strasbourg, 29.11.2006 – The Council of Europe's Pompidou Group – created in 1971 to combat drug abuse and illicit drug trafficking at the suggestion of the late French President Georges Pompidou – transferred its three-year chairmanship from the Netherlands to Poland (Spain becoming vice-president), with a new "six platform" programme and focus on young people.

In her speech to ministers at the opening of the Strasbourg conference for the 35 Pompidou Group member states (27-28 November), Council of Europe Deputy Secretary General Maud de Boer-Buquicchio stressed that "young people should not only be considered as a target, but also as an actor of successful prevention." She pointed out that "this approach is fully in line with the Council of Europe programme of *Building a Europe for and with children*, which is designed to promote policies not only for children, but with their active participation."

Putting individuals and their place in society at the centre of the drug policy debate is a theme running through many Pompidou Group activities. This is most evident in the expanding work on the ethical issues raised in many areas of drug programmes.

Recent developments were introduced for each of the six platforms in the fight against drug abuse and trafficking – prevention, treatment, ethics, airports, research and criminal justice – including the imminent launch of an online data base of European research on drugs.

Other issues, such as the problems women face in the context of prevention and treatment of drug abuse, were also raised: "Women may be particularly vulnerable for a number of social, economic and biological reasons and therefore require additional and specific attention," the Deputy Secretary General said. "Statistics show that many amongst them are not seeking counselling and treatment because of the fear of losing custody over their children."

The conference welcomed the increased collaboration with other international bodies active in drugs, especially the new joint actions with the European Union launched under the auspices of the current Finnish EU presidency, such as the network of local experiences in inter-service coordination among police, social and health services.

The Pompidou Group's ministerial conference is organised once every three years by the country that holds the presidency. In its 35th year of operation, it provides a multidisciplinary Europe-wide forum, allowing policy-makers, professionals and researchers to discuss and exchange information and ideas on both drug abuse and trafficking.

For more information, see <http://www.coe.int/pompidou>

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