

Press Release

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Taking a tough line on drug trafficking: Pompidou Group

Strasbourg, 03.11.2010 – The Council of Europe's [Pompidou Group](#) welcomed ministers and officials from some 50 countries in and outside of Europe to step up cooperation in the fight against drug trafficking and drug abuse.

The Pompidou Group – a multidisciplinary forum that focuses on drug policy – elected its new president for a four-year term, Etienne Afaire, president of France's inter-ministerial mission against drug abuse ([MILDT](#)). "We need to combat criminal groups that find effective means to distribute poisons in our societies," he said after his election.

Over 150 participants debated strategies to decrease supplies, coming from countries like Afghanistan and Columbia. They underscored the need to step up efforts to fight drug trafficking, such as the illicit trade of "drug precursors" – legal substances used to make illegal drugs.

In his welcoming statement to the conference, Council of Europe Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland said: "The Pompidou Group received a double mandate: it has to fight the abuse of drugs in our societies, but also the illicit trafficking of drugs. In today's terms, this means to be active both in the fields of demand reduction, but also in the field of supply reduction, and I would also add to that 'harm reduction'."

The conference marked the publication of several detailed reports, including a comprehensive survey of treatment systems in 22 European countries; a study of ethical questions emerging from new "drug-proofing" methods, such as "vaccination" against cocaine; a report on drug abuse in recreational settings.

Participants will decide on the Pompidou Group's work programme for 2011-2014 in a final declaration (to be published on the Council of Europe website).

In a ceremony today, successful drug prevention projects from Belgium ([RecceR Resilience Coaching](#)), Spain ([Energy Control](#)) and the United Kingdom ([Smoke and Mirrors](#)) won the prestigious [European Drug Prevention Prize](#), which is awarded every two years to drug prevention projects that involve young people, either in the development and implementation of activities, decision-making, project management and/or evaluation. Eighty applications from 26 European countries were considered as candidates.

The conference also saw the addition of new members to the Pompidou Group: Serbia and "The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia."

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