

Stockholm, Sweden, 26 April 2010

## Support letter for the 2011 ESPAD data collection

The European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD) is the largest school survey on substance use in the world. Data were first collected in 1995 by 26 countries. The three subsequent surveys, carried out at four-year intervals, have involved an increasing number of countries. In the most recent study, in 2007, data were collected in 35 countries, to which should be added five more countries that participated in an additional survey in 2008. This means that ESPAD data now exist for a very large majority of European countries.

The ESPAD project covers students who turn 16 during the year of data collection. ESPAD yields data that are comparable between countries. This means that ESPAD data can be used to compare substance use habits in one country with the habits of students in other European countries, for example in neighbouring countries, and to make any other comparisons that may be considered useful.

Participation in ESPAD provides an opportunity not only to make comparisons with the situation in other countries but also to look at trends over time. This means that ESPAD data – as a complement to other data – can be of use when evaluating national preventive measures. In recognition of this, it has been decided that data from ESPAD will be used in the evaluation of the EU Strategy on Alcohol. ESPAD data will also be available for the evaluation of the EU Drugs Action Plan.

Since each country may add country specific questions at the end of the standard questionnaire, ESPAD also provides an opportunity to gather data on issues of particular interest at the national level.

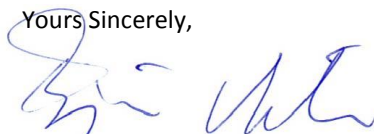
Another reason for the importance of participating in ESPAD is that the data are gathered in a database, which constitutes a unique source of data for research purposes. This makes it possible for ESPAD researchers – as well as other researchers – to carry out comparative studies or test hypotheses in order to produce new knowledge that may give us a better understanding of young people's use of various substances.

**The fifth ESPAD data collection will take place in 2011** and preparations are already in full swing. To make the 2011 survey as successful as the previous ones, it is essential that the Principal Investigator or ESPAD Contact Person in each country obtains all the support necessary for participation.

ESPAD cooperates with the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) in Lisbon, and with the Pompidou Group at the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. However, each country has to provide the resources necessary to carry out the survey. Your active support for the 2011 ESPAD data collection in your country would therefore be highly appreciated.

If you would like more information, you are very welcome to visit the ESPAD website at [www.espad.org](http://www.espad.org). You are of course also welcome to contact the Principal Investigator or ESPAD Contact Person in your country, or the undersigned ESPAD Coordinators.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Björn Hibell'.

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