



Cooperation Group to Combat Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking in Drugs

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Pompidou Group position statement on the value of the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD)

The European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD) is an initiative dating back to 1995, which provides data on alcohol, tobacco and drug use among the 15-16 year old students across the European continent. The methodology employed allows comparisons between countries and the tracking of trends in substance use among youth over time. In 2011, the fifth data collection will allow countries which have participated from the start to review these trends for their country and allows new countries to get a first overview of the attitudes and use of drugs among their young people.

Since the very start, the Pompidou Group of the Council of Europe has been the first international organisation to support the initiative of the "Swedish Council for Information on Alcohol and other Drugs" (CAN) to start a collaborative research project to simultaneously perform school surveys on alcohol and other drugs, using a methodology developed and piloted by Pompidou Group experts. Since then, the Pompidou Group has funded the participation of researchers from Central and Eastern European countries. Since 2008, the Mediterranean Network of the Pompidou Group (MedNET) promotes the ESPAD methodology in the Mediterranean Region and adapts it to the context of these countries. This resulted in nation-wide surveys being conducted in Lebanon and Morocco in 2009 (MedSPAD).

In 2005, in line with its mission of promoting the interaction between policy, research and practice, the Pompidou Group undertook an assessment of the impact of ESPAD amongst 28 of its Member States in which ESPAD had been carried out. The overwhelming majority of them expressed the view that the ESPAD results were taken into account in the formulation of their drug policies.

The Pompidou Group therefore continues to support the collection of comparable data through national school surveys and considers the ESPAD methodology as an appropriate instrument to do so. The Pompidou Group therefore strongly encourages stakeholders to participate in the implementation of ESPAD as a means to understand drug use among youth in Europe.

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