

Press Release

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Pompidou Group supports report on drug use among European youth: fall in cigarette smoking but small continuous increase of heavy episodic drinking

Strasbourg, 26.03.2009 - A multi-national study of tobacco, alcohol and illicit drugs use amongst 15-16 year-old European students was released today as part of the European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs (ESPAD), supported by the Council of Europe's drug abuse policy body – the Pompidou Group (*).

"Being the most detailed international study of drinking, smoking and illicit drug use amongst European students, the report is a unique tool which provides decision-makers with a clear understanding of the problem and helps to shape their anti-drug policies," said Patrick Penninckx, Executive Secretary of the Pompidou Group.

Trend developments over the 12 years of the ESPAD project indicate a fall in smoking in a majority of the countries. The situation is more or less unchanged as regards alcohol use in the past 12 months and the past 30 days. On the other hand, heavy episodic drinking shows a small but continuous increase throughout the period. Use of illicit drugs is still dominated by cannabis use. Four out of the six countries that had the highest prevalence for cannabis in 2003 show a decline in 2007, and not a single country displays an increase for recent use of cannabis. The overall impression regarding illicit drug use is that the upward trend between 1995 and 2003 now has come to a halt, with a slightly lower figure in 2007 than in 2003.

The survey, repeated every fourth year, aims to monitor the trends of the adolescent substance use in European countries and to compare trends between countries. This includes the mapping of differences and the monitoring of trends for policy purposes as well as the scientific study of the context, predictors and consequences of adolescent substance use.

The content of the report is based on standardised country reports and datasets delivered to the coordinators and the database manager. It presents the detailed country-specific data and findings regarding the long-term trends based on data collected from more than 100, 000 students from 35 countries.

Nine key variables were selected to give an overview of the 2007 results per country: consumption of any alcoholic beverage during the past 12 months, having been drunk during the past 12 months, alcohol volume (100% alc.) consumed on the latest drinking day, cigarette smoking during the past 30 days, lifetime use of marijuana or hashish (cannabis), lifetime use of any illicit drug other than cannabis, lifetime use of inhalants, lifetime use of non-prescribed tranquillisers or sedatives and lifetime use of alcohol together with pills in order to get high.

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(*) The [Co-operation Group to Combat Drug Abuse and illicit Trafficking in Drugs](#) (more commonly known as the Pompidou Group) currently has [35 member states](#): Austria, Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom. The European Commission is also a member.

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The report is available at <http://www.espad.org/espad-reports>

The ESPAD project began in 1994 with the assistance of the Pompidou Group and the Swedish Government. The first report was published in 1995 and today sees the publishing of the fourth report which is also supported by the Swedish National Institute of Public Health and the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) in Lisbon.

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For county-specific question please refer to [List of National Principle Investigators](#)

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