

Preface

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Protecting the health and wellbeing of children and young people is one of the highest priorities of the Northern Cyprus Prime Minister's Anti Drug Commission. Effective prevention begins with reliable evidence. Sound policies and meaningful interventions must be informed by accurate, high quality research that enables us to understand emerging patterns of substance use and respond with confidence and responsibility.

The European School Survey Project on Alcohol and Other Drugs is one of the most respected international research programmes examining adolescent substance use. By implementing the ESPAD methodology in Northern Cyprus, our Commission committed to producing evidence that is scientifically rigorous, internationally comparable, and directly relevant to the needs of our country.

This publication represents the third consecutive annual implementation of the ESPAD study in Northern Cyprus. Our decision to conduct this research every year reflects a long-term commitment to establishing a sustainable national surveillance programme capable of monitoring trends, evaluating prevention efforts, identifying emerging challenges, and supporting evidence based policy development. Annual monitoring enables us to move beyond isolated observations and develop a clearer understanding of how adolescent substance use changes over time. The Commission remains committed to continuing this important work in the years ahead.

The success of a project of this scale depends upon strong scientific leadership and close collaboration between researchers, institutions, schools, and public authorities. Since the establishment of the ESPAD programme in Northern Cyprus, Dr. Zafer Bekiroğulları has served as Principal Investigator and Project Coordinator. Under his scientific leadership, the programme was developed into a nationally significant research initiative conducted according to internationally recognised scientific and ethical standards. His direction of

the project’s scientific, organisational, and operational components ensured the consistent delivery of reliable evidence capable of informing national prevention strategies and public policy.

I also wish to express my sincere appreciation to Professor Dr. Dr. (h.c.) Marilyn A. Huestis for her distinguished editorial leadership and scientific guidance, which made an invaluable contribution to the quality of this publication. My gratitude extends to Melis Yağmur Minas for her dedication throughout the project, to the staff of Dr. Zafer Bekiroğulları Psychological Services Ltd. for their professional and organisational support in implementing this research on behalf of the Commission, and to every member of the Northern Cyprus Prime Minister’s Anti Drug Commission whose commitment and professionalism contributed to the successful completion of this work.

Most importantly, I extend my heartfelt thanks to the school principals, teachers, parents, and students who participated in this research. Their willingness to contribute created a body of evidence that will support stronger prevention policies and promote the health and wellbeing of future generations.

It is my sincere hope that this publication serves as a valuable resource for researchers, policymakers, educators, healthcare professionals, and all organisations committed to protecting young people from substance related harm. The Northern Cyprus Prime Minister’s Anti Drug Commission remains committed to strengthening prevention through scientific research, national collaboration, and international partnership, ensuring that public policy continues to be guided by evidence and dedicated to the wellbeing of our society.

Teyfide Tecel Hatipoğlu

President

Northern Cyprus Prime Minister’s Anti Drug Commission

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