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**FINAL REPORT**

**SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION**

**April 2012**

The European Health & Fitness Association  
Rue Washington 40  
B-1050 Bruxelles  
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## Foreword

For the past three years EHFA (the European Health and Fitness Association) has been pursuing a strategy of professionalising the European fitness sector and a key aspect of this is the establishment of policies to support our position of social responsibility for the sector. These cover positive attitudes towards promoting healthy and active lifestyles, as well as informing and helping to control practices which are harmful to health and restrict inclusiveness.



It is not by accident that the title of this project is called Fitness Against Doping because this has been our position from the outset. What has been lacking in the past has been any real information or surveys on the prevalence of doping practices across Europe which has fully involved the fitness sector itself. Millions of citizens use fitness centres every day and we have some evidence that shows there is some doping taking place, but we just did not know or understand the extent until we undertook this ground-breaking piece of research and consultation.

The Fitness Against Doping project has been co-funded by the European Commission and we are grateful to them for their confidence and courage in supporting EHFA to undertake this project which has now become a unique piece of work in the field of amateur sport. Our project partners have worked with us in an impressive spirit of cooperation and they have shown real resolution in what many consider to be a most difficult area of work. The project, which has established broader parameters than other studies, has reviewed existing evidence, and collected over 10,000 survey results to build, for the first time, a picture of what is actually happening in fitness centres. There has been too much speculation and extended interpretation of other findings about the level of doping in fitness which has built perceptions without proper foundations. As a result of this project, however, we are now able to present its significant findings and to make specific recommendations which will challenge not only the fitness sector but many other agencies to come together in a lasting and coordinated network to help reduce levels of doping practices.

This report demonstrates that the fitness sector is committed to a position of real social responsibility and I commend its contents and recommendations. As President of EHFA I will ensure that we use every occasion and opportunity to promote the clear message that fitness is against doping.

Harm Tegelaars, President EHFA,  
Brussels, March 2011

Against Doping Project is grant-aided by the European Commission.  
This report represents the views of the author and not of the Commission.



## 1.1 Acknowledgements

The Fitness Against Doping project could not have been completed without the contributions of many organisations and individuals from the European health and fitness sector. Notable thanks must of course go to the project partners who have executed the project plan with the utmost commitment and professionalism; therefore we would like to extend our gratitude to the following partners and individuals:

- Cliff Collins, European Health and Fitness Association (EHFA)
- Herman Rutgers, European Health and Fitness Association (EHFA)
- Armando Moreira and Jose Júlio Vale Castro from the Portuguese Association of Academies and Gymnasiums (AGAP)
- Peter Angelov and Valentin Dragnev from the Bulgarian Association of Health and Fitness (BAHF)
- Jesper Bøgh Christensen and Morten Brustad from the Danish Fitness and Health Organisation (DFHO)
- Birgit Schwarze and Aileen Börner from the Arbeitgeberverband deutscher Fitness- und Gesundheits-Anlagen (DSSV)
- Dr. Dorota Kwiatkowska and Damian Gorczyca from Department of Anti-Doping Research, Polish National Institute of Sport (DADR)
- Dave Stalker, Stephen Wilson and Olivier Smith from the Fitness Industry Association (FIA)
- Dr. Ladislav Petrovic and Dr. László Zopcsák from the Hungarian Coaching Association and International Council for Coach education (HCA/ICCE)
- Mogens Kirkeby and Jacob Schouenborg from the International Sport and Culture Association (ISCA)
- Paul Eigenmann and Rebecca Stienstra from QualiCert

In designing and implementing the field research, there was expert assistance from Mike Hill of Leisure-net Solutions and website survey design and coordination by Robbie McGregor. The incisive review of the results and psychological interpretation into specific interventions and policy for future action, was developed by John Hattam and colleagues from Scintillate.

We would also like to acknowledge and thank those people and organisations who responded during the several rounds of consultation, their comments have helped shape the final recommendations in this report. We would also like to thank the EHFA Board for providing quality management and their overview throughout the project. In particular we must acknowledge the individuals involved in both the EHFA Standards Council under its chairmanship of Prof. Alfonso Jiménez.

Finally, we would like to thank the Sport Unit of the Directorate General for Education and Culture for the confidence and support they have given to EHFA to undertake this project that will now take the fitness sector forward to build a framework of action to encourage the promotion of health enhancing physical activity across Europe and a zero tolerance policy towards the use of doping substances.



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## 1.2 Abbreviations

**AAS** - Androgenic Anabolic Steroids

**ADD** - Anti-Doping Denmark

**AGAP** - Associação de Empresas de Ginásios e Academias de Portugal (Portuguese Fitness Association)

**DG EAC** - DG Education and Culture

**EHFA** - European Health and Fitness Association

**EMCDDA** - European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction

**EREPS** - European Register of Exercise Professionals

**ESPAD** - European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs

**FAD** - Fitness Against Doping project

**FINADA** - Finish Anti-Doping Association

**IAAF** - International Amateur Athletic Federation

**IDU** - Intravenous drug user

**LERF** - National Fitness Centre Certification in the Netherlands

**IOC** - International Olympic Committee

**NACE** - Nomenclature des ActivitesEconomiques

**NADA** - National Anti-Doping Association

**NADO** - National Anti-Doping Organisation

**NCD** - Non communicable disease

**NZVT** - Nederlands Zekerheidssysteem Voedingssupplementen Topsport

**PIED** - Performance and Image Enhancing Drug

**UKA** - UK Athletics Authority

**UKAD** - United Kingdom Anti-Doping Agency

**UNESCO** - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

**UNODC** - United Nations Office for Drugs and Crime

**WADA** - World Anti-Doping Agency

**WHO** - World Health Organisation

## 1.3 Project Introduction

### 1.3.1 Contextual Introduction

The European Health and Fitness sector is comprised of more than 40,000 health and fitness centres servicing an estimated 44m members with many more informal participants. The sector's globally recognised operators, world-leading equipment manufacturers and training providers, are all integral to the provision and promotion of the benefits of physical activity across the European Union.

Physical inactivity is now identified as the fourth leading risk factor for global mortality. Levels of physical inactivity are rising across Europe with major implications for the prevalence on non-communicable diseases (NCDs) and the general health of the population worldwide.<sup>1</sup> The levels of physical inactivity throughout Europe are estimated to cause 600,000 deaths and a loss of 5.3 million years of healthy life due to early mortality and disability every year.<sup>2</sup>

A key role and responsibility for the health and fitness sector is to promote health-enhancing physical activity (HEPA). This approach is consistent with the EU Guidelines on Physical Activity<sup>3</sup> and the World Health Organisation Global Recommendations on Physical Activity for Health<sup>4</sup>, which has called upon national governments to develop strategies to encourage higher levels of physical activity.

The European Commission commissioned the Eurobarometer survey on Sport and Physical Activity. The 2010 survey interviewed 26,788 European citizens and gauged the extent of participation in fitness activities in order to contribute to providing an evidence-based sports policy. Of the 87% of respondents that claimed to participate in physical activity, 11% of these did so within a fitness centre, and although up to half of respondents were not members of any form of sports or fitness centre, it was found that physical activity does take place in a wide range of formal settings across the EU.

A relatively high level of respondents asked about

why they engaged in physical activity, attributed their participation to a desire to improve their physical appearance, (24% EU-wide) improve physical performance (24% EU Wide) or control their weight (24% EU wide) as opposed to alternative responses such as “to be with friends” “to improve self-esteem”, “to develop new skills” “to relax” or “to have fun”. The most common responses were “to improve health” (61%) and “to improve fitness” (41%).

The presence of various different motivating factors for participating in physical activity is indicative of the varied and significant benefits which can be accrued from exercise. However, this spotlight on fitness has also led to an increase in unsubstantiated criticism in respect of the use of doping linked to physical activity. As the results of the above surveys demonstrate, the use of banned substances is in no way consistent with what the fitness sector is actually delivering or achieving. Nevertheless, these perceptions now exist and even if the allegations are unsubstantiated, there is potentially severe damage to the image of the sector, and of the professionals that work within it.

There is an inherent risk that the European fitness sector's ability to develop and integrate into other healthcare policies, strategies and the promotion of health enhancing physical activity, will be stunted and potentially jeopardised if the perception that doping practices are “widespread” is not challenged.

The European Health and Fitness Association (EHFA) has taken the responsibility for the sector to develop pan-European standards to train and qualify exercise professionals so the sector will have a technically competent workforce. These trainers need the knowledge and skills to deliver diverse supervised exercise covering, for example, exercise for adults, children and adolescents, for active ageing and increasingly with more specialist programmes alongside other healthcare professionals. This development is indicative of the sector's continued striving to professionalise itself and the desire to move away from its origins of bodybuilding and free-weight training towards a holistic approach to health and wellbeing. This project is consistent with



this aim and the knowledge and expertise of the exercise professionals will be key to the success of any proposed interventions.

### 1.3.2 Aims of the Project

In October 2010 the Commission called for proposals in the Preparatory Action in the Field of Sport (EAC/22/10) in the “Fight Against Doping”. The project application submitted by EHFA was successful and resulted in an Agreement with the Commission (EAC-2010-1283) for the Fitness Against Doping (FAD) project which started in January 2011.

The project worked to develop a coordinated European strategy to limit the use of doping substances in the fitness sector. There are 10 partners in the project together with EHFA, which are based in nine different European countries. The partners in this project are:

- AGAP - Portugal (Portuguese Fitness Association)
- BAHF - Bulgaria (Bulgarian Association of Health and Fitness )
- DFHO - Denmark (Danish Fitness and Health Organisation )
- DSSV - Germany (German Fitness Association)
- DADR - Poland (Department of Anti -Doping Research of Institute of Sport)
- FIA - UK ( Fitness Industry Association )
- Fit!vak - Netherlands ( Dutch Fitness Association)
- HCA & ICCE - Hungary (Hungarian Coaching Association & International Council for Coach Education) ISCA – Int/Denmark (International Sport and Culture Association)
- QUALICERT - Switzerland (Swiss Certification Body)

The project was divided into four main activities.

- Research into existing evidence of doping practices in amateur sport and fitness
- Field research by the partners into doping practices in their countries
- Reporting on findings and consultation
- Develop intervention strategies to effect reductions in any doping practices

The Fitness Against Doping (FAD) project’s core

aims is to challenge the preconceptions and existing perceptions which exist about doping in the fitness sector. It is integral to the continued success of the fitness sector that it proves itself to be transparent and to tackle allegations which have been levelled against it.

The focus of the project was to establish the prevalence of doping in three areas. The ensuing research included the following substances:

1) Performance and Image Enhancing Doping Substances (PIEDS) generally include:

- Anabolic Steroids – a group of synthetic hormones that promotes the storage of protein and the growth of tissue, sometimes used by athletes to increase muscle size
- Stimulants – a chemical agent that temporarily arouses or accelerates physiological or organic activity, such as Ephedrine, pseudoephedrine, amphetamines, and growth hormones

The majority of existing research into substance abuse within both elite sport and recreational activities, including fitness, has focused on the use of Androgenic Anabolic Steroids.

2) Food supplements include:

- Dietary supplements – a product that contains substances like vitamins, mineral, foods, botanicals, amino acids and is intended to supplement the usual intake of these substances. Examples include, testosterone boosters, weight loss products, creatine, vitamin C

Supplements may also include Vitamin C, Multi-vitamins, Magnesium, and skimmed milk products. Contamination identified in these examples is typically due to inadvertent cross- contamination within the manufacturing process, but also can be deliberately adapted to include otherwise banned substances.

### 3) Recreational drugs

- Any substance used with the intention of creating or enhancing recreational experience, these include, for example cocaine, ecstasy, and marijuana.

There has been very little investigation into high profile cases of recreational substance abuse within an elite or 'unorganised sport environment'.

The White Paper on Sport recognised that doping poses a threat to sport and calls on sport organisations "to develop rules of good practice to ensure that young sportsmen and sportswomen are better informed and educated in the issues of doping substances, prescription medicines which may contain them, and their health implications".<sup>5</sup>

Previous anti-doping research and international regulation has focused on elite sport, but it is suggested that amateurs are also making use of performance-enhancing drugs and this is of concern to the fitness industry.

The EU Anti-Doping Conference 2009 stated that in regards to doping there is no difference between professional sport and any other amateur sport and as such the fitness industry needs to rise to the challenge and to deal with this issue by establishing a socially responsible position.<sup>6</sup>

The Conference acknowledged that doping is not just a problem exclusively for sport in undermining principles of fair and open competition, but is also a matter of public concern because of the detrimental effect that doping has on the long-term health of the users. The FAD project set out to fill the current gap in the research and understanding around doping in the fitness industry and has provided advice, information and strategies for future action to mitigate and deal with evidenced problems.

Recognising that the fight against doping requires a coordinated transnational response, the project established a network of partners across Europe and with its other international organisations that had experience and knowledge in this field. The network has provided for the first time researched

information on the extent of doping and current anti-doping policies affecting the fitness industry.

Establishing the prevalence of doping in the European fitness industry required some primary data collection through quantitative and qualitative research. The Polish Institute of Sport Anti-Doping Research Centre, as a partner of the project, were tasked to develop the methodology to be used for the primary research.

The results of the survey have provided the evidence base for future targeted interventions within the industry and will start a network of best practice to further the fight against doping. The international partners of the project (ISCA and ICCE) provided examples and evidence of effective anti-doping practices and policies used in sport which are adapted for use by the fitness industry.

The interventions will combine to help educate and inform fitness operators, club owners, and national associations on effective practice. Policy has been developed on how to better educate our workforce in the area of anti-doping and of the threat to the health of those involved in taking doping substances.

The recommendations for where promotion can be improved and where the fitness sector could be better utilised are set out to address three main audiences identified by the research and all contained within the broad proposal for developing an anti-doping network which will coordinate activities and resources. The three main audiences are:

- The Commission
- Member State governments & agencies
- European fitness sector

The context of the project was further emphasised by the EU Communication on Sport in January 2011 which stated that "doping remains an important threat to sport. Use of doping substances by amateur athletes poses serious public health hazards and calls for preventative action, including in fitness centres. Doping preventions and doping sanctions remain within the remit of sport organisations and Member States. It encourages Member States to adopt and share national anti-

doping plans aimed at ensuring co-ordination among all relevant actors. There is a need for anti-doping rules and practices to comply with EU law in respecting fundamental rights and principles. The paper encourages the existing trend across EU Member States to introduce criminal law provisions against trade in doping substances”.<sup>7</sup>

The Communication concluded that it will “support transnational anti-doping networks, including networks focusing on preventive measures targeting amateur sport, sport for all and fitness”.

### 1.3.3 Project Methodology

The project was focused on 5 work packages:

#### Work Package 1 - Project Management, Quality Control and External Evaluation

The objective of this work programme was to ensure that the project met its objectives within budget and the scheduled timescales and that there was adequate reporting and monitoring of performance against project outcomes.

There were a total of nine meetings, 7 of which were meetings of the management group and two with all partners. The management group consisted of EHFA, the FIA, HCA, ISCA and DADR. The meetings took place on the dates below, and the minutes are available on request from the project manager.

#### Full Partner Meetings record

	Date	Type
1	25th January 2011	Management Group
2	28th February 2011	Management Group
3	3rd March 2011	Management Group
4	4th April 2011	Full Partner Meeting
5	19th July 2011	Management Group

	Date	Type
6	8th September 2011	Management Group
7	29th September 2011	Management Group
8	8th November 2011	Management Group
9	28th February 2012	Full Partner Meeting



*Full Partner Meeting – 4th April 2011, Brussels*

The final Anti-Doping Conference was held in Copenhagen in February 2012 where the project partners discussed the draft executive summary of the final report and finalised the recommendations which are found in this report



*The Fitness Against Doping Full Partner Meeting (prior to the final conference) in Copenhagen 28th February 2012.*

EHFA acted as the project manager and organised the technical, management and partner meetings to provide a forum for regular review of the work in progress. Berkley Associates were appointed as the external evaluators in September 2011 and have fed-back comments and information measuring progress against the project deliverables, programming and outcomes.

Each partner signed a sub-contract which explicitly detailed their obligations against the Administration, Operational handbooks the agreed dissemination strategy and detailed workplan.

### Work Package 2 - Project Communication, Website, Dissemination and Valorisation Strategy

The outcome of this work package has been to widen and maximise the impact of the project by disseminating and exploiting the project findings and outcomes. The strategy was built around a series of networks at both the European and National levels, the development of a website ([www.ehfa-programmes.eu](http://www.ehfa-programmes.eu)) and linking to the existing group of EHFA, EREPS and partner websites. The detailed dissemination strategy (see appendix) included a number of key activities and outcomes which are detailed in section 5 of this report.

Most notably there were 2 key events – the Brussels Summit on 8th November 2008 and the final conference in Copenhagen on 28th February. In between there was wide consultation of the interim findings which has contributed to the development of the policies and proposed interventions.

#### 4.3.3 Work Package 3 - Research on Anti-Doping Policies

The aim of this work package was to undertake the necessary analysis of secondary sources in order to identify the key stakeholders to gain a clearer understanding of the current anti-doping situation in the health and fitness industry and in the work of the broader sport sector, as well as to review existing strategies for mitigating doping practices.

This project brought together the strongest researchers in the European health and fitness sector with anti-doping experts, national anti-doping organisations, universities and law enforcement

agencies. The initial stage of work package 3 involved the project partners identifying key stakeholders in the project.

The second part of the research involved key project partners in undertaking desk-based research into the current anti-doping situation in the European health and fitness industry and broader sport sector (including wider international understanding).

The research examined doping prosecution statistics, research documents, government data and information from the health and fitness industry. There was further analysis of the national, transnational and international anti-doping policies with the aim of establishing the prominence of anti-doping initiatives. Information was collated and assessed in a systematic fashion to ensure consistency of approach.

The FIA was the responsible partner for the final research report combining the outcomes of Work package 3 and 4 to produce policy recommendations for consultation. The field research was used to support all recommendations as well as incorporating the lessons learned from the situational awareness mapping undertaking in work package 3.

WP3 Research Partner(s) for the research on existing information and strategies of doping prevalence in fitness, amateur sport and elite sport	Fitness Industry Association (FIA)
	Polish Institute of Sport Anti-doping Research Centre (DADR)
	International Council for Coach Education (ICCE) and Hungarian Coaching Association (HCA)
	International Sports and Culture Association (ISCA)

### Work Package 4 - Developing the role of the health and fitness sector in Anti-Doping

The Polish Institute for Sport Anti-Doping Research Centre (DADR) took the lead in designing the research methodology for the partners to use in the field research to provide statistically



significant results on the prevalence of doping in European health and fitness facilities. The method involved undertaking anonymous interviews and questionnaires of health and fitness centre members, exercise professionals and managers/owners of fitness facilities. It also required disaggregating the health and fitness sector into categories based upon, for example, the facilities offered such as free weight gyms on the one hand and health spas on the other.

Expert independent advice was also given by consumer research group Leisure-net Solutions Ltd who provided target numbers to achieve and the “lifestyle” context of the structure for the surveys.

The questionnaires and interviews also collected data on age, sex, gender, socio-economic grouping and plus the prevalence of doping use. DADR also examined the ethical implications of undertaking the research which is included in briefing to partners and is included in the appendix of this report.

All partners contributed to the methodology used to ensure consistency and support.

The analysis “framework” was developed to ensure that the data returned was examined in a consistent manner especially taking into account the complexity of the surveys being undertaken in 9 European languages. The interim report on the research findings of this work package formed the basis of the consultation following the Brussels Summit. Each of the partners took responsibility for undertaking the field research together with an independent agency overseeing the process to help establish credibility and objectivity.

### **Work Package 5 – Integrating Policy Recommendations**

The FAD project has provided the evidence and statistically significant findings to develop specific, targeted interventions and further action. It will be the legacy of the project that its findings will become the impetus of sustained action.

A principle outcome is the creation of a strong network developed between the partners of this

research project and the transfer of knowledge between partners and other interested stakeholders. EHFA in conjunction with the European Register of Exercise Professionals (EREPS), is committed to the promotion of a responsible and healthy lifestyle. The policy recommendations from this research shall form a central component in the development of European Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) in the health and fitness sector. EHFA in conjunction with EREPS will now promote CSR in the sector highlighting the role the industry can play in anti-doping, nutritional advice, preventing smoking and alcohol abuse and providing holistic preventative health benefits.

Following the final conference EHFA and the project partners published a commitment to a charter that will determine the role of the health and fitness sector in anti-doping and provide the context for policies and interventions in this report.

### **1.3.4 Variations in Delivery against original project plan**

There were no significant variations of the delivery of the project when reviewed against the original Agreement and stated objectives.

## References

- <sup>1</sup>World Health Organisation, 'Global recommendations on physical activity for health', World Health Organisation, 2010.
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- <sup>3</sup>EU Guidelines on Physical Activity 2009 - [http://ec.europa.eu/sport/news/eu-physical-activity-guidelines\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/sport/news/eu-physical-activity-guidelines_en.htm).
- <sup>4</sup>WHO Global Recommendations on Physical Activity for Health (2010) - [http://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/factsheet\\_recommendations/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/dietphysicalactivity/factsheet_recommendations/en/index.html)
- <sup>5</sup>White Paper on Sport - COM(2007) 391 final
- <sup>6</sup>EU Conference on Anti-Doping Organised by the European Commission Athens, Greece, 13 – 15 May 2009 [http://ec.europa.eu/sport/news/doc/athens\\_conf\\_conclusions\\_final\\_version\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/sport/news/doc/athens_conf_conclusions_final_version_en.pdf)
- <sup>7</sup>Developing the European Dimension in Sport COM (2011)

## The Project Partners:

**AGAP** - Portugal (Portuguese Fitness Asociación)

[www.agap.pt](http://www.agap.pt)

**BAHF** - Bulgaria (Bulgarian Association of Health and Fitness)

[www.bahf.bg](http://www.bahf.bg)

**DFHO** - Denmark (Danish Fitness and Health Organisation)

[www.dfho.dk](http://www.dfho.dk)

**DSSV** - Germany (German Fitness Association)

[www.dssv.de](http://www.dssv.de)

**DADR** - Poland (Department of Anti-Doping Research of Institute of Sport)

[www.insp.waw.pl](http://www.insp.waw.pl)

**FIA** - UK (Fitness Industry Association)

[www.fia.org.uk](http://www.fia.org.uk)

**Fit!vak** - Netherlands (Dutch Fitness Association)

[www.fitvak.com](http://www.fitvak.com)

**HCA & ICCE** - Hungary (Hungarian Coaching Association and International Council for Coach Education)

[www.magyaredzo.hu](http://www.magyaredzo.hu) & [www.icce.ws](http://www.icce.ws)

**ISCA** - Denmark (International Sport and Culture Association)

[www.isca-web.org](http://www.isca-web.org)

**QualiCert** - Switzerland (Swiss Quality Assurance Company)

[www.qualicert.ch](http://www.qualicert.ch)