

13 March 2017

English only

Commission on Narcotic Drugs**Sixtieth session**

Vienna, 13-17 March 2017

Item 6 of the provisional agenda*

Follow-up to the special session of the General Assembly on the world drug problem held in 2016, including the seven thematic areas of the outcome document of the special session**International Action Group on New Psychoactive Substances compilation report on UNGASS 2016 implementation: A summary of steps taken by International Action Group members to implement the recommendations on new psychoactive substances in the Outcome Document of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Drugs 2016 (General Assembly Resolution S-30/1), submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, in its capacity as Chair of the International Action Group on New Psychoactive Substances*****Summary*

The International Action Group on New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) is an informal network of over 30 Member States and international organizations that coordinates and drives the global response to these substances.

This report is a contribution from the International Action Group to the wider process of monitoring the implementation of the Outcome Document. Members of the group have been invited to contribute information on their work to implement the six Outcome Document recommendations on NPS.

This report does not reflect a joint position of the International Action Group, nor should it be considered a comprehensive collection of actions being taken to address NPS.

* E/CN.7/2017/1.

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**INTERNATIONAL
ACTION GROUP**
ON
**NEW
PSYCHOACTIVE
SUBSTANCES**

Compilation report

A summary of steps taken by International Action Group members to implement the recommendations on new psychoactive substances in the Outcome Document of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Drugs 2016 (General Assembly Resolution S-30/1)

March 2017

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Introduction

The International Action Group on New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) is an informal network of over 30 Member States and international organisations that coordinates and drives the global response to these substances.

In the Outcome Document of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on Drugs 2016 (General Assembly Resolution S-30/1), Member States agreed a series of substantive recommendations on NPS.

The priority now is to implement these recommendations and to monitor implementation. General Assembly Resolution 71/211 encouraged the Commission on Narcotics Drugs *“to include in its report to ECOSOC a section on the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of the Thirtieth UNGASS outcome document”*.

This report is a contribution from the International Action Group to the wider process of monitoring the implementation of the Outcome Document. Members of the group have been invited to contribute information on their work to implement the six Outcome Document recommendations on NPS.

This report does not reflect a joint position of the International Action Group, nor should it be considered a comprehensive collection of actions being taken to address NPS.

Implementation of the Outcome Document is an ongoing process. The International Action Group will update this report on an annual basis to ensure that the international community remains informed about the implementation of the NPS recommendations in the Outcome Document.

New Psychoactive Substances Outcome Document Recommendations

A comprehensive response

5(d) Continue to identify and monitor trends in the composition, production, prevalence and distribution of new psychoactive substances, as well as patterns of use and adverse consequences, and assess the risks to health and safety of individuals and society as a whole and the potential uses of new psychoactive substances for medical and scientific purposes, and on that basis to develop and strengthen domestic and national legislative, regulatory, administrative and operational responses and practices by domestic and national legislative, law enforcement, judiciary, social and welfare, educational and health authorities;

Legislative measures

5(e) Commit to implementing timely, scientific evidence-based control or regulatory measures within national legislative and administrative systems to tackle and manage the challenge of new psychoactive substances, and consider the use of interim steps while substances are under review, such as provisional measures of control, or make public health announcements, as well as share information and expertise on those measures;

International scheduling

5(f) Share relevant information with, as appropriate, and strengthen the capacity of the World Health Organization, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the International Narcotics Control Board and other relevant international and regional organizations to prioritize the review of the most prevalent, persistent and harmful new psychoactive substances and to facilitate informed scheduling decisions by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs;

Early warning systems and surveillance

5(g) Actively participate in early warning networks and promote the use of relevant surveillance lists and voluntary controls and the sharing of information through the International Narcotics Control Board, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Health Organization, within their respective mandates, and enhance bilateral, subregional, regional and international cooperation in the identification and reporting of new psychoactive substances and incidents involving such substances and, to that end, strengthen the use of national, regional and international established reporting and information exchange systems, such as, where appropriate, the early warning advisory on new psychoactive substances and the global Synthetics Monitoring: Analysis, Reporting and Trends (SMART) programme

of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and Project Ion of the International Narcotics Control Board;

Detection and identification

5(h) Enhance the capacity and effectiveness of national laboratories and promote national and regional cooperation among them, as appropriate, for the detection and identification of new psychoactive substances, including through the use of existing United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime reference standards and assistance activities;

Prevention and treatment

5(i) Strengthen domestic information-sharing and promote information exchange at the regional and international levels on effective prevention and treatment and related legislative measures in order to support the development of effective, scientific evidence-based responses to the emerging challenge of new psychoactive substances with regard to their adverse social and health consequences;

Brazil

A comprehensive response

The Government of Brazil, in accordance with its [National System for Drug Public Policies](#) (Law 11.343/1996) is taking the necessary steps to guarantee a broad involvement of its national institutions in the domestic and international discussions aiming at a balanced response to the challenge of new psychoactive substances. The first inter-institutional meeting including law enforcement, health and regulatory authorities specifically to discuss the state of the art and future steps about NPS-related issues was held in February 2017.

In the international level, the Brazilian Government has been actively participating in initiatives dedicated NPS issues, such as the International Conferences on Precursor Chemicals and New Psychoactive Substances, the Regional Meeting on NPS in the Western Hemisphere (Americas) and the International Action Group on NPS. During the 59th Session of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs (March 2016), the Government of Brazil sponsored a side event to debate with regional partners the challenges and perspectives for NPS in Latin America.

Legislative measures

Since 2014, 74 NPS were nominally included in the control lists in Brazil, 72 in the list of prohibited substances, 1 in the list of psychotropic substances and 1 as a controlled legal substance due to its industrial use.

The NPS scheduled as prohibited substances receive the same treatment given to any other illegal drug, being subjected to the Law 11.343/1996, and their suppliers may be penalized as drug traffickers.

A Working Group was created in Brazil in 2015 dedicated to the discussion of new legislative approaches for the control of substances. It includes representatives from the regulatory agency, law enforcement officials, and experts from forensic laboratories. Based on this Working Group recommendation, on 2016, Brazil approved the [Resolution RDC 79/2016](#), introducing for the first time a "generic" system for the scheduling of controlled substances, which will be used alongside the individual scheduling approach. The first chemical group scheduled was that of synthetic cannabinoids. New groups of substances are under study for generic classification in 2017.

Early warning systems and surveillance

The Brazilian Government has been providing information to support the reviews of substances carried out by the World Health Organization in a consistent manner. Also, relevant information is shared with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the International Narcotics Control

Board through the existing notification systems. The extent of the Brazilian contribution is soon to be broadened, as the national monitoring systems are being enhanced. A national early warning system is under implementation and will incorporate data related to demand and supply reduction actions, in order to enable better results in the health and security perspectives.

The notification system currently used by health professionals to inform the authorities about cases of substances' abuse in Brazil uses a general approach in regard to psychoactive substances. NPS-specific information from the already existing network of sentinel health services is under consideration. These sentinel health services encompass emergency facilities and toxicology centers in reference hospitals, Psychosocial Attention Centers and teams that assist vulnerable populations.

Detection and identification

Since 2011, the Criminology Institute (INC) of the Brazilian Federal Police counts with a team dedicated to the identification and characterization of NPS seized in Brazil. The technical data provided by this team supports enforcement measures. This Federal forensic laboratory collaborates with UNODC's International Collaborative Exercises (ICE) programme. Within the scope of the Chemical Profile (PeQui) Project, INC conducts quantitative and qualitative analysis of NPS to chemically determine connections of materials seized in different parts of the country, suggesting correlations with national and foreign processes and products.

Both Federal and State-based forensic laboratories are part of the Working Group dedicated to the discussion of new legislative approaches for the control of substances, and their analysis provide evidence to the scheduling of NPS in Brazil. The information is provided directly to the regulatory authority both through an online notification system or documentation.

Brazilian regulatory and forensic authorities have been promoting the training of their staff by supporting NPS-focused technical seminars and workshops that count with lectures by international experts, with a focus on detection and identification.

To try and overcome the difficulties related to the acquisition of reference standards of NPS, the Brazilian Government met with importing companies that work with this type of product to ask for donations, informing about the positive impacts their assistance might have. A list of required material is being prepared, and donations of NPS reference samples were already received.

Prevention and treatment

Prevention policies in Brazil have a general focus in enhancing life skills, with a positive impact in lowering the consumption of drugs in general. These programmes are targeted on children and young population, those considered more exposed to NPS.

The Brazilian Government is actively working in the implementation and systematic evaluation of prevention programmes, based on evidences and culturally adapted to the country's diverse realities, with the support of UNODC. These programmes focus on educating professionals to work with students in public schools. In the past 3 years, Brazil trained around 3,500 professionals, reaching over 20,000 students in three different prevention programmes. Also, the Brazilian Government has been investing in continuous education to health professionals, and more than 300,000 were trained since 2015.

Patterns of use of drugs are under investigation in Brazil, and the most recent household study, which results are to be launched in 2017, will indicate the current state of consumption of NPS and other synthetic drugs.

Canada

In December 2016, the Government of Canada proposed Bill C-37, a legislative package that includes new authority for the Minister of Health to temporarily schedule substances for up to two years to a temporary Schedule to the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act. This would allow the Government of Canada to quickly respond to situations where an unscheduled substance either poses a significant risk to public health or safety; or may pose a risk to public health or safety and is being imported into or distributed in Canada with no legitimate purpose. Under this temporary scheduling measure, simple possession would not be an offence so as to not punish individuals, who may have purchased a substance with the belief that it is legal.

In addition, Canada is using more efficient approaches to permanently schedule NPS, with a particular emphasis on capturing more than a single substance based on structure, as well as capturing substances with similar pharmacological effects. For instance, in 2016, Canada expanded the scheduling entry for 2C-phenethylamines in the CDSA in order to control the entire class of 2C-phenethylamines, including NBOMes.

In November 2016, the following six chemicals used to make fentanyl were scheduled under the *Controlled Drugs and Substances Act*: propionyl chloride; 1-phenethyl-4-piperidone and its salts; 4-piperidone and its salts; norfentanyl (N-phenyl-N-piperidin-4-ylpropanamide) and its salts; 1-phenethylpiperidin-4-ylidenephethylamine and its salts; and, N-phenyl-4-piperidinamine and its salts. This will make it harder to access these chemicals and provide law enforcement with better tools to take action on these substances.

Colombia

A comprehensive response

Colombia has tackled the problem from different angles through an evidence-based decision process. In this regard, progress has been made through the following actions:

- A study on the chemical characterization and the market of synthetic drugs and new psychoactive substances (NPS) was carried out in order to determine which substances and how they are marketed in the country.
- A draft bill has been prepared with the purpose of addressing the problem through more efficient penal and administrative measures against the proliferation of this type of drugs.
- The country is one of the members of the International Action Group on NPS.
- The capacities of the official forensic laboratories have been strengthened through seminars on identification methodologies and by the provision of certified reference material for the detection of this type of drugs and its precursors.
- A guidebook has been developed for judicial authorities -prosecutors and judges- in order to strengthen their technical knowledge in the field and to facilitate the determination of legal tools and strategies aimed at penalizing the trafficking of these drugs in the country under the current regulations.

An Early Warning System (EWS) has been set up as an information exchange mechanism in order to address the problem of emerging drugs, which is based on a network that integrates the action of several government institutions related to the drug phenomenon.

Legislative measures

Based on the study of the chemical characterization and the market of synthetic drugs and NPS, a draft bill has been prepared which mainly includes:

- Amendments of the Criminal Code which aim at referring to a list of 'controlled drugs'¹, regularly updated by administrative authorities, in accordance with the dynamics and emergence of NPS in the country.
- Strict prohibition of the use of postal traffic in the trade of 'controlled drugs'.

In addition, for the purpose of strengthening the whole judicial system, the main shortcomings on the subject, in both technical and legal knowledge, have been defined after conducting roundtables with prosecutors and judges

¹ The objective of the draft bill is to update the Criminal Code with a list provided by the Health Ministry which in turn would be updated based on the Colombian Early Warning System and the WHO, United Nations or regional alerts on substances which Colombia considers may enter the country. The idea is to include substances in the Criminal Code in a more agile way according to the country's reality.

in five cities of the country. Consequently, a guide has been prepared to strengthen their capacities in the judicial processes.

International scheduling

In response to the different requests on international level related to reliable information on the manifestation of illicit drug phenomena and their precursors, the *International Cooperation Working Group on new challenges and threats of drugs* has been created as a network of governmental institutions.

This network, coordinated by the Ministry of Justice and Law, is responsible for integrating, consolidating and spreading information produced by executing entities of drug policy in response to information requirements and the country's commitments at national and international level.

The disclosed information represents the position of the Colombian government in the area of drugs and has been requested by different international organizations (WHO, UNODC, INCB, CND, etc.).

Early warning systems and surveillance

Colombia has an Early Warning System (EWS) coordinated by the Colombian Drug Observatory of the Ministry of Justice and Law. This initiative was created in 2014 as a mechanism to respond to the problem of emerging drugs and is based on the networking of institutions that are part of it.

The main results obtained in this network system correspond to:

- Formalization of activities and composition of the EWS through Resolution 001 from 15 January 2016.
- Articulation of the institutions which are part of the EWS and development of operational protocols.
- The EWS in Colombia has detected the presence of 24 New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) on the market of synthetic drugs, which have been characterized. This information has proved to be very useful in order to strengthen the competences of institutions in charge of studying the phenomenon of new drugs from the judicial, forensic, administrative and operational perspective.
- Advice and exchange of knowledge in the context of international cooperation with countries in the EWS implementation process.

Detection and identification

In order to strengthen the performance of national laboratories, the following measures have been taken:

- A seminar has been organized with the participation of experts of different countries for members of all forensic laboratories of the country in order to

increase their knowledge on different methodologies used for the detection of drugs and establish a communication and cooperation network between them.

- Certified reference material has been donated to all official forensic laboratories for the detection of this kind of drugs and their precursors.

Prevention and treatment

In order to respond to the challenges of prevention and treatment of NPS consumption, the following progress has been made:

- The guide on the management of toxicological emergencies in the country has been updated which includes a chapter on new psychoactive substances. This guide has been developed for health personnel who work in emergency services of health service institutions. It is currently being validated by the Ministry of Health and Social Protection before its implementation.
- Transmitting the information about the presence and danger of NPS to the population at risk, poses a challenge to Colombia, which is why it has sought to know the experience of other countries. Furthermore, an improvement of warning communication has been achieved thanks to the cooperation with civil society, including the development of harm reduction strategies by the NGOs. The NGO *Acción Técnica Social*, for instance, has generated communicative devices that inform the findings of the Early Warning System especially aimed at youth at risk. The latest information was transmitted in December 2016 and was seen by an estimated 90,000 people in Colombia and other countries in the region.

The project is being independently evaluated by the [College Centre for Quality Improvement](#), which will report in 2017.

European Union

A comprehensive response

The European Union and the Member States have developed together, over the past two decades, a European approach to addressing drugs sustainably. This approach is enshrined in the [EU Drugs Strategy 2013-2020](#) and the [EU Drugs Action plan](#) (the most recent covers the period 2013-16). The Strategy is structured around two policy areas: drug demand reduction and drug supply reduction.

Awareness raising of the risks and consequences associated with the use of psychoactive substances, the challenge of their misuse, the challenge of having them sold online, as well as measures to address their emergence, use and rapid spread are all part of the EU Action Plan on Drugs.

In 2015 the Commission adopted [a report on progress in the EU's 2013-2020 Drugs Strategy and 2013-2016 Action Plan on Drugs](#). In 2016 with the support of an external contractor, the Commission conducted a fully-fledged mid-term assessment of the Strategy and the Action Plan that looks at the outputs of the Strategy and the Action Plan and their impact.

The evaluator found *inter alia* that there is strong support for a future Strategy to focus further on NPS. The EU Drugs Strategy and Action Plan were considered to be relevant to problems identified at the EU and national level at the time of their adoption and in particular the need to respond to NPS.

International scheduling

The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), established in 1993, provides the EU and its Member States with sound and comparable information on drugs, drug addiction and their consequences in Europe. It helps policymakers to draw up informed drug laws and strategies. It has developed the tools needed to collect country data in a standardised way, mainly via the European Information Network on Drugs and Drug Addiction (Reitox), composed of focal points in the Member States, Norway and Turkey. The analysis of these data results in a variety of information products conveying the broader European picture.

The EMCDDA is collaborating and exchanging data on NPS with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNDOC) and the World Health Organisation (WHO) with which it concluded Memoranda of Understanding respectively in 1998 and in 2000. The EMCDDA communicates data on NPS detected through the EU EWS to both organisations. It also provides support and advice to the WHO's Expert Committee on Drug Dependence (ECDD) on prioritising substances for review towards international scheduling.

Legislative measures

Since 2005 a system is in place to detect new substances on the market and a mechanism to assess their risks and ban across the EU those substances that pose risks via the ([Council Decision 2005/387/JHA](#) on the information exchange, risk assessment and control of new psychoactive substances.) Based on a risk assessment made by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA), the Commission presents a proposal to the Council for a decision to ban harmful new psychoactive substance. So far, [17 harmful new psychoactive substances were subjected to control measures by Council decisions](#).

Given the rapid rise of new psychoactive substances, the system set up in 2005 is no longer effective and fast enough. Therefore, on 17 September 2013, following an [impact assessment report](#), the Commission adopted a package of [legislative proposals](#) to enable the EU to act swifter and more effectively to address new psychoactive substances.

Negotiations on this legislative package have been ongoing for more than three years. However, the legislative procedure is now in the final stage and is expected to be finalised within the first half of 2017.

Early Warning and surveillance

The EMCDDA plays a central role in the EU-wide exchange of information on new psychoactive substances (NPS) via the Early Warning System (EWS) which currently monitors 560 substances - more than double the number of substances controlled under the United Nations international drug control conventions.

The EWS on new psychoactive substances is a multidisciplinary network consisting of 30 European countries which collect, appraise and rapidly disseminate information on new drugs and products that contain them. The EWS builds on a variety of information sources such as health and care providers, law enforcement organisations, sources closer to drug users, media, the Internet, etc.

Detection and identification

On EU level, NPS are addressed by using a three-step approach:

- an '**early-warning system**' to identify new drugs as they appear on the European market (EMCDDA);
- a mechanism for **assessing the risks** of these drugs (EMDCCA); and
- a **decision-making process (control measures)** through which these products may be placed under control in the EU Member States (EU legislators).

To this end, the EMCDDA avails itself of the contributions of and cooperation with Europol, the European Medicines Agency (EMA), the European Commission, including its Joint Research Centre located in Ispra (in particular through the CLEN2SAND project for the fast recognition of NPS).

On European level, the Customs Laboratories European Network and the European Network of Forensic Science Institutes are sharing data and providing support to the identification of NPS. The European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) and the EMCDDA collaborate with both networks.

Prevention and treatment:

The experience and best practice developed in addressing traditional drugs should be adapted to the existing effective interventions to prevent the use and to treat the harmful consequences of NPS. These are the findings shown in the EMCDDA study "Health responses to New Psychoactive Substances"

Four EU financial [programmes](#) provide funding for drug-related projects between 2014-2020, to help implement the objectives set by the EU Drugs Strategy 2013-2020 and to foster cross-border cooperation and research on drug issues:

- [The Justice Programme 2014-2020](#);
- [The Internal Security Fund 2014-2020](#);
- [The Health Programme 2014-2020](#);
- [Horizon 2020](#).

Finland

Legislative measures

Finland has since December 2014 had two different definitions for the new psychoactive substances in the national Narcotics Act (373/2008). NPS or their positional isomers can be scheduled to be controlled as narcotics, similarly to the substances controlled by the UN conventions, or as psychoactive substances banned from the consumer market with different restrictions. The new definition makes swift responses possible in order to reflect the rapid changes in the NPS market. To this date around 50 NPS which have been risk assessed and effectively scheduled as narcotics and 456 NPS has been individually listed and classified as psychoactive substances banned from the consumer market. NPS enter Finland mainly via internet and mail import and this issue these legislative efforts have effectively addressed.

Detection and identification, early warning systems and International scheduling

Finland continues to be an important part of the early warning network of the European Union lead by the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA). For several years already there has been around 100 different NPS effectively identified from our market even from very small shipments of incoming mail. Approximately one third of the NPS identified each year has been identified for the first time in Finland. The data obtained and reported by the national forensic network has been collected effectively and this has proven to be extremely informative. The prevalence of the NPS use is studied by national population surveys but even more effectively by waste-water analyses in 14 cities in different parts of Finland. Data from different sources give an important overview of the situation.

Finland has also actively participated in the efforts to share relevant information, expertise and data on new psychoactive substances with the World Health Organization, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and also the International Narcotics Control Board. The collaboration has taken place by data sharing and by taking part e.g. to the third expert consultation on new psychoactive substances held by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime and the World Health Organization in May 2016.

Finland also took part to the exercise on collecting toxicological data on NPS conducted by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime in partnership with the International Association of Forensic Toxicologists in June 2016. Finland also gives annual financial support of 26 000 Euros to UNODC laboratory section.

A national network of frontline workers has also been established in Finland. Health and social care professionals, different authorities and various NGOs

including the user organization share expertise regularly in this network. Finland still welcomes all the efforts and sharing of expertise of the Member States in networking between different partners involved and also in gathering more experience in clinical practices with the NPS. We are willing to share expertise and contribute to exercises and operations of relevance whenever the resources allow.

France

A comprehensive response

The Government Plan for Combating Drugs and Addictive Behaviours 2013–17, is under the responsibility of the Inter-ministerial Mission for Combating Drugs and Addictive Behaviours (MILDECA). The Government Plan addresses illicit and licit drugs (narcotics, alcohol, tobacco, psychotropic medicines and new psychoactive products) and other forms of addictive behaviours (gambling, gaming, doping): it therefore specifically addresses NPS issue.

France is implementing a balanced, comprehensive and global response to NPS, primarily focusing on:

- Improving capacity of detection and identification of NPS;
- Reinforcing exchange of information between stakeholders;
- Developing medical treatments, prevention and harm reduction actions dedicated to drugs, including NPS.

Legislative measures

From a legislative point of view, France has adopted a pragmatic approach, managing NPS under existing drug legislation, through modification or extension of the list of narcotics, defining groups (families) of substances rather than individual drugs. This approach aims at not affecting legitimate industry and research while ensuring a high level of health protection. In France, NPS are controlled by decisions of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health applying a classification of chemical substances. As of 2015, cathinones, synthetic cannabinoids and 25x-NBOMe (phenethylamines) derivatives into the market have been classified.

Once NPS are classified as an illicit drug, use and possession are criminal offences in France. Indeed, the illegal use of any substance or plant classified as a narcotic is an offence punishable by sentences of up to one year in prison and a fine of €3,750 (Article L.3421-1 of the French Public Health Code - CSP) – although alternatives to sanctions and incarceration exist. Illegal transport, possession, proposal, sale, acquisition or use and the fact of facilitating the illegal use of narcotics are punishable by a maximum of ten years in prison and a fine of €7.5 million (Article L.222-37 of the French Penal Code).

Early warning systems and surveillance

France focuses on reinforcing exchange of information and cooperation at national and international levels.

There are several ways by which, health and social workers, or law enforcement agents can signal NPS substances or NPS-related events. Some are proactive systems², meaning that they allow the government to be informed early on. Others are lengthways monitoring tool, such as general population survey. Data can be collected and exploited by various actors to ensure that a collaborative work is embodied.

In order to foster information exchange between all parties involved at national level, an inter-ministerial working party has been set up and regularly meets under the aegis of the MILDECA. This inter-ministerial working party enables open and informal update on matters related to NPS, from a health point of view as well as a law enforcement perspective.

France is involved in the EU-EWS through its national focal point (the OFDT). On a regular basis a range of various key data are centralized and reported at European and international level. Data are mostly about seizures, collected samples, and legislative changes and at a lesser extent chemical analysis of biological samples. An experimental tool is also used to increase the notification of serious adverse events linked with NPS. The whole system is supported by the main actors involved in the subject, both from public health and law enforcement sector.

Aside this system that functions for “regular” cases, in case of critical or questionable situation a national procedure called “Drugs-network” enables those very same actors to inform each other, to evaluate together signals and to determine which action should be taken.

Detection and identification

In order to improve our capacity of identification of NPS, laboratories are equipped with high-performance devices which are able to detect and identify new substances. Police and customs laboratories are invited to enhance cooperation, exchange information and best practices with health agencies, and conversely (governmental plan measures n°47 and 61). An experimental process is actually being draft in order to facilitate the NPS detection in emergency care (measure 38).

Several nonprofit associations are also developing the thin layer chromatography technique to complete the offer already provided by SINTES. Others projects focusing on remote analysis services are under feasibility evaluation.

² - SINTES and the [TREND network](#) (OFDT). SINTES is a national system aiming to lead chemical analysis on samples given by users or collected by health and social workers. TREND detects emerging phenomena in illegal drug use by means of a network of seven cities with ethnographic observers using a common information collection and analysis strategy.

- [Addictovigilance Network](#) (ANSM, National Agency for Medicines and Health Products Safety).

- CAPTV, the national poison call center platform ([SPF](#)).

Prevention and treatment

France is also fostering the health intervention dedicated to NPS, in particular prevention and harm reduction actions.

A booklet has been published in September 2016 providing information on NPS for clinicians and experts in the emergency services, to improve clinical practice in the management of harms resulting from the use of NPS³. Aside this national action, nonprofit association have also created dedicated flyer on the subject.

Several measures concerning the improvement of digital outreach practices should also be looked upon during 2017.

³ www.drogues.gouv.fr/actualites/nouvelles-substances-psychoactives-publication-dun-guide-services-durgences

Israel

Legislative measures

Since 2013, in addition to the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance (main Narcotics Law), the government implemented temporary scheduling law named “The Fight against the Phenomenon of the Use of Dangerous Substances Law”. It allows rapid regulation of constantly changing chemicals on the “legal highs” market not yet included in the main controlled substances law. New substances and/or chemical groups are constantly updated and referred to as Urgent Declarations, and are valid for maximum 1 year with various options for extension, after which they either permanently regulated and enter Dangerous Drugs Ordinance or stop being controlled. As a result, at least in the past one and a half year most synthetic drugs which are identified, controlled by the law. In addition, for this past period we have observed a slowdown in the appearance of completely new NPS which were not detected before.

Detection and identification

In addition to existing analytical laboratories that are equipped with high-performance equipment (e.g. Police, MOH), Israeli Customs acquired field detection devices which are highly efficient and precise in rapid identification of new psychoactive substances. The use of these devices give the ability to prevent NPS entering the country.

Early Warning System and Surveillance

Medical Administration (MOH) Regulation of compulsory reporting to the Ministry of Health of hospitalizations related to NPS use. Hospitals are also recommended, when possible, to collect NPS products from patients used closely to the hospitalization incidents. Samples are transferred to the Enforcement and Inspection Division in the Ministry of Health for laboratory testing and further investigation.

Italy

Introduction

This contribution aims at providing an overview of the situation exclusively referred to the Law Enforcement sector, under the Ministry of Interior jurisdiction, Department of Public Security – Direzione Centrale per i Servizi Antidroga.

A comprehensive response

As far as the law enforcement sector is concerned, the monitoring on the spreading and trends of NPS at EU level is carried out as part of discussions of the Committee on Precursors and of the Group of Experts on Drug Precursors (both within the European Commission), and by transmitting all possible data through the information network REITOX, as indicated in the Decision JHA 387/2005.

At national level, the information sharing regarding NPS is the subject of specific communications by the National Early Warning System – N.E.W.S..

At UN level, the above-mentioned activities are developed through the UN ION-IONICS Platforms. Significant data are also shared through Project PRISM (focusing on operations launched by special alerts from the participating States or from other international initiatives) and Project Cohesion (focusing on information provided to the participating States on the particular methods used by criminal syndicates in the precursors diversion or on special alerts related to actual cases representing a common basis of investigation, by the Law Enforcement sector).

Legislative measures – 5(e)

As to the possibility to introduce NPS into the National territory, mention must be made of the provisions contained in the (EU) Regulations 1258 and 1259, both of 2013, which widen the right to reject or detain suspicious deliveries of non-classified substances. At the national level, it is possible to temporarily prohibit the sale of products which might represent a threat to public health. The sale of medicines or pharmaceutical products is regulated by the Code of National Health Laws. Information on NPS and the Law Enforcement activities is shared through the platforms under Recommendation 5(d)

International Scheduling

Information on the Law Enforcement field is shared through the Platforms indicated above under Recommendation 5(d).

Early Warning System and Surveillance

As far as the Law Enforcement sector is concerned, the DCSA is included in the main international Platforms and initiatives, as referred to in recommendation 5(d)

Prevention and Treatment

The operational response capacity by the national Law Enforcement Agencies is implemented on the basis of information shared through the platforms and initiatives referred to by Recommendation 5(d)

Japan

A comprehensive response

In 2014, the Government of Japan formulated “Emergency Measures to Eliminate Dangerous Drug Abuse” in order to tackle the crisis of NPS abuse at that time. As a result of actively carrying out various measures based on the above Emergency Measures, all domestic NPS shops were successfully closed down by July 2015. The problem has almost been contained in Japan. Japanese NPS legislation is quite unique. Currently more than 2,300 NPS are controlled.

Legislative measures

Besides “Narcotics” and “Psychotropics”, Japan devised a third drug category titled “Designated Substances” in 2007. “Designated Substances” are controlled by the “Law on Securing Quality, Efficacy and Safety of Products including Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices”. Currently almost all NPS are controlled as “Designated Substances”. Their manufacture, import, sale, distribution, possession, use etc. are generally prohibited except for academic purposes by national institutes etc. Law enforcement agencies apprehend not only suppliers but also abusers to suppress the spread of NPS.

Based on the law, authorities can also issue the “Order of Scientific Examination” and the “Order of Sales Suspension” for all products that may contain NPS, to stop such products from being distributed. The “Order of Scientific Examination” is an order of examination made to the shop owner to make sure their products don’t contain any NPS. The “Order of Sales Suspension” is an order asking shop owners to refrain from selling products until a scientific examination has been finished. In case the NPS contained is not controlled, the authority will promptly designate it as a controlled substance. Therefore, in fact, even non-controlled NPS products cannot be sold. Following intensive enforcement, no NPS head shops have been identified in Japan since July 2015.

In addition, as border control measures, the authority can issue the “Order of Scientific Examination” for products which are found at customs inspection and might have psychotoxicity. In fact, Japan has a scheme for preventing the import of all psychotoxic substances using this mechanism.

The sentences for offences of “Designated Substances” are shorter than for equivalent offences of narcotics.

A total 2,356 substances are currently controlled as "Designated Substances" (Substances basis 252, Generic scheduling 2,104.) Generic scheduling is introduced to synthetic cannabinoids and synthetic cathinones. And 26 substances, such as JWH-018, mephedrone, MDPV etc. have already been reclassified as "Narcotics".

Early warning systems and surveillance

All information concerning new NPS found in Japan is transferred to the National Institute of Health Sciences (NIHS). NIHS also collects, by itself, the overseas information concerning NPS.

“Designated Substances” are decided by an expert committee. The Minister of Health, Labour and Welfare consults with it to decide whether a new NPS should be controlled as “Designated Substances” or not. In this case, much scientific data is not necessary. It is decided by psychotoxic possibility based on a simple test of in vitro and in vivo.

Recently, the expert committee has been held almost every two months. Based on the advice of the expert committee, an NPS can be designated as “Designated Substances” within a few weeks. Japan actively controls NPS even if it has not been found in Japan yet.

Detection and identification

Relevant authorities analyse NPS products obtained from Internet shops and found at customs inspections. The analysis is carried out by the National Institute of Health Sciences (NIHS), Prefectural Institute of Public Health, Police, Narcotics Control Department, Customs etc. using reference standards and Nuclear Magnetic Resonance (NMR). NIHS keeps a database concerning NPS products and it is open to other experts including those from foreign countries.

Prevention and treatment

The Government of Japan has been carrying out an active anti-NPS public campaign. As mentioned above, the NPS problem has almost been contained in Japan. Currently there are little cases of NPS abuse.

New Zealand

A comprehensive response

New Zealand has recently completed all its legislative requirements around a NPS scheme and is developing non-legislative aspects of the regime. This includes the implementation of the Psychoactive Substances Act 2013 (the Act), development of an Early Warning System (EWS), and initiating information-sharing between agencies and health professionals.

In 2013, the New Zealand Government introduced the Act to regulate the availability of psychoactive substances in New Zealand to protect the health of, and minimise harm to, individuals who use psychoactive substances.

The Psychoactive Substances Regulatory Authority (the Authority) was set up to ensure all products distributed in New Zealand that contain psychoactive substances pose no more than a low risk of harm as designated through a pre-market approval regime. The psychoactive substances, and their final products, are only able to be imported, manufactured, distributed and sold by people and businesses licensed by the Authority.

Legislative measures

The Act and associated regulations is New Zealand's main legislative response to NPS, and which:

- authorises the Authority to issue licences for the importation, research, manufacture, and sale of psychoactive substances and to approve psychoactive products
- creates offences relating to the importation, manufacture, sale, and supply of psychoactive substances without a licence or in breach of licence conditions
- establishes oversight for licence/product approval compliance and enforcement with Psychoactive Substances Enforcement Officers and illegal activity enforcement with NZ Police.

The Act has ensured that new psychoactive substances, which usually have limited information about their safety, are quickly given a status. At present, new psychoactive substances are considered "unapproved psychoactive substances" and cannot be sold or possessed until there is proof that they are of:

- low risk of harm (through the approval process provided by the Act)
- high risk (through scheduling as a controlled drug under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1975.

Action can be taken if this occurs, e.g. on conviction a term of imprisonment up to 2 years for sale and supply, or a \$500 fine for possession.

A review of the legislation will take place in 2018, after 5 years of implementation.

Note: The Act was amended in May 2014 and included a section prohibiting the consideration of animal testing by the Psychoactive Substance Expert Advisory Committee when assessing if products are of low risk of harm and therefore able to be approved. At this time, there are no suitable non-animal testing alternatives for evaluating the key requirements in assessing risk; resulting in no applications for approved products. Consequentially, there are no retail licences, as licensed retailers can only sell approved product.

Early warning systems and surveillance

NZ has initiated a sub-group of government agencies with the intention of investigating information-sharing arrangements. It also is taking the lead on scoping appropriate early warning systems for the NZ situation.

The Ministry of Health Regulatory Practice and Analysis team (RPA) encompasses the Authority and aims to be the hub that facilitates, collates and distributes this information. RPA works closely with other agencies and NGOs to gain this information.

The Ministry of Health has gained modest funding to scope an early warning system that is relevant and workable in New Zealand. It is expected that this will also involve links to other EWS. It is proposed that the funded scoping work will primarily look at access to sources of information on the availability of psychoactive substances in New Zealand, such as Emergency Departments, customs seizures, Accident Compensation Commission claims, and police intelligence. A project plan is being developed.

Detection and identification

The Ministry of Health advises customs and police on whether a substance is considered psychoactive under the Act. ESR, the Government's testing laboratory services, have been provided with funding by the Ministry of Health to purchase reference standards for psychoactive substances, to provide more certainty with regard to identification and support prosecutions by police.

Through the Inter-agency Committee on Drugs, Ministry of Health is working with other agencies to improve information-sharing. It is proposed that further international contacts are strengthened.

In 2017, RPA will be initiating another round of the testing programme where products are purchased off shelves and tested by ESR for unapproved psychoactive substances. If psychoactive substances are detected, this information is passed to police.

Prevention and treatment

NZ is intending to meet with Emergency Department clinicians to investigate ways of capturing adverse health effects more comprehensively.

United Kingdom

A comprehensive response

The UK is implementing a balanced response to the challenge of new psychoactive substances. This includes the implementation of the Psychoactive Substances Act 2016, the Forensic Early Warning System, a resource pack for educators, and NPS treatment guidelines.

The UK is taking a leading role in the international response to these substances, including by chairing the International Action Group on NPS. The UK is also tabling a resolution on NPS at the 60th Commission on Narcotic Drugs (March 2017) which will drive forward the implementation of recommendations made in the Outcome Document.

Legislative measures

The [Psychoactive Substances Act 2016](#) is the UK's main legislative response to the problem of NPS. It introduces a 'blanket ban' on all psychoactive substances. There are exemptions in place for drugs already controlled under the UK's [Misuse of Drugs Act 1971](#), as well as for medicines, alcohol, nicotine and tobacco products, caffeine, food and substances used in research. These exemptions ensure that the Act doesn't affect legitimate industry or scientific and medical research.

The offences under the Act include supply, production, import and export. However, the sentences are shorter than for equivalent offences under the Misuse of Drugs Act, reflecting that these substances have not had their harms adequately assessed. For the same reason, there is no possession offence in the Act. The Act is targeted at those who are supplying these substances.

The UK gathered information on the initial results of the Act, in terms of enforcement activity, six months after it came into force. The initial results are:

- 332 shops from across the UK have stopped selling NPS, and 31 headshops have closed down;
- Nearly 500 arrests of individuals suspected of selling NPS; and
- The removal of UK-based websites selling NPS.

The UK will conduct a full evaluation 30 months from when the Act came into force. This will be available in late 2018.

Early warning systems and surveillance

The UK will be establishing a NPS Intelligence System which will enhance data collection on NPS in the UK, in particular on health harms. This will

complement existing data collection systems in the UK, such as the Forensic Early Warning System.

There are limited options in the UK for frontline health workers to report the harms of NPS. The NPS Intelligence System will address this by providing a new system for collecting information on NPS harms, similar to the system used to report adverse reactions to new medicines. The pilot will be launched in Spring 2017 for a year, after which it will be evaluated. The new system will involve online forms for health workers to submit the information available when they are dealing with an NPS-related health problem. This information will then be sent to a central point of contact at the Medicines Agency for processing.

Another key challenge is that data on NPS is not always collected in one place. To address this, Public Health England has set up a network of leading clinicians and experts to analyse the data coming from the new online form reporting system and other existing drugs intelligence systems.

This network will identify patterns and harms, and agree appropriate clinical responses. The results of this analysis will be fed back to the frontline to inform responses to NPS-related health problems. This will include information for health workers published online and alerts distributed to health networks.

Detection and identification

To support prosecutions under the [Psychoactive Substances Act 2016](#), the UK is commissioning the production of pharmacological data which identifies the potential for particular substances to have a psychoactive effect. Data on 50 substances was commissioned shortly after the Act came into force, with data on further substances being commissioned when required for a prosecution.

The UK will be sharing pharmacological data with the US Drug Enforcement Administration, which commissions the production of this data to support prosecutions under the US drugs legislation. The UK would be interested in exploring options to share pharmacological data on NPS with other Member States who commission this data.

Prevention and treatment

Project Neptune has been developed to improve clinical practice in the management of harms resulting from the use of club drugs and NPS. It is aimed at clinicians working in a range of frontline settings, including drug treatment and recovery services, emergency departments, sexual health services, primary care and mental health services.

With the support of a multi-disciplinary group of experts, the project has developed [clinical guidance](#), based on a systematic review of the evidence and clinical consensus. Clinical tools are being developed to complement the

guidance, including online learning modules. These will be available on the [Project Neptune website](#) in due course. Project Neptune has also produced additional resources to help improve clinical practice in managing the harms of NPS, including a paper on the harms of [synthetic cannabinoids](#).

The project is being independently evaluated by the [College Centre for Quality Improvement](#), which will report in 2017.

United States

Emerging challenges such as new psychoactive substances (NPS) require the international community to share information, experiences, and best practices to understand the scope of the issue and more effectively respond. These efforts represent good progress, and it remains critical that these efforts are sustained. Of note, the international community should continue collecting and disseminating information on NPS, particularly through the existing UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) initiatives, to assist in their identification and investigation. The international community should also continue to focus on the prioritization of NPS for international scheduling and continue discussions at the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND) to update and accelerate such processes.

Specific contributions from the United States:

- The United States provides funding to support UNODC's Global Synthetics: Monitoring, Analyses, Reporting, and Trends (SMART) program to strengthen the capacity of law enforcement and public health officials in the western hemisphere to work together to identify and detect the presence of NPS in the region.
- The United States also continues to fund the Global SMART's Early Warning System to advance the ability to detect the presence of NPS at the national and regional levels.
- The United States provides funding to INCB's Project ION to enhance operational cooperation on NPS.
- The United States contributes funding support and information to the Pre-Export Notification (PEN) Online system and the Precursors Incident Communication System (PICS) to work to prevent the diversion of precursor chemicals.
- The United States supported the INCB's international conferences in 2013, 2015, and the most recent one in February 2017 on precursor chemicals and new psychoactive substances to further cooperation and information sharing.
- Domestically, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) has developed an online reporting tool for the public to report tips related to synthetic drugs. This tool can be found on the "Submit a Tip" section of the DEA Office of Diversion website. This tip line went live on October

23, 2015 and has generated 45 tips. Tips are forwarded to the appropriate DEA Field Office for investigation.

- DEA's efforts to reach out to retail outlets selling NPS has been recognized by the INCB as a best practice and shared with all Project ION participants. The communication that was sent out is at the end of this document.
- The DEA works to facilitate information sharing and raise awareness on NPS through presentations to state and local law enforcement and participation in international meetings on NPS to report on the latest U.S. trends and to find out what NPS may potentially enter the United States.
- DEA has used the U.S. Analogue Act extensively to combat NPS and control these substances domestically. This act allows us to pursue justice against those trafficking in substances that act just like another controlled substance. This is one way in which we are trying domestically to address the rapidity with which the chemical composition of a controlled synthetic substance can be altered to evade control or "jam up" scheduling processes. Since 2011, there have been over 700 prosecutions using the Analogue Act.

International Narcotics Control Board

Project ION and IONICS – contribution to Recommendation 5(g)

Project ION is INCB's international operational initiative supporting national authorities' efforts in preventing NPS, specifically synthetic NPS with little or no known medical, scientific or industrial uses, from reaching consumer markets. Project ION provides the infrastructure for real-time intelligence sharing on NPS, as well as follow-up between authorities of concerned countries.

For many years INCB has been facilitating international cooperation on real cases for years with substantial successes as attested to, for example, by the conviction of aka "Eric Chang", a NPS manufacturer and trafficker from Asia, who exported various substances to some 58 countries worldwide. Through Project ION (International Operations on NPS) and its communication platform IONICS, INCB focuses on the coordination, collection and communication of strategic and operational information and intelligence related to suspicious shipments of, trafficking in, and manufacture or production of NPS.

Project ION is overseen by a dedicated international NPS Task Force, and facilitates the timely exchange of information/ intelligence and further operational coordination through a network of currently 218 focal points from 123 Governments and 6 international organisations.

The Project ION Incident Communication System (IONICS), which was launched in December 2014, also continues to see expansion of its user base and communicated incidents to enjoy global participation. IONICS is a secured system accessible only to registered users, who are Government officials working on drug control, specifically NPS. Currently, IONICS has over 200 registered users from across 79 countries and territories. More than 860 incidents have been communicated through IONICS, involving over 170 different substances and more than 60 countries and territories.

In 2016 there were several cases to which follow-up communications and investigations by countries concerned were inspired by incidents communicated through IONICS or information forwarded through Project ION.

Following recommendations by the 2nd International Conference Precursor Chemicals and New Psychoactive Substances in April 2015 Project ION extended the concept of the limited international special surveillance list of non-scheduled precursors to NPS and developed a NPS surveillance list to help law enforcement responses and operational cooperation in coordination with the NPS Task Force. The initial version of the NPS surveillance list containing 16 substances was disseminated to all Member States in November 2015 with a set of recommended actions. This initiative was

endorsed in the CND resolution 59/8 in March 2016. The INCB NPS surveillance list intends to support Member States' law enforcement responses to non-scheduled NPS, but has no linkage to, or intention to be linked to, prioritization for international scheduling.

From December 2016 through January 2017 Project ION, together with INCB's operational projects on precursors (Project Prism and Project Cohesion) has conducted an intelligence-gathering survey on illicit fentanyl, designer fentanyls, other opioid-type NPS and their precursors. In the operational spirit of Project ION, the purpose of the survey was to examine global patterns of the illicit sources, flows, manufacture of and trafficking in this group of drugs and NPS as well as the *modi operandi* of trafficking, with a view to assisting investigations and devising practical solutions to address this drug group, which are causing serious health harms in North America and are also found in other parts of the world, especially in Europe.

While responses are still being submitted and results have yet to be fully analyzed, as of 15 February 2017, 46 countries and one international organization have responded with regard to 56 countries. Results will be shared with all participants through the Project ION focal point network.

Project ION, under the direction of the NPS Task Force, will conduct similar time-bound multilateral operational initiatives in the future with a view to enabling and supporting intelligence generation and dissemination; raising awareness to the threat of and practical response to specific NPS or in different regions; and ultimately facilitating and strengthening international partnerships and cooperation in preventing NPS from reaching consumer markets.

Bangkok III Conference – contribution to all the NPS-related Recommendations

INCB co-organises with UNODC the Third International Conference on Precursor Chemicals and New Psychoactive Substances from 21 to 24 February 2017 in Bangkok. Over 170 officials from 43 countries and 11 regional and international organisations are expected to participate in the conference and discuss a broad scope of issues. Topics include recent NPS trends, prioritisation, networking and information sharing related to investigations, regional cooperation and the role of regional coordination centres. The conference is expected to adopt an outcome document and recommendations.

United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)

The UNODC Global Synthetics Monitoring: Analyses, Reporting and Trends (SMART) programme improves the capacity of targeted Member States to generate, manage, analyze, report and use information on illicit synthetic drugs with a specific focus on NPS. The SMART programme administers the UNODC Early Warning Advisory on NPS (EWA) and publishes current information on NPS in the biannual Global SMART Updates, the Global SMART Bulletin for Latin America and the Caribbean as well as in the form of brochures and news clips on its web page.

A comprehensive response

UNODC organized the First Regional Meeting on NPS in the Western Hemisphere in Bogotá, Colombia, which was attended by technical experts from the region (Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico, Paraguay, Peru, the United States of America, Uruguay and Venezuela) as well as international experts and organizations (OAS/CICAD, COPOLAD, EMCDDA, INCB, Interpol, UNODC, WCO and WHO). Topics discussed included manufacture and trafficking of NPS, public health risks, legislation, and early warning systems. As a result, a coordinated, integrative response was called for, which should include the establishment of early warning systems in the region, prevention and risk communication strategies, and appropriate national legislative approaches.

Early Warning Systems (EWS) on NPS

The UNODC is advancing the Early Warning Advisory (EWA) on NPS, an online data portal on NPS emergence and scientific information on NPS, in cooperation with over 220 national forensic science laboratories in 69 countries, a number of national EWS as well as international and regional partners such as The International Association of Forensic Toxicologists (TIAFT) and the European Monitoring Centre on Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA).

Support for prioritization of NPS for international review

Three international Experts consultations have been organized since 2012, in cooperation with the World Health Organisation and other relevant regional and international organizations, to support the prioritization of NPS for international action in the context of the International Drug Conventions. In addition, UNODC convened an Experts Consultation on Forensic Toxicology and Drug Control aimed at improving the collection of data on NPS-related health harms (Vienna, June 2016) and facilitating the prioritization of the most harmful NPS for action.

Data collection and analysis of NPS

Established in 2013, the UNODC Early Warning Advisory a global database which provides information on the emergence and trends of NPS, legislative and administrative measures adopted by Member States, and analytical and technical data on NPS. With over 13,000 data records of more than 700 different NPS from over 100 countries, it has become an established reference for NPS data worldwide.

Relevant publications on NPS by the Global SMART Programme with analyses of recent trends include:

- “Synthetic cannabinoids: Key facts about the largest and most dynamic group of NPS”(Global SMART Update 13)
- “Legal responses to NPS: Multiple approaches to a multi-faceted problem (Global SMART Update 14)
- “Injecting use of synthetic drugs” (Global SMART Update 15),
- “Post-UNGASS 2016: NPS trends, challenges and recommendations” (Global SMART Update 16),
- “Fentanyl and its analogues – 50 years on (Global SMART Update 17).
- “Effect groups of NPS” (brochure)

Capacity building for forensic laboratories and law enforcement

The UNODC is committed to supporting laboratories in the analysis of substances of abuse, including NPS. The UNODC support includes: the publication of recommended methods of analysis for forensic laboratories e.g. for synthetic cannabinoids, synthetic cathinones and piperazines; provision of reference standards of controlled substances, including recently scheduled NPS, and capacity building workshops.

Recent activities include a forensic capacity building workshop for Central Asian laboratory experts (Vienna, August 2016) and a training workshop for law enforcement and forensic experts from South Asia in collaboration with the Asian Forensic Sciences Network (New Delhi, August 2016).

Training for law enforcement officers on NPS is provided in different formats and regions, often in collaboration with other UNODC projects and programmes. Finally, the 3rd edition of “Terminology and Information on Drugs”, collating basic concepts and information on drugs of abuse, was updated in 2016 to include a number of newly schedule NPS.

The way forward

Activities planned for the future include: enhancement of the UNODC EWA to incorporate toxicology data on NPS harm; providing support to national EWS through guidelines and technical assistance; and strengthening linkages between national EWS and the UNODC EWA. Furthermore, the Global

SMART team is currently preparing the triannual “Global Synthetic Drugs Assessment” which will be published as part of the World Drug Report 2017 in June 2017 with information on the latest NPS market trends and developments.

World Health Organization

International scheduling

The Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, 1961, as amended by the 1972 Protocol, and the Convention on Psychotropic Substances, 1971, entrust WHO with the responsibility of reviewing and assessing substances to determine whether they should be controlled under the conventions. Fulfilling this mandate involves ensuring the provision of robust data to the WHO's Expert Committee on Drug Dependence for the review of the most prevalent, persistent and harmful psychoactive substances. The Expert Committee will then be providing timely evidence-based advice to facilitate informed decision-making by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs on the international scheduling of psychoactive substances.

The Expert Committee will continue to meet annually. Support from Member States, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the International Narcotics Control Board, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction and other regional organizations is sought for collecting robust evidence on abuse and dependence potential and harm to health, and for prioritization of psychoactive substances to be reviewed by the Expert Committee.

Early warning systems and surveillance

The WHO is creating a mechanism for surveillance of substances with the potential for abuse, dependence and harm to health, including new psychoactive substances and for which there is not enough data to justify a review by the Expert Committee. This will complement existing international scheduling mechanism. WHO will regularly update its surveillance list and disseminate this to Member States and relevant international and regional organisations. Furthermore, WHO will issue voluntary public health alerts where there is sufficient evidence that a substance poses a significant risk to public health and safety.