Workstream 3

Online survey among NPS users

Final report

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Summaries and key findings

The I-trend online survey was conducted between July and November 2014 in France, Czech Republic, Nederland and Poland. The welcome text was translated and it was made clear in the description and outline of the text that it was part of a trans-European research project to investigate the profiles users of new psychoactive substances (NPS), their effects and context of use. It was made clear to respondents that filling out the survey was anonymous and the results would only be used for research purposes. Participants were given information about the institution and the person responsible for conducting the survey.

There are some differences regarding the recruitment of participants for the on-line survey. The general rule was that the survey was addressed to people who had had experience with NPS. Above all, the problem of using psycho-active substances is also influenced by the socio-cultural context and anti-drug policy in every country.

This meant that the creation of comparable data as well as the comparison of results in different countries was subject to restrictions. Therefore, making reliable comparisons between the four countries would be possible in a rather limited way and the international report is generally based on the discrete presentation of results.

The total number of respondents is 2,323; Poland – 1,355; France – 536; the Netherlands – 266; and the Czech Republic – 166. Male respondents represent the majority (71.9%). The age 15 – 24 age group predominates among respondents (72.5%). The average age of the national samples differs substantially: for Polish respondents it is 20.2 years; for French respondents it is 28.1; for Dutch respondents it is 25.6; for Czech respondents it is 24.3. The average age for the total sample is 24.5 years. In terms of education, the majority of respondents have gained a matriculation certificate or certificate in tertiary education (lower and higher), that is 66.1%. In terms of respondents' positions on the labour market, the following categories are represented in the total sample: employed – 23%; student (high school) – 34.1%; student (university) – 16.7%. The majority of respondents lives in large cities (>50,000 inhabitants) or the close suburbs of cities (less than 30 minutes' train ride away) – 50.7%.

Pattern of use

Almost all respondents (98.3%) drank alcohol at least once in their life. Nearly 95% declared also to have smoked tobacco. Of illegal substances, marijuana and hashish were indicated most frequently, by 94.8 % of respondents. In the one of the first questions respondents were asked about using NPS (51.9%) and herbal extracts (herbal NPS) 27.1%. The situation differed between countries. NPS was most popular in France[1] (79%) among the respondents whilst least popular in the Czech Republic (39.6%). Respondents received a list of the most popular NPS to select, which they took in the last year. The most popular NPS is Mephedrone (23.6%), which is illegal in all European countries. The second most popular is Kokolino (18.2%), including Cathinone substances. This product has caused a fatality in Poland. The third most popular is WLodziu (17.3%). It is worth mentioning that 15.9% of respondents declared using substances from the NBOMe group which has also caused fatalities in Poland.

[1] As the survey aimed at reaching NPS users, the differences in prevalence of NPS use among respondents between countries can be related to ability to precisely reach the target or to make respondents understand what we called NPS.

Polish substances are the most popular due to big group of Polish respondent in the survey. The largest number of respondents took NPS with friends at home (31.9%). They have also took NPS with friends outside (27.9%). One of the popular places to take NPS are at a pub or club. Respondents declared to take NPS in these places with friends (17.1%). These results showed that there are differences between countries. It is worth mentioning that injecting was not a popular way of administering NPS among respondents from the on-line survey. The typical way of taking NPS the last time respondents took them was snorting (41%). Every third user smoked it (35.1%) and ingested it to a lesser extent (24.4%). 13.5% reported taking it sublingually. In Poland the most popular method was smoking (48.5%) and snorting (48.2%). Respondents from France most often took NPS by snorting (39%) and ingestion (47.4%). In the Netherlands they took NPS sublingually (75.9%). The most popular way of taking NPS in the Czech Republic was snorting (38.8%), but they also took NPS by ingestion (33.3%). It is not surprising that respondents declared taking NPS most often to bond with others (to socialize) (53.2%), to get high (51.2%) and modify perception (47.5%). Every third respondent said that they took NPS to relax (32.5%). Respondents in Poland took NPS to bond with others (61.7%); in France (61.6%) and the Netherlands (57.8%) to modify perception; in the Czech Republic to gain energy (62.9%). There are differences between countries in the most important intended effects after taking NPS. Respondents were asked about descriptions of unpleasant feelings after taking NPS. Several answers were possible. Strong paranoia, fear, anxiety were reported by 44.7% of respondents. A smaller group had: a greatly increased heart rate, palpitations, chest pains (42.4%). In third place was sweating (32.7%). One of the consequences of taking NPS could be the need for medical help (5.6%). The greatest percentage was in Poland (6.2%) and lowest in the Czech Republic (3.7%). Respondent had also been asked if they had enough information on the NPS, which they had taken. Less than half indicated that they did not have enough information about the health risks (43%). Half reported not having enough information about how much is needed to get the necessary effects of the substance (50%).

Mode of purchase

One of the questions regards the modes of obtaining NPS. The following possibilities were mentioned: been given it by someone for free (29.1%), bought from a friend who is not a dealer (14.7%), bought it from a dealer (11.7%), bought it from a shop online (23.2%), bought it from a classified ad online (1.2%), bought it from a shop (not online) (12.7%), I made it myself (6.0%). The results indicate a variety of different modes of obtaining NPS, but what is surprising is the high percentage of people who obtain NPS for free.

Only 23% declared buying NPS from a shop online. Of this group 66.4% ordered NPS during the last 12 months. During the last 12 months, respondents most used shops where NPS are mainly presented with their chemical names (around 68% for Polish and French users and up to 91% for Dutch users). Shops where NPS are presented with branded names were also popular among Polish users (38%) and some French user (21%) while classified ads drew 24% of Polish users and shops on deep web concerned 24% of French users and 22% of Polish users. The respondents, who ordered NPS during the last 12 months, did it most often one time in the case of shops where New Psychoactive Substances were presented with branded names, similarly with classified ads and of the Silk Road. More frequently NPS were bought in shops where New Psychoactive Substances were mainly presented with their chemical names. The main answer to why the respondent chose a particular kind of shops for getting NPS was thanks to the advice of other users (46.4%). The second important criterion of choice (43.4%) was that the shop had a good profile on the web pages where clients share their experiences.

Information

The main source information about NPS seems to be from web forums (42.9%). There are some differences between countries: web forums are used by 86.9% of Dutch respondents, 68.8% of French respondents, 50% of Czech respondents and by only 28.7% of Polish respondents. The second most important source of information are friends/family/acquaintances (34.3%). Again, this source of information seems to be used most often by Dutch users (51.3%) and Czech users, (46.8%) compared to French users (39.9%) and Polish users (29.6%).

Knowledge about NPS and illicit substances amongst respondents seems to based more on opinion and experience than on scientific facts. The majority of respondents disagree with the following statements: New Psychoactive Substances are less harmful than illicit substances (74.3%); New Psychoactive Substances are less addictive than other illicit drugs (65.1%) and New Psychoactive Substances are of better quality than illicit substances (57%). Only 28.1% disagree that the effects of New Psychoactive Substances are stronger than other illicit drugs.

There are two main answers to the question: “How the market should be regulated” with the largest proportion believing it should be regulated through criminal law (29.8%), a smaller proportion believes it should regulated in a similar way as tobacco and alcohol (25.4%)

Key-findings

The survey showed that NPS users also use other psychoactive substances. Half of the respondents used cannabis. The most prevalent NPS was Mephedrone, which is a controlled substance in Europe. Depending on the country, the ways of administering NPS varied. The typical way of taking NPS by respondents the last time they took it was snorting (41.03%). Every third user reported smoking it (35.1%) and to a lesser extent ingestion (24.4%). It should be stressed that injecting was not a popular. Among patients of syringe and needle exchange programmes, every third respondent used Mephedrone. The online survey probably failed to include this group of users.

Almost half of users experienced negative consequences of using NPS, which might provide an important insight into NPS with regard to educational and awareness activities.

NPS were most frequently consumed in the company of friends, which matters from the point of view of potential overdoses considering that a fairly large group of users experienced the negative effects after taking NPS. NPS users are likely to ignore overdose symptoms as they might mistake them for NPS effects.

It is hard to determine the major reason for NPS use because the largest proportions of users reported various reasons for taking them in respective countries. The most popular answers were the following: to bond with others – in Poland (61.7%); to modify perception – in France (61.6%) and the Netherlands (57.8%); to provide respondents with more energy – in the Czech Republic (62.9%).

The survey shows that half of NPS users are not sufficiently aware of the health risks as well as the NPS doses needed to induce a high. This shows that it is worth implementing risk reduction campaigns among NPS users.

A small proportion of the survey participants (5.6%) needed emergency medical assistance because of taking NPS, which means that despite the knowledge gaps regarding the right doses, most NPS users did not require medical intervention. It must be stressed that the survey participants were internet users and possibly also users of internet forums or discussion groups where one can find information on how to take NPS.

The methods of acquiring substances differed among countries: getting substances from someone for free was the main method in the Czech Republic (36.6%) and Poland (32.9%), whereas in France (40.8%) and in the Netherlands (46.2%) the most common way of obtaining substances was purchasing from online shops. 17% Polish respondents said they bought selected substances from regular (bricks and mortar) shops. A relatively high percentage said they "bought it from a dealer" in four countries: Poland (12.2%), France (12.1%) , the Netherlands (11,5%) and the Czech Republic (7%). This may indicate the important role of the illicit market for the spread of NPS.

The amount of money that NPS-users spent during their last online order was quite different: Polish respondents spent an average of €127, the French spent €99, the Dutch spent €78 and the Czechs €46.

There are many internet shops. During the last 12 months, respondents most used shops where NPS are mainly presented with their chemical names and these belong to the most frequented. Respondents had thus different habits depending countries. Dutch users nearly purchased only on "RC shops"; Polish users also often purchased on shops where NPS are presented with branded names (4/10) , then on classified ads (2/10) and on deep web shop(2/10)s; French users also purchased on deep web shops and on branded shops (around 2/10 for both)

There are different reasons to use online shops to obtain NPS. The most often mentioned criterion is "I followed the advice of other users" (46.4%). This indicates the important role of experience exchange among users. In all probability, the internet offers a good opportunity to communicate and exchange information. On the other hand, shops that provide such an opportunity have the advantage of being preferred by NPS users, who mention that "A good profile on webpages where clients share their experience (e.g. SafeOrScam)" is the second most important criterion for them (43.4%). The third most important criterion is "I had a good experience with the shop already" (41.0%).

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Respondents disagree with the following statements: New Psychoactive Substances are less harmful than illicit substances (74.3%); New Psychoactive Substances are of better quality than illicit substances (57.0%); New Psychoactive Substances are less addictive than other illicit drugs (65.1%); The effects of New Psychoactive Substances are stronger than other illicit drugs (28.1%).

With regard to regulating the market: 29.8% of respondents believe regulation should take place through criminal law; 25.4% are proponents of regulating the NPS market in a similar way to tobacco and alcohol.

Introduction

In the last few decades the consumption of so-called new psychoactive substances (NPS) in Europe has been the subject of social concern and calls for much more effective prevention. Regarding the European Drug Report 2013 (quoted as EMCDDA 2013), the essential change in the drug market that has taken place could be characterized as becoming "more fluid and dynamic, and less structured around plant-based substances shipped over long distances to consumer markets in Europe". In the chapter: New psychoactive substances, the report points out that there is an increasing number of NPS. In 2012, the EWS announced 73 new substances in Europe and more than 280 substances are being monitored by the EMCDDA (EMCDDA 2012, 28). There is no doubt that the monitoring systems of NPS use should quickly identify emerging trends. For this purpose it is necessary to "utilize multiple methods and data sources" to incorporate "sensitive data sources in order to more quickly pick up on the new consumptions patterns" (Mounteney, J. at all 2010, 267).

There is another remarkable shift on the drug market: "about a decade ago, most new psychoactive substances were typically sold on the illicit market" (EMCDDA 2012, 28), but with the emergence of "legal highs" the production of NPS has moved to China and India and a more open market has developed. This development has been facilitated by globalisation and technological advancement. "This includes advertisement and sale through the internet and 'bricks and mortar' head shops. In addition, for suppliers, the internet is also facilitating communication as well as providing access to knowledge, expertise and logistics. For users, the internet has made it easier to learn about 'legal highs', share their experiences of using them and provide advice and support to other users" (EMCDDA 2012,28).

This development indicates the growing role of the internet in the future as a platform for information exchange, marketing and the purchase of NPS. Taking this in consideration the project: "Internet Tools for Research in Europe on New Drugs (I-TREND): interdisciplinary and integrated approaches to substances, users and markets" is aimed at exploring the impact of the internet on sharing information among users, creating tools for monitoring online shops and providing more detailed information about users with the help of an online survey. The main goal of the online survey is to describe the socio-demographic characteristics, substance use trajectories/careers and health consequences of the people who purchase psychoactive substances on the internet. The survey was conducted in the Czech Republic, France, the Netherlands and Poland.

Methodology - Some general remarks

The growing importance of the internet and the internet community for exchanging experiences and information about NPS was one of the main reasons to use an on-line survey as a research tool. Another important feature of internet surveys is that responses seem to be more honest, less socially desirable and more extreme than responses to mail or telephone surveys (Vaux, A and Briggs, S.Ch. 2006, 192; Frippiat, D. and Marguis, N. 2010, 304), which makes this choice appropriate. Generally, the popularity of internet research, including web-surveys (on-line surveys, internet-surveys) has being increased and has found use in drug use research (see: Eickenhorsta, P. at all 2012; Lord, S. at all 2011; Tackett-Gibson, 2008; Looby, A. and Earleywine, M. 2007;). An important source in this field is WebSurveyMethodology (www.websm.org). The Web Survey Bibliography lists 6,662 publications (2.09.2013)

The on-line survey has become a very popular tool in social research because of the several widely recognized advantages: the democratization of research; low cost; high rate of return; possibility to reach individuals who are difficult to locate or contact (Frippiat, D. and Marguis, N. 2010, 287-288; Vaux, A and Briggs, S.Ch. 2006, 192; Hunter, L. 2012).

For researchers the possibility of more effectively monitoring data collection is key. This means:

a) forced answers;
b) the possibility of recording data "as and when the responses are send, meaning that researchers can pinpoint the exact moment at which respondents give up. The reasons for giving up could be: the complexity of particular questions or the questionnaire as a whole; a lack of interest" (Frippiat, D. and Marguis, N. 2010, 288 – 289);
c) the monitoring of the quality of results – the "primacy effect", "whereby respondents tend to select the first options they see on the screen, with those at the top of the list receiving far more attention than those at the bottom." (Frippiat, D. and Marguis N 2010, 289).

There are several more and less open questions and ambiguous answers that relate to recruiting a sample and the use of the internet as a sampling tool (see: Vaux, A and Briggs, S.Ch. 2006, 190). In the case of our online survey we have to realise that even if we could define clearly users of NPS, it is a uncertain whether or not and who would respond and speak about randomly distributed non-responses (see: Frippiat, D. and Marguis, N. 2010, 290). Therefore making inferences relates first of all to the population of the respondents participating in the online survey. More problematic is making inferences regarding the general population. There is great uncertainty relating to the self-selection of respondents and the probability of being included in a sample. The main problem is that "self-selection inevitably creates biases that are difficult to overcome" (see: Frippiat, D. and Marguis, N. 2010, 295). The danger is that self-selection web surveys results "are sometimes claimed to be 'representative' because of the high number of respondents or as a result of advanced

adjustment weighting procedures. The term representative is rather confusing" (Bethlehem, J. 2010, 169).

The second phenomena that makes the outcome of online surveys unreliable is under-coverage. "Under-coverage means that the sample selection mechanism of the survey is not able to select some elements of the target population. If data is collected by means of the internet, only respondents with internet access can complete the questionnaire form. The target population of a survey is, however, usually wider than just those with internet. This means that people without internet are excluded from the survey. Research shows that people with internet access differ, on average, from those without internet access. As a consequence, web survey results only apply to the sub-population of people having internet. These results cannot be used to say something about the target population as a whole. Or, to say it differently, web survey based estimates of population characteristics are biased" (Bethlehem, J. 2010, 161). It is extremely difficult to estimate the impact of under-coverage on reliability characteristics of the general population of NPS users. There are some ways that the selection probability of each member of the target population can be improved. The survey can be announced via different channels: e-mails, social networking sites, banner ads in online or offline newspapers, pop-up windows on websites, etc. (see: Frippiat, D. and Marguis, N. 2010, 294). All this could have a substantial impact, but it requires an analysis of the impact of every channel that was used.

The online survey is faced with problems of a low response rate and response quality (Hunter, L. 2010). The online survey offers an opportunity to "enhance formal response quality and to reveal the questionnaire content progressively (pacing)" (Frippiat, D. and Marguis, N. 2010, 303). The advantage of pacing is the possibility to reduce non-response due to navigation errors. Much more complicated is the question for substantive response quality. There are two important aspects: social desirability and low respondent engagement (satisficing) (see: Frippiat, D. and Marguis, N. 2010). In the case of NPS-use, social desirability could play a quite important role. As opposed to the responding questionnaire in the presence of a researcher this may cause socially desirable responses, the answering of the online survey may reduce the risk of social desirability: "Authors (…) seem to agree that responding over the internet makes individuals less sensitive to the intrusive nature of the questions than if they were replying in a different mode. This means that they can report more non-conformist or socially undesirable behaviours while not totally abandoning the notion of social desirability" (Frippiat, D. and Marguis, N. 2010, 304).

The second problem of the online survey is satisficing. This is "the tendency of respondents to choose the first option they find acceptable and to look no further" (Frippiat, D. and Marguis, N. 2010, 305). In consequence, this behaviour could be read as a form of non-response (see: (Frippiat, D. and Marguis, N. 2010, 305).

To sum up, the online survey offers on the one hand the possibility of quickly collecting data about NPS use, avoiding social desirability bias, reaching NPS-users who are difficult to locate or contact and the low cost of inquiry. On the other hand, we must be aware of the serious limitations, for example, making inferences about the general population

Description of conducting the survey

The I-trend online survey was conducted between July and November 2014. The welcome text was translated, and it was made clear in the description and outline of the text that it was part of a trans-European research project to investigate the profiles of users of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS), their effects and context of use. It was made clear that filling out the survey was completely anonymous and the results would only be used for research purposes. Participants were given information about the institution and the person responsible for conducting the survey. The remainder of the text contained a declaration of consent and the fact that the publication of the results would be released in the summer of 2015. (Netherlands)

Although a common methodology was agreed upon, there were some peculiarities in conducting the online survey in every country. How far this may have an impact on the range and structure of the participant sample needs scrutiny. Another reservation regards the translation of questionnaires into the particular languages, which may result in producing incomparable data. There are also some differences regarding the recruitment of participants for the online survey. The general rule was that the survey was addressed to people having any experience with NPS. Above all, the problem of using psychoactive substances is also influenced by the socio-cultural context and anti-drug policies of every country.

This all means that the creation of common data as well comparing these figures between countries is subject to restrictions. Thus, making of genuine comparison between the four countries would be possible in a rather limited way and the international report will be generally based on the discrete presentation of results.

Procedure

Promotion of the survey began 7 July 2014 in most of the country, after the final version of the questionnaire was prepared and pilot tested.

The Czech Republic

The Czech survey used its own online tool, and the final version of the questionnaire was put online May 20, and an announcement was placed on main webpage of the Department of Addictology in Prague and on its Facebook page. An email was circulated to the following stakeholders between May 21 and May 23: (i) online drug-counselling sites (EXT.cz, Sananim.cz, PrevCentrum.cz); (ii) cannabis-related communities (grower.cz, legalizace.cz); (iii) online shops with psychoactive substances / plants (botanic.cz, salviaparadise.cz, vegetalismus.cz, mnauXmnau.cz, amsterdamshop.cz); (iv) BA and MA students of addictology; (v) party/events organisers and music portals (techno.cz, rave.cz, mix.cz, freeteknomusic.cz, schranz.cz, linemedia.cz); (vi) drug services – prevention, risk reduction and treatment centres across the country and the head of the National Monitoring Center for Drugs and Drug Addiction; (vii) online discussion boards (nyx.cz, lide.cz). From these sites, several responded positively to the request, stating that they sent the survey invitation out on their mailing list, and / or posted it on their webpage. These outreach strategies mirrored those used for recruitment in an EU drug market study in 2010.

Given the relatively low response rate, Facebook advertising was set up in mid June. For Facebook advertising, an NPS-focused Facebook page was created by the Department of Addictology in order

to facilitate communication of the results of NPS-related research to the user community, and to recruit users for research purposes (Party-trend.cz). The survey was advertised on the Party-trend.cz FB webpage. Paid, targeted advertising was undertaken through 5 separate posts on this webpage. The wording as well as the target groups of the ad were altered in order to test response rates; targeting the "party population" seemed to yield the best results.

POST TITLE	TARGET GROUP	Clicks	period
Do you know anyone who experiments with new psychoactive substances and similar compounds? Send them a link to an anonymous study conducted by the 1st Faculty of Medicine, Charles University, which is looking at their effects and risks.	Different music styles, new psychoactive substance terms (RCs etc.)	17 post engagements ($0.88 per PE) / 26 clicks	June 10 – 11
Are new psychoactive substances replacing "classical" illegal drugs? Which new substances have minimal adverse effects? What do you think about them – why do you use them and why not?	Legalization terms	136 post engagements ($0.18 per PE) / 177 clicks	June 12 – 18
What were the substances used in the 2014 festival season? Did you encounter illegal drugs, or rather new psychoactive substances? Let us know about them through a European questionnaire that will help us identify their effects and risks on the market. (If you have had experience with these substances, you can send us a substance for analysis after filling in the questionnaire).	Legalization terms	1110 post engagements ($0.27 per PE) / 1,931 clicks	Jul 21 – Aug 18
The summer season seems to be behind us. Did you encounter any new or unknown substances this season? Were the effects different than you anticipated? Share with us information about the effects and risks, and we can analyze any suspicious samples, in order to check whether or not they contain risky compounds.	Techno and free techno music lovers, chill out, electronic music genre	419 post engagements ($0.36 per PE) / 688 clicks	Sept 1 – Sept 8
The European questionnaire on new psychoactive substances is still on – if you haven't yet filled it in, you have time till the end of October, if you have, please pass it on	Techno and free techno music lovers, chill out, electronic music genre	369 post engagements ($0.49 per PE) / 616 clicks	Oct 11 – Oct 25

France

One of the main issue of the online survey was to catch a range of NPS users as large as possible, knowing that NPS use seems to date not to be a large phenomenon in France. First French general population surveys still show low prevalence use of synthetic cannabinoids, NPS presumed to have the larger potential audience, due to high level of cannabis use in France.

The French I-TREND team identified several specific targets and the means that could help to reach them. It appeared that one of the most hard to reach population was socially inserted users, specifically those who don't attend festive events or who are only cannabis users. The targets were the followings:

Specific population

- Drug users forums or NPS users forums;
- Self-support associations (ASUD, AIDES);
- Health centers and professional associations dedicated to drug users;
- Harm reduction facilities (around 150 in France) or French Association for Harm Reduction (AFR), and other harm reduction associations in festive events (MDM);
- The regional network of OFDT's TREND scheme (Emerging Trends and New Drugs)
- GLBT associations

General population

- General media or media specialized on music;
- General prevention: INPES (National Institute for Prevention and Health Education)

The process included several stages.

Before the collection

Upstream the survey launch, OFDT team first took contacts with **networks or representatives of professional associations for care or harm reduction or of self-support users associations** in order to request any help in the communication, directly by speaking with users, by the means of an article, by a banner on their Web site or through their information letter. They all received the press release several days ahead of the beginning of the survey, as well as communication tools such as the I-TREND banner and models of Flyers. All contacted organisations accepted to promote the survey and to spread the questionnaire address. There were announcements of the I-TREND survey on the following sites:

- http://www.federationaddiction.fr/lofdt-lance-grande-enquete-les-nps-destination-usagers/
- www.safe.asso.fr (in the part of the site devoted to drug users)
- http://sos-addictions.org
- https://www.facebook.com/pharmaddict
- https://www.facebook.com/revue.flyer?fref=ts
- asud.org, a-f-r.org
- technoplus.org

The same request was made to **users' forums**, which we were already in contact with the moderators, as part of the forums analysis also conducted in the I-TREND project (see WS1 report). One of the more tricky point within the discussions with moderators and more largely, NPS users, is the administrative position of OFDT, perceived as a kind of governmental agency, and the role that the OFDT implication could play in accelerating NPS ban by delivering information. One "forumer" offered his help by creating a flyer including a QR code that was mainly fitted for festive environment. OFDT's team used this latter as a basis to design some other flyers, fitted to different environments. Support was obtained from the three contacted forums.

https://www.psychoactif.org : Administrator's support with an advertisement located on the front-page + a dedicated sub-forum created for the I-TREND project. This document was passed on to threshold services.
http://www.psychonaut.com/forum.php: OFDT animated a dedicated thread on this site with the agreement of moderators. The welcome was not very warm but we received the help of the sites' moderators and the thread offered the opportunity to exchange on the role of the OFDT on NPS surveillance.
http://lucid-state.org/: It was proceeded the same way for this website. However the welcome was more kindly and offered a great opportunity to talk on the project.

We used OFDT's **network of coordinators for regional surveillance, TREND** (7 cities) to spread the information toward local prevention or harm reduction associations.

As far as general-interest media is concerned, it had been decided by OFDT's communications department as a general principle of communication policy, not to ask directly media to communicate on the survey. This attitude allows OFDT to remain independent when facing the media requests. However a press release introducing the survey was elaborated and it was decided to use opportunities of speaking about the survey when receiving requests for interviews on NPS. On the 17th of May, OFDT answered an interview on NPS to a limited audience radio station "Radio JaZZ".

Data collection launch

We launched the data collection and communicated through:

- a press release on the 19th of May 2014 disseminated and uploaded on the web site;
- A special announcement on the front page OFDT web site with an area dedicated to the survey;
- a e-letter to professionals' OFDT network
- a tweet about the survey from OFDT Twitter account. This tweet has been retweeted by some associations including ground prevention associations.
- a new add on OFDT Facebook page

Data collection period from the 19th of May to the end of October

During the long period of data collection communication were continued to increase number of potentially touched consumers:

- New e-letter and Tweet from OFDT about the survey on the 26th of June (UN International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking. The message has been retweeted by several correspondents until the 4th of July.
- 17th of July : annoucement on the web site of the **French agency for health prevention** (INPES) until the end of the collection
- 17th of July : on the web site on the **French free Call Center for public on Drugs and Addictions (Drogues Info Service)**
- 18th of July: new message to all harm reductions facilities

Several series of mails were sent again to professional and self-support network and association during the duration of the data collection in order to recall that the survey was still ongoing, to send **flyers by e-mail**, to announce the prolongation and finally, the end of the data collection.

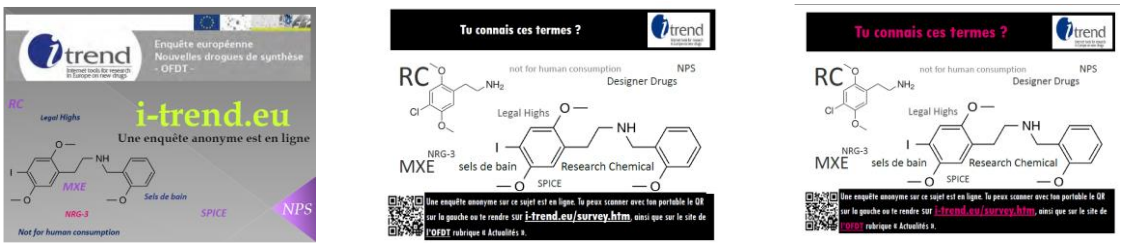

Chart 1: examples of Flyers

OFDT's team tried to back on **general media** each time it was possible. From the 25th to 27th of May we answered media interview requests following the release of EMCDDA report, e.g a rather large audience radio station, France Info.

The survey was mentioned in a specialize publications. (http://www.techniques-ingenieur.fr/actualite/biotech-chimie-thematique_6343/le-marche-des-drogues-de-synthese-explose-article_285670/)

On the 9th of July a magazine specialized in slightly alternative culture released an inteview from OFDT on NPS and settled a short annoucement for the survey on its web site. This tool was one of the most effcicient of the whole coverage (http://www.lesinrocks.com/2014/07/09/actualite/nouvelles-drogues-synthese-participez-lenquete-lofdt-11514193/)

A new interview on NPS on the Inrocks Magazine (8th of October) without article on website had no efficiency at all (http://special.lesinrocks.com/reader/issue.php?num=984).

Finally, nearby the end of the collection phasis, It was tried to use **Facebook advertisements** from a specially created account. It was done quickly and not really on a professional way. The result was discernible but rather disappointing in comparison with those obtained by the Polish partner.

As a conclusion, it seems that most efficient communication means during the survey were the first general information notably on users' forums, and the media buzz on NPS, especially the article published on the website of *Les Inrocks*, potentially connected with an audience of NPS users among general population. The help of associations directly in contact with drugs users during festive events seems to have been efficient too. The Facebook ads, lastly tried didn't provide answerers as it was the case for some partners' surveys. It may be due to two main reasons: the Facebook profile was of poor quality, build quickly while the ads have probably not be used properly. Another explanation could be linked with the fact that NPS use hasn't spread largely in France among youngest population such as students.

The Netherlands

Participants of the online survey were recruited via various channels on the internet. First of all, Trimbos Institute social media were utilized, so Trimbos on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter as well as the website itself. Then, a notification was placed on the DIMS website and Unity, a peer-education project in the Netherlands on alcohol and drugs from a risk-reduction point of view. Finally, several Dutch drug-related forums were contacted with the question if this survey could be placed on the forum. Two general forums were contacted for this purpose: www.partyflock.nl and www.drugsforum.nl. The first is the largest nightlife forum in the Netherlands with almost 400,000 active visitors and is mainly focused on nightlife activities, large dance events and music. The survey was promoted within the drugs section and the science section of the forum. It was promoted by reposting and following replies for one day at two different times, the first in August and a second time in October. It was only promoted the first time in August on drugsforum.nl.

At the beginning of August, responses showed an upward curve, with an average of thirty responses a week. Respondents seemed enthusiastic and the survey was often seen as interesting and new. During September, however, responses dropped significantly, and some respondents also indicated there was "too much surveying" on the internet about drugs. This might have something to do with several other surveys undertaken by Trimbos and also by

some research institutes for mental health. The reactions to Trimbos social media quickly dropped in August and there were not many re-tweets. It does not seem to have been a wise decision to use Trimbos for surveys like this, because people know it as a national institute and not necessarily in a positive capacity among drug users.

The response via the forums was much better, but this also dropped. People on those media were used to surveying and polls, and the Global Drug Survey also targets the Netherlands, so it seems this fatigued users in filling out yet another large survey. Another hampering factor was the nature of the questions, which was an inherent issue involved with the construction of the survey. Many questions did not seem logical to users and used overt repetition of previous questions. Many users got bored with this and felt uncertain about what was asked and began wondering why it was being asked. This was apparent in the comments users gave, and many respondents quit the survey prematurely. Very few users answered questions on where they bought their NPS, this only confirmed that they were beginning to doubt why certain questions were repeated.

Poland

Participants were recruited via various internet channels. The criteria for participation were: any experience with new psychoactive substances, Polish citizenship, aged 16+. The first step was to send a request for participation with information and a link to the survey to more than 300 institutions for drug abuse (therapeutic facilities, local and regional governments, NGOs, risk reduction programs and persons working in drug prevention). Some of these institutions placed information and link on their websites. Efficiency was low, during the first week there was about 0-1 questionnaire filled out per day.

On 14 July 2014 the Facebook fanpage dedicated to the I-trend survey was created (https://www.facebook.com/pages/I-Trend/1447454772180886?ref=hl). There was a fixed post put on the fanpage plus information twice a week about the survey which was sent to about 20-30 Facebook fanpages on: new psychoactive substances, research chemicals, legal highs as well as conventional substances (mostly marijuana). After every piece of information sent out to fanpages the number of filled out questionnaires increased (during the first three days to about 18 per day; after which this decreased to about 2 per day).

Additionally, on 24 July 2014, there was a topic created on both the main Polish forums dedicated to NPS: talk.hyperreal.info and forum.dopalamy.com. Forum users were asked to fill out the online questionnaire and encouraged to ask questions. After three weeks, the topic on forum.dopalamy.com was deleted by the administrator and access to the forum was denied. Efficiency was difficult to measure, however about 30 forum users claimed to have filled out the questionnaire and this number increased to about 2-4 per day in the first three weeks and decreased to 1-2 per day after that.

At the same time, there was information and a link to the I-trend project posted on the website of the University of Social Sciences and Humanities: (http://swps.pl/warszawa/warszawa-aktualnosci/warszawa-doniesienia-ze-swiata-nauki/876-warszawa/warszawa/nauka-i-rozwoj/warszawa-biuro-badan-naukowych/11621-). Efficiency was very low, there was still approximately 1-2 questionnaires filled out per day.

There was also a letter sent out again by e-mail at the end of September 2014 to about 100 therapeutic facilities with the request of encouraging their patients to fill out the questionnaire. Efficiency was still very low, about 1-2 questionnaires filled out per day.

Up until that moment 156 questionnaires had been completed.

On 13 October, with the help of the marketing department of the University of Social Sciences and Humanities (SWPS), promotion via Facebook Ads began. Respondents to whom the advertisement was shown were defined as: Polish citizens, age 16+. The advertisement was seen by 6,500 Facebook users and this resulted in 1,229 questionnaires being filled in by 3 November (58-59 daily).

All in all, 1,385 participants took part in the I-trend survey: 949 male respondents, 436 female respondents, average age: 20.8.

Socio-demographic profile of the respondents

The use of an internet survey and the different ways of promoting it must presumably have has some decisive impact on the national samples of respondents. Unfortunately, it is impossible to estimate whether these samples could be representative.

Table 1. Q2 Gender of respondents

	Polish		French		Dutch		Czech		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Man	934	68.9%	423	78.9%	205	77.1%	109	65.7%	1,671	71.9%
Woman	421	31.1%	113	21.1%	61	22.9%	57	34.3%	652	28.1%
Total	1,355	100%	536	100%	266	100%	166	100%	2,323	100%

Male respondents represent the great majority in all national samples: from 67.7% (the Czech Republic) to 78.9% (France).

Table 2. Q3 Age of respondents

	Polish		French		Dutch		Czech		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
15 or under	0	0.0%	4	0.7%	0	0.0%	4	2.4%	8	0.3%
16-18	678	50.0%	25	4.7%	31	11.7%	34	20.5%	768	33.1%
19-20	263	19.4%	66	12.3%	39	14.7%	15	9.0%	383	16.5%
21-22	162	12.0%	62	11.6%	44	16.5%	23	13.9%	291	12.5%
23-24	96	7.1%	79	14.7%	40	15.0%	19	11.4%	234	10.1%
25-26	53	3.9%	47	8.8%	26	9.8%	20	12.0%	146	6.3%
27-28	23	1.7%	49	9.1%	16	6.0%	14	8.4%	102	4.4%
29-30	23	1.7%	24	4.5%	20	7.5%	7	4.2%	74	3.2%
31-35	25	1.8%	71	13.2%	22	8.3%	20	12.0%	138	5.9%
36-40	10	0.7%	52	9.7%	10	3.8%	7	4.2%	79	3.4%
41-45	1	0.1%	26	4.9%	6	2.3%	2	1.2%	35	1.5%
46-50	0	0.0%	11	2.1%	5	1.9%	0	0.0%	16	0.7%
51 or above	21	1.5%	20	3.7%	7	2.6%	1	0.6%	49	2.1%
Total	**1,355**	**100%**	**536**	**100%**	**266**	**100%**	**166**	**100%**	**2,323**	**100%**

Generally, the 15-24 age group is prevalent among respondents (72.5%), but this is partly the result of the large number within the Polish sample. Furthermore, according to data on NPS, this age group seems to be most in danger (EMMCDA 2012). Indeed, the average age of the national samples differs quite clearly: for Polish respondents it is 20.2; for French respondents it is 28.1; for Dutch respondents it is 25.6; for Czech respondents it is 24.3; the average age for the total sample is 24.5.

Table 3. What is your highest academic education attained?

	Polish		French		Dutch		Czech		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
General elementary education	369	27.2%	35	6.6%	12	4.7%	37	22.6%	445	19.3%
Intermediate vocational qualification	141	10.4%	50	9.5%	49	19.4%	18	11.0%	217	9.4%
Matriculation certificate (end of secondary education)	651	48.0%	120	22.7%	15	5.9%	64	39.0%	850	37.0%
Higher vocational Dutch	0	0.0%	5	.9%	60	23.7%	0	0.0%	65	2.8%
Lower tertiary certificate	81	6.0%	213	40.3%	63	24.9%	10	6.1%	367	16.0%
Higher tertiary (university)	113	8.3%	105	19.9%	49	19.4%	35	21.3%	302	13.1%
other Dutch	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	5	2.0%	0	0.0%	5	.2%
Total*	1,355	100%	528	100%	253	100%	164	100%	2,30	100%

*some respondents did not report their level of education. There were additional points in the Dutch survey

Regarding the education level of respondents, the national samples vary considerably. The largest categories among Polish respondents represent persons with general elementary education (27.2%) and persons with a matriculation certificate (48.0%). A similar structure is witnessed in the Czech sample: persons with general elementary education amounted to 22.6%; persons with a matriculation certificate 39.0%; persons with higher tertiary education (university) 21.3%. However, the French sample was very different[2] from the two post-communist countries: persons with a matriculation certificate (22.7%); persons with lower tertiary certificate (40.3%) and persons with higher tertiary education – university (19.9%).

[2] Note from OFDT: These differences reflect age disparities but also national choices in educational system (differences between Dutch and French) as well as the global education level of the national population.

Table 4. Q30 Currently, what is your position on the labour market?

	Polish		French		Czech		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Employed	193	14.2%	204	39.2%	62	37.8%	527	23.0%
Self-employed (licence holder, businessperson)	45	3.3%	34	6.5%	9	5.5%	125	5.5%
Employed and self-employed in parallel	25	1.8%	13	2.5%	4	2.4%	55	2.4%
Retired	2	0.1%	2	0.4%	0	0.0%	15	0.7%
Working retired	2	0.1%	1	0.2%	0	0.0%	52	2.3%
Retired due to disability	7	0.5%	4	0.8%	0	0.0%	38	1.7%
Student (high school)	750	55.4%	22	4.2%	0	0.0%	781	34.1%
Student (university)	213	15.7%	131	25.1%	0	0.0%	383	16.7%
On maternity or parental leave	6	0.4%	2	0.4%	2	1.2%	10	0.4%
Unemployed – registered at the Job Center	35	2.6%	73	14.0%	8	4.9%	116	5.1%
Unemployed – not registered at the Job Centre	48	3.5%	20	3.8%	2	1.2%	70	3.1%
Other, please specify	29	2.1%	15	2.9%	7	4.3%	51	2.2%
Student (any)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	59	36.0%	59	2.6%
Job (temporary)	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	11	6.7%	11	.5%
Total*	**1,355**	**100%**	**521**	**100%**	**164**	**100%**	**2,293**	**100%**

*some respondents did not report their labour status

Regarding to current position on the labour market, the following categories are mostly represented in the total sample: employed (23.0%); student – high school (34.1%); student – university (16.7%).

Polish respondents are mostly students which is consistent with their mean age (20 years old). In the other countries the part of working respondents is prevalent. In France, users show a high level of unemployment.

Q. 30 Currently, what is your position on the labour market (Dutch version)?

	Frequency	Percent
Employed , fulltime	68	26.9
Self-employed (licence holder, businessperson)	13	5.1
Freelance, parttime	11	4.3
Employed, parttime	37	14.6
Temporary employee	49	19.4
Unemployed – registered at the Job´s Office	9	3.6
Unemployed – not registered at the Job´s Office	27	10.7
Other	39	15.4
Total	253	100

Synthesis

	Polish	French	Czech	Dutch
Have a job	18%	46%	50%	65%
Students	71%	29%	36%	
Job seekers	3%	14%	5%	4%

Table 5. Q31 How would you describe your place of residence?

	Polish		French		Dutch		Czech		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Large city (>50,000 inhabitants) or its close suburbs (less than 30 minutes away by train)/ A large city (>100,000 inhabitants) or its close suburb (less than 30 minutes transport) - Dutch version	655	48.3%	248	65.8%	86	45.3%	44	38.6%	1033	50.7%
Small or medium city of around 5,000 to 50,000 inhabitants/ An average city (20,000-100,000) - Dutch version	422	31.1%	80	21.2%	42	22.1%	43	37.7%	587	28.8%
Village (<5,000 inhabitants) far from a large city (more than 30 minutes away by train)/ Small city (5,000-20,000) Dutch version	278	20.5%	49	13.0%	40	21.1%	27	23.7%	394	19.4%
A village (<5,000 inhabitants) far from a large city (more than 30 minutes transport)					22	11.6%				
Total*	**1,355**	**100%**	**377**	**100%**	**190**	**100%**	**114**	**100%**	**2,036**	**100%**

The majority of respondent live in large cities (>50,000 inhabitants) or its close suburbs (less than 30 minutes away by train) – 50.7%.

In general we can characterize the average participant of the online survey as male, from 15 to 24 years old, with a matriculation certificate or tertiary education, a student of either high school or a university, living in a large city.

Pattern of use

The participants of the survey were asked about their experiences in using drug. They answered questions about their use of psychoactive substances in the last 30 days (current use), last 12 months (recent use) and ever in their life (lifetime prevalence). Respondents who reported using drugs in the last 12 months are called recent users and those who once took drugs in their life are referred to as experimental users. One of the first questions concerns the use of psychoactive substances. The aim of the question was to discover the prevalence of use over a respondent's life. Almost all respondents (98.3%) used alcohol at least once in their life. Nearly 95% declared also smoking tobacco. Of illegal substances, marijuana and hashish are indicated most frequently, by 94.8 % of respondents. The vast majority (57.9%) admitted taking Amphetamine or Methamphetamine, while almost 1/3 (32.8%) also claimed to have taken ecstasy pills or MDMA powder. It worth mentioning that some ecstasy pills could have been Amphetamine. Other psychoactive substances were taken by less than half of respondents:

LSD or psilocybin mushrooms (26%), cocaine (21%) solvents of glues (16%). 51.9% of respondents had taken NPS (synthetic cannabinoids included) once in their life and 27% had used herbal extracts (Salvia, Kratom) which are herbal NPS. Some respondents may not know the term NPS and not report it in the survey. In Poland, NPS are known as "boosters" (pol. *Dopalacze*). Let us take a look at the differences between countries. Cannabis was most popular among respondents in the Czech Republic (99.4%). Others surveys like GPS and Youth also show that the Czech Republic is in the group of countries with the highest prevalence of cannabis use. The lowest level of use is in the Netherlands (90.7%). Amphetamine or Methamphetamine was the most popular among respondents in the Czech Republic and the Netherlands (73%). Lowest prevalence was found in Poland (57.9%). In France, the most popular stimulant was cocaine. 78% of respondents had taken cocaine at least once in their life. It is not surprising that in Poland this rate stood at 21%. Interested results were obtained concerning heroin. 43.8% of respondents had taken heroin or Buprenorphine in France. In other countries, the rate was not higher than 17%. The most popular NPS was in France (79%) and lowest rate was in the Czech Republic (39.6%). 51.3% of respondents had used herbal NPS in France (the highest rate) whilst the lowest was in Poland (16.2%). The same situation concerns Ketamine. This substance was the most popular in France (58%) and least popular was in Poland (7%).

Table 6. Q4 In your life, which of these substances have you already used?

		Polish		French		Dutch		Czech		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Alcohol	Yes	1,329	98.1%	501	98.4%	244	98.4%	161	99.4%	2,235	98.3%
	No	26	1.9%	8	1.6%	4	1.6%	1	0.6%	39	1.7%
Tobacco (including hookah / shisha)	Yes	1,295	95.6%	491	96.5%	213	85.9%	154	97.5%	2,153	94.8%
	No	60	4.4%	18	3.5%	35	14.1%	4	2.5%	117	5.2%
Marijuana/hashish	Yes	1,270	93.8%	498	97.8%	225	90.7%	158	99.4%	2,151	94.8%
	No	84	6.2%	11	2.2%	23	9.3%	1	0.6%	119	5.2%
Ecstasy pills or MDMA powder	Yes	444	32.8%	446	87.6%	227	91.5 %	116	72%	1,233	54.3%
	No	910	67.2%	63	12.4%	21	8.50%	45	28%	1,039	45.7%
Cocaine	Yes	286	21.1%	397	78%	155	62.50%	83	51.9%	921	40.6%
	No	1,068	78.9%	112	22%	93	37.5 %	77	48.1%	1,350	59.4%
Amphetamine (speed) or Methamphetamine (Ice)	Yes	785	57.9%	371	72%	181	73%	65	40.4%	1,402	61.7%
	No	570	42.1%	138	27%	67	27%	96	59.6%	871	38.3%
LSD or psilocybin mushrooms / magic mushrooms	Yes	352	26%	427	83.9%	186	75%	117	73.1%	1,082	47.6%
	No	1,002	74%	82	16.1%	62	25%	43	26.9%	1,189	52.4%
Heroin or Buprenorphine in (Subutex, Suboxone), Opium	Yes	100	7%	223	43.8%	24	9.7%	20	12.8%	367	16.2%
	No	1,254	92%	286	56.2%	224	90.3%	136	87.2%	1,900	83.8%
Solvents or glues or paints or other volatile substances, Poppers	Yes	220	16%	334	65.6%	86	34.7%	19	11.7%	659	29%
	No	1,134	83%	175	34.4%	162	65.3%	144	88.3%	1,615	71%
Ketamine	Yes	95	7%	295	58%	113	45.6%	33	20.6%	536	23.6%
	No	1,259	93%	214	42%	135	54.4%	127	79.4%	1,735	76.4%
Herbal extracts (Salvia, Kratom)	Yes	219	16.2%	261	51.3%	85	34.3%	52	32.1%	617	27.1%
	No	1,135	83.8%	248	48.7%	163	65.7%	110	67.9%	1,656	72.9%
New Psychoactive substances, synthetic cannabinoids included (Spice. etc.)	Yes	581	42.9%	403	79.2%	131	52.8%	61	39.6%	1,176	51.9%
	No	773	57.1%	106	20.8%	117	47.2%	93	60.4%	1,089	48.1%
Other	Yes	320	23.7%	170	33.4%	81	32.7%	36	29.0%	607	27.2%
	No	1,033	76.3%	339	66.6%	167	67.3%	88	71.0%	1,627	72.8%

The age of first experience in using substances was lowest for alcohol (Mean=14), cannabis (M=15, highest in France and the Netherlands M= 16) and glue or paint solvents or other volatile substances and poppers (M=17, highest in France M=23). The age of first contact with heroin or Buprenorphine (M=20, highest in France M=23) and cocaine were the highest (M=20). First contact of users with LSD and psilocybin mushrooms (highest in France and the Netherlands M= 20), NPS (highest in the Czech Republic M= 24) and ecstasy pills (highest in France M= 21) was 19.

Table 7. Q4A When did you try this product for the FIRST TIME in your life

	Polish	French	Dutch	Czech	Total
	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean	Mean
Alcohol	14	-	14	14	14
Cannabis	15	16	16	15	15
Heroin or Buprenorphine	17	21	23	21	20
Hallucinogenic	18	20	20	18	19
Cocaine	19	21	21	21	20
New Psychoactive Substances	17	-	23	24	19
MDMA; ecstasy	17	21	20	18	19
Solvents or glues	15	17	23	17	17

Respondents, who have used NPS, were asked about taking psychoactive substances during the last 12 months. Almost all respondents (94.1%) had had alcohol. Cannabis was indicated most frequently of the illegal substances (79%) of respondents. The half (51.1%) admitted to having taken amphetamine/methamphetamine or ecstasy. 41.4% of respondents had taken NPS. 25.8% of respondents had taken cocaine. Let us see which substances were the most popular in countries in the survey. Alcohol was most popular in the Netherlands (86.8%), France (89.2%), Poland (90.7%), and cannabis in the Czech Republic (88%). On the second position were cannabis in Poland (79,8%), French (81,5%) and Dutch (64,7%). In the Czech Republic (88%) was reported MDMA; ecstasy, Amphetamines. NPS were taken in France 87.7%, Dutch 40,2%,Poland 25,8% and in the Czech Republic 20,5%.

Table 8. Q4B Did you use this during the last 12 months

		Polish		French		Dutch		Czech		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Alcohol	Yes	1,229	90,7	478	89,2	231	86,8	158	95,2	2,096	90,2
	No	100	7,4	23	4,3	4	1,5	4	2,4	131	5,6
Cannabis	Yes	1,081	79,8	437	81,5	172	64,7	146	88,0	1,836	79,0
	No	189	13,9	52	9,7	37	13,9	13	7,8	291	12,5
Heroin or Buprenorphine	Yes	62	4,6	118	22,0	7	2,6	5	3,0	192	8,3
	No	38	2,8	98	18,3	16	6,0	151	91,0	303	13,0
Hallucinogen	Yes	232	17,1	307	57,3	136	51,1	65	39,2	740	31,9
	No	150	11,1	124	23,1	41	15,4	95	57,2	410	17,6
Cocaine	Yes	166	12,3	293	54,7	99	37,2	42	25,3	600	25,8
	No	120	8,9	88	16,4	42	15,8	118	71,1	368	15,8
New Psychoactive Substances	Yes	350	25,8	470	87,7	107	40,2	34	20,5	961	41,4
	No	231	17,0	97	18,1	15	5,6	120	72,3	1,414	60,9
MDMA; ecstasy, Amphetamines	Yes	575	42,4	344	64,2	187	70,3	83	50,0	1,189	51,2
	No	251	18,5	89	16,6	26	9,8	78	47,0	444	19,1
Solvents or glues	Yes	61	4,5	96	17,9	46	17,3	7	4,2	210	9,0
	No	159	11,7	219	40,9	35	13,2	156	94,0	569	24,5

Respondents were asked about taking psychoactive substances during the last 30 days. Almost all respondents (79.3%) had had alcohol. Cannabis was indicated most frequently of the illegal substances with (60.3%) of respondents. Every forth (27,6%) admitted taking amphetamine/methamphetamine or ecstasy. 11.6% of respondents had taken cocaine. 11.9% of respondents had taken NPS. Let us see which substances were the most popular in the countries of the survey. Alcohol was most popular in all countries and the second one was cannabis. Let see in NPS prevalence during last 30 days. The most popular were in France (49,8%) and Poland (33.4). In Dutch 23,7% had used and in Czech 11,9%.

Table 9. Q4C Did you use it during the last 30 days

		Polish		French		Dutch		Czech		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Alcohol	**Yes**	1,040	76,8	446	83,2	211	79,3	145	87,3	1842	79,3
	No	289	21,3	31	5,8	24	9,0	17	10,2	361	15,5
Cannabis	**Yes**	779	57,5	369	68,8	138	51,9	115	69,3	1401	60,3
	No	491	36,2	68	12,7	71	26,7	44	26,5	674	29,0
Heroin or Buprenorphine	**Yes**	32	2,4	66	12,3	4	1,5	2	1,2	104	4,5
	No	68	5,0	52	9,7	19	7,1	154	92,8	293	12,6
Hallucinogenic	**Yes**	79	5,8	157	29,3	73	27,4	19	11,4	328	14,1
	No	303	22,4	150	28,0	104	39,1	141	84,9	698	30,0
Cocaine	**Yes**	50	3,7	165	30,8	41	15,4	14	8,4	270	11,6
	No	236	17,4	128	23,9	100	37,6	146	88,0	610	26,3
NPS	**Yes**	194	14,3	267	49,8	63	23,7	19	11,4	276	11,9
	No	387	28,6	300	56,0	59	22,2	135	81,3	581	25,0
MDMA; ecstasy, Amphetamines	**Yes**	290	21,4	209	39,0	106	39,8	35	21,1	640	27,6
	No	536	39,6	135	25,2	107	40,2	126	75,9	904	38,9
Solvents or glues	**Yes**	27	2,0	41	7,6	19	7,1	3	1,8	90	3,9
	No	193	14,2	55	10,3	62	23,3	160	96,4	470	20,2

Respondents received a list the most popular NPS in order to select which they took in the last year. The most popular NPS is mephedrone (23.6%) which is illegal across Europe. In second place is kokolino (18.2%) including cathinone substances. This product resulted in a fatality in Poland. In third place was Włodziu (17.3%). It is worth mentioning that 15.9% of respondents declared taking substances from the NBOMe group also caused fatalities in Poland.

Table 10. Q5 Did you use any of the following NPS in the last 12 months

	Number	%
włodziu	410	17.3
UR-144	151	6.4
sztywny misza	295	12.4
pMPPP	68	2.9
Pentedrone	283	11.9
Methoxetamine (MXE)	145	6.1
Mephedrone	560	23.6
MDPBP (NRG1)	68	2.9
kokolino	432	18.2
Funky	286	12.0
Etylofenidat	212	8.9

ETH-CAT	160	6.7
Buphedrone	125	5.3
Bromo-dragonFLY	185	7.8
Brephedrone	208	8.8
AM-2201	233	9.8
Alpha-PVP	197	8.3
AB-FUBINACA	26	1.1
6- APB "Benzofury"	124	5.2
5F-UR-144	196	8.3
4-HO-MET	112	4.7
3,4-DMMC	157	6.6
3-MMC	273	11.5
2C-P	123	5.2
2C-B	56	2.4
2C-E	68	2.9
25I-NBOMe	96	4.0
25C-NBOMe	283	11.9

The largest number of respondents took NPS with friends (31.9%) at home. They are also took NPS with friends outside (27.9%). The most popular places to take NPS are at the pub, club. Respondents declared taking NPS in these places with friends (17.1%). The largest proportion of respondents in France reported taking NPS with friends at home (42%). This place was also reported by the highest proportion of Czech users. In the Netherlands the most popular places were at a club or pub (44%). In Poland, the most common place to take NPS with friends was outside (in the countryside).

Table 11. Q9 What were the circumstances the last time you took the substance you selected? (*several answers are possible*)

	Polish		French		Dutch		Czech		Total	
	N	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**	**N**	**%**
Alone at home	114	10.7%	62	17.9%	25	15.4%	7	11.3%	208	12.7%
With friends at your home or their home	318	29.90%	146	42.1%	47	29.0%	11	17.7%	522	31.9%
Alone at a club, pub or party	17	1.6%	4	1.2%	2	1.2%	2	3.2%	25	1.5%
With friends at a club, pub or party	125	11.7%	61	17.6%	72	44.4%	22	35.5%	280	17.1%
Alone outside/in the countryside	29	2.7%	10	2.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	39	2.4%
With friends outside/in the countryside	377	35.4%	55	15.9%	9	5.6%	16	25.8%	457	27.9%
At school/work	41	3.8%	3	0.9%	0	0.0%	3	4.8%	47	2.9%
Other circumstances	44	4.1%	6	1.7%	7	4.3%	1	1.6%	58	3.5%
Total	-	100%	-	100%	-	100%	-	100%	-	100%

The typical way of using NPS the last time users took it was snorting (41%). Every third person reported smoking (35.1%) and to a lesser extent ingestion (24.4%). 13.5% reported taking it sublingually (13.5%). The other ways of taking NPS were reported by less than 6% of respondents. In Poland, the most popular method was smoking (48.5%) and snorting (48.2%). Respondents from France most often took NPS by snorting (39%) and ingestion (47.4%). In the Netherlands NPS was most often taken Ingestion (75.9%). In the Czech Republic the most popular way was snorting (38.8%), but there was also a high percentage taking it through ingestion (33.3%). The result showed that there are differences between countries. It is worth mentioning that injection was not popular among respondents from the on-line survey.

Table 12. Q10 What were the typical ways of administering the NPS you selected, the last time you took it? (*several answers are possible*)

	Polish		French		Dutch		Czech		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Smoking	516	48.5%	46	13.3%	5	3.1%	6	10.0%	573	35.1%
Waterpipe	67	6.3%	6	1.7%	1	0.6%	1	1.7%	75	4.6%
Bong	89	8.4%	7	2.0%	1	0.6%	0	0.0%	97	5.%
Vaporizer	9	0.8%	3	0.9%	1	0.6%	1	1.7%	14	0.9%
Chasing the dragon	18	1.7%	7	2.0%	1	0.6%	2	3.3%	28	1.7%
Sublingual	65	6.1%	29	8.4%	-	-	3	5.0%	220	13.5%
Ingestion	173	16.2%	164	47.4%	123	75.9%	20	33.3%	399	24.4%
Snorting	513	48.2%	135	39.0%	42	25.9%	23	38.3%	674	41.3%
Rectal	16	1.5%	9	2.6%	3	1.9%	1	1.7%	27	1.7%
Injection	24	2.3%	15	4.3%	1	0.6%	3	5.0%	42	2.6%

It is not surprising that respondents declared that they took NPS mostly to bond with others (to socialize) (53.2%), to get high (51.2%) and to modify perception (47.5%). Every third person took NPS to relax (32.5%). Polish users took it most often to bond with others (61.7%); in France (61.6%) and the Netherlands (57.8%) most often to modify perception; in the Czech Republic to provide respondents with energy. There are differences between countries in the most important intended effects for using NPS.

Table 13. Q11 What are the most important intended effects that you seek when you used the substance you selected? (*several answers are possible*)

	Polish		French		Dutch		Czech		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
To bond with others, to socialize	657	61.7%	143	41.6%	43	26.7%	25	40.3%	868	53.2%
To get high	583	54.7%	162	47.1%	66	41.0%	24	38.7%	835	51.2%
To provides me energy (sexual performance not included)	101	9.5%	134	39.0%	32	19.9%	39	62.9%	306	18.8%
To improve sexual intercourse	104	9.8%	31	9.0%	3	1.9%	19	30.6%	157	9.6%
To increase the positive effects of another drug	76	7.1%	14	4.1%	10	6.2%	5	8.1%	105	6.4%
To reduce the negative effects of another drug	65	6.1%	16	4.7%	6	3.7%	4	6.5%	91	5.6%
To modify perception	443	41.6%	212	61.6%	93	57.8%	28	45.2%	776	47.5%
To soothe pain	92	8.6%	13	3.8%	3	1.9%	7	11.3%	115	7.0%
To allay or alleviate anxiety	261	24.5%	51	14.8%	8	5.0%	11	17.7%	331	20.3%
To fight sleeplessness	91	8.5%	16	4.7%	2	1.2%	7	11.3%	116	7.1%
To fight tiredness	151	14.2%	62	18.0%	2	1.2%	21	33.9%	236	14.5%
To relax	451	42.3%	84	24.4%	25	15.5%	15	24.2%	575	35.2%
To stimulate brain activity for learning or work	117	11.0%	43	12.5%	64	39.8%	0	0.0%	224	13.7%
Others	77	7.2%	79	23.0%	24	14.9%	4	6.5%	184	11.3%

Near half of respondents reported that they had unpleasant feelings after using NPS the last time they took it but only in the Netherlands (51.6%) was the figure above 50%. The lowest percentages were found in the Czech Republic and France (43%).

Table 14. Q. 12 Did you feel anything unpleasant after you used the substance last time?

	Polish		French		Dutch		Czech		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
yes	513	48.2%	149	43.3%	83	51.6%	27	43.5%	772	47.3%
no	552	51.8%	195	56.7%	78	48.4%	35	56.5%	860	52.7%

Taking drugs and NPS may cause unpleasant effects. Respondents were asked to describe the unpleasant feelings after taking NPS. Several answers were possible. Strong paranoia, fear, anxiety were reported by 44.7% of respondents. A slightly smaller proportion had a strongly increased heart rate, palpitations, chest pains (42.4%). In third position was sweating (32.7%). In every country the most common unpleasant feelings were different. In Poland (52,4%) and France (36,5%), respondents reported strong paranoia, fear, anxiety.. In the Netherlands, respondents complained of sweating (41%). In the Czech Republic, respondents reported feeling extremely agitated and excitement,

sleeplessness (55.6%). We must treat this last result with some caution due to the fact that not many persons answered this question in the Czech Republic.

Table 15. Q13 Did you feel anything unpleasant after taking the substance last time? What were the unpleasant feelings after taking the substance? (*several answers are possible*)

	Polish		French		Dutch		Czech		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
The substance had no effect at all	23	4.5%	6	4.1%	3	3.6%	5	18.5%	37	4.8%
Unpleasant, intensive hallucinations, delusions	145	28.3%	21	14.2%	11	13.3%	3	11.1%	180	23.3%
Strong craving to use more	139	27.1%	24	16.2%	11	13.3%	12	44.4%	186	24.1%
Depression, dejection	163	31.8%	17	11.5%	11	13.3%	9	33.3%	200	25.9%
Strong paranoia, fear, anxiety	269	52.4%	54	36.5%	12	14.5%	10	37.0%	345	44.7%
Aggression	77	15.0%	6	4.1%	2	2.4%	1	3.7%	86	11.2%
Extreme agitation and excitement, sleeplessness	171	33.3%	33	22.3%	16	19.3%	15	55.6%	235	30.5%
Fatigue, exhaustion, sleepiness	184	35.9%	26	17.6%	12	14.5%	7	25.9%	229	29.7%
Muscle aches, cramps, jaw clenching	140	27.3%	39	26.4%	19	22.9%	7	25.9%	205	26.6%
Shaking	167	32.6%	19	12.8%	12	14.5%	0	0.0%	198	25.7%
Seizures	97	18.9%	3	2.0%	2	2.4%	0	0.0%	102	13.2%
Loss of muscle control, problems with movement	108	21.1%	16	10.8%	10	12.0%	1	3.7%	135	17.5%
Headache	150	29.2%	36	24.3%	20	24.1%	8	29.6%	214	27.8%
Nausea, vomiting	130	25.3%	33	22.3%	24	28.9%	3	11.1%	190	24.6%
Greatly increased heart rate, palpitations, chest pains	252	49.1%	48	32.4%	17	20.5%	10	37.0%	327	42.4%
Breathing difficulties, dyspnoea	111	21.6%	15	10.1%	6	7.2%	0	0.0%	132	17.1%
Sweating	180	35.1%	27	18.2%	34	41.0%	11	40.7%	252	32.7%
Hyperthermia	149	29.0%	31	20.9%	5	6.0%	6	22.2%	191	24.8%
Dehydration and/or diarrhoea	52	10.1%	15	10.1%	6	7.2%	8	29.6%	81	10.5%
Problems with sight	119	23.2%	25	16.9%	9	10.8%	0	0.0%	153	19.8%
Itches, skin changes , changed skin colour, spots, blisters, rash etc.	57	11.1%	4	2.7%	1	1.2%	2	7.4%	64	8.3%
Other unpleasant side effects	0	0.0%	23	15.5%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	23	3.0%

One of the effects of using NPS could be the need for medical assistance. 5.6% needed medical attention. The largest proportion was in Poland (6.2%), the lowest in the Czech Republic (3.7%). In

2014, there were more than 2,500 medical interventions needed after taking NPS. Perhaps, the explanation for this is that online respondents are also readers of NPS forums where there is information on how to use NPS and not overdose.

Table 16. Q14 Did you ever seek medical assistance due to unpleasant feelings after taking NPS?

	Polish		French		Dutch		Czech		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Yes	32	6.2%	6	4.1%	4	4.8%	1	3.7%	43	5.6%
No	481	93.8%	142	95.9%	79	95.2%	26	96.3%	728	94.4%

Respondents were asked if they had enough information about the NPS they had taken. Less than half indicated that they did not have enough information about the health risks (43%). Half reported not having enough information about how much is needed for it to take effect (50%). Most respondents said that they had enough information on how to administer it (80.7%). This was indicted by the greatest number of respondents in all countries. 65.7% declared that they had Information on the NPS legality or illegality. French, Dutch and Czech respondents had the greatest lack of information about the health of NPS. Polish reported the greatest lack of information on safe doses of NPS (52.6%) but also health risks. These results show that one of most urgent issues is to provide NPS users with information about how safe doses and the risks that can be expected after taking NPS.

Table 17. Q15 In relation to the NPS you last took, do you consider that you had enough information on the following aspects?

	Polish		French		Dutch		Czech		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Information on legality or illegality	592	61.5%	199	72.4%	62	56.9%	38	71.7%	891	63.7%
Information on effects	613	63.7%	138	50.2%	73	67.0%	28	52.8%	852	60.9%
Information on health risks	534	55.5%	54	19.6%	25	22.9%	21	39.6%	634	45.3%
Information on the doses to have the required effect	580	60.3%	151	54.9%	65	59.6%	23	43.4%	819	58.5%
Information on the safe dosage	506	52.6%	112	40.7%	65	59.6%	22	41.5%	705	50.4%
Information on ways of administering	800	83.2%	201	73.1%	83	76.1%	45	84.9%	1129	80.7%

One of the main issues of the survey was to discover the reasons for taking NPS. The highest proportion of respondents (77%) in the survey in all countries claimed that one of the main reasons to take NPS was curiosity. In second place was to have the opportunity (71%). In Czech also was very important for respondent easy to get (72%).

Table 18. Q16 What were the most important reasons for taking a substance the last time you took it? Please specify the importance for you?

		Polish	French	Dutch	Czech	Total
The use was not forbidden	Not important	57,1%	74,0%	80,3%	55,9%	62,7%
	Rather important	26,9%	19,9%	16,6%	27,1%	24,4%
	very important	16,1%	6,1%	3,2%	16,9%	12,8%
It was easy to get for me	Not important	32,0%	31,2%	43,9%	28,8%	32,9%
	Rather important	36,9%	44,0%	41,4%	39,0%	38,9%
	very important	31,1%	24,8%	14,6%	32,2%	28,2%
It is difficult to detect during tests	Not important	65,1%	82,6%	95,5%	65,5%	71,6%
	Rather important	20,5%	12,2%	4,5%	17,2%	17,1%
	very important	14,5%	5,2%	0,0%	17,2%	11,3%
I had the opportunity (through friends, etc.)	Not important	24,9%	27,2%	57,3%	28,3%	28,7%
	Rather important	36,0%	33,6%	32,5%	28,3%	34,9%
	very important	39,2%	39,1%	10,2%	43,3%	36,5%
Just for my personal curiosity	Not important	26,2%	16,2%	9,6%	31,1%	22,7%
	Rather important	32,8%	32,4%	37,6%	21,3%	32,7%
	very important	41,0%	51,4%	52,9%	47,5%	44,5%
I like the effects	Not important	43,8%	38,2%	20,4%	29,5%	39,8%
	Rather important	24,7%	28,4%	41,4%	29,5%	27,3%
	very important	31,5%	33,3%	38,2%	41,0%	32,9%
It is less harmful	Not important	48,5%	48,0%	60,5%	39,3%	49,3%
	Rather important	31,1%	38,5%	29,9%	31,1%	32,5%
	very important	20,4%	13,5%	9,6%	29,5%	18,3%
It is of better quality	Not important	48,7%	24,5%	44,6%	35,0%	42,9%
	Rather important	26,4%	37,0%	38,2%	35,0%	30,0%
	very important	24,9%	38,5%	17,2%	30,0%	27,1%
Is not so much addictive	Not important	52,5%	32,4%	65,0%	30,5%	48,8%
	Rather important	24,9%	38,8%	26,8%	33,9%	28,2%
	very important	22,6%	28,7%	8,3%	35,6%	22,9%
The effects are strong	Not important	32,0%	20,2%	73,2%	41,4%	34,0%
	Rather important	33,4%	46,2%	20,4%	31,0%	34,7%
	very important	34,6%	33,6%	6,4%	27,6%	31,4%

Mode of purchase

There is diversity in the modes of purchasing NPS: from illicit street market buying, to more or less legal shops, internet shops operating internationally. The question is whether there are differences between the four countries, although we must be careful to interpret these results.

Table 19. Mode of purchasing selected NPS

	Polish		French		Dutch		Czech		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Given it by someone for free	350	32.9%	76	23.3%	24	15.4%	19	30.6%	469	29.1%
Bought from a friend who is not a dealer	150	14.1%	49	15.0%	28	17.9%	9	14.5%	236	14.7%
Bought from a dealer	129	12.1%	36	11.0%	18	11.5%	5	8.1%	188	11.7%
Bought from a shop online	146	13.7%	143	43.9%	72	46.2%	12	19.4%	373	23.2%
Bought from a classified ad online	12	1.1%	4	1.2%	-	-	0	0.0%	20	1.2%
Bought it from a shop (not online)	183	17.2%	6	1.8%	4	2.6%	6	9.7%	205	12.7%
I made it myself	0	0	1	0.3%	0	0.0%	1	1.6%	1	0.0%
Other	95	8.9%	11	3.4%	10	6.4%	1	1.6%	12	0.7%
Bought from a friend who is a dealer	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	9	14.5%	9	0.6%

One way to get substances is from someone for free. For respondents from the two post-communist countries: the Czech Republic (36.6%) and Poland (32.9%), this seems to be the main mode of purchasing the selected substance whereas in France (40.8%) and in the Netherlands (46.2%) the most common way is to buy it from online shops. 17% of Polish respondents said they bought the selected substance from regular (bricks and mortar) shops. The dynamic growth of the number of regular shops is a concern for the public and politicians in Poland. Only a few French users (1.7%) buy substance in regular shops; Dutch users also seem to prefer online shops rather than regular shops. One of the most common ways of buying the NPS was from a friend who is not a dealer. This indicates the social aspect of NPS consumption. A relatively high percentage of people bought from a dealer: Poland (12.2%), France (12.1%), the Netherlands (11.5%) and the Czech Republic (7%). This may indicate the essential role of the illicit market for the spread of NPS.

Table 20. Frequency of ordering NPS in online shops

		Polish		French		Dutch		Czech		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
During the last 12 months, have you ordered any NPS online	yes	251	23.4%	195	55.1%	92	59.4%	17	25.4%	556	33.6%
	no	823	76.6%	159	44.9%	63	40.6%	54	74.6%	1098	66.4%

Although the purchase of substances from online shops varies in the four countries, it is important to know how often NPS are ordered online. Again we see a division between both post-communist countries and Western European countries. 23.4% of Polish and 25.4% of Czech respondents replied in the affirmative to the following question: "During the last 12 months, have you ordered any NPS online?" However, more than half of respondents from France and the Netherlands answer this question in the affirmative.

Table 21. Q18 During the last 12 months, how many times have you ordered any NPS from an online shop?

	Polish		French		Dutch		Czech*		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
None	815	76.5%	135	41.5%	63	40.6%	0	0.00%	1,013	65.6%
One time	52	4.9%	51	15.7%	27	17.4%	0	0.00%	130	8.4%
2-5 times	85	8.0%	94	28.9%	55	35.5%	0	0.00%	234	15.1%
to 10 times	41	3.8%	21	6.5%	9	5.8%	0	0.00%	71	4.6%
11 to 20 times	19	1.8%	15	4.6%	1	0.6%	0	0.00%	35	2.3%
More than 20 times	53	5.0%	9	2.8%	0	0.0%	0	0.00%	62	4.0%
Total	1,065	-	325	-	155	-	0	0	1,545	-

* 17 Czech respondents purchased on the internet but did not report how many times

No doubt that using the internet as a method of getting NPS is very different in these countries. For three countries: Poland, France and the Netherlands we have much more specific data about the frequency of ordering: 4.9% of Polish respondents, 15.7% of French respondents and 17.4% Dutch respondents ordered one time during the last 12 months; 8.0% of Polish respondents, 28.9% of French respondents and 35.5% of Dutch respondents ordered 2-5 times. These results indicate again that purchase of NPS on the internet does play an important role in France and the Netherlands, and continues to play a minor role in Poland.

Table 22. Q19 During the last online order, how much have you spent?

	Polish	French	Dutch	Czech	Total
Mean	127	99	78	46	88
Mode	25	50	100	43	42
Median	32	57	50	43	43

*Exchange rate €1 = PLN 4.03 (Polish National Bank, 8.4.2015); Exchange rate €1 – CZK 27.6 (Czech National Bank, 8.4.2015)

Polish respondents spent an average of €127 on their last online order; the French spent €99; the Dutch €78 and the Czechs spent €46. The most often mentioned amount (mode) is €25 in the case of Polish users; €50 for French users; €100 for Dutch users and €43 for Czech users. 50% of Polish respondents said they spent less or as much as €32, another 50% spent more than €32. 50% of French respondents spent €57 or less. For Dutch respondents, the median is €50; the Czech median is €43. We should mention that the results in the case of Czech respondents are not valid because of the relatively small numbers of respondents (17) who answered the question**.**

Table 23. Q20 During the last online order, how many different NPS did you buy?, Quantity of NPS ordered from online shops

	Polish		French		Dutch		Czech		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	105	42.0%	98	52.4%	41	44.6%	9	52.9%	298	49.7%
2-5	97	38.8%	83	44.4%	46	50.0%	8	47.1%	240	40.1%
more than 5	48	19.2%	6	3.2%	5	5.4%	0	0.0%	61	10.2%
Total	250		240		92		17		599	

The great majority of respondents who buy NPS from online shops order from one to five NPS. Only in the case of Polish respondents about 20% of them order more than 5 NPS at once. These results raise some questions: what are the reasons for ordering only one NPS? Financial, habit or popularity? In the case of ordering 2 to 5 NPS, does it mean an interest to have more experiences with different NPS?

Table 24. Q21 During the last 12 months, where did you buy online and how many times did you order any new psychoactive substance from an online shop

		Polish		French		Dutch		Czech		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Shops where NPS are presented with branded names	Didn't bought	155	62.0%	184	79.3%	74	82.2%	1	25.0%	414	71.9%
	1 time	35	14.0%	31	13.4%	11	12.2%	2	50.0%	79	13.7%
	2-5 times	25	10.0%	13	5.6%	3	3.3%	0	0.0%	41	7.1%
	6-10 times	6	2.4%	1	0.4%	1	1.1%	1	25.0%	9	1.6%
	>10 times	29	11.6%	3	1.3%	1	1.1%	0	0.0%	33	5.7%
Shops where NPS are mainly presented with their chemical names	Didn't bought	80	32.0%	75	32.3%	8	8.9%	4	30.8%	167	28.5%
	1 time	39	15.6%	53	22.8%	30	33.3%	8	61.5%	130	22.2%
	2-5 times	68	27.2%	64	27.6%	42	46.7%	1	7.7%	175	29.9%
	6-10 times	15	6.0%	19	8.2%	8	8.9%	0	0.0%	42	7.2%
	>10 times	48	19.2%	21	9.1%	2	2.2%	0	0.0%	71	12.1%
Classified ads	Didn't bought	189	75.6%	225	97.0%	76	84.4%	0	0.0%	490	85.7%
	1 time	26	10.4%	4	1.7%	9	10.0%	0	0.0%	39	6.8%
	2-5 times	9	3.6%	1	0.4%	3	3.3%	0	0.0%	13	2.3%
	6-10 times	10	4.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	10	1.7%
	>10 times	16	6.4%	2	0.9%	2	2.2%	0	0.0%	20	3.5%
Silk Road and similar	Didn't bought	196	78.4%	177	76.3%	79	87.8%	0	0.0%	452	78.6%
	1 time	19	7.6%	27	11.6%	6	6.7%	2	66.7%	54	9.4%
	2-5 times	16	6.4%	16	6.9%	4	4.4%	0	0.0%	36	6.3%
	6-10 times	4	1.6%	5	2.2%	0	0.0%	1	33.3%	10	1.7%
	>10 times	15	6.0%	7	3.0%	1	1.1%	0	0.0%	23	4.0%
Other	Didn't bought	184	73.6%	215	92.7%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	399	82.6%
	1 time	13	5.2%	7	3.0%	0	0.0%	1	100.0 %	21	4.3%
	2-5 times	12	4.8%	8	3.4%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	20	4.1%
	6-10 times	10	4.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	10	2.1%
	>10 times	31	12.4%	2	0.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	33	6.8%

There are a variety of internet shops and ways of getting NPS. Some shops specialize in selling branded names, others in research chemicals. Other source are classified ads or the Silk Road, its founder has already been sentenced to life imprisonment.

During the last 12 months, respondents most used shops where NPS are mainly presented with their chemical names (around 68% for Polish and French users and up to 91% for Dutch users). Shops where NPS are presented with branded names were also popular among Polish users (38%) and

some French user (21%) while classified ads drew 24% of Polish users and shops on deep web concerned 24% of French users and 22% of Polish users.

Table 25. Q24 What were the most important criteria for you when you selected shops in the last 12 months? (no more than 5)

	Polish		French		Dutch		Czech		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
I followed the advice of other users	129	51.6%	86	38.7%	41	47.1%	11	64.7%	267	46.4%
I had good experience with the shop already	109	43.6%	82	36.9%	42	48.3%	3	17.6%	236	41.0%
The site uses a secure payment method	55	22.0%	66	29.7%	4	4.6%	5	29.4%	130	22.6%
There is a good profile on the pages where the client shares their experiences (e.g. SafeOrScam)	98	39.2%	116	52.3%	25	28.7%	11	64.7%	250	43.4%
It specializes in one substance	37	14.8%	18	8.1%	3	3.4%	4	23.5%	62	10.8%
It was cheaper than other online shops	71	28.4%	19	8.6%	19	21.8%	6	35.3%	115	20.0%
NPS are of better quality than other online shops	74	29.6%	65	29.3%	15	17.2%	8	47.1%	162	28.1%
NPS are shipped in discrete packets	63	25.2%	59	26.6%	23	26.4%	4	23.5%	149	25.9%
The shipment was more reliable than other sites	42	16.8%	42	18.9%	13	14.9%	0	0.0%	97	16.8%
The NPS I was looking for was not available in other online shops	28	11.2%	34	15.3%	9	10.3%	0	0.0%	71	12.3%
No online shop sends the NPS I was looking for to my country	8	3.2%	13	5.9%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	21	3.6%
No specific criterion	46	18.4%	29	13.1%	8	9.2%	0	0.0%	83	14.4%
Other	4	1.6%	12	5.4%	6	6.9%	0	0.0%	22	3.8%
Total	764		641		208		52		1,665	

There are different reasons for using online shops to obtain NPS. The most often mentioned criterion is “I followed the advice of other users” (46.4%). This indicates the important role of experience exchange among the users. The internet no doubt offers a good opportunity for communication and information exchange among users. Thus, shops that offer such an opportunity are often preferred by NPS users, who mention that “There is a good profile on the pages where the clients share their experiences (e.g. SafeOrScam)”. This is the second most important criterion (43.4%). The third most important criterion is “I had good experience with the shop already” (41.0%). Less important are the follow criteria: “NPS are of better quality than other online shops” (28.1%); “NPS are shipped in discrete packets” (25.9%); “The site uses a secure payment method” (22.6%); “It was cheaper than other online shops” (20.0%); “The shipment was more reliable than other sites” (16.8%).

Information

The problem of the prevalence of NPS and the possibly growing health risks is extremely closely connected with the question of the sources of information that are available for NPS users and how reliable these sources of information are. In an interesting study on the role of so-called innovative drug users for the dissemination of information about psychoactive substances, the authors point out that this group of users may "play a disproportionate role in accelerating drug experimentation and use among their peers. Understanding how innovative drug users disseminate information may therefore permit the development of drug prevention messages that may have broader impact once accepted by larger social networks" (Boyer et al. 2007, 5).

Table 26. Q26 Where did you look for information about NPS? (several answers are possible)

	Polish		French		Dutch		Czech		Total	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
from an online shop	116	8.6%	70	18.0%	42	21.1%	6	9.7%	234	11.7%
from a web forum	389	28.7%	267	68.8%	173	86.9%	31	50.0%	860	42.9%
from friends / family / acquaintances	401	29.6%	155	39.9%	102	51.3%	29	46.8%	687	34.3%
I do not need any information	332	24.5%	19	4.9%	1	0.5%	8	12.9%	360	18.0%
from my dealer	160	11.8%	19	4.9%	17	8.5%	10	16.1%	206	10.3%
from TV/radio	81	6.0%	58	14.9%	8	4.0%	2	3.2%	149	7.4%
from newspapers, magazines	55	4.1%	30	7.7%	135	67.8%	2	3.2%	222	11.1%
I do not have any information	393	29.0%	12	3.1%	12	6.0%	0	0.0%	417	20.8%
Other	125	9.2%	65	16.%	22	11.0%	12	19.4%	224	11.1%

The main source of information about NPS seems to be web forums (42.9%). There are some differences between countries: web forums are used by 86.9% of Dutch respondents, 68.8% of French respondents, 50% of Czech respondents and only 28.7% of Polish respondents. The second most common mentioned source of information are Friends/family/acquaintances (34.3%). Again, this source of information seems to be used more often by Dutch (51.3%) and Czech (46.8%) users than by French (39.9%) and Polish (29.6%) users. The important role of friends for the dissemination of information seems to confirm the fact that innovative users use the "buddy list" and instant messaging (Boyer et al. 2007). In comparison to these two main sources of information, less important are such popular media as TV/radio (7.4%) or newspapers/magazines (11.1%). Also, online shops and dealers seems not to be considered as very useful providers of information about NPS. The answer: "I do not need any information" is given by a relatively high percentage of Polish users (24.5%). This is difficult to explain, especially considering that the NPS market is changing. On the other hand, our project shows that the so-called Top-Ten most "popular" NPS has not changed substantially.

Another extremely important question regards the level of knowledge that NPS users have about NPS. This could be based on their own experiences, on provided information or on opinions shared by many people. Users were asked to agree or disagree with the following statements (see: table)

Table 27. Q28 Do you agree with the following statements

		Polish		French		Dutch		Czech		Total	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
NPS are less harmful than illicit substances	Yes, that's true for most of them	110	8.1%	9	2.4%	3	1.6%	8	6.4%	130	6.3%
	Yes, that's true for some of them	210	15.5%	32	8.5%	55	28.8%	26	20.8%	323	15.8%
	No, that's not true	1035	76.4%	263	69.6%	133	69.6%	91	72.8%	1522	74.3%
	I do not know	0	0.0%	74	19.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	74	3.6%
NPS are of better quality than illicit substances	Yes, that's true for most of them	189	13.9%	66	17.5%	39	20.4%	19	15.7%	313	15.3%
	Yes, that's true for some of them	243	17.9%	138	36.5%	81	42.4%	36	29.8%	498	24.4%
	No, that's not true	923	68.1%	105	27.8%	71	37.2%	66	54.5%	1165	57.0%
	I do not know	0	0.0%	69	18.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	69	3.4%
NPS are less addictive than other illicit drugs	Yes, that's true for most of them	149	11.0%	9	2.4%	8	4.2%	13	10.4%	179	8.7%
	Yes, that's true for some of them	305	22.5%	61	16.1%	56	29.3%	26	20.8%	448	21.9%
	No, that's not true	901	66.5%	220	58.2%	127	66.5%	86	68.8%	1334	65.1%
	I do not know	0	0.0%	88	23.3%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	88	4.3%
The effects of NPS are stronger than other illicit drugs	Yes, that's true for most of them	521	38.5%	42	11.1%	6	3.1%	14	12.2%	583	28.6%
	Yes, that's true for some of them	542	40.0%	153	40.5%	91	47.6%	42	36.5%	828	40.6%
	No, that's not true	292	21.5%	128	33.9%	94	49.2%	59	51.3%	573	28.1%
	I do not know	0	0.0%	55	14.6%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	55	2.7%

Approximately one fifth of respondents agreed with the statement "New Psychoactive Substances are less harmful than illicit substances", whereas 74.3% disagreed. There is a differentiation of two positive opinions: "Yes, that's true for most of them" and "Yes, that's true for some of them". 15.8% respondents thinks that only some NPS are less harmful than illicit substances, and only 6.3% believe that most NPS are less dangerous than illicit substances. These results indicate a rather high awareness about the high risk of NPS among users. In general, there are no significant differences among national samples.

The second statement: “New Psychoactive Substances are of better quality than illicit substances” is probably difficult to confirm or refute because an assessment of the quality of NPS or illicit substances requires laboratory analysis. The answers rather reflect opinion than evidence-based knowledge therefore it is not very surprising that they are diverse. 57% of respondents disagree with the answer that NPS are of better quality than illicit substances. There are significant differences among national samples. This view is shared by 68.1 % of Polish respondents and 54.5% of Czech respondents but only 27.8% of French and 37.2% Dutch respondents. It is difficult to find credible reasons for these results. It seems that in the opinion of more than 60% of Dutch respondents, NPS are of better quality than illicit substances. Perhaps this has to do with the greater legality of the NPS market and better quality control of customers. The point leads to the following question: “How should the market be regulated?” with the results given in the table below.

The statement: “New Psychoactive Substances are less addictive than other illicit drugs” partly shows the addictive proprieties of drugs. The website DrugWarFacts.org publishes some results about the addictive properties of popular drugs (http://www.drugwarfacts.org/cms/Addictive_Properties#sthash.QogeKa8A.dpbs). In order to measure the addictive properties of drugs different criteria can be used which gives different results. One possible way to discover the addictive property of a drug could be based on the concept of the addictive potential of “the people who sample a particular substance, what portion will become physiologically or psychologically dependent on the drug for some period of time? Heroin and Methamphetamine are the most addictive by this measure. Cocaine, Pentobarbital (a fast-acting sedative), nicotine and alcohol are next, followed by marijuana and possibly caffeine. Some hallucinogens—notably LSD, mescaline and psilocybin—have little or no potential for creating dependence.” (Gable 2006, 208).

Some NPS seem to possess a relatively high risk of dependency but not the same as illicit drugs heroin or cocaine. For example, street Methadone has a 2.08 value on the dependency scale, Ketamine 1.54; 4-Methylthioamphetamine (4-MTA) 1.30, Khat 1.04; whereas heroin is at the top of the with 3.0 (http://www.drugwarfacts.org/cms/Addictive_Properties#sthash.QogeKa8A.dpbs). The effects of Krokodil are “very rapid but its action is of short duration, which may lead to rapid physical dependence and frequent administration”(Grund, J. -P. C., et al. 2013).

It is obviously difficult to make a correct assessment whether indeed NPS are less addictive than other illicit drugs. In the opinion of 65.1% respondents NPS are similarly as addictive as illicit drugs. No doubt some NPS are less addictive than other illicit drugs and this opinion was expressed about 30% of respondents.

Similar difficulties were found with the following statement: “The effects of NPS are stronger than other illicit drugs”. 28.1% of users disagreed with this statement, the greatest proportion being among Czech (51.3%) and Dutch (49.2%) respondents. The majority of respondents

represent the opposite view. Indeed, the alarming news about several NPS-related fatalities seemed to confirm this opinion.

One crucial question is how the drug/NPS market should be regulated. The British report on "New Psychoactive Substances Review (2014)" discusses different legislative responses, how it is possible to regulate NPS and what impact one or the other regulation could have on the drug market. Unfortunately, the question: "How should the market be regulated" was asked only to Polish and Czech respondents. There are no significant differences between the two groups.

Table 28. Q36 How should the market be regulated?

		Polish	Czech	Total
No regulation	N	192	15	207
	%	14.2%	9.1%	13.6%
Vendors should regulate themselves	N	68	10	78
	%	5.0%	6.1%	5.1%
Market should be regulated by customer reviews, like e-bay	N	62	14	76
	%	4.6%	8.5%	5.0%
Consumer safety legislation, like for food or supplements	N	118	14	132
	%	8.7%	8.5%	8.7%
Medicine legislation, like for instance pain medication	N	111	18	129
	%	8.2%	11.0%	8.5%
Similarly to tobacco and alcohol	N	352	34	386
	%	26.0%	20.7%	25.4%
Through criminal law – they should be banned	N	420	33	453
	%	31.0%	20.1%	29.8%
Other	N	32	7	39
	%	2.4%	4.3%	2.6%
Do not know, no opinion	N	0	19	19
	%	0.0%	11.6%	1.3%
Total		1,355	164	1,519

What is surprising is the large number of respondent (29.8%) that proposed regulating the market through criminal law, which could mean prohibition of NPS. A much more moderate solution was the regulation of the NPS market in a similar way to tobacco and alcohol, which is mentioned by 25.4% of respondents. 13.6% of respondents believed there should be no regulation. Only a small percentage of respondents supports such regulation as: "Vendors should regulate themselves" or the "Market should be regulated by customer reviews, like e-bay".

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