

Short history of new psychoactive substances spread in Slovak Republic since 2009

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NÁRODNÉ MONITOROVACIE CENTRUM PRE DROGY
GENERÁLNY SEKRETARIÁT VÝBORU MINISTROV
PRE DROGOVÉ ZÁVISLOSTI A KONTROLU DROG
ÚRAD VLÁDY SLOVENSKEJ REPUBLIKY

NPS first appeared in Slovak Republic

- Since 2005, but especially since 2008 – rapid increase of prevalence of new psychoactive substances in Europe: 2005 – 14, 2006 – 7, 2007 – 16, 2008 – 13, 2009 – 24, 2010 – 41.

In Slovakia that time was more than 100 seizures of NPS

- Number of seizures in last years increase permanently: 3 seizures in 2007, over 10 seizures in 2008, 27 seizures in 2009, up to 44 seizures in 2010 (EWS).
 - Drug identified: spice, ketamine, synthetic cannabinoids, synthetic cathinones, mephedron and others).
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Two groups of NPS

- Two different group of NPS:
 - Synthetic drugs already known – LSD, MDMA or methamphetamine; designer drugs
 - Other group: „Spice“, synthetic cannabinoids, cathinones, called also “legal highs”
 - Main difference: in way of their distribution
 - First group was distributed through illegal channels and black market
 - Second group was advertised on Internet and was free supplied into special “shops”: “Crazy shops”, „Smart shops“, „Head shops“ etc..., using often unfair ad (declared as bath salts, souvenirs, etc.
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“Spice period”

- First signs – in 2009: internet shops
 - Many varieties and effects
 - Sold as herbs for inhalation
 - “natural substances” – popular among young people and those seeking “healthy life style”
 - NMCD reported its monitoring findings on this new phenomena to the National Drug Service
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“Legal highs period”

- In spring 2010 NMCD obtained information on sale of suspicious substances in several new shops (Crazy shops) in northern regions of Slovakia
 - These substances were used orally as drugs and showed psychoactive effects
 - On their cover they were declared as souvenirs, gifts, bath salts
 - There was also warning on not to use orally – can cause harm of health.
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First steps

- NMCD initiated special meeting of EWS, with presence of State Trade Inspection and public health representatives to assess the situation
 - Several steps were adopted in order to stop this sales
 - These substances was legal, therefore not legal but only some administrative measures were adopted, using formal and procedural shortcomings in operation of trade (inspection of compliance with sanitary and trade standards from the part of the seller, as well as by utilization of the act on advertisement).
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- Despite measures adopted, networks of shops spread to the south and east of Slovakia and also on internet
 - At the end of summer 2010, shops reached the capital, Bratislava (2 stores)
 - Then, several journalists bought these substances there and according to instructions of the selling staff used them on themselves.
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- They subsequently published their experience and information about effects of tried substances, what caused wave of activities at various levels of politics and social life, leading to the closure and ban on sale of such products.
 - 43 new substances were added with effect from 1 March 2011 in shortened legislative procedure by the Act No. 43/2011 Coll. to the annex of the said act.
 - Subsequently the person registered as the owner of crazy shop network was detained and shops were closed down
 - These shops were later renamed to Euphoria shop and their activity on the internet, as well as in direct physical sale, was renewed.
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- This situation was reflected in our monitoring activities:
 - Some questions were added to the population survey questionnaire for survey in December 2010.
 - Collecting data for ESPAD study, questions on NPS were added to the questionnaire too.
 - Data from both surveys are processed already.
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- Now, new legislation is being prepared at expert level to solve rapid increase of types and also amount of NPS
 - One idea among other is to prepare regulation with lower force comparing to law that would allow to put suspicious substances on so called „waiting list“ for a certain period
 - During that period, substances would be not allowed to be sold and meantime their possible risk should be explored and assessed
 - Issues: finance, human resources, infrastructure, know-how or sometime knowledge
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