

I-SEE, Project for strengthening information exchange between Italy and South East Europe neighbouring countries on New Psychoactive Substances.

SUMMARY

The main objective of the I-SEE project, which involves the National Early Warning Systems (EWS) on drugs of Italy, Republic of Slovenia and Republic of Croatia, is to strengthen information exchange on New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) between Italy and South East Europe neighbouring countries, where drug smuggling is easy due to the right of free movement of persons and goods into EU territory.

Target groups of project activities are Law Enforcement, professionals working in analytical laboratories, clinical centres and NGOs involved in prevention, treatment and rehabilitation of drug addicts.

The work is organized in 3 steps:

1. Building up a network with Law Enforcement, NGOs and health sector (Republic of Slovenia). A number of NGOs will be selected to collect NPS samples from drug users and transmit them anonymously to Law Enforcement to be analyzed. Analytical results will be provided, for control purposes, and to inform drug users about what they are consuming. In parallel, health professionals will be involved to share clinical information on NPS with Law Enforcement and NGOs.
2. Building up a clinical network (Republic of Croatia), to develop an effective network in clinical settings, including clinical toxicology laboratories, emergency wards, departments of forensic medicine and other relevant subjects in the health sector, so as to increase scientific and professional capacities related to the identification of NPS in biological samples and effective treatment of intoxicated patients.
3. Developing tools for strengthening NPS information exchange and identification (Italy), by arranging a model for information flows among the three EWSs, acquiring new technical and analytical tools enabling laboratories to identify NPS and sharing the existing Italian online database containing analytical and clinical information on NPS identified in Europe.

The project will result in meetings, trainings and study visits to improve the know-how of professionals involved. Guidelines for analytical and clinical information collection and sharing will be developed and disseminated. The project will provide reference materials and free access to an online database on NPS to EWS networks members, improving their analytical and clinical capacity.

According to the European Pact against Synthetic Drugs (EPSD), the project contributes to a more coordinated and effective operational response to NPS phenomenon, including activities to develop evidences which can be used to identify transnational criminal networks and to assess the nature and evolution of crime and criminal patterns. The project also allows the creation of transnational networks where Law Enforcement may benefit from information gathered by analytical

laboratories, clinical centres, NGOs and Law Enforcement from neighbouring countries. As a result, it fulfils the need for a reinforced coordination, information sharing and tasks, and enhanced regional cooperation. Finally, by means of a balanced approach, the project enables participating Member States to boost the circulation of information about NPS and new distribution patterns among national authorities, European Commission and European Monitoring Center for Drugs and Drug Addiction.