



Factsheet 4

NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES

The number of new psychoactive substances reported by Governments continued to increase, with 388 unique substances identified as of 2014, compared to 348 the previous year. Most of the abused substances are synthetic cannabinoids and synthetic cathinones whose abuse mimics the effects of controlled drugs, such as cannabis and amphetamine. In 2014, the Commission on Narcotic Drugs called upon Governments and international organizations to do more to combat the abuse of these new substances, while in 2015, the Commission is expected to review World Health Organization (WHO) recommendations for the possible international control of 26 non-scheduled substances.

Country-specific examples to tackle the rise in the number of new psychoactive substances include China, often cited as a source for new psychoactive substances production. China has taken steps to control several of these substances, including by placing 12 new psychoactive substances under domestic control in 2014 and actively supporting multilateral efforts to investigate, identify and prosecute those responsible for major manufacturing and distribution operations. Consumer countries have also been active in both domestic scheduling and supporting international efforts to stop the trafficking of these substances. In 2014, the United States Drug Enforcement Administration seized hundreds of thousands of retail packages containing new psychoactive substances ready for distribution and millions of dollars in illicit assets during its special operations entitled Project Synergy, in cooperation with numerous international law enforcement agencies.

Multilateral efforts – Project Ion: INCB also assists multilateral efforts by Governments to stem the flow and abuse of new psychoactive substances through its new project to coordinate and exchange information on new psychoactive substance trafficking, known as Project Ion. Special operations, directed by the New Psychoactive Substances Task Force, gather information and intelligence related to suspicious shipments, trafficking and production of new psychoactive substances and exchange this information through its global focal point network of more than 100 Governments and international agencies.