

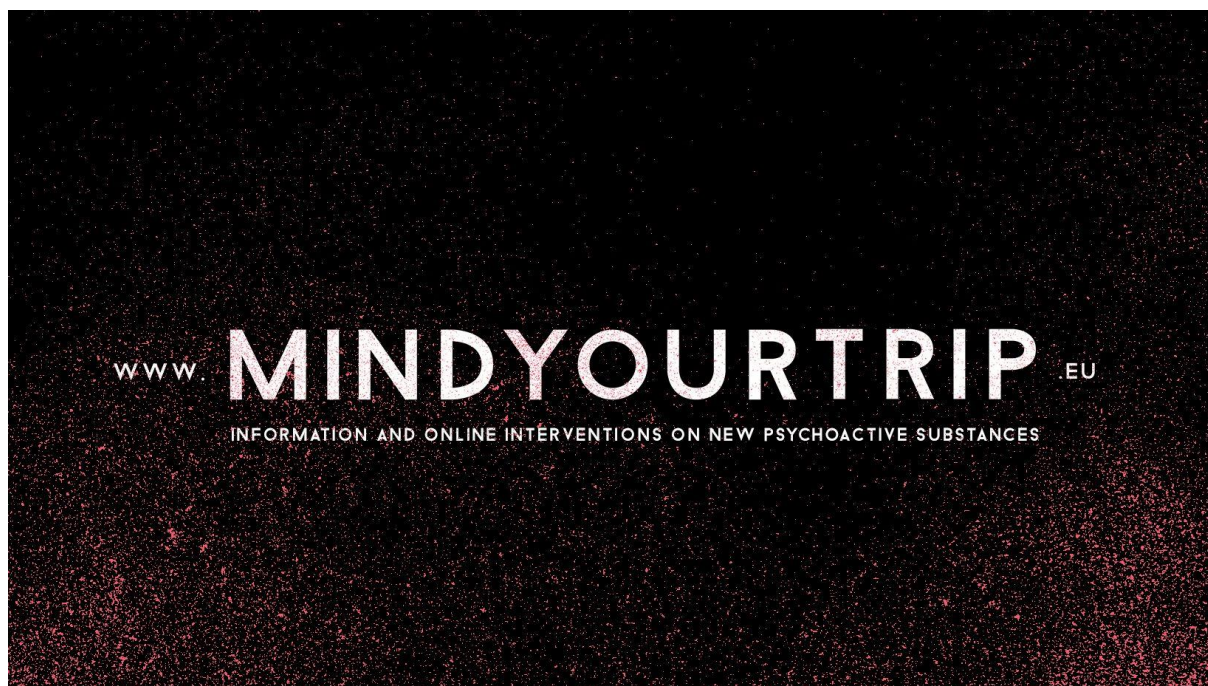
## Click for Support – REALized

NEWSLETTER #2 - JUNE 2018

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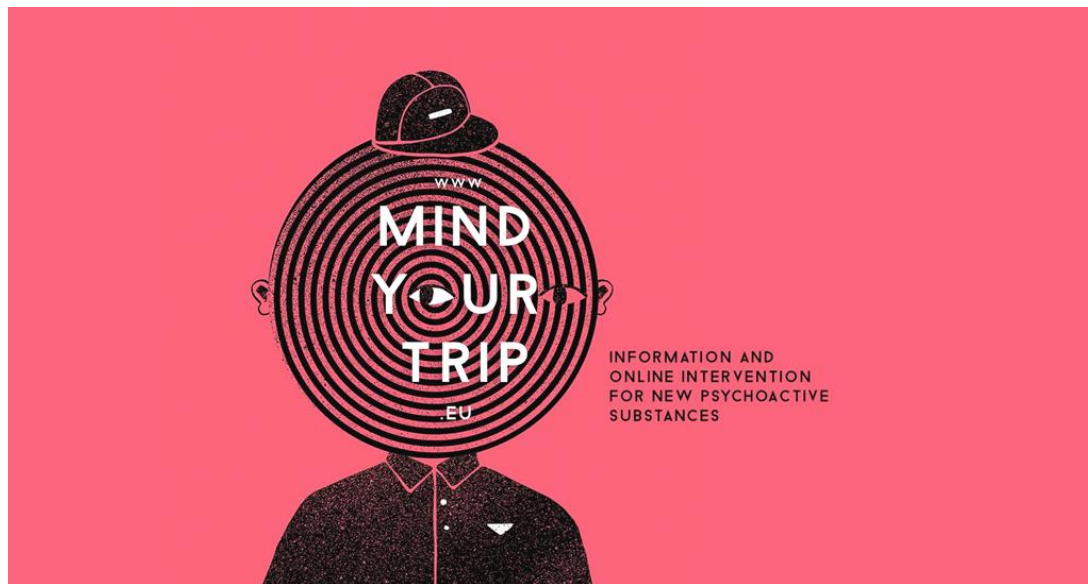
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## Introduction

Great strides have been made in the past year in the European DG HOME-project 'Click for Support - REALized' since our first project newsletter of June 2017: the web-based intervention (WBI) for young consumers of New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) has been developed in the form of a responsive website and an application for mobile devices. The WBI has been given the name '**MIND YOUR TRIP**', and the official logo was designed by Jacques & Lise (Belgium):



After the project's first workshop for the 13 European project partner organisations in Riga, Latvia in June 2017, the technical- and content development of the WBI began. Dutch IT company Wild Sea has taken care of the technical development of the website and app, whereas Dutch partner Tactus Addiction Care has been responsible for the development of the intervention programme, consisting of three modules: 'Insight', 'Safer Use', and 'Quit or Reduce'. Belgian partner CAD Limburg has been main responsible for the development of promotional materials aimed at the target group of young users of NPS, as well as for the development of a promotion and dissemination strategy once the website is publically available. Mind Your Trip will be promoted through social media channels as well as printed promotion cards in 13 European countries.

The partner organisations in the 13 European countries involved in 'Click for Support - REALized' have been developing contents for their national websites, and have compiled nationally relevant information on professional face-to-face drug- and health counselling for referral where necessary, national legislation concerning NPS, links to relevant websites regarding harm reduction measures, more information on new substances and their effects and risks, etc.. This information will give the user of the Mind Your Trip website or app a comprehensive overview of information regarding different aspects of NPS in his or her respective country. Furthermore, the project has continuously been disseminated among professionals by all partners, among others at various drug- and prevention related conferences and professional social media channels.

## 2nd project workshop

In April 2018, the project's second workshop for partner organisations has taken place in Brixen/Bressanone, Italy, hosted by Italian project partner Forum Prävention. During this workshop, the proceedings and next steps in the project have been discussed among the project group, as well as the strategy for the promotion of the WBI among the target group. Promotional cards for the WBI have been developed in 2017, and external advisor for target-group issues Tiny Devriendt of CAD Limburg (Belgium) has given a presentation on her views for effectively reaching the target group and especially the 'sub'age-groups within the 14-25 year age group.

Additionally, 13 prevention experts involved through the partner organisations have received a 2-day training in handling the website (its technical features and the intervention programme), and online counselling from Tactus Addiction Care (NL) trainers Heleen Westendorp and Mariëlle Brenninkmeijer, and technical developers Joost Nuijten and Michiel de Vries of Wild Sea (NL). Furthermore, German NPS expert Karsten Tögel-Lins of BAS!S e.V. Frankfurt has given a training module on the effects and toxicology of New psychoactive Substance groups. An English-language training manual has been prepared for this Workshop, which is now publically available on the project website: [www.clickforsupport.eu/project-info/publications](http://www.clickforsupport.eu/project-info/publications).

The next step for 'Click for Support - REALized' will be to operate **Mind Your Trip** in the 13 European partner countries: Austria, Belgium, Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Greece, Italy, Latvia, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia, and Slovenia. The WBI will run from Monday 11 June until (at least) end of October 2018. The effectiveness of the WBI will then be evaluated, and the results of this evaluation will be presented during the (closed) Final Conference on 13 and 14 November 2018 in Münster, Germany, to which one invited expert country will be in attendance.

Read more below about our project partners' experiences from Austria (pro mente Oberösterreich / Institut Suchtprävention), Slovakia (OZ Prevencia V&P), and Portugal (IREFREA) with the 'New Psychoactive substances phenomenon', the workshop and training in Italy, the CfS-REALized project, the target group of NPS-users, and WBI **Mind Your Trip**!

Mind Your Trip main website

[www.mindyourtrip.eu](http://www.mindyourtrip.eu)

Mind Your Trip Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/mindyourtrip.eu>

Mind Your Trip Instagram

[https://www.instagram.com/mindyourtrip\\_eu/](https://www.instagram.com/mindyourtrip_eu/)

## NPS in Austria: the facts again

Within the past ten years, the market for NPS and RCs (Research Chemicals) has developed and expanded rapidly throughout Europe. Austria is in the fortunate position of having countered that sustainably, so that NPS is currently not a major topic for counselling and treatment. On the one hand, there is the well-known drug-checking system in Austria (CheckIt!) which enjoys a) great acceptance among party drug users and b) protects consumers from unpredictable health risks. On the other hand, it was the New Psychoactive Substances Law of 2012 (NPSG) and the policy mix of behavioural and relationship prevention through sensitisation and knowledge transfer that are responsible for the continuing reduction of NPS in Austria.

Considering the low values within the 12-month prevalence of 15 to 24 year-olds (0.5%), trial consumption or sporadic consumption can be assumed. Across Europe, the 12-month prevalence of NPS for young adults (15 to 24 years) was around 3% in 2014. The proportion of samples that were analysed as NPS was only 1.6% (N=1219) for CheckIt! in 2016, compared to 8.9% (N=459) in 2010. CheckIt! reports that MDMA and amphetamines in their pure form - without other active ingredients - are increasingly available on the market, and concludes that these 'classic' party drugs - at least in party settings - are preferred to NPS. The police also report that purchases in Deep Net or Dark Net are essentially limited to 'conventional' substances. Streetwork- and counselling centres report of consumption of research chemicals such as "U-47700" (a synthetic opioid) or ketamine derivatives by long-time members of the 'drug scene'.

NPS are of declining importance for drug-using young people and young adults in Austria. Although NPS are still of high importance in other EU countries, against the background of low prevalence in Austria, it remains to be seen whether a web-based intervention that is aimed exclusively at 14 to 25 year-old NPS users will suit the Austrian young drug user, or whether it may even have a counterproductive effect concerning the current national situation for NPS.

## Prevention? Online!

During a conference in March in Linz - organised by the largest association for youth work in Upper Austria and the Institut Suchtprävention with over 200 persons from the field of youth work - we discussed the topic 'Crypto markets, infotainment & prevention'. We examined, among others, the question of why professional counselling and treatment offers, despite the huge presence of digital communication, have not yet gained a young target group. With a few exceptions - such as 'Quit the Shit' from Germany - online consulting is largely reduced to chat or e-mail consulting. Web/app-based interventions, especially for young consumers of various substances, do not exist in Austria. There is a large number of drug channels and user forums, which sometimes serve as a socialisation tool of drug information for young people. Their temporal flexibility, paired with anonymity but also a high degree of self-regulation, are described as advantages of these channels. There are only limited user experiences about chances and risks for both prevention and consulting settings. Some professionals try to work with channel operators to make the messages of these drug channels more fact-based.





*Andreas Reiter, prevention expert in the 'CfS - REALized' project for Austria, presenting Mind Your Trip at the 'Jugendtagung 2018 - Kryptomärkte, Infotainment & Prävention' in Linz.*

At the Institut Suchtprävention, these drug channels are part of monitoring activities, and we use them for information as well. Online consulting is more than just posting, liking and commenting: it is more differential and high-threshold. It requires a lot of patience from consultants and participants. 'Mind Your Trip' could be a welcome test balloon for an online consulting service in Austria.

### **Prevention! Online? Mind Your Trip!**

The Bèta version of Mind Your Trip was presented at the project meeting in South Tyrol, making clear how extensive a well thought-out Mind Your Trip is; the app is very visually attractive.

Mind Your Trip is created with the Content Management System (CMS) WordPress. In the CMS of WordPress, even untrained users quickly find their way around and all prevention experts were already busy working on national texts for the website in South Tyrol. Basic knowledge of MS Office is enough to use WordPress - the editing of the contents and the administration of the system are very similar to classical word processing.

Due to the complexity (website, app access, language differences, and differing attitudes concerning prevention), there were some technical difficulties or different approaches, which however could be clarified in the following weeks - with great support by the Dutch colleagues from Tactus and Wild Sea - or which could be solved by working together in WhatsApp groups. Wild Sea also designed a manual that left no question unanswered.

After filling out an intake questionnaire, users can communicate directly with a professional counsellor over the website or mobile app. The user decides autonomously for which goal - for example reduction of use or safer use - he or she wants to choose. Based on the motivational interviewing approach, users are supported in this choice - anonymously and individually.

### **1<sup>st</sup> Focus Group of 2018: cancelled**

We cancelled one of two focus groups in Austria – for the first feedback on the Mind Your Trip bèta version - because we didn't want to focus their attention on NPS ('topic advertising', i.e. adverse, effect). This concerned the focus group of 15- to 16-year-olds, who had plenty of alcohol and cannabis experience but are completely uninformed about NPS. Young NPS users (Spice, bath salts...) as a classic target group for addiction prevention were present in Austria 6-10 years ago, among others through extensive media coverage, which additionally (unintentionally) beat the advertising drum for these substances. As mentioned above, this phenomenon is now largely history in Austria. A possible advertising effect can be counteracted to a certain extent by means of visual language and wording, but this remains a sensitive aspect for us, especially when the Mind Your Trip website is distributed.

### **2<sup>nd</sup> Focus Group: „Well done, but...”**

Our second focus group consisted of 13 young adults (average age 21), for which we found ideal conditions for a discussion round in a living room atmosphere. None of these participants had experience or affinities to NPS: alcohol and especially cannabis use with occasionally problematic consumption habits, however, do play a major role in this group.

We have been working with the majority of them for a long time to get feedback and project ideas. People are very open, critical and interested in selective addiction prevention. We not only discussed the website, but the focus group was also able to provide insight into the approach and wording of the online counselling. The website's clarity and the possibility of individual feedback on personal substance use were very well received. However, the majority of the group was sceptical about guaranteeing anonymity.

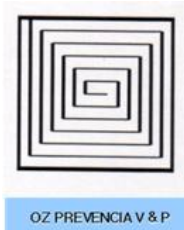
The questions whether they themselves would write a diary about their substance use using an app or participate in a 30-day programme - maybe on the subject of cannabis - remained largely unanswered. The group's remark that online counselling is more a possibility to reach the adult (30-somethings) target group with drinking problems, distracted from the question of personal participation - but we are pleased to take this aspect with us.

Andreas Reiter, MA

Institut Suchtprävention

## Expectations from Slovakia

For OZ Prevencia V&P, dealing with prevention of NPS use was an absolutely new area of professional help and prevention. New technologies and modern social media play an important role in everyday life and in the communication of young people. Communicating through apps



and social networks, shopping, playing games, fun and gathering information - all this is going on on the Internet. Therefore, the relationship between prevention and web-based tools was very promising for us to work with. In Slovakia, NPS are not frequently used drugs, but the danger of use is very high for everyone. To create a tool based on modern communication (WBI and App) was the most important reason for us to join this project.

In Slovakia, there is only one web-based intervention for marihuana users ([www.akonehulit.sk](http://www.akonehulit.sk)) available since 2017. Developer and provider of this WBI created the intervention based on the 'Guideline for effective web-based interventions in selective drug prevention' (Click for Support, 2015).

**Mind Your Trip** will be the second WBI in Slovakia, again based on the Click for Support guidelines. We are in connection with the providers and authors of the WBI for marihuana users to exchange information and experiences. Mind Your Trip will widen services in Slovakia for safer use as well as for providing qualified counselling.

The development phase of Mind Your Trip showed that not much information about NPS is available in Slovak language. Discussions with prevention experts and policy authorities gave us the feedback to put strong emphasis on the balance between sharing information about NPS and support the challenge to safer consumption practices for drug use, while giving the opportunity to quit using. Focus groups showed that young drug users from Slovakia don't know much about NPS and their effects, but there are some communities of youngsters which might profit from web information together with intervention.

During the Workshop in Brixen, we were introduced to the website and prevention modules. It was very interesting for us to hear about the structure and theoretical background of e-health prevention and interventions from The Netherlands, presented by Tactus. We find Mind Your Trip, a second WBI for Slovakia, well structured, exactly oriented to intervention, balance between a friendly youth look and a professional, intervention-providing website. We hope the WBI could attract young people with drug problems, could possibly be supplemented by case reports, and further concretise young people's cases and their problems with NPS.

Alena Kopányiová & Zuzana Vojtová

OZ Prevencia V&P, Slovakia

## The Portuguese experience

In Portugal, online interventions are starting to appear in different areas such as anxiety, depression and lifestyle coaching. The adhesion to these interventions, however, still remains quite low. This project is a great and brand new experience for us as it develops a new and innovative response for our youngsters regarding their NPS consumption.

We believe that delivering this kind of response to Portuguese youth will be a great addition to the national responses that have already been implemented, and it is a good thing that IREFREA Portugal is leading this project at a national level. Mind Your Trip offers a new, innovative, free and anonymous approach for all our youngsters with drug-related consumption problems or doubts.

The national focus group with youngsters with different patterns of consumption were an eye-opening experience regarding what young people expect, and a major confirmation that the development of a website and an app to support our interventions is the best approach to tackle their problems.

The participation of IREFREA Portugal in the Brixen workshop in April 2018 was crucial to learn about the structure of the intervention and technical features of the website and app. It was quite challenging: in a full week, we learned how the intervention works, and shared knowledge about the three intervention modules. It has been an amazing opportunity for networking and bonding with all the international partners. A very big thanks to Italian project partner Forum P for co-arranging such a (fruit)full meeting!

We are spreading Mind Your Trip across the Portuguese national institute of drugs and drug abuse, mainly with the staff of a special commission that promotes the deterrence of drug consumption of minors that are caught whilst consuming drugs. We consider this partnership a great way to reach the youngsters that could really use this kind of intervention and help.

At the same time, we are spreading the existence of this intervention through national journals on addiction, schools, online settings, and in professional meetings, the latter being at a national and international level through our networks. We will continue working hard to further develop Mind Your Trip, to spread it across the population that is most vulnerable to drug addiction at a young age, and to reach positive results.

Rosário Mendes

IREFREA, Portugal





*The 'Click for Support - REALized' project group during the second Workshop in Brixen, Italy.*



## European project partner organisations



Athina Ygeia – Center  
for Prevention of  
Addictions & Promotion  
of Psychosocial Health,  
Greece



LWL – Coordination  
Office for Drug-Related  
Issues, Germany



CAD – Centra voor  
Alcohol- en andere  
Drugproblemen, Belgium



CePT – Centre de  
Prévention des  
Toxicomanies,  
Luxembourg



Education Centre for  
Families and Schools,  
Latvia



EHYT – Finnish  
Association for  
Substance Abuse  
Prevention, Finland



Forum Prävention,  
Italy



Institut Suchtprävention  
– pro mente  
Oberösterreich, Austria



IREFREA - Instituto  
Europeu para o Estudo  
dos Factores de Risco  
em Crianças e  
Adolexcentes, Portugal



LWL-Universitätsklinik  
Hamm – der Ruhr-  
Universität Bochum –  
Klinik für Kinder und  
Jugendpsychiatrie,  
Germany



Kenthea – Center for  
Education about Drugs  
and Treatment of Drug  
Addicted Persons,  
Cyprus



National Institute of  
Public Health, Slovenia



Prevention V&P,  
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Tactus Addiction  
Treatment, Netherlands



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**- disclaimer -**

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