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## 'Click for Support – REALized' (HOME/2015/JDRU/AG/DRUG/8857)

### Report on results of Good Practice Research

#### Introduction

For the 'Click for Support – REALized' project, all 13 project partners have conducted online and offline national research for finding examples of good practices in the drug prevention field, focused or partially focused on NPS. Additionally, the project coordinator has conducted international online research for finding good practices in countries outside of those involved in the project. Below, the research strategy and objectives of the research, conducted between March and May 2017, are described. The main overall objective has been to gather from existing NPS prevention offers what can be learned and transferred to the development and dissemination of the web-based intervention for young NPS consumers.

The exact objectives of the good practice research have been defined as:

- Finding out which information is currently offered to the target group of young NPS / drug consumers in prevention offers focused or partially focused on NPS;
- Finding out how existing NPS prevention programmes get access to the target group;
- Finding out what methods for communicating with and motivating the target group are used in existing NPS prevention programmes.

The focus and criteria for conducting the research have been defined as:

- Conducting national research (project coordination: international);
- Focus on New Psychoactive Substances;
- Include universal and selective prevention offers;
- Include only professional prevention offers;
- The target group should consist (at least partially) of NPS consumers (ideally youth).

#### Research Strategy

The research strategy for the 13 project partners has been as follows:

- Consult the REITOX National Focal Point;
- Consult national experts on NPS;
- Inquire into national prevention databases;
- Contact drug prevention providers / networks;
- Conduct online- and literature research;  
(keywords: "new / novel / emerging new psychoactive substances", "drug prevention", "NPS", "legal highs", "synthetic drugs" "designer drugs", "research chemicals", etc.)



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In addition, the project coordinator has contacted 20 REITOX National Focal Points from European countries not in the project, enquiring whether they are aware of any prevention offers focused or partially focused on NPS currently being offered in their country. 13 Focal Points gave a response – more information on this is provided in the results section.

### Quality Assessment

As discussed with the project group during the project’s kick-off meeting in February 2017 and decided among the project’s steering group, the COMIQS<sup>1</sup> (2015) quality standards have been used to assess the quality of the found prevention offers. These criteria, developed by Belgian researchers, combine the European Drug Prevention Quality Standards<sup>2</sup> (EDDRA, 2011; developed in cooperation with the EMCDDA) and the EQUS Minimum Quality Standards in Drug Demand Reduction (2011)<sup>3</sup>. The reporting template for the project partners was based on those minimal quality standards<sup>4</sup> for drug prevention most applicable to the purposes of the Good Practice Research exercise and overall project. These criteria relate to ‘Procedures and content of the prevention offer’ and ‘Evaluation / effectiveness of the prevention offer’. For an overview of the assessment of the found NPS prevention offers along the minimal COMIQS quality standards, please see the table added at the end of this report.

### Overall Results

National and international research combined, a total of 23 prevention offers focused or partially focused on NPS were found. The consultation of national and international (drug) prevention database has not generated any results. The 23 programmes were found through national experts and national youth- and drug-related facilities, as well as the international online research. In the map of Europe on the next page and in the table on this page, it can be seen in which countries how many applicable prevention offers were found.

14 out of the 23 offers were fully focused on News Psychoactive Substances, and four of the offers were found outside of the countries involved in this project (Australia, Israel, and the UK). Additionally, it was found in the international research that both Poland and the Czech Republic have had some public awareness campaigns directed at NPS; however, these activities did not fulfil the criteria to be regarded ‘professional prevention offers’ within the scope of this exercise.

Country	# NPS offers
AT	1
BE	2
CY	0
DE	4
FI	1
GR	0
IT	1
LU	4
LV	1
NL	1
PT	0
SI	4
SK	0
AU	1
IL	1
UK	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>23</b>

<sup>1</sup> An English summary report on the COMIQS minimal and ideal standards (2015) has been attached.

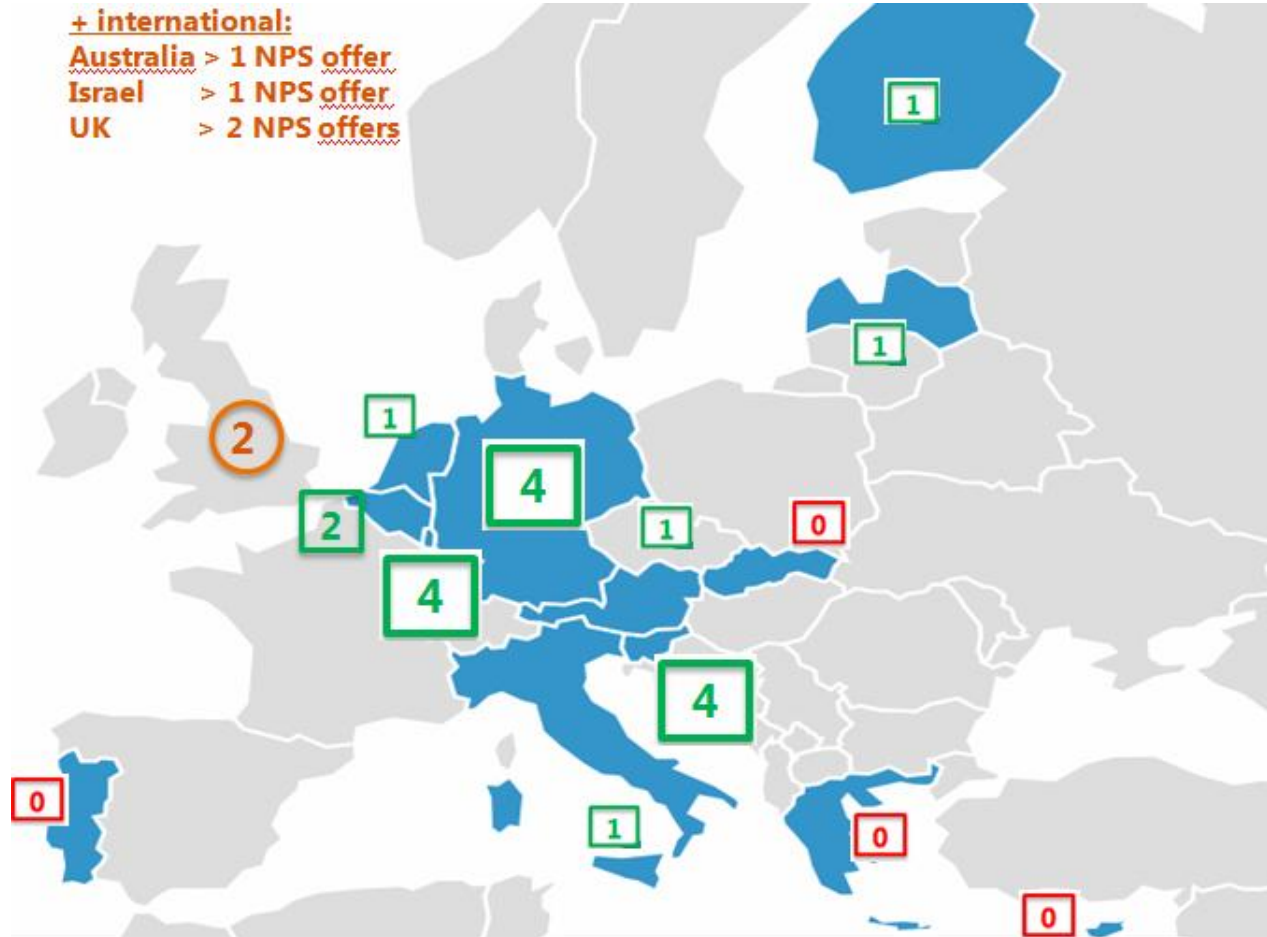
<sup>2</sup> An English report on the European Drug Prevention Quality Standards (201) has been attached.

<sup>3</sup> The EQUS Minimum Quality Standards in Drug Demand Reduction final report has been attached.

<sup>4</sup> The reporting template with selected minimal quality standards has been added in the attachment.



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Country overview of found NPS-related prevention offers in Europe.

Many of the NPS prevention offers consist of online or at least partially online offered programmes (for an overview, please see the table on the next page). This shows the importance of using online tools to attract and engage the target group. Those which use an evidence-based approach are mostly based on the principles of Motivational Interviewing, Brief Intervention, Social Norms Approach, and Peer Education. Additionally, several offers use an outreach-method (for instance regularly visiting music- and nightlife scenes) for accessing the target group. For the majority of the offers, though, it cannot be told how many of our target group members (young NPS users) have been reached so far as they blend in with other drug users, yet most of the offers are aimed at NPS consumers and/or young drug users.

With one exception, the found NPS prevention offers have not been evaluated for effectiveness. A few of the NPS prevention projects do conduct process evaluations by surveying the target group, thereby questioning them about the perceived reliability of the offer, and about whether the target group deems the information to be of interest to them. These surveys usually show positive results regarding feedback from the target group.

For the Australian school-based programme 'Climate Schools: module Ecstasy and NED' (New and Emerging Drugs), effectiveness was studied by Randomised Controlled Trial among over 1100 pupils. The results, published in 2016, showed a significant increase in knowledge of



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NPS, and a significant decrease in intention to use NPS 6 months after the intervention. After 12 months, there was still significantly less intention of using synthetic cannabinoids in the intervention group as compared to the control group.

Country	offer #	online / offline	NPS-focus
<b>Australia</b>	1	both	full
<b>Austria</b>	2	both	partial
<b>Belgium</b>	3	both	partial
	4	online	partial
<b>Finland</b>	5	online	partial
<b>Germany</b>	6	both	partial
	7	online	full
	8	both	partial
	9	online	full
<b>Israel</b>	10	offline	
<b>Italy</b>	11	online	full
<b>Latvia</b>	12	online	full
<b>Luxembourg</b>	13	offline	partial
	14	offline	partial
	15	offline	partial
	16	offline	full
<b>Netherlands</b>	17	both	partial
<b>Slovenia</b>	18	offline	partial
	19	both	partial
	20	offline	partial
	21	offline	full
<b>United Kingdom</b>	22	both	full
	23	both	full

*NPS- and online/ offline-focus of found prevention offers.*

Below, important outcomes of the research with regard to the exercise objectives are described.



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### **Objective I: Information to target group**

The first objective of the Good Practice Research exercise has been to find out which information is currently provided to the target group with concern to New Psychoactive Substances and related issues. It was found that the target group mainly receives information on the following topics:

- ✓ harm-reduction messages / safer use advice
- ✓ referral information to drug counselling / help lines / mental health counselling
- ✓ expected effects and possible side-effects, risks and harms of NPS
- ✓ personalised advice according to personal consumption pattern
- ✓ legal status of NPS / judicial issues (nationally and internationally)
- ✓ information on wider health-related issues (healthy choices)
- ✓ description of new substances and substance groups
- ✓ toxicology and chemical composition of NPS
- ✓ specified information for different target groups (users, friends, family)

These results are, for the most part, well in line with the results of the national focus groups on information which the target group requests. The largest difference is that the focus group participants did not request information for their friends and/or family.

### **Objective II: Accessing the target group**

The results of the Good Practice Research show a wide variety of methods to access the target groups of young drug users and/or NPS consumers:

- ✓ providing online information and drug counselling
- ✓ use of social media (mainly Facebook)
- ✓ providing several contact channels (chat, e-mail, phone, social media, website)
- ✓ informing through video materials instead of text (especially through Youtube)
- ✓ using outreach- and peer approaches (i.e. peer education)
- ✓ ensuring repeated presence in relevant scenes (trust building)
- ✓ using a targeted, local approach (adapted to target group)
- ✓ providing information in several languages (mostly English as additional language)
- ✓ cooperating with the community and local organisations
- ✓ involving schools and universities to spread information and awareness

For the purpose of dissemination of the to-be developed WBI, it may be useful to research national possibilities for cooperation with relevant organisations and institutions that have contact with the target group, in order to spread awareness about the existence of the WBI among NPS users. Furthermore, the use of social media to reach the young target group is clearly important. Efforts will be made in this area by possibly posting animations about the WBI on Youtube, as well as setting up national and general Facebook- and Instagram accounts in national and English language for disseminating the WBI.



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### **Objective III: Communicating and motivating**

Lastly, concerning the way the target group is being communicated with by professionals, and the way the target group is motivated for behavioural- and/or attitude change, the following was found:

- ✓ anonymity, confidentiality and transparency are very important
- ✓ focus on healthy choices, resisting peer pressure, and improving life skills
- ✓ use the Motivational Interviewing method
- ✓ show support for abstinence
- ✓ use a non-judgemental approach
- ✓ provide harm-reduction information
- ✓ spread messages through peers and with tailored language
- ✓ provide several contact channels (e-mail, chat, phone, social media, website...)
- ✓ provide low-threshold, free-of-charge support
- ✓ involve the target group and request their feedback
- ✓ ensure continuous presence in relevant scenes (trust building)
- ✓ use an interactive approach (quizzes, games / 'gamification', video materials)

These findings will indeed be incorporated in the WBI as much as possible. Project partners will make efforts to cooperate with relevant organisations in the scene for spreading awareness of the WBI, an interactive approach will be used within the WBI, and prevention experts will be trained in the method of Motivational Interviewing. Furthermore, emphasis will be placed on anonymity, confidentiality and transparency, starting with the development phase. Several contact channels as well as harm reduction messages will be provided, and a non-judgemental way of communication will be implemented. Lastly, the target group is being involved in the development and dissemination of the WBI through target groups, and a feedback option for participants of the online intervention programme will be provided.



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*Good Practice NPS prevention offers assessed through relevant COMIQS minimal standards.*

	Name	online / offline	fully NPS-focused?	evidence-based?	# target group members reached	use of (which) social media?	evaluation?
AT	ChEckIT!	both	no	MI	+8.500 (2016)	Facebook	yes [not for NPS]
BE	Safe 'n Sound	both	no	Peer Education	1.495 (2016)	Facebook	process (target group feedback)
	Drughulp.be	online	no	CBT, MI, Social Norms Approach	55.000 visitors	Facebook	no
DE	Eve & Rave	both	no	professionals / scientists involved	1.350 (2017) (NPS users)	Facebook	process (target group feedback)
	Legal-High-Inhaltsstoffe	online	yes	unknown	unknown	Facebook	no
	MindZone – Sauber Drauf!	both	no	unknown	unknown	Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Pinterest	process (target group feedback)
	NeuePsycho-aktiveSubstanzen	online	yes	unknown	unknown	Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr	no
FI	Paihdelinkki	online	no	unknown	~ 170.000 monthly visitors	Facebook	process (target group feedback)
IT	BAONPS	online	yes	Carl Rogers Model, MI	26.245 partygoers	Facebook	in progress
LV	Es zinu, Tu to vari!	online	yes	educational, social norms	unknown	Youtube	no
LU	Party MAG-net	offline	no	no	thousands	Facebook	no
	Act R.I.C.O. pipapo	offline	no	no	7 youth centres 1.823 (2016)	Facebook Facebook	no no



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*Good Practice NPS prevention offers assessed through relevant COMIQS minimal standards.*

	Name	online / offline	fully NPS-focused?	evidence -based?	# target group members reached	use of (which) social media?	evaluation?
LWL	Programme Tox	offline	yes	no	unknown	none (prison setting)	process (staff feedback)
	Mr. Nice Guy for you	offline	yes	social norms, significant others	unknown	none	no
	Stoke-on-Trent	both	yes	community-based	unknown	Twitter	process (target group feedback)
	Project AWARE	both	yes	community-based, peer approach, life skills, healthy choices	~ 3.500 (youth)	Youtube, Twitter, Instagram	not yet (2018)
	Climate Schools	both	yes	social norms	> 1.126 students	none	yes (RCT): <b>effective</b>
NL	Unity	both	no	peer education	10.000 – 15.000 yearly	Facebook, Twitter, Youtube, Instagram	no
SI	Center za Preprečevanje Odvisnosti	offline	no	MI, peer approach	unknown	none	yes (abstinence) [not NPS specific]
	DrogArt	both	no	MI, CBT, Brief Intervention	> 8.000	none	yes (process + HR-effective) [not NPS specific]
	Drug Prevention Centre Maribor	offline	no	MI, peer approach	6 (NPS users)	none	no
	Zdrava pot	offline	yes	MI, Brief Intervention, Harm Reduction	[older target group]	none	[not NPS specific]