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third international conference on novel psychoactive substances

International experts to examine latest findings in the field of new drugs

(15.5.2014, LISBON) International experts gather in **Rome** today to examine the latest scientific research in the rapidly-changing field of novel (or new) psychoactive substances (NPS). They will be participating in the **Third international conference on novel psychoactive substances** organised by: the University of Hertfordshire; the **EU drugs agency (EMCDDA)**; the University of Chieti-Pescara; Sapienza University of Rome; the *Società italiana di psichiatria* and the Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse (1). The event follows on from the first two conferences held in **Budapest** (2012) and **Swansea** (2013) (2).

The emergence of NPS and the ability of the Internet to disseminate information quickly, present a number of challenges for drug policy, substance use research and public health. Despite increased attention being paid to this issue, these emerging products — often unregulated and sold online as ‘legal’ and ‘safer’ alternatives to traditional illicit drugs — are rarely mentioned in the scientific literature. The prime objective of the NPS conference series is to increase knowledge and understanding on the nature and effects of NPS, as well as to promote innovative solutions in the field.

The two-day conference will contribute, among others, to:

• sharing accurate, evidence-based information on NPS and on latest trends in NPS misuse;

• developing an international platform and other technological solutions for rapid information sharing;

• assessing psychiatric consequences of NPS use and related behavioural addictions;

• developing innovative prevention measures especially for vulnerable individuals;

• raising awareness and contributing to the development of effective prevention messages;

• exploring socio-cultural factors underlying risky behaviours;

• improving understanding of treatment and management approaches for patients with levels of clinical and/or behavioural toxicity associated with NPS use; and

• networking and providing the opportunity to meet renowned experts in the field.

The **EU Early Warning System**, operated by the **EMCDDA** and partners, currently monitors over 350 new psychoactive substances. These include derivatives of phenethylamines, tryptamines, piperazines and cathinones, as well as synthetic cannabinoids and a small number of herbal substances that can produce psychoactive effects. Such a phenomenon highlights the importance of multinational and multidisciplinary collaboration in order to enhance knowledge and improve the quality of information sharing and best practice at a global level. The latest information on NPS in Europe will be published on 27 May in the EMCDDA’s ***European Drug Report 2014*** ([www.emcdda.europa.eu/edr2014](http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/edr2014)).

Notes

(1) [www.novelpsychoactivesubstances.org](http://www.novelpsychoactivesubstances.org)

(2) [www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/2013/fs5](http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/2013/fs5) and [www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/2012/rednet-conference](http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/news/2012/rednet-conference)