



EPS NPS PROJECT

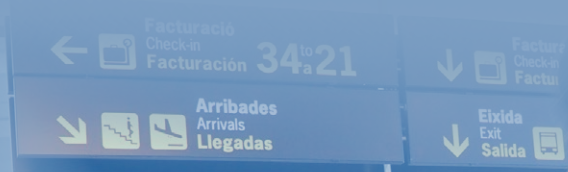


CRIMINOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE NPS MARKET

AN EXPLORATORY EVIDENCE-BASED STUDY
OF THE NPS MARKET IN ITALY

SHORT RESEARCH REPORT ON PRELIMINARY FINDINGS BY RISSC - RESEARCH CENTRE ON SECURITY AND CRIME

CRIMINOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE NPS MARKET



EPS NPS PROJECT

The Project **EPS/NPS - Enhancing Police Skills on Novel Psychoactive Substances** is coordinated by RiSSC and developed in cooperation with University of Hertfordshire Higher Education Institution (UH) (UK), University of Szczecin (US) (PL), Eotvos University (ELTE) (HU) and INTERPOL (associate partner), with the financial support of the EU Commission - Targeted call on cross border law enforcement cooperation in the field of drug trafficking - DG Justice/DG Migrations and Home Affairs (JUST/2013/ISEC/DRUGS/AG/6429). The Advisory Board is composed by experts from Arma dei Carabinieri, EUROPOL, INTERPOL, Swiss Federal Police, UNODC and US Drug Enforcement Administration. The overall objective of the Project is to contribute at enhancing a knowledge-based joint EU approach to effectively addressing the rapid spread of NPS, by promoting in particular the generation of data/knowledge, information-sharing, and cooperation.

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INTRODUCTION

This working paper presents the preliminary outcomes of the research activity carried out within the Project EPS/NPS - Enhancing Police Skills concerning Novel Psychoactive Substances (NPS), co-financed by the European Commission and coordinated by RiSSC – Research Centre on Security and Crime (IT), developed in cooperation with the University of Hertfordshire (UH) (UK), the University of Szczecin (US) (PL), the Eotvos University (ELTE) (HU) and INTERPOL.

In detail, it illustrates the introductory results of an evidence-based pilot study on the Italian NPS market, carried out under the Workstream 1 – Generation of data and knowledge. The work presented in this study intends to contribute to fill the gap existing in the criminological knowledge of the NPS phenomenon. In fact, there is an increasing attention to the issue of NPS at international, European and national level, since there are large numbers of NPS available on the synthetic drugs market globally and they are easily obtainable in many countries.¹

Nevertheless, NPS have not been much investigated from a criminological perspective, thus little knowledge has been yet produced on the supply chain, on the authors and their *modi operandi*. Furthermore, this research work wants to highlight the importance to adopt a global but also a local approach when studying NPS, as confirmed by the significant differences existing between countries and even regions in the emergence and persistence patterns of these substances.

The paper is divided into two main parts.

The first part focuses on the definition and on some characteristics of NPS that make this kind of psychoactive substances very challenging to investigate and study.

The second part illustrates the methods and sources used, the limitations and advantages of the seizures data on NPS for criminological research purposes, and outlines the introductory results of the research on the Italian case. These findings emerged exclusively from the primary sources collected and examined in this study, including the analysis of case studies concerning 16 investigative operations on NPS carried out by the Italian Law Enforcement agencies between 2010 and 2015, interviews with key experts and the qualitative analysis of drug seizures, also referred to Malpensa Airport for the years 2014-2015. The access to a great quantity of original investigative and trial acts makes this work particularly innovative and rewarding in the field of NPS studies. In detail, since the NPS market results to be quite fragmented and often the various phases of the supply chain are not linked, the Italian framework is described according to the main and various components of the NPS supply chain, namely substances/products, actors and *modi operandi*, including methods of concealment and transport, methods of payment, communication strategy, and substances' routes.

¹ According to the data collected by the UNODC Global Smart Programme, "The majority of countries and territories that reported the emergence of NPS up to December 2014 were from Europe (39), Asia (27), Africa (14), the Americas (13) and Oceania (2). Up to December 2014, a total of 541 NPS had been reported to the UNODC early warning advisory". (UNODC, 2015, p. 73).



1. EXPLORING NPS. THE DIFFICULTIES AFFECTING THE KNOWLEDGE GENERATION PROCESS

Both enforcement and research activities are suffering from some NPS intrinsic characteristics that make both investigating and analysing these substances particularly challenging. Consequently, also the existing knowledge base continues to be fragmented and often built on partial data (in particular seizures data), which offer an incomplete overview of the phenomenon and are not able to follow its rapid changes. Some of these relevant features relate to the NPS status, namely to their official international definition and to the legislative questions concerning the drugs scheduling process, while others refer to their chemical nature and their impact on (individual and public) health. In particular, as underlined also by LEAs, NPS deserve specific attention because they:

- Have not an official international definition and the drugs scheduling process is still uncertain
- Have an ambiguous legal status
- Have a transient nature
- Are peculiar with respect to other illicit drugs (e.g. they can be produced easily; even if consumed in small quantity, they provoke a great effect; they are odourless and not easily traceable through chemical analysis).

NPS definition and their ambiguous legal status

New psychoactive substances are usually called in the market by many different terms such as “legal highs”, “designer drugs”, “herbal highs”, “bath salts” and “research chemicals”.

According to the Council Decision 2005/387/JHA², NPS are defined as new narcotic or psychotropic drugs in pure form or in a preparation, that have not been scheduled under the 1961 United Nations Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, and under 1971 United Nations Convention on Psychotropic Substances, that may pose a threat to public health comparable to the substances listed in the Schedule I, II or IV of the 1961 Convention and those listed in the Schedule I, II, III or IV

of the 1971 Convention.

As underlined by UNODC³, the term “new” does not necessarily refer to new inventions — several NPS were first synthesized 40 years ago — but to substances that have recently become available on the market.

More in detail, according to the UNODC classification, NPS are made up by the following main groups of substances⁴:

AMINOINDANES

KETAMINE AND PHENCYCLIDINE-TYPE SUBSTANCES

OTHER SUBSTANCES

(E.G. 1,3-DIMETHYLAMYLAMINE (DMAA).

PHENETHYLAMINES (E.G. 2C-E AND 25H-NBOME)

PIPERAZINES

PLANT-BASED SUBSTANCES

SYNTHETIC CANNABINOIDS

SYNTHETIC CATHINONES

TRYPTAMINES

In other words, NPS can be described as those substances that are not controlled at the international level. This means that their legal status depends mostly on national legislations and, therefore, they may be legal in one country and illegal in another one. For this reason, NPS could be considered more a socio-criminological notion rather than a juridical or legal one.

It must be noted that diverse initiatives have been recently taken internationally in order to promote a synergic approach against NPS. In 2015 the Commission on Narcotic Drugs decided to place 10 NPS under international control, taking into account a request made by the United Kingdom regarding mephedrone and following recommendations by the WHO Expert Committee on Drug Dependence.

² Council Decision 2005/387/JHA of 10 May 2005 on the information exchange, risk-assessment and control of new psychoactive substances. Available at <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/ALL/?uri=CELEX:32005D0387>.

³ UNODC, Early Warning Advisory on New Psychoactive Substances. Available at <https://www.unodc.org/LSS/Home/NPS>.

⁴ The research here reported has considered also the crystal methamphetamine, that shares some characteristics with NPS, yet it is controlled at the international level.

These 10⁵ substances were added to the relevant schedules of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 as amended by the 1972 Protocol and the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971. In March 2016, 7 more substances⁵ were placed under international control and added to the relevant schedules of the Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs of 1961 as amended by the 1972 Protocol and the Convention on Psychotropic Substances of 1971, by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs, following recommendations by the WHO Expert Committee on Drug Dependence.

However, the ambiguous legal status of NPS still poses a series of problems in terms of understanding and contrasting the phenomenon. In particular, as underlined by the Council in the abovementioned Decision 2005/387/JHA, when new psychoactive substances are not brought within the scope of criminal law in all Member States, problems arise in cooperation between the judicial authorities and Law Enforcement agencies of Member States.

The transient nature of NPS

Besides the ambiguous legal status of the substances, NPS market is fast expanding and has an intrinsic rapidly changing nature, thus its scope and magnitude are difficult to explore and assess. For example, as registered by the UNODC mapping of NPS, “Although a growing number of NPS are being reported by a larger number of countries every year, some NPS are found to be transient. For instance, of the 541 NPS reported up to December 2014, 16 substances had not been reported since 2012 and 49 had not been reported since 2013. Several NPS have only been reported by a small number of countries in a particular year and some substances seem to have disappeared from the market entirely. For example, the tryptamine 5-MeO-DPT337 was reported by eight countries between 2009 and 2012, but since then there have been no further reports of its availability by countries submitting to the UNODC early warning advisory. Other substances such as the synthetic cannabinoid CP-series have shown large variations in market availability since 2009. For example, the CP-47,497 series was first reported by four countries in Europe in 2009, but in 2012 only two countries in Europe reported its presence to the advisory, whereas 10 countries reported its presence in 2013, as did six countries in 2014.” (UNODC, 2015, pp. 67-75).

Operationally, the transient nature of NPS makes the work of Law Enforcement agencies very difficult since they have to update continuously their knowledge on the new drugs that the NPS market offers. More NPS stay in the drug market more LEAs tend to improve their knowledge on them, as occurred in the case of ketamine in Italy (Interview P1, 1-2-2016).

The easiness of NPS production

NPS can be produced easily, because most of them are chemical and do not require a transformation process from natural substances, unlike cocaine or heroin. Even the NPS group that are categorised as “plant-based substances”, in which are included for example mushrooms or *salvia divinorum*, do not require any transformation process.

Small quantity of NPS provokes great effects

Small quantity of NPS is sufficient to provoke strong psychoactive effects. Therefore, it is not surprising that they are traded or trafficked in small quantity that can be easily transported, hidden in cars or within correspondence and objects sent by air or through mail.

NPS are odourless

The fact that NPS do not produce any odour makes very difficult their identification by Law Enforcement agencies that are not facilitated by drug-detecting dogs when searching for NPS.

In synthesis, all these characteristics, along with their growing popularity, are opening up a new front in the drug war. The point is that the front line is shifting from some specific renowned areas of the world (e.g. Colombia, New Mexico, Afghanistan...) to the (legal) laboratories located in China and India (where according to available sources NPS are typically produced), as well as to an incalculable number of premises all over Europe.

⁵ The list of substances is available here: <https://www.unodc.org/LSS/Announcement/Details/fcdc9169-29c9-4ebc-a589-b61113716708>.

⁶ The list of substances is available here: <https://www.unodc.org/LSS/Announcement?type=NPS>

2. THE ITALIAN NPS MARKET

2.1 METHOD AND SOURCES. THE LIMITS OF ENFORCEMENT AND JUDICIAL DATA

In order to describe the Italian (illegal) NPS market, this study has used a qualitative approach based on the analysis of case studies related to investigative operations on NPS, interviews with LEAs and Public Prosecutors, and the analysis of drug seizures.

Given that the picture hereby presented has been drawn mostly on the ground of information and data coming from Law Enforcement agencies, it must be underlined that this kind of data presents some limitations and should be analysed with caution, mostly because:

- In the vast majority of the cases, the picture they offer is not updated;
- The number of investigations on NPS carried out by Law Enforcement agencies is still very limited with respect to other drugs, so the dark number of the NPS circulation continues to be high and the substances change rapidly;
- The national investigations concern the controlled substances and not the legal ones that are also included in the definition of NPS and, due to their legal status, largely present in the NPS market;
- Data on seizures reflect more the patrolling capacity of the Law Enforcement agencies than the prevalence and real trends of the phenomenon, since they show mainly what has emerged from the few investigative activities;
- The methods of collecting drug seizures data, especially on NPS, are not uniform at the European level. In particular, in all the countries included in the EPS/NPS Project – Italy, UK, Hungary and Poland – most of the seizures data offered by the official bodies/authorities at central level are aggregated by macro-categories of drugs, and not by single NPS;

- A serious difficulty in collecting information about the judiciary cases on NPS exists, since there is not a database of judiciary proceedings neither at national nor European level.

Among the most important reasons, which are related to LEAs but also to judicial authorities, the relevant ones can be schematised as follows:

- Insufficient human and financial resources allocated by/available to LEAs;
- Lack of awareness about the seriousness and spread of the phenomenon;
- Insufficient preparation at knowing and identifying NPS;
- Scarce availability of Prosecutors, who often tend to avoid proceedings with further investigations;
- Inadequate cooperation at the international level;
- Transnational dimension and complexity of the NPS supply chain (e.g. non-homogenous legal status, simple mode of production that can be realized in any place, easiness of transporting them due to the fact that they are traded in small quantity, and they are odourless ...).

Furthermore, most of the information available mainly concern the last stages of the supply chain, namely those that occur at a national level and consequently are more likely to emerge from criminal investigations. In other words, the analysis of data related to national investigations doesn't allow to get information also about the first stages of the NPS supply chain, since they refer to activities occurring in foreign countries, so the players at this stage are unlikely to be identified.

Despite of the above limitations, the information coming from the *modi operandi*, substances or products identified by the Law Enforcement agencies

are very useful, as far as they could offer interesting indications about the NPS market, demand and the supply, as well as the LEAs capacity to tackle this phenomenon. For example, as it emerges from the analysis of the EMCDDA national reports, seizures data show that in Italy and UK, NPS seizures still represent a low percentage of the total drug seizures, while in Hungary they are overcoming the seizures of traditional drugs.

Operationally, the research work has been based on:

The analysis of case studies

The study has collected information about 16 investigative operations on NPS carried out by the Italian Law Enforcement agencies between 2010 and 2015 (table 1, Page12). Each case has been analysed with the intention of reconstructing the supply chain of the substances identified. In particular, the study has focused on the cases no .1, no. 6, no. 8, no. 12, no. 13 (a brief description is available in Appendix I), that have been analysed by drawing inspiration from the crime-script approach.

Interviews with key informants

13 interviews with Law Enforcement agencies and Public Prosecutors has been conducted. For the sake of privacy, the names of the interviewees are not quoted in the Report, however a code has been attributed to each interview. The code is composed by the category to which the interviewees belong (table 2), and the progressive numbers of the name of interviewee (listed in alphabetic order). This method allows to keep the anonymity of interviewees and, at the same time, to make the research activity traceable.

Table 2:

CATEGORY	CODE	QUANTITY
Polizia di Stato	P	4
Arma dei Carabinieri	CC	3
Public Prosecutors	PP	4
Agenzia delle dogane (Customs Agency)	CA	1
(Guardia di Finanza) Financial Police	TP	1

Source: RiSSC

Qualitative analysis of NPS seizures

The seizures data gathered during the field research concerns the seizures occurring during the investigative operations carried out by Italian LEAs since 2010 (table 1) and those occurred in Malpensa airport between 2014 and 2015 during the routine control of packs at the borders carried out by Customs officers and Tax Police. This data is particularly significant, since the Malpensa airport is the destination of the 80% of mails and packs that arrive in Italy.

2.2 PROFILING NPS SUPPLY CHAIN IN ITALY

The research activity conducted has allowed to delineate some general characteristics of the Italian NPS market, based on the considerations offered by the interviewees, the analysis of the collected case studies and the drug seizures data. Furthermore, the main components of the market - including substances/products, actors and modus operandi, methods of concealment and transport, methods of payment, communication strategy, and substances' routes – were assessed.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE ITALIAN NPS MARKET

The following points summarise the main actual features of the Italian NPS market that confirm and integrate the trend of the phenomenon as it was traced by the international reports and the secondary literature:



Different types of NPS are trafficked concurrently, as explained also by Customs officers at Malpensa airport who frequently find out various types of NPS in the same pack (Interview with TP1, 25-6-2015). Very often, NPS are trafficked along with classical drugs, so it may be assumed that the NPS market is influenced also by the general evolution of the overall illicit drugs markets. This result is in line with the trend shown by international and national reports, according to which the drug market is characterized by poly drug trafficking and poly drug consumption (DCSA, 2015; Europol, 2013, p. 23);

Table 1: Investigative operations on NPS in Italy 2010-2015

CASE	OPERATION NAME	PLACE	SUBSTANCES	YEAR
Case 1	Alexander 2008	Bologna	Ketamine, ecstasy and hashish	2010
Case 2	Batangas	Messina	Shaboo	2010
Case 3	Seven 2011	Bologna	Ketamine, ecstasy, Methoxetamine	2011
Case 4	Profumo di droga	Milan	Mephedrone, Synthetic Cannabinoid (5-MeO-DHT, JWH-018, JWH-073, JWH-081, JWH-250, JWH-203 JWH-200, JWH-122, JWH-019, WIN48098, WIN55,212-2, CP47,497 (C8) AM694, AM679)	2011
Case 5	Il sale di Manila	Rome	Shaboo	2012
Case 6	Oro e Incenso	Catania	Synthetic Cannabinoid (JWH-073)	2012
Case 7	China Blue	Milan	Ketamine	2013
Case 8	Sense aromatic	Padua	3MMC, 4MMC, 4MEC, popper, mephedrone, Fluoroamphetamine, pentadone, GHB	2013
Case 9	La luna	Bologna	Shaboo	2014
Case 10	Il Sale di Manila 2	Rome	Shaboo	2014
Case 11	Sport pulito	Busto Arsizio	Nandrolone, anabolic substances	2014
Case 12	Easy drugs	Milan	MDP V , Pentadone, Methoxetamine	2014
Case 13	Sballo 2.0	Monza	Marijuana, hashish, cocaine, lsd, liquid ketamine	2015
Case 14	Farmlake	Trento	Anabolic substances	2015
Case 15	Sale d'Oriente	Rome	Shaboo	2015
Case 16	Melting pot	Parma	Ecstasy, ketamine	2015

Source: RiSSC



NPS supply chain is shorter than the classic illegal drugs' supply chain. NPS production is easier, and it is not linked to a specific country that produces the primary natural substance from which the drug originates. Furthermore, they are traded in small quantity, since a small quantity is itself sufficient to provoke significant/desired psychoactive effects. As a result, trading/trafficking NPS does not require a complex organization, unlike in the case of traditional drugs' supply chain. The latter, in fact, requires many intermediate stages between production and consumption, and the capacity of organizing the transport of great quantity of products (Interviews with P4, 19-5-2015);⁷



The legal status of NPS is/may be often different in the various stages of the supply chain. The substances change their status according to the country where a given segment of the chain takes place. For example, NPS might be legal in the country of production and illegal in the country of consumption;

⁷ For an explanation of the supply chains' different organization between distribution systems of the classic drugs and the synthetic drugs, see Massari (2005, p. 8) who refers to the traditional studies on urban drug markets, including Preble and Casey (1969), Moore (1977), Lewis (1994).

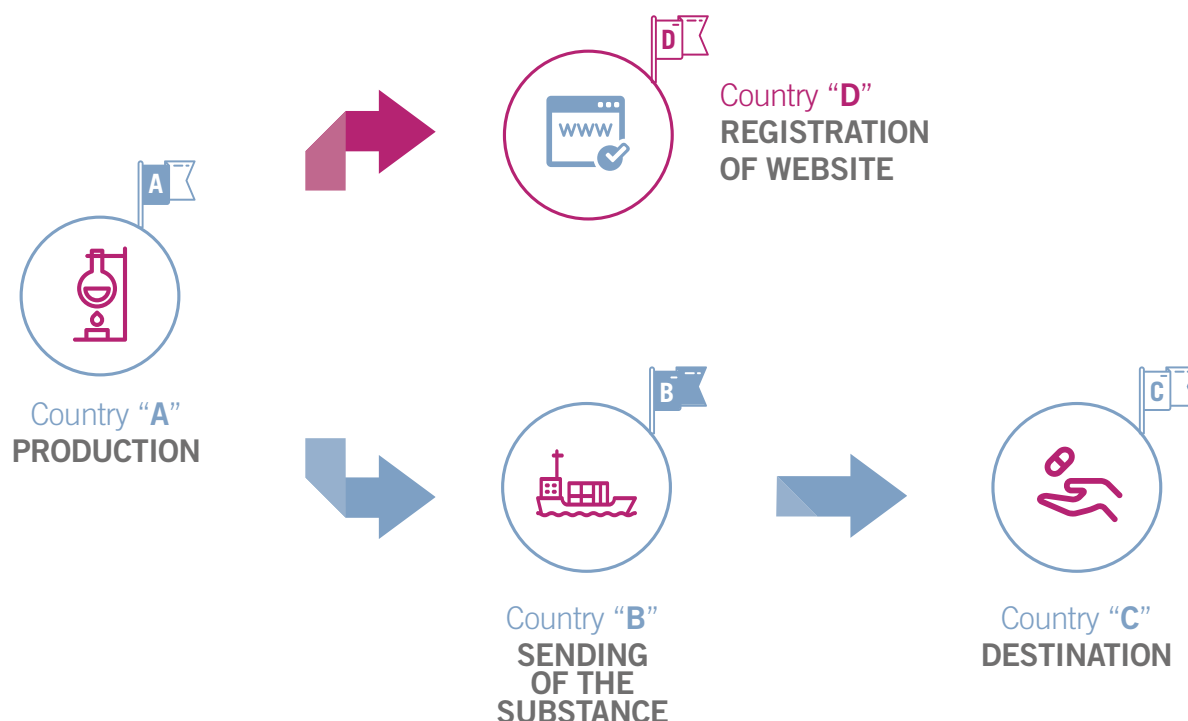


The NPS market has been facilitated by the increasing use of the Internet that is changing the traditional organization of the drugs' market, favouring the e-commerce. Therefore, the linkage between suppliers and consumers is closer compared to the traditional connection between demand and supply occurring in the classic drugs' market. Internet guarantees anonymity and permits to avoid vis-à-vis meetings, that might entail the risk of encountering violent situations. Moreover, Internet allows to find information to create synthetic drugs and purchase precursors. These functions of Internet in the NPS market have been reported by EMCDDA and also confirmed by the case studies analysed in this report (EMCDDA, 2015; EMCDDA, EUROPOL, 2013, p. 118);



The website selling the new psychoactive substances or products is usually registered in a country that does not correspond to the production country neither to the country from which the products are sent. For example, in the case of investigation no. 8, the website was registered in UK, while the synthetic cathinones were sent from Netherlands to Italy. In the case of case no.12, the sellers of NPS were a series of websites registered in US, and the products were sent from Spain to Italy.

Figure 2



MAIN MODELS OF THE ITALIAN MARKET

As regards the analysis of the main components of the Italian market, it has brought to identify:

- Some interwoven factors influencing the NPS market, such as NPS legal status, availability of classic drugs, and countermeasures of Law Enforcement agencies;
- Three models of NPS market, including domestic criminal business, (il)-licit smart shop business, and organized criminal business (see table 3).

SUBSTANCES/PRODUCTS (PACKAGING AND PRICE)

The information collected during the research activity concern various types of NPS that correspond almost to all the substances classified by UNODC as NPS, including the legal and illegal ones. However, in most of the cases there were controlled substances, since the collected data come from LEAs seizures. More specifically, the data analysed in this study are related to the seizures occurred during the investigative operations examined (table I) and to those seized at Malpensa airport (table 4). According to the tax police, 70% of the new psychoactive substances identified at Malpensa airport were illegal, namely scheduled, while 30%

were not scheduled, despite their psychoactive effects (Interview with PF1, 25-6-2015). In particular, the tax police underlined that the substances 3,4- CTMP and A-PVT arrive quite often and, although they have been reported many times to the central level, they have not been scheduled yet. The seizures operation considered particularly interesting by Law Enforcement agencies in terms of identifying new NPS circulating in the Italian market was the recent operation called “Easy drugs” (case no.12), since there was a great variety of substances and products that belonged to different categories of NPS and had different legal status (table 5).

From the analysis of the substances/products seized by LEAs, it is possible to identify different types of packaging:

- The vacuum-sealed packs with the “not for human consumption” label (see picture 1 and 2) are quite common. Evidence collected at Malpensa airport shows that the bags containing synthetic cathinones are often vacuum-sealed. This method of packaging contributes to better conserve the substance and make it less likely to be discovered by the anti-drugs dogs. During the participant observation carried out at Malpensa airport in October 2015, police seized a pack vacuum-sealed with the following label: “25 gramme 3MMC CRYSTAL not for human consumption” (RiSSC, 16-10-2015).

Table 3

TYPE OF NPS MARKET	MODUS OPERANDI	SUBSTANCES
Domestic criminal business	Sellers and consumers overlap; substances are bought mostly online, packaged at home, and the final products are sold offline, or finished products are bought online and sold offline. NPS are sold along with traditional illicit drugs.	Synthetic cathinone; synthetic cannabinoids; ketamine; phenethylamines
(Il)-licit smart shop business	Actors sell NPS until they are not scheduled and then change them with new non- controlled substances with effects that are similar to those of controlled drugs; actors buy substances online, make the packaging at home and sell through online or offline smart shops; clients receive the products through courier services, or buy them at offline smart shop. NPS are sold along with legal products.	Synthetic cannabinoids; Synthetic cathinone (especially not controlled substances)
Organized criminal business	Substances are transported through boats, cars and lorries, or well disguised within objects sent via air; trafficking and consumption mainly occur within ethnic communities, such as the Philippine and the Chinese ones; the substances are increasingly popular, and are sold with other traditional trafficked drugs.	Ketamine, Crystal meth

Source: RiSSC

- Another common way to present the products is under the disguise of incense or air fresheners, as shown for example by the packs seized at Malpensa airport and containing synthetic cannabinoids. According to the explanation given by Malpensa airport LEAs, they are not concealed, because traders/criminals presume that these products are likely to be confused with legal goods composed by legal substance (Interview with CO, 9-10-2015). The packaging solutions change rapidly, however. In April 2015, custom officers at Malpensa airport seized a great quantity of synthetic cannabinoids packaged in small tea bags. The product was called Aromatic

Potpourri Bonzai. On the back there was the following label describing the product and giving information about the route of administration:

Aromatic Potpourri Herbal Blend contains a combination of herbal extracts and essential oils. Open the package. Put the content in a small container. Let the natural fruity fragrance envelope the room.

The manufacture and distributors of this product take no responsibility for incorrect or misuse of this product. Is not suitable for burning. Not for human consumption. Adults only-use responsibility.

Table 4 - Substance seized at Malpensa airport

SUBSTANCE (2014-2015)
5 MEO-DALT N (N-diallyl-5-methoxytryptamine)
2C-B (4-Bromo-2,5-dimetossifeniletilamina)
3 FPM
3,4 CTMP (3,4-dichloro-methylphenidate)
3-BROMOMETCA TINONE
3-MMC (3-METILMETCATINONE)
4 CMC
5 APB
5APDB (3- diidrobenezofurano)
AL-L AD
AMT (ALFA-METILTRIPTAMINA)
APB (5-2 aminolpropil benzo furano)
A-P VP
A-PVT
18
BK-2C-B 2-AMINO-1-ETHANONE (4-bromo-2,5- dimethoxyphenyl)
BUPHEDRONE
CTMP (3,4-DICLOROMETILFENIDATO)
E TH YLONE
GBL
GHB
JWH-122 E SUOI ISOMERI
JWH-210 E SUOI ISOMERI
KRATOM
MAPB
MDP V
MEFEDRONE (4 –MMC)
MEO MIPT
METHAQUALONE
METHOXETAMINE
ME TH YLONE
MXE (Methoxetamine)
PENTEDRONE
POPPER

Source: RiSSC

Table 5

SUBSTANCE
4-M
4-M 3
4-MMC
5-MEO-D AL T
ALFA-PVP
A-PUP 1
A-PVT
DIPHENIDINE
EFEDRIN A
EXTACY
GBL
JWH122 - JWH210
MARJIUANA
MDP V
MEFEDRONE (4-MMC)
MXE
PENTEDRONE
PERTEDA 1

Source: RiSSC

In case no. 6, the controlled synthetic cannabinoid JWH-073 was sprayed in an herbal mixture called “Hurricane” that was sold as air freshener, which also contained a substance that was not controlled by the Italian legislation yet and, as the chemical consultant of the Public procurement wrote, was very dangerous for public health. In the website of the smart shop that sold the product, “Hurricane” was inserted in the sector of ‘herbal blend’ and was described as follows:

Fresheners environments made from the leaves and dried flowers aromas. Ingredients: Marigold, Mullein, Mint, Molasses, 17- (3-pyridyl) -5,16-androstadien beta-3-acetate, Blueberry Flavor. Keep out of the reach

of children. Do not swallow. Do not inhale. If swallowed, seek medical advice. Use: empty the contents into a bowl and place in closets, drawers or car. Ideal to perfume small spaces. We accept no liability for uses other than those described in the labelling. It is not recommended in any way the personal use.

The investigative and trial acts offer some information also about the retail prices of NPS (with reference to those listed in table 5), and confirm that NPS dealers get high profits. This is proved by the difference between the price of the substances bought on Internet and the price of the same substances sold offline (table 6 - column price).

Table 6

PRODUCT	SUBSTANCE	QUANTITY	PRICE
Hurricane	Synthetic cannabinoids	2 grams (from one gram of hurricane it was possible to make three joints)	23€
	3MMC	1 gram	Online: 5 € Offline: 25-30 €
	MEPHEDRONE IN CRYSTAL	Ketamine, Crystal meth	Online: 17 € Offline: 30 €
	MDP	1 gram	Bought at 10 € online; sold at 50 € offline
	CRYSTAL METH	5 gram	800 € offline
	Ketamine	1 litre (= 50 grams)	1 litre (= 50 grams)

Source: RISSC

Picture 1 - Source: Police media conference on investigative operation Sense aromatic (case no. 8)



Picture 2
Source: Arma dei Carabinieri



ACTORS

As emerged from the interviews with Law Enforcement agencies, in Italy the drug market is populated by numerous and various actors on the supply side, because there is a great demand for drugs. This does not necessarily mean that there is also a strong competition among them. In fact, according to the police, in Milan the drug market is not particularly competitive, since it seems that the demand for drugs overcome the supply (Interview with P4, 19-5-2015).

From the criminal human factor standpoint, there are diverse roles ranging from the actors producing the substances to those packaging and selling the products.

ACTORS PRODUCING THE SUBSTANCES

Actors producing NPS may be legal if they are located in countries where the substance produced is not controlled (i.e. research chemical industries). In countries where the substance is controlled, people manufacturing NPS use clandestine laboratories located in warehouses or houses.⁸

Figure 3



In Italy there have been few cases of small-scale clandestine laboratories.

- ➡ In June 2015, the Arma dei Carabinieri of Pescara (Abruzzo Region) identified a domestic laboratory of mephedrone managed by two Polish citizens who lived in the city (PrimaDaNoi.it, 2015).
- ➡ In August 2012, police identified a very basic laboratory producing ketamine in a house in Lido di Classe, a seaside area of Ravenna (Emilia-Romagna Region). Five young people produced drugs for selling them in the clubs of the Adriatic Sea coast. The discovery occurred during a local investigation on the trafficking of synthetic drugs (Ravennadintorni.it, 2012).
- ➡ In 2010, a laboratory was seized at Peschiera Borromeo, a small town close to Milan. It produced “legal highs”, including non-controlled synthetic cathinone and cannabinoid, and supplied many smart shops around all Italy (case n. 4).

⁸ For a useful classification of clandestine laboratories in the sector of drugs, see: Chiu, Y. et al. (2011)

Actors packaging and selling substances and products

In the stage of wholesale and distribution, the actors range from individual persons who want to earn little money through small and domestic trade, to criminal networks. As explained by the interviewed Law Enforcement agencies representatives, there may be various cases:



CASE NO. 1

Producers and sellers overlap, and the producer/seller reaches the consumers directly through Internet. Identifying the actors creating and managing the websites selling NPS is difficult. They might be legal actors, selling non-controlled substances/products, or they might be ghost actors who supervise legal or illegal websites selling legal or illegal substances/products. In case no. 12, LEA's supposed that the ghost actors, behind the website, might be part of a serious criminal organization dealing with drugs trafficking. According to them, the trafficking of different kinds of NPS that occurred through various websites clearly seemed part of the same criminal plan. Indeed, the products were bought by various virtual clients from a series of websites, all registered in the United States, the financial transactions were directed to the same bank account and the substances were sent from Spain by the same company.



CASE NO. 2

Wholesale distributors buy the substances on Internet and transform them in products by packaging and advertising them online or offline. In case no. 4 and no. 6, smart shop managers bought the substances on the Internet from foreign countries and transformed them in finished products. For example, they bought from China and Spain the synthetic cannabinoid and from Italy the herbs and printed cardstocks, namely the material used for disguising the substances and packaging the final product, which was an herbal potpourri containing also a synthetic cannabinoid.



CASE NO. 3

Consumers easily become dealers by buying the products on Internet and selling them through their offline network. They usually traffic different kinds of drugs at the same time. In case no. 8, people with regular job and people working as pushers bought on the Internet synthetic cathinones and also traditional drugs, like hashish, marijuana and popper, which is not included in the table I DPR 309/90, and Iopan-4-OI-Butonic Acid Salt, known as "GHB", to sell them especially within the homosexual community;



CASE NO. 4

The supply of ketamine shows a trend that is similar to the distribution system of traditional illicit drugs. Wholesale dealers establish offline contacts with the producers. The case no. 13 shows that, in 2014-2015, Italian wholesale dealers bought ketamine in Spain and transported it to Italy by lorry and then sold it, along with other traditional drugs, to young consumers who became dealers by selling it through social networks and smartphone applications;



CASE NO. 5

Ethnic networks: ketamine and crystal methamphetamine are mainly trafficked and consumed within Chinese and Philippine communities. Ketamine seems to be diffused among China groups (case no. 7). Dealers sell ketamine, shaboo and MDMA, as well as heroin, to their compatriots and to the Philippine dealers or consumers, who do not have direct contacts with Chinese traffickers, but only with Chinese small dealers. The crystal methamphetamine has been traditionally trafficked and consumed by the Philippine community (case no. 5), although more recent investigations have shown that the number of Italians both as consumers and dealers increased (cases no.10 and no.15).

⁹ On the non-existent role of organized crime in the market of synthetic drug market, see Massari, 2005, pp. 10-14.

Serious transnational organized crime - like mafia-type criminal groups - seems not yet interested in the NPS trade/trafficking, a part from the market of those drugs that are becoming more popular, like ketamine (Vidotto Fonda, 2013 p.61, 81), and are less available because they are more controlled. In fact, in these circumstances, consumers and suppliers may need a powerful actor, like the mafia organizations, who is able to take some risk. However, according to the interviewed Law Enforcement agencies, in Italy, mafia-type criminal organizations are so involved in the more lucrative traditional illicit drugs market, where they occupy a leader position by playing important functions above all in the intermediate stages of the supply chain, that they are not interested in expanding their business to NPS. Moreover⁹, the services offered by organized crime, aimed at regulating the violent and untrustworthy market of drugs, usually are not requested in the NPS market, because the latter has been developed especially on the Internet, which allows a direct linkage between producers and clients. The lack of interest on the part of traditional organised crime does not mean that the NPS market is not organised. For example, as shown by intercepted phone calls, the shaboo market in Rome is not managed by organized crime, however there is a network of Philippines that collaborate and some of the components of the network, who occupy leader positions, are connected to the criminal organizations that traffic the crystal meth in the homeland (case no. 15).

MODUS OPERANDI

According to the research results, the modus operandi of trading and trafficking NPS seems to be influenced mainly by the following factors:

- the legal status of the NPS;
- the Law Enforcement agencies responses;
- the characteristics of buyers.

In detail, the modus operandi considered in this paper includes strategies to avoid penal punishment or administrative fines, methods of concealment and transport the substances/products, trafficking routes of substances/products, methods of payment, places of retail selling and communication strategies.

Method of avoiding a penal punishment

In the market of non-controlled NPS, actors use the so-called “substitution strategy”: they substitute the product, as soon as one of its components is scheduled, with a new one that is not controlled, but provokes similar effects. In other words, they change substances following the legislation’s modification. As written by the Public procurement coordinating the “Oro e incenso” investigative operation that identified a trafficking of synthetic cannabinoids, the diffusion of these substances is expanding rapidly, the criminal organizations are trying to identify new synthetic molecules capable of evading the controls and the responses of the authorities are evolving (Procura della Repubblica presso il Tribunale di Catania, 2011, p.17)”. The investigations show that actors making business through NPS are updated about the legislation regarding the drug scheduling and exploit all the opportunities given by NPS as legal products, adapting their offers on the basis of the legislation’s changes.

Concealment and transport methods

The concealment methods of NPS are various and show different degree of sophistication: more the substance is known (popular and controlled), more it requires to be well disguised and hidden.

Generally speaking, transporting NPS is easy because of their nature and due to the little preparation of Law Enforcement agencies. As illustrated above, NPS are traded in small quantity and are odourless. Law enforcement agencies are not sufficiently prepared to identify and tackle them. Therefore, traffickers send them as the substances were legal, without hiding them. Indeed, they write the chemical names of the substances adding the following expression: “not for human consumption”. In other words, the substances are traded like any other kind of legal good. For example, synthetic cathinones are not always concealed. Most of the times, they are inside anonymous little bags with the indication of the molecule and the customer number. They are not hidden because the senders deliver it for “chemical research” and ‘not for human consumption’. In other words, they are treated as substances for a legitimate scope.

When the products are concealed, the method of hiding them are usually simple. Many examples show that the NPS concealment is more rudimentary

compared to the methods of concealment used for classic illegal drugs. Some of these examples are as follows:

- Tax police has recently seized seven bags of MDPV shielded in DVD cases (RiSSC, 16-10- 2015);
- Criminals have recently used the method of sticking stamps with new drugs on an envelope sent as registered mail. This is a simple, yet clever method: criminals know that police at the border is allowed to control through X-ray only goods and not mails;
- The crystal meth can be easily hidden in various objects, such as inside suitcases' handles (case no. 15), or stacked in little bags disguised as a perfume sample;
- In case no.1 related to the first investigative operation identifying a ketamine trafficking, the actors used the strategy of dunking fabrics into colours and ketamine.

Methods of transport

The methods of transport are various. Drugs are usually ordered online and arrive via mail often through public mail service or private couriers. In some cases, they have been transported by human beings. Some NPS, like ketamine and crystal meth, are likely to be transported also through traditional

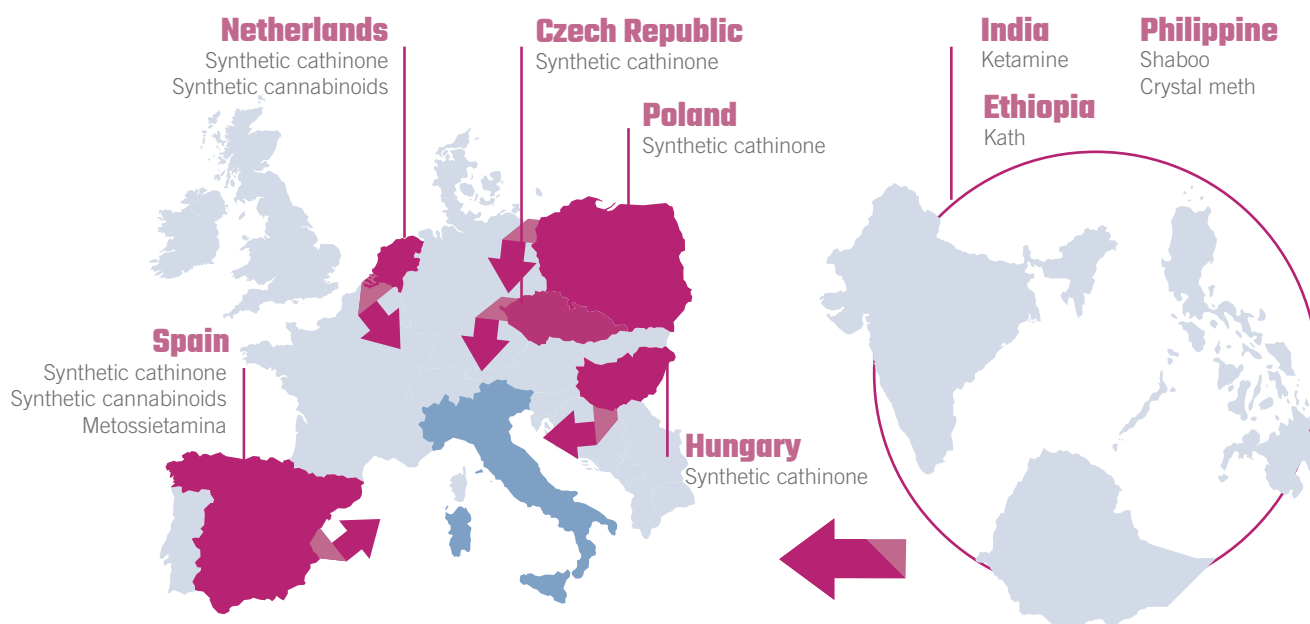
Table 7

SUBSTANCES	PROVENIENCE
Synthetic cathinone	Spain, Netherlands, Poland, Hungary, Czech Republic
Synthetic cannabinoids	Spain and Netherlands
Shaboo	Philippine
Ketamine	India
GBL	Spain
Kath	Ethiopia
Metossietamina	Spain
Crystal meth	Philippine

Source: RiSSC

drugs' transport methods (i.e. hidden in cars or boat). The actors selling the NPS tend to change the method of transport, as soon as they recognise that their activity is under criminal investigation. This was clear in case no. 8: the supply chain operators changed method of sending synthetic cathinones; they probably thought that the airport would have seized them, and so they stopped using air couriers and started to send the packs through lorries.

Figure 4



Substances/products' routes

The collected data so far showed that the NPS are sent to Italy from the following European countries: Spain, Netherlands, Poland and Hungary. These routes are also confirmed by the Europol analysis (EMCDDA, Europol, 2013). The substances' destinations are located more in the North of Italy rather than in the South.

An interesting route of synthetic cannabinoids, disguised as air fresheners, that emerged from a seizure in Malpensa, was from Netherlands to Iran, namely from a place where the substance is not controlled to a country where people using drugs are highly penalized. This showed that the routes and the modi operandi of trading/trafficking NPS is influenced by the legal status of NPS.

The routes are also influenced by the so-called "cat and mouse game". In other words, criminals change routes according to the Law Enforcement agencies' responses. This for example has been the case of crystal meth. From intercepted phone calls, traffickers claimed that they stopped bringing the substance through the air boards at Malpensa airport due to the many controls that had occurred, and they started to send the drugs from Philippine to Balkan airports (investigators could not reveal the name of the airports since they are still conducting activities of investigations), and transport the substances by cars crossing Italian borders.

Communication strategies

The investigative and trial cases that are analysed here show that Internet is a pivotal tool of communication both for the internal contact between the actors of the (criminal) network and the marketing of the products. Case no. 6 gives an interesting indication about the communication between managers of smart shops, all aware of the fact that the 'Hurricane' product they sold was composed by legal and illegal substances. They communicate through Skype, since this modality is unlikely to be intercepted by police. Instead, the communication between sellers and clients was not concealed, because it was a "normal" commercial exchange. In case no. 13, young consumers/dealers communicate with buyers through the emoticons offered by WhatsApp and Facebook, used to indicate various types of drugs: for example, a quatrefoil indicated a dose of marijuana (see the various nicknames of ketamine listed in table no.8). They used a common saying among young people to indicate drug exchanges: for instance, "let's go to drink" meant "purchasing liquid ketamine" or "ten books of science" meant "ten grams of marijuana".

Methods of payment

Most of the NPS are bought on Internet and sent by mail. Consequently, the payment occurs by credit card or through bank transfers. The identification of the owner of the bank account used for making the bank transfer usually enables Law Enforcement agencies to catch the dealers and identify also the websites used by them for making restocks of substances or products. Generally speaking, criminals do not use sophisticated methods of payment, because they pretend that the products are licit. For example, the payment for the apparently legal product "hurricane", containing a synthetic cannabinoid and sold on the website of a smart shop, was legally made through credit card or bank transfer. Other cases show more sophisticated methods of payment. In case no. 12, the bank transfers made by consumers/dealers were directed to the branch of Bank of Valletta located in Malta on the benefit of a company registered in the Republic of Seychelles (see figure 3).

Table 8

KETAMINE'S NICKNAMES

K

Keta

Katerina

Kate

Caterina

Sketch

Sketchamina

Skizzo

Source: RiSSC

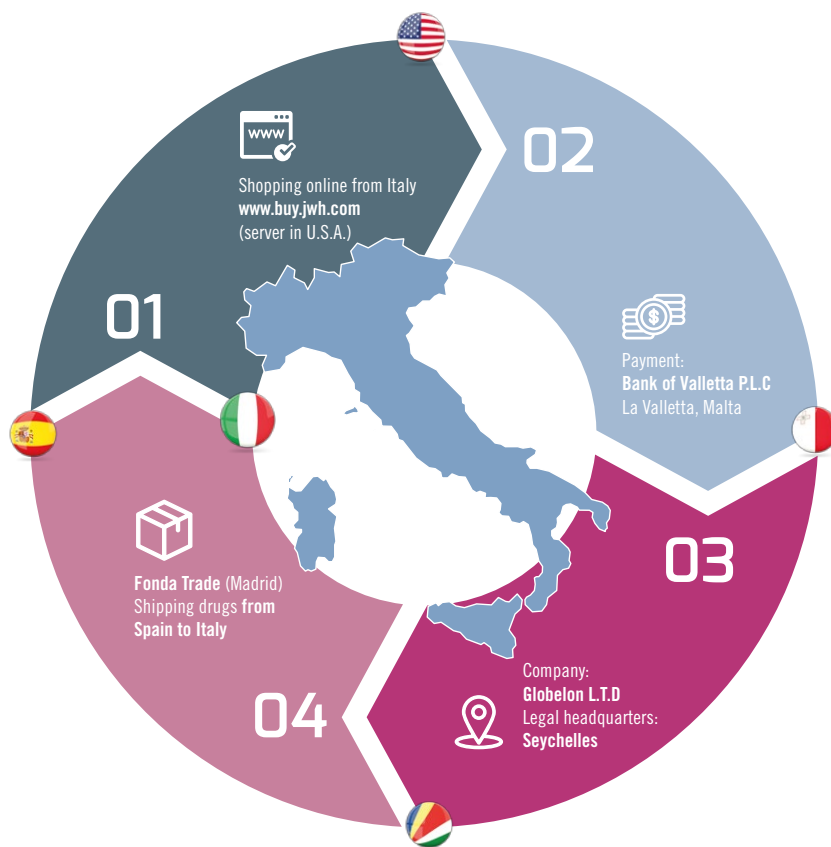
The analysis of some cases shows that the exchanges occurring offline were paid in cash and through sexual services (case no. 12).

Places of retail selling

Non-controlled NPS are usually sold in smart shops or through the smart shop websites. The “Hurricane” product was sold on the website of the smart shop registered in the Czech Republic, and also through a consolidated commercial network mainly composed by a series of complicit smart shops located in various Italian cities (some of them were a franchise, others were independent companies). Prosecutor wrote in the judiciary act that the smart shops were the “punti cardine” (the cornerstones) of the commercial system of the criminal association. Two employees of the Turin smart shop, working as salesman, had the task of distributing the products by keeping the contacts with the network of smart shops.

The offline places of retail selling change according to the typologies of consumers. The analysis of some case studies shows that the ketamine was sold by Chinese groups in bars and clubs attended by Chinese young people (case no.7). It was also sold by Italian young consumers/dealers at school or in local trains (case no. 13), or in clubs (cases no. 4, no. 8, no. 12, no. 13). According to the analysis of case no. 8, the mephedrone was sold mainly in clubs or during parties, or in dealers’ houses. In Rome crystal meth was sold on the streets or brought directly to the houses of consumers, or in bars attended by the Philippine community and in gamble places (cases no. 5, no. 10, no.16).

Figure 5



Source: Police media conference call on investigative operation called “Easy Drugs” (case no. 12)

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This report has offered a preliminary analysis of the Italian NPS market, according to the elements collected during an evidence-based study. It has contributed to generate knowledge on the NPS supply chain, giving additional information and perspectives on an issue that has been little explored from a socio-criminological approach. The elements collected and examined so far confirm the complexity of the NPS phenomenon and the pervasive need for in-depth studies on its dynamics and trends, also in order to outline possible patterns of reference. In particular, there are some main issues that should be considered a priority in the knowledge generation process on the NPS European and global market:



The correlation between the changes in the legal status of the substances and the changes in their presence in the diverse national markets, also according to new trafficking routes;



The possible correlation between the legal economy (e.g. chemical and pharmaceutical industry) and the NPS market;



The operational role of the Internet, intended as both Surface and Deep Web. It is clear that the actors of NPS market take advantage from technologies, which facilitate communication, research, logistics, marketing, recruitment, distribution and payment. For example, the online environment allows to purchase precursors; find information for making synthetic drugs (including literature and suggestions from social forum participants); reach consumers through clever marketing strategies exploiting also social networks; make anonymous and untraceable connections between producers and consumers, or producers and wholesalers. The Deep Web is itself an NPS market.

APPENDIX I



CASE NO. 1

The investigative operation called **Profumo di droga** was carried out in 2010 by the Health sector of Carabinieri coordinated by the Milan Public Procurement Office. It was the first operation discovering the implementation of the ‘substitution strategy’ aimed at trading/trafficking synthetic cannabinoids. The synthetic cannabinoid was sprayed in a mixture of herbs and the product was sold as air fresheners through a network of smart shops. As soon as the legislation changed, the substance was substituted with a new one that had been already prepared in a laboratory (see the list of the legal and illegal substances seized in the table).



CASE NO. 6

Oro e incenso is the name of an important investigation carried out by the Health sector of Carabinieri (Nas) of Catania in 2011 that identified the trafficking of synthetic cannabinoids organized by a couple owning a smart shop in Turin.

The two people were arrested since they trafficked the synthetic drug JWH-073 (naftalen-1-il)(butil-1h-indol-3-il), which is illicit in Italy, since it is scheduled in table I envisaged by the drug legislation (art. 13 d.p.r. 309/90). The substance was inserted in a herbal mixture called HURRICANE sold as air freshener, containing a substance that was not controlled by the Italian legislation yet and was – as written by the chemical consultant of the Public procurement – very dangerous for public health. The Spice called “hurricane” was inserted in the sector of ‘herbal blend’ and sold in bags containing 2 grams of the product; its price was 23 Euros. From one gram of hurricane it was possible to make three joints. The

payment occurred through credit card or bank transfer directed to Praga. The criminals do not use sophisticated methods of payment, because the product was treated as a licit one (Ivi. p. 42). The marketing strategy of the company was carried out mostly on the website of the shop, registered in the Czech Republic. The couple bought via Internet from China and Spain the illicit substances and from Italy the material used for disguising the substances and packaging the final product, including herbs and printed cardstocks. Their commercial network was composed mainly by a series of complicit smart shops located in various Italian cities: some of them were a franchise, others were independent companies. The prosecutor wrote in the judiciary act that the smart shops were the “punti cardine” (the cornerstones) of the commercial system of the criminal association.

Two employees of the Turin smart shop, working as salesman, had the task of distributing the products by keeping the contacts with the network of smart shops. Therefore the selling was online or directly through the smart shops that were supposed to sell licit products. The managers of smart shops were aware of the precarious licit nature of some substances that could have become illicit.

The leaders of the drug trafficking association, namely the couple owning the Turin smart shop, exploited the opportunities given by the ambiguous nature of NPS even before the Oro e incenso investigation. The Carabinieri had seized a product called “ketama gold” sold by a smart shop in Campania that was bought at the Turin smart shop. The chemical analysis showed that the product contained the cannabinoided synthetic JWH 122 that at the time of the seizure was not under control (Ivi., p. 86). In 2010 the Carabinieri, coordinated by Public Prosecutor Guaraniello, controlled some substances sold by the Turin smart shop and seized the product called “N-joy” too (<http://>

www.lastampa.it/2010/03/07/cronaca/blitz-dei-nas-nel-magazzinodelle-droghe-vendute-sul-web-5SfE18tPSsX4U1kryxCozK/pagina.html.

During the “Oro e incenso” investigation, the price of hurricane (23 Euros) let the Carabinieri suspect that the product contained drugs, because a bag of 2 grams of potpourri seemed excessive. Moreover, the data on the orders of hurricane, namely the quantity, the frequency (for example, one smart shop ordered 190 bags of hurricane in two weeks) and the identity of buyers helped the Carabinieri to understand that beyond the licit selling network there was an association trafficking NPS. Carabinieri gathered this data by intercepting the messages addressed to the email of the Turin smart shop and the data given to the Carabinieri by the courier express, TNT Global Express, used by the association to send the products (during the investigation, the entrepreneurs of the smart shop had some suspects and changed the courier company). The investigations were facilitated by the testimony of one buyer, who confessed that he assumed the substances by smoking it with tobacco and the effects were stronger than the cannabis ones.



CASE NO. 8

The investigative operation **Sense aromatic** was carried out in 2013 and started from the confession of a person who was found with 120 grams of 3MMC, a synthetic cathinone, when searched by the police. He told to the police that he had just bought the products on the sensearomatic.com website and showed the receipt of payment.

Thanks to the coordination of the DCSA (*Direzione centrale servizi antidroga – Central Office for Anti-drug Services*), the investigation was linked to other activities carried out by the Bologna Public Prosecutor Office who was working on a website selling drugs that used the same courier company chosen by the “sense aromatic” website, registered in the Netherlands. The Italian courier company that worked with the Netherlands courier company collaborated with investigators and enabled them to identify the suspected packs and to find out that they contain various substances, especially synthetic cathinones,

including 3MMC, 4 MMC and 4 MEC, which were inserted in the table I of the Italian drug legislation (DPR 309/90). During the investigation, police found out that other substances were sent on the website, including etafedrone, fluoranfetamina, pentedrone. The seizures were carried out in many Italian cities, especially in Padua, Florence, Milan and Rome. Given the great quantity of seizures, 25 people were arrested in March and April 2013.

During the search in their houses, police found out material for the packaging and the measurement of the drugs. Indeed, most of the arrested people were not only sellers of the products, but they packaged the substances. They trafficked at the same time different kinds of drugs: not only the above mentioned NPS, but also traditional drugs, like hashish, marijuana and popper which is not included in the table I DPR 309/90 and, in province of Siena, Iopan-4-OI-Butonic Acid Salt, known as “GHB” (this substance has been recently put it under international control). The website was registered in the UK, while the substances arrived from the Netherlands and were sent through air couriers. Some buyers used false names. During the police seizures, the supply chain operators change method of sending the substances: they probably thought that the airport would have seized them, and so they stopped using air couriers and started to send the packs through lorries. The activity of selling occurred offline: one of the sellers was arrested while he was selling 5 grams of mephedrone to a driver in a car park of an industrial area of Padua (<http://www.padova24ore.it/cronaca/6609-droghe-sintetiche-a-padova-due-insospettabili-arestat-dalla-squadra-mobile.html>). Considering that one gram of 3MMC was bought on Internet for 5 Euros and sold offline for 25-30 Euros, the activity of selling was profitable (Questura di Padova, Richiesta di emissione di provvedimenti cautelari restrittivi della libertà personale, Procedimento penale 926/13 mod. 44 Procura della Repubblica presso il Tribunale di Padova). Many of the identified consumers and some of the sellers/consumers used mephedrone to facilitate sexual intercourse. It is diffused in the gay community and in the nightclubs. Consumers buy mephedrone instead of ecstasy or MDMA, because it is considered better in terms of price and quality, and also because there are lower risks of being identified

since it is still little known by the Law Enforcement agencies (Ivi, p. 17). Police was not able to identify the criminals behind the website because of the lack of cooperation from the Netherland investigative authorities (Guglielmi, National Workshop, 26-6-2015).



CASE NO. 12

Easy drugs is the investigative operation carried out by the Carabinieri of Milan between October 2013 and March 2015. It started after the arrest of a drug addict who had 500 grams of MDPV. The guy bought the drug that he consumed and sold on a website registered in US to a company domiciled at Seychelles. The packs arrived from Spain, where MDPV was not scheduled, through ordinary mail or private couriers and the money was put in a bank account in Malta. Almost 30 persons were arrested: they were ordinary people who bought the drugs on Internet and sold the drugs to their friends. Many types of drugs were seized (see table 4).



CASE NO. 13

CASE NO. 13

Sballo 2.0 is an investigation carried out in March 2015 by the police of Monza, a city closed to Milan, that arrested eight people and warning other five people for trafficking synthetic drugs. The investigation, started in January 2014 when a minor was recovered in hospital since he showed a dissociative status as an effect of the assumption of ketamine. As a result of the investigation, police found out that a network of young people sold marijuana, hashish, cocaine and synthetic drugs using a code language through social networks tools. They communicate through emoticons offered by WhatsApp and Facebook, to indicate various types of drugs (for example, a quatrefoil indicated a dose of marijuana). They used a common saying among young people to indicate drug exchanges: for instance, “let’s go to drink” meant “purchasing liquid ketamine” or “ten books of science” meant “ten grams of marijuana”.

During the search, police seized marijuana, hashish, cocaine, ketamine, stamps soaked in LSD, money gathered from the drug selling, false money, material for packaging, transport and concealment of the drugs. They also found out a small greenhouse, with lamps and ventilation tubes for the domestic cultivation of marijuana plants.

[\(http://www.poliziadistato.it/articolo/38044/\)](http://www.poliziadistato.it/articolo/38044/)

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