



INCB Annual Report highlights the importance of shared responsibility in reducing drug-related suffering, warns of global trafficking of precursor chemicals and of prescription drugs being misused, and highlights regional trends.

VIENNA, 5 March (UN Information Service) – New psychoactive substances, known as 'legal highs' and 'designer drugs', are a growing threat to public health, as seen by increased emergency room admissions and calls to poison centres, the Vienna-based International Narcotics Control Board (INCB) says in its Annual Report for 2012, launched today in London.

These new psychoactive substances are easily available over the Internet and the total number of such substances on the market, already estimated to be in the hundreds, is growing steadily. INCB is calling for concerted action by States to prevent the manufacture, trafficking and abuse of these substances which are a threat to public health. The President of the Board, Raymond Yans said: "In recent years, there has been an unprecedented surge in the abuse of new psychoactive substances. In Europe alone almost one new substance is appearing every week. Previously, between 2000 and 2005 there were an average of five notifications of new substances per year. Clear action must be taken now by governments to prevent and deal with the abuse of these so-called 'legal highs' which are already a threat to public health and pose a significant challenge to public health systems."

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