

2014 Report on Drug Situation in Georgia

WITHIN THE COMPETENCE OF THE MINISTRY OF
INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF GEORGIA



MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

1. Balanced Drug Policy

Over the recent years a lot of problems have been accumulated in the country in regard to illicit traffic in drugs, what has been negatively influencing the life and health of the Georgian population.

Since the October Elections of 2012 the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia (hereinafter - MIA) has chosen the vector of balanced drug policy. Each and every initiative of the MIA represents the outcome of the consistent state policy, which has been planned as a result of comprehensive analytical work.

1.1 Analytical Work

At the end of 2013 the MIA conducted comprehensive analytical work, which had been mostly based on the information provided by state agencies (MIA, Ministry of Corrections of Georgia, Office of the Chief Prosecutor of Georgia, Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia, Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia), non-governmental sector (“Bemoni”, “Uranti”, “Global Initiative on Psychiatry – Tbilisi”, “Alternative Georgia”, “Kamara”, “Open Society Georgia Foundation”), partner countries (USA, Austria, Germany, Cyprus), international organizations (International Organization for Migration (IOM), European Police Office (Europol), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)). Moreover, a study visit was conducted to Germany, which was fully dedicated to analytical work.

Furthermore, analytical work has been based on a research conducted by Young Psychologists Association in August 2013, studying public opinions on decriminalization-legalization of drugs, as well as on a survey conducted by ACT (Analysis and Consulting Team) in 2012 on decriminalization/legalization of Marijuana. Results of both social surveys have shown that the majority of the population is against the decriminalization and respectively, against the legalization.

1.2 Short and Long-Term Perspectives

As a result of analytical work, several main directions have been identified, which required short and long-term solutions.

In the first phase, within the short-term perspective, it was necessary to solve the problems related to illicit traffic in the so-called “homemade drugs”, new psychoactive substances and classical drugs. Relevant measures have been taken by the State in this regard.

As for the second phase, the State actively works in the direction of conducting treatment-rehabilitation programs of drug addicts.



2. “Prescription Drug Abuse”

Problem:

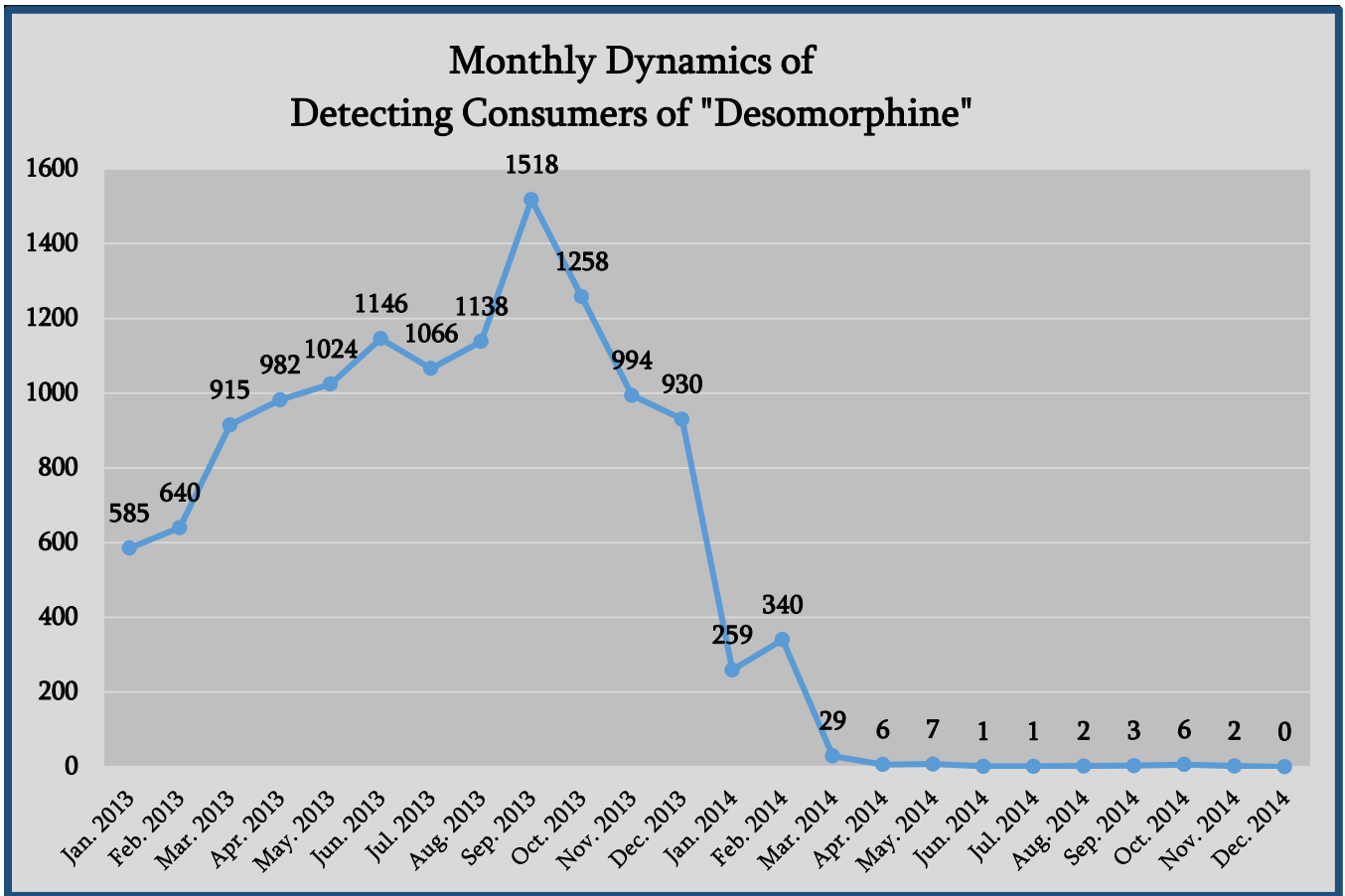
The first and most urgent problem facing the country in regard to drug consumption, was the so-called “prescription drug abuse”. Over the recent years combined therapeutic agents containing Codeine, Ephedrine, Norephedrine and Pseudoephedrine were legally imported to Georgia and were freely available at pharmacies. These preparations were used to make the so-called “homemade drugs”: “Krokodil”, “Vint” and “Jeff”.

Response:

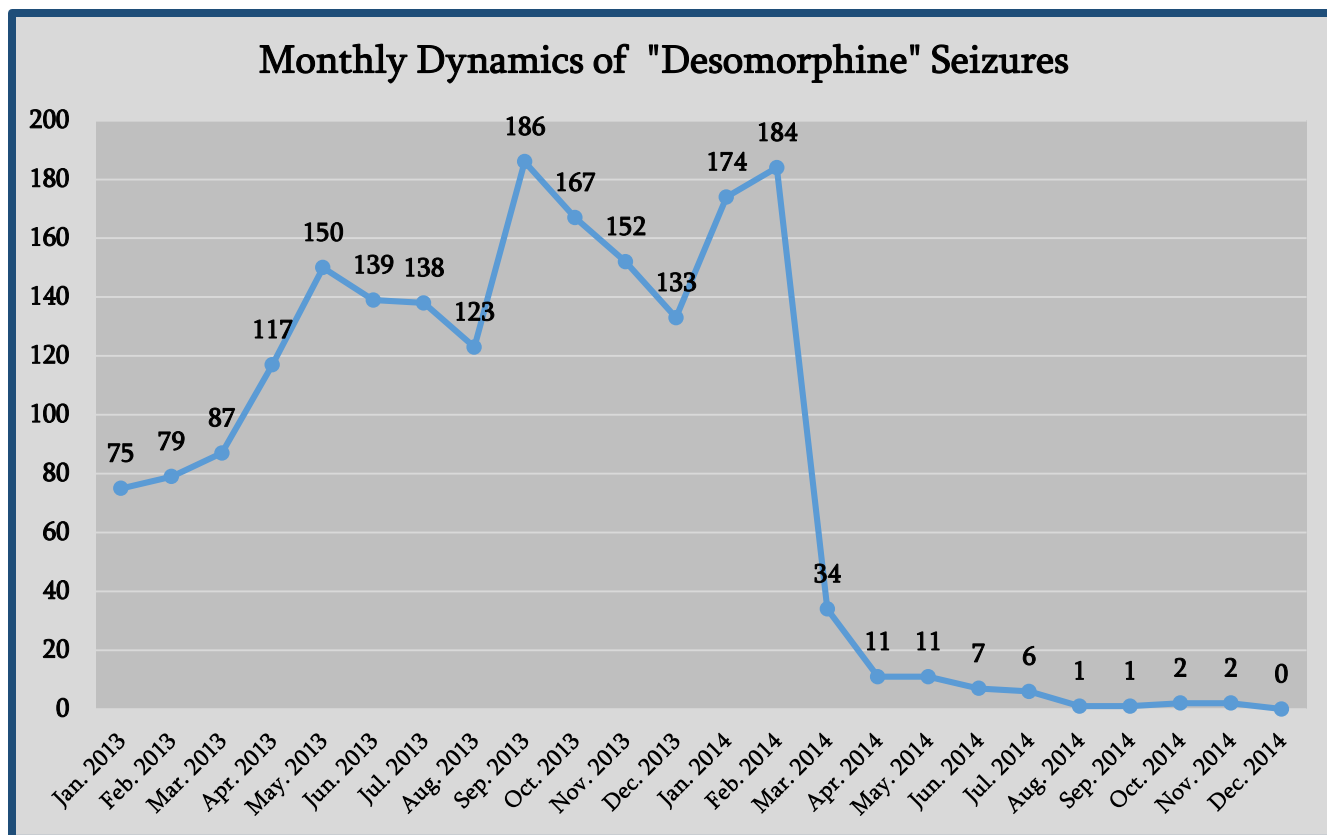
On behalf of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia and Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia, a package of legislative amendments has been initiated at the Parliament, which entered into force on 15 March 2014. According to the legislative amendments, illicit traffic in combined therapeutic agents containing Codeine, Ephedrine, Norephedrine and Pseudoephedrine has been subject to criminal prosecution, especially in regard to charging pharmacy owners and its employees.

Result:

This project has resulted in a more than 90% reduction in consuming “Krokodil”, upon entry into force. If in February 2014 consumer detecting number was 340, this figure has been reduced to 29 in March, to 6 in April, and to a zero in December.



Furthermore, a significant decrease tendency of “Krokodil” seizures is also noteworthy. If in February 2014 the number of “Desomorphine” seizure amounted to 184, this number has decreased to 34 in March, to 11 in April, and to a zero in December.



Practically, there is a 100% decrease of illicit traffic in “Krokodil”, according to the December data.

Other Measures:

Control over Legal Entities Authorized for Circulation of the First Group Pharmaceutical Products

Memorandum “On Implementation of Joint Measures for Controlling and Monitoring Legal Circulation of the First Group Pharmaceutical Products on the Pharmaceutical Market” was signed in August 2013, between the MIA and the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia. On the basis of the Memorandum, a joint working group was established, which develops mechanisms for preventing flow of the First Group Pharmaceutical Products from legal circulation into illegal channels.

As a result of implementing joint measures for controlling the pharmaceutical market, consumption of “homemade drugs” has been minimized in the country.



3. New Psychoactive Substances

Problem:

The second, also very urgent problem was new psychoactive substances, the so-called “bios” and “spices”, which were not legally regulated anyhow and were smuggled into Georgia without any control. NPS represent a challenge not only for Georgia, but for the whole world.

Response:

Based on the experience of four European countries (Austria, Switzerland, UK, Cyprus) and on behalf of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, a package of legislative amendments on new psychoactive substances had been elaborated, which entered into force on 1 May 2014. The Law “On New Psychoactive Substances” envisages *inter alia* criminalization of classes of chemical compounds.

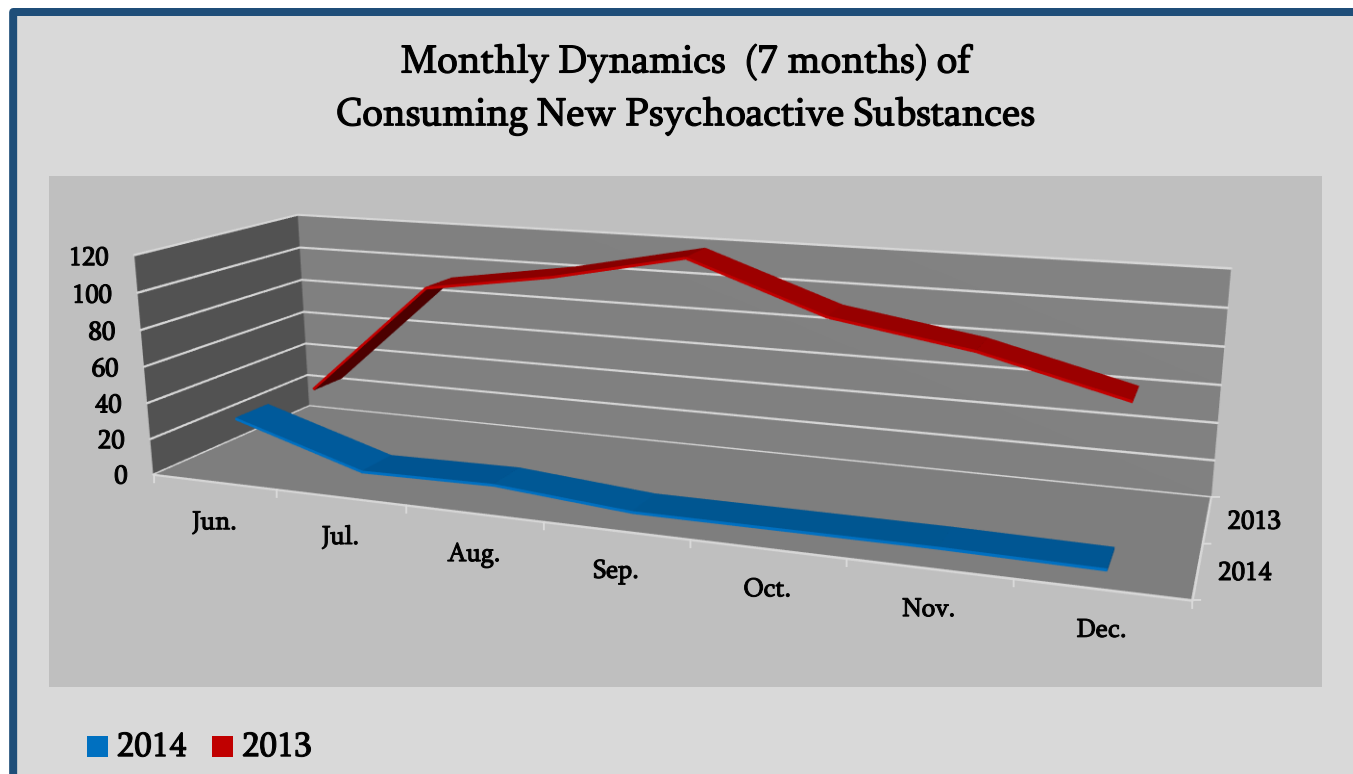
Result:

a) Reduction Tendency

A new Law has turned out to be very effective in several directions. Since entry into force of the Law, an impressive reduction tendency of consuming “Bio Drugs” has been detected. More precisely, based on the overall data of 7 months (June - December) of 2014, over 90% reduction in consuming new psychoactive substances has been identified, in comparison to the similar period of 2013. If this number (total amount) was 573 in 2013, there were only 51 cases in 2014.

Significant decrease in consumption of New psychoactive substances

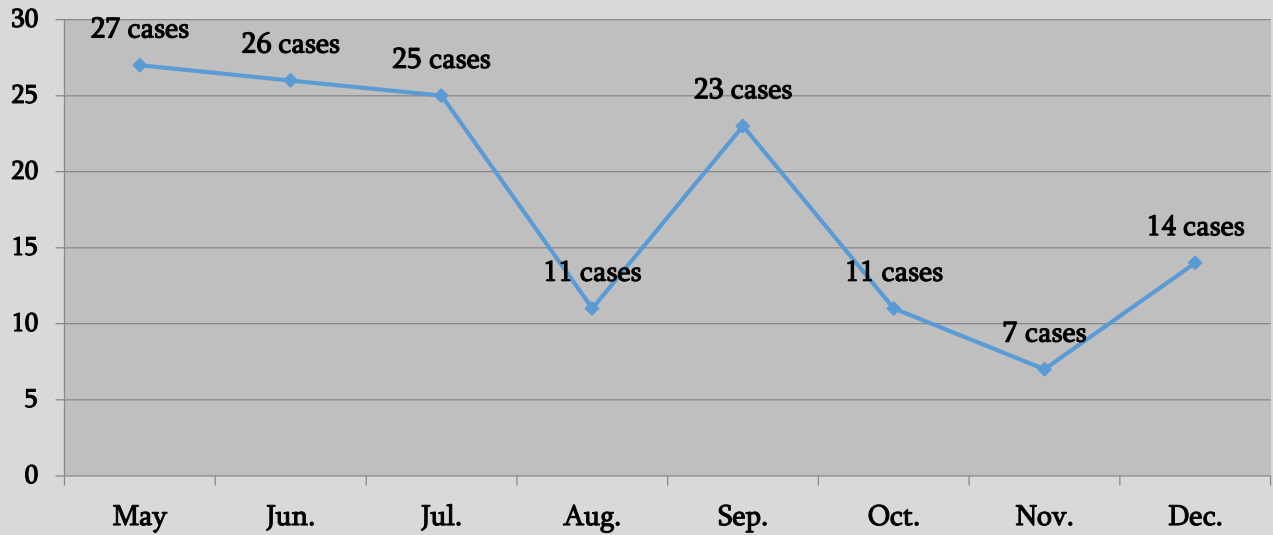




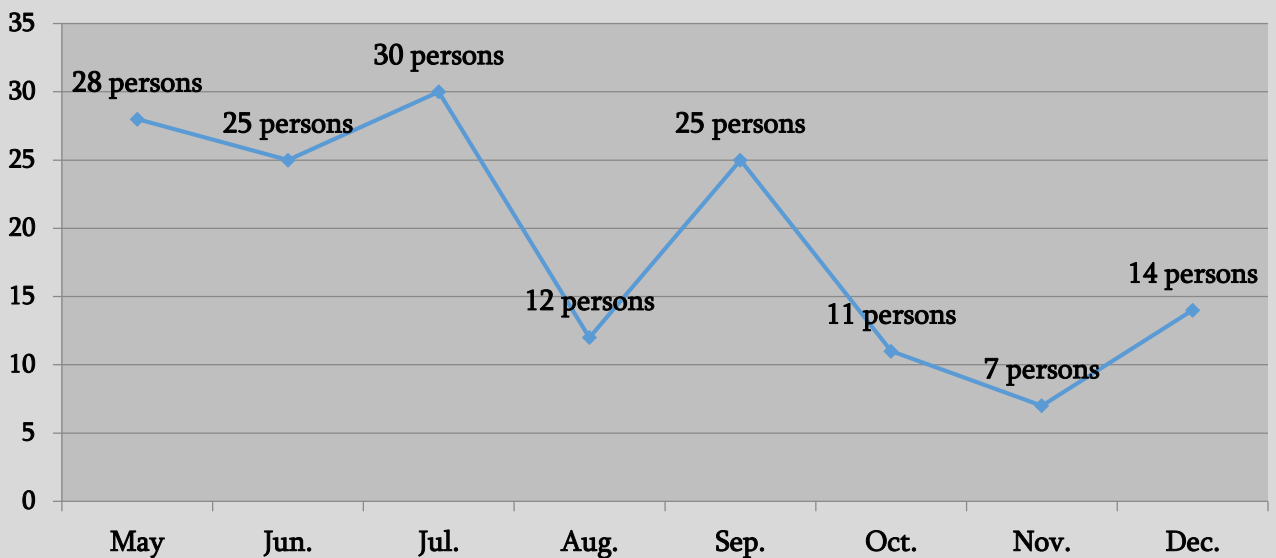
Furthermore, upon entry into force of the Law, since the beginning phase law enforcement agencies have been conducting seizures of “Bio Drugs” nearly every day. In May-December of 2014, 144 criminal cases have been initiated and 152 persons have been charged for illicit traffic of new psychoactive substances. Moreover, obvious reduction tendency has been identified in terms of illicit traffic of “Bio Drugs”. If in May 2014 – 27 cases were initiated for illicit traffic in NPS, this number decreased to 14 cases in December, while in November there were only 7 criminal cases. Similarly, if in May 2014 – 28 persons were charged for illicit traffic in NPS, this number dropped to 14 persons in December, while in November only 7 persons were charged.

See below the graphs:

Number of Criminal Cases on Illicit Traffic in NPS
Monthly Dynamics



Number of Persons Charged for Illicit Traffic in NPS
Monthly Dynamics



It is noteworthy that the non-governmental sector also notes a sharp decrease in consuming new psychoactive substances and positively evaluates the drug policy conducted by the State.

It should be also mentioned that upon entry into force of the Law, qualitative and quantitative analyzes of up to 500 various types of new psychoactive substances (so-called “Bios”, “Spices”) have been carried out in chemical forensic labs of the MIA Forensic-Criminalistic Main Division.

b) State Commission

On the bases of the new Law, a monitoring system over new psychoactive substances has been institutionalized in the form of a state commission. More precisely, State Commission Supporting Suppression of Distributing New Psychoactive Substances brings together relevant agencies; the Commission is composed of the representatives from the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia and Ministry of Finance of Georgia. Also, respective specialists participate in the Commission meetings, in case of necessity; thus, the involvement of non-governmental sector in the State Commission activities is guaranteed.

The State Commission conducts monitoring over the situation related to new psychoactive substances in the country and responds to the challenges existing in this regard, ensures implementation of the relevant legislation, identified specific problems, analyzes them and refers respective proposals to the Government of Georgia. The State Commission is an effective inter-agency mechanism for fighting against illicit traffic in NPS.

The State Commission meets every month. Since the adoption of the Law, in the period of June-December, 7 Commission meetings were held. On the basis of the Law and for the purposes of ensuring transparency, publicity and accountability of the State Commission before the society, reports covering the activities of the Commission are quarterly published on a new web page of MIA drug policy; these reports are available in the Georgian as well as English languages.

Within the framework of the Commission activities, several problems have been identified. In response to these problems, the State Commission elaborated a package of legislative changes:

- Draft of amending Article 221 of the Tax Code of Georgia;
- Draft of amending annexes of the Law of Georgia “On New Psychoactive Substances”;
- Draft of the Ordinance of the Government of Georgia on Approving the Instruction “On Further Response in Case of Suspension of Goods or Probable Detection of the Substance under Special Control, Therapeutic Agent Equated to Pharmaceutical Product under Special Control and/or New Psychoactive Substance Moving through the Customs Territory of Georgia”;

- Draft of amending the Order №295 of 6 March 2006 of Minister of Internal Affairs of Georgia “On Approving the Instruction “On the Rules of Storage and Destruction of Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Seized from Illicit Traffic””.

The mentioned package covers the issues related to the division of competences among the agencies as well as the procedures for cooperation among them, the procedures for suspension of goods and the details of destruction of various substances under special control and of NPS.

In terms of novelties conducted within the framework of the State Commission, a new online access system to the NPS database is worth mentioning, which functions at the MIA drug policy web page and ensures effectiveness of the fight against illicit traffic in new psychoactive substances and coordinated cooperation between the relevant agencies, the MIA and the Ministry of Finance, in this regard.

c) EMCDDA Planning Regional Event on NPS in Georgia

It is noteworthy that due to the impressive achievements of Georgia in regard to new psychoactive substances and on the basis of the EMCDDA offer, a regional event will be held in Tbilisi, in April 2015. This is important for Georgia, including for the development of the Visa Liberalization process.



**Reitox Regional Academy on
New Psychoactive Substances**
for European Neighbourhood
Policy (ENP) Eastern
Partnership Beneficiaries



4. Illicit Traffic in Classical Drugs

Problem:

The third and a very important problem is illicit traffic in classical drugs on the territory of Georgia.

Response/Result:

Enhanced security measures at the borders as well as a more proactive approach towards investigation and control have resulted in significant increase of the amount of drugs seized in Georgia. In order to better realize how effectively the MIA combats this problem and to understand its scale, the following cases are noteworthy:

- In June 2014 more than 500 g. of Cocaine was seized by employees of the MIA operative units;
- In July 2014 a truck loaded with up to 3 tons of liquid Heroin (containing 589 kg. of Heroin, more than 2 kg. of Codeine and 12 kg. of Morphine) was detained by MIA employees, while crossing the border;
- Only on 31th July of 2014, 28 tons and 373 kg. of wild cannabis was detected and destroyed by MIA regional division employees, within the framework of joint operative-prophylactic measures carried out throughout the territory of Georgia.

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Three cases are unprecedented in the history of Georgia and demonstrate a very effective work conducted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia.

Statistics:

In order to assess the effectiveness of the MIA activities, a comparative statistical data of 2013-2014 (full 12 months) on drugs seized in illicit traffic, is presented below:

Title	2013	2014
Heroin	117 kg. 623,1738 g.	591 kg. 895,7934 g.
Buprenorphine	13,4241 g. (approx. 1 678 pills)	25,7479 g. (approx. 3 220 pills)
Methadone	9,5224 g.	77,6059 g.
Opium	53,15 g.	217,869 g.
Amphetamine	0,2695 g.	59,2974 g.
Methamphetamine	3,4579 g.	67,8831 g.
Morphine	2,651 g.	11 kg. 761,8207 g.
Codeine	38,294 g.	2 kg. 303,2276 g.
Tramadol	141,189 g.	730,45 g.
Fentanyl	0,403 g.	0,8097 g.
Desomorphine	10,1737 g.	0,6129 g.
Cocaine	2,445 g.	502,019 g.
Ephedrone	0,7963 g.	
Diphenoxylate	1,443 g.	
Pregabalin	597,725 g.	15 kg. 336,067 g.
Cannabis	217 kg. 776 g.	5420 kg. 809,225 g.
Cannabis Resin	22,039 g.	69,7267 g.
Cannabis Oil		9,5 g.
Marijuana	71 kg. 609,69 g.	57 kg. 399,3635 g.
Ecstasy (MDMA)	76,934 g.	70,9151 g.
Pseudoephedrine		81,1057 g.
Poppy	13 kg. 936,62 g.	8 kg. 228,397 g.
Extract of Poppy Straw		8,651 g.
Poppy Straw		129,83 g.
Lysergic Acid	0,0015 g.	
JWH „Bioplan“	4,585 g.	
Tenamfetamine		1,7342 g.
Tetrahydrocannabinol		14,54 g.

Cyclobarbital	0,0519 g.
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Other Measures:

Development of Canine Service for the Purposes of Detecting Narcotic Drugs, Psychoactive Substances and Precursors

Over the years the U.S. Department of State Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) has been supporting the improvement of professionalism and operational capacity of the Georgian law enforcement. With the assistance of INL, from 14 February till 11 April, 2014 three police officers and three dogs were specially trained on detecting drugs in USA, in the States of Wisconsin and Washington.

On 1 July 2014 the Canine Project (K9) was launched at the Tbilisi International Airport, with the objective of developing capacity of the MIA canine service and fighting against drugs. Within the framework of the project, an operative unit has been formed; the unit is staffed with the representatives from MIA and Ministry of Finance of Georgia, and it is tasked to detect narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and precursors at the Tbilisi International Airport. Five sniffer dogs have been purchased for both agencies. For training of dogs, dog enclosures and a so-called simulation room have been constructed on the territory of the Service. Besides the Tbilisi Airport, dog handlers periodically patrol various border crossing points of Georgia (Sarfi, Sadakhlo, Larsi), together with dogs.

In 2015 from 17 January till 28 February, five patrol police officers have been sent to USA. Two of them will be trained as instructors for dog handlers, and the other three police officers will be involved in canine training course. Moreover, 5 dogs will be brought to Georgia.



MINISTRY OF
INTERNAL AFFAIRS

NO to DRUGS!

LET'S CHANGE THE ATTITUDE TOGETHER

5. Prevention

Problem:

Within the framework of analytical work the necessity of preventive measures was highlighted in terms of drug-related situation in Georgia.

Response/Result:

a) Anti-Drug Campaign

On March 24, 2014 the launch of a wide-scale anti-drug campaign - “No to Bio Drugs” was announced by the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia. The state agencies such as the Ministry of Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia, Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia, Ministry of Finance of Georgia, Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs of Georgia have been actively involved in the campaign.

The campaign aims at broadly informing the society and especially the youth concerning various negative effects of illicit traffic in drugs, and raising awareness on the healthy lifestyle among the population. By doing so the Ministry of Internal Affairs conducts its primary function of prevention. The Georgian police effectively reacts to each and every crime committed; however, the police intervention is far more important before the crime is committed. And one of the best ways to do so is to inform the society; this approach complies with the western standards and with the community-oriented police system, having being established in Georgia over the last two years. Involvement of the whole population, all segments of the society in the fight against drug abuse is highly important for the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia. And therefore, the campaign has the following slogan: “Let’s Change the Attitude Together”.

Within the framework of the anti-drug campaign, the Minister of Internal Affairs and other representatives of the Ministry, together with the health protection sector representatives, have conducted meetings with the young generation at schools and universities. They have presented the information on legal consequences of illicit traffic in drugs, as well as on negative effects of drug consumption for the life and health of an individual. Various representatives of sports and art have joined the campaign; they have conducted a number of supportive activities.

Coverage of the anti-drug campaign has been especially far-reaching among the media and social network. The campaign has been intensively reported in the news, various television or radio shows have addressed the issue. Also the issue has been actively discussed on social networks and internet blogs. Upon initiative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, media contest has been held, within the framework of which media representatives have been awarded in various nominations. A great number of television and radio programs, shows, articles, etc. have been presented during the contest.

Overall, the main messages of the campaign have reached all segments of the society and especially the most vulnerable groups in this regard – the youth, what indeed has resulted in reducing drug consumption and prevention of drug use in the country.



b) Drug Policy Web Page

A new web page of drug policy has been created on the official site of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (police.ge). The web page shares the information on balanced drug policy of the State, indicating main challenges facing the country and effective measures responding thereto, which have been successfully implemented and translated into respective statistical data (see *supra*). Moreover, anti-drug campaign is respectively covered on a new web page, sharing links to the activities conducted by the Ministry within the campaign, including Facebook page: “No to Bio Drugs – Let’s Change the Attitude Together”. Furthermore, a separate section of the drug policy page addresses the legal regulatory framework, covering national laws and bylaws as well as international agreements (and their authoritative commentaries) to which Georgia is a party.

Drug policy site devotes special attention to the activities of the State Commission Supporting Suppression of Distributing New Psychoactive Substances. More precisely, the site shares the information on the structure, functions and rules of procedure of the State Commission. Information of Commission meetings and quarterly reports on existing situation relating to NPS in Georgia are systematically published on the site. Also, functioning of online access system to the database on new psychoactive substances, under the State Commission section, is worth mentioning; this will facilitate inter-agency coordination and rapid, effective exchange of information among the agencies.

Furthermore, a new web page of drug policy shares the information on the law enforcement activities conducted by the MIA, information on involvement of MIA representatives in trainings, international meetings, programs and other activities related to drugs, including relevant links.

It should be especially highlighted that a new web page of drug policy is available in the English language as well, thus further guaranteeing transparency of the State activities and accessibility of information in regard to drug policy in the country.



6. International Cooperation

6.1 Developing Capacity of Canine Service

For the purposes of developing canine service and with the assistance of the US Department of State Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL), enclosures have been rehabilitated, sniffer dogs have been purchased and dog handlers have been trained in the USA; since 2014 the MIA and Revenue Service dog handlers jointly conduct suppressive measures against illicit import of narcotic substances at the Tbilisi International Airport.

In September 2014 representatives of the US canine service visited Georgia and observed the working process of the operative group and training procedures of the service dogs in practice. The objective of the visit was to develop recommendations and to plan activities for 2015. Purchase of 5 additional service dogs, selection of 5 new dog handlers and organization of a study visit to the USA - have been planned.

6.2 Container Control Programme

By the joint initiative of the World Customs Organization (WCO) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), implementation of the Global Container Control Programme (CCP) was launched in Georgia in 2012. The Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia, Ministry of Finance of Georgia and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime signed a memorandum of cooperation. A working group has been established within the framework of the Programme, staffed with the representatives from the MIA Patrol Police Department, MIA Central Criminal Police Department and the Revenue Service of the Ministry of Finance. The working group conducts drug control over containers at the Poti Port.

6.3 Cooperation with EMCDDA

In June 2014 the leadership of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, being part of the delegation of the Interagency Coordination Council on Combating Drug Abuse, participated in the working meeting held at the headquarters of the European Monitoring Center for Drugs and Drug Addiction (EMCDDA) in Lisbon, Portugal in order to further enhance cooperation with the EMCDDA. The issue of establishing an observatory on illicit drug traffic and drug abuse in Georgia has been discussed within the framework of the working visit.

6.4 Signing Bilateral/Multilateral Agreements on Fight against Drug Abuse

In 2014 the Government of Georgia concluded international agreements on fight against organized crime with Germany and the United Kingdom, which also cover the issues of combating drug-related crime.

On May 1, 2014 the Second Additional Protocol to the European Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters entered into force for Georgia.

According to the 2014 December data, Georgia has concluded international agreements on fight against crime and on police cooperation with 23 countries, namely with: Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Germany, the Great Britain, Egypt, Estonia, Turkey, Israel, Italy, France, Armenia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Moldova, Poland, Romania, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Hungary, Kazakhstan. This process is ongoing and aims at covering the EU Member States and other countries at the bilateral cooperation level.

6.5 Existing International Mechanisms, Forum of Police and Customs Attachés, Bilateral Treaty Mechanisms/Working Groups

In order to strengthen international cooperation in the fight against drug abuse, special units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Georgia effectively use the mechanisms of existing international and regional organizations (UN, EU, GUAM, BSEC, WCO, IOM), Police Attaché forums, bilateral agreements and working groups.

On April 22-25, 2014 the representatives of the MIA Central Criminal Police Department participated in the regional conference on “Best Practice on Information Exchange and Analysis”, held within the framework of the EU project “Heroin Route”, in Kazakhstan.

In April 2014, employees of the Cooperation Center on Fight against International Crime held a meeting with the liaison officer of the UK National Crime Agency, in order to enhance international cooperation in fight against drug abuse.

6.6 Advanced Training for Employees of Respective MIA Units on the Issues of Combating Illicit Traffic in Drugs/Experience Sharing

Throughout 2014 employees of various relevant MIA units have undergone trainings on drug-related issues – at MIA Academy as well as within the cooperation framework with various international organizations and partner countries.

Also, it should be mentioned that throughout 2014 several study visits have been conducted in other countries (Germany, USA, Austria, Czech Republic, etc.) for the purposes of experience sharing in fight against illicit traffic in drugs. Also, Turkish Delegation visited Georgia for the purposes of sharing Georgian experience.