Narcotic and psychotropic substances: defining 1-benzylpiperazine BZP as a new synthetic drug which is to be made subject to control measures and criminal provisions

2007/0811(CNS) - 19/07/2007 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to define 1-benzylpiperazine (BZP) as a new synthetic drug which is to be made subject to control measures and criminal provisions.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

BACKGROUND: BZP is a synthetic substance; it was first reported in the European Union in 1999. In some Member States BZP is legally available from retail chemical suppliers. For recreational purposes it is sold as tablets and capsules via internet sites or in some Member States in 'smart/ herbal shops'. On the illicit drugs market, BZP may also be sold/ bought as the popular drug ecstasy.

Thirteen Member States and one Third State (Norway) have reported seizures of BZP in powder, capsules or tablets. In five Member States, BZP is subjected to control measures and criminal penalties as provided under their legislation. Two Member States apply control measures to BZP under their medicines legislation.

A Risk Assessment Report on 1-benzylpiperazine (BZP) was drawn up on the basis of Article 6 of the Council Decision 2005/387/JHA by a special session of the extended Scientific Committee of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction and subsequently submitted to the Council and the Commission on 31 May 2007. The report reveals a lack of conclusive scientific evidence on the overall risks of BZP. However, due to its stimulant properties, risk to health, the lack of medical benefits and following the precautionary principle, there is a need to control BZP, but the control measures should be appropriate to the relatively low risks of the substance.

Placing 1-benzylpiperazine under control may help avoid problems in international law enforcement and judicial cooperation.

CONTENT: on the basis of the abovementioned information, this draft decision obliges the Member States to take the necessary measures, in accordance with their national law, to submit 1-benzylpiperazine (also known as 1-benzyl-1,4-diazacyclohexane, Nbenzylpiperazine or – less precisely – as benzylpiperazine or BZP) to control measures, proportionate to the risks of the substance, and criminal penalties, as provided for under their legislation complying with their obligations under the 1971 United Nations Convention on Psychotropic Substances.