Narcotics and psychotropic drugs: substances used in the illicit manufacture of drugs

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The Committee has adopted, as amended, a report by Mr Hubert Pirker (PPE/A), on the amendment of Directive 92/109/EEC relating to substances used in the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, The rapporteur states that, in recent years, consumption of synthetic drugs has increased sharply throughout the world. After marijuana they are the most consumed drugs in the European Union. Increasing efforts are therefore being made at UN and at European Union level to create new cooperation mechanisms with regard to synthetic drugs or to adapt existing instruments to the specific problems of synthetic drugs. The first of the Commission's proposals relates to the basic substances used in the manufacture of synthetic drugs and is aimed at establishing a suitable control mechanism. The Commission considers that precise monitoring of trade with precursors is an effective method of combating the new synthetic drugs. Such a control mechanism must be distinct from the existing Community provisions, the application of which to precursors for synthetic drugs would be impossible in practical terms and not desirable. As there are such a large number of precursors on the market which can easily be replaced by others or can be mixed with others, a strict monitoring mechanism such as that for the existing 22 substances would jeopardise the efficiency of the whole system and hamper a fruitful cooperation between the operators and the Community authorities. The aim of the Commission's proposed amendment is, therefore, to extend cooperation between the authorities and the operators such that it would also apply on a voluntary basis to previously non-scheduled substances which could be diverted to the illicit manufacture of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances. The competent authorities of the Member States should have the opportunity to prohibit transactions of these substances if there are reasonable grounds for suspecting that they are intended for illicit manufacture. However, the new controls to be introduced for the precursors for synthetic drugs are meaningful only if they are not restricted to the European Union. Close cooperation with non-member countries, in particular the countries of central and eastern Europe is needed, as otherwise procurement will simply be shifted elsewhere.