

Global Drug Addiction

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Abstract

A growing number of new unregulated drugs ('legal highs') have emerged in recent years which are also marketed on the Internet and often used on the recreational and night clubbing circuit. The EU has set up a system to detect new substances on the market and a mechanism to assess their risks and ban across the EU those substances that pose risks.

The Council Decision on the information exchange, risk assessment and control of new psychoactive substances establishes an early warning system, enabling a rapid exchange of information on a new psychoactive substances emerging in the EU.

When a new substance gives rise to concern, the EMCDDA and Europol can draw up a Joint Report, based on information on the substance collected from across the EU. Based on this Joint Report, the Commission or the individual of EU countries can request a risk assessment of the substance.

Since 1997, EU countries notified more than 400 new psychoactive substances through the Early Warning System on new drugs. Those substances that seem to pose risks to health are subjected to risk assessment and if they are harmful, they are withdrawn from the market from the whole EU.

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