



news release

from the EU drugs agency in Lisbon

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COUNCIL CALLS FOR RISK ASSESSMENT OF FOUR NEW SYNTHETIC DRUGS

Four new synthetic drugs were singled out by the **Council of the EU** for risk assessment this week under the 1997 Joint action on new synthetic drugs. The decision follows consideration by the Council's Horizontal working party on drugs (HWPDP), on 12 December, of an **EMCDDA-Europol** report providing the state of knowledge on these substances.

The four substances are:

- **2C-I** (2,5-dimethoxy-4-iodo-phenethylamine)
- **2C-T-2** (4-ethylthio-2,5-dimethoxyphenethylamine)
- **2C-T-7** (2,5-dimethoxy-4-(n)-propylthiophenethylamine)
- **TMA-2** (2,4,5-trimethoxyphenylisopropylamine)

Three of the drugs belong to the so-called '2C' family and are from the phenethylamine chemical group. All provoke hallucinogenic and other effects such as mood-lifting, sense of well-being and powerful visual alterations. The substances tend to be taken in doses ranging from 10–35 mg, thus being stronger than ecstasy (MDMA) which is typically taken in 80 mg doses.

Health risks posed by the 2C drugs partly derive from their dose-sensitivity. The delayed action of 2C-I for example (onset of effects in 90 minutes) could potentially lead users to take too much of the drug if they become impatient and 'top up' their dose before effects hit. Sniffing 2C-T-2 and 2C-T-7 in powder form increases the risks of severe and even lethal overdoses.

TMA-2 is from the trimethoxy amphetamine group. It too has potent hallucinogenic effects and is around 10 times stronger than mescaline. Health risks derive from the thin line between the dose needed to produce psychoactive effects and a toxic dose.

Among the side effects of the four drugs are: nausea, vomiting, delirium, dissociation, loss of memory, panic attacks and a strong depression of the central nervous system, which could provoke convulsions, suffocation or lead to physical injury.

Although no fatalities related to these drugs have been recorded so far in the **EU**, seizures of all four have been reported recently in a number of Member States, leading some countries to already place them under control (see annex). Deaths related to 2C-T-7 have been recorded in the **US**, where it is now controlled.

The **EMCDDA** will now prepare for a formal risk assessment of the health and social risks of these substances, as well as the possible consequences of prohibition. Final risk-assessment conclusions will be forwarded to the European Commission and the Council in the course of 2003, based on scientific evidence.

Previous risk-assessments by the **EMCDDA** and its partners have been undertaken for: MBDB, 4-MTA, GHB, ketamine and PMMA. Final decisions were taken to control some of the substances (4-MTA and PMMA) and monitor others (MBDB, GHB and ketamine).

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Notes:

For more on the Joint action, see:

http://www.emcdda.eu.int/policy_law/joint_action.shtml

For previous risk-assessment reports, see:

http://www.emcdda.eu.int/policy_law/joint_action_nsd/risk_assessment.shtml

The present risk assessment will be carried out by an enlarged EMCDDA Scientific Committee composed of its regular members, national experts and representatives of the European Commission, Europol and the London-based European Agency for the Evaluation of Medicinal Products (EMA).

Annex:**Legal status**

	Not listed under the Schedules of the 1971 UN Convention on Psychotropic Substances http://www.incb.org/e/conv/1971/index.htm
2C-I	DK: controlled since May 2002. D: under permanent control since June 2001. UK: falls under definition of a controlled substance under Misuse of Drugs Act 1977 (Controlled Drug) Declaration Order 1987. US: uncontrolled.
2C-T-2	D: controlled since October 1998. NL: classified as an unregistered pharmaceutical since April 1999. Unlicensed manufacture, sale, import, trade and possession can be prosecuted. S: under 'emergency scheduling' since April 1999. US: uncontrolled.
2C-T-7	D: controlled since January 1998. IRL: controlled as a Class A drug. S: under 'emergency scheduling' since April 1999. UK: controlled as a Class A drug. US: Temporarily placed under Schedule I in Sept 2002 for up to 18 months or until the drug would be permanently scheduled. 2C-T-7 is also controlled in Canada.
TMA-2	D: controlled drug under Schedule I of the BtMG, Sept 1999. IRL: controlled drug under Schedule I of the Misuse of Drugs Acts. UK: controlled as a Class A drug. US: controlled drug under Schedule II of the Controlled Substance Act.