

Amendment 1: ADB-BUTINACA, protonitazene, etazene, etonitazepyne, 2-methyl-AP-237, and  $\alpha$ -pyrrolidinoisohexanophenone to the schedule of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances

#### 4.1 Social, including demographic impact

Concerned target group: potential users of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances

According to the Public Opinion and Risk Behaviour Survey of the Police and Border Guard Board, nearly 20 % of the adult population of Estonia had used some drugs at least once in their lifetime in 2015.

According to the results of the Health Behaviour Survey among the Estonian Adult Population (2022), 6.1 % of all respondents aged 16–64 had taken drugs or psychotropic prescription drugs without having been ordered to do so by a physician in the last twelve months and 5.3 % in the last thirty days.

Illegal drugs are used among schoolchildren as well: more than a third (38 %) of Estonian schoolchildren aged 15–16 claimed to have used some narcotic substances.

The size of the target group is average.

#### Magnitude of the impact, frequency of occurrence, and risk of undesirable effects

Estonia stands out in the European Union by a higher than average prevalence of drug use among schoolchildren aged 15–16.

Up to 2018, Estonia was the first in the European Union in terms of drug overdose-related deaths.

The aim of the inclusion of the substances listed above in the schedule of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances is to limit the wider distribution and availability thereof as they may pose a serious risk to public health.

ADB-BUTINACA has currently been found in twenty-six European Union Member States, including Estonia. At least fourteen deaths have been associated with the substance in the European Union Member States.

Protonitazene has been found in six European Union Member States, including Estonia. Protonitazene has been repeatedly submitted to the Estonian Forensic Science Institute for analysis. The number of deaths caused by benzimidazole opioids increased exponentially in Estonia in 2022, including twenty-two deaths from protonitazene.

Etazene has also already been identified in many European countries. Ethazene was submitted to the Estonian Forensic Science Institute on three occasions in 2020–2021, in the total amount of 11.52 g.

To date, etonitazepyne has been found in six European Union Member States, including Estonia.

2-methyl-AP-237 has been found in seven European Union Member States, including Estonia. The total amount of 1.34 g of 2-methyl-AP-237 was submitted to the Estonian Forensic Science Institute for analysis on two occasions in 2022.

a-PiHP has been found in most European Union Member States, with the highest amounts found in 2018 and 2022. A-PiHP has been repeatedly submitted to the Estonian Forensic Science Institute for analysis.

The extent and frequency of the impact is low, as according to official data, these substances still remain rather rare in Estonia. The risk of undesirable effects of including the substances listed above

in the schedule of prohibited substances is low, as the substances have no medical use, according to current data. The amendment will have a positive impact, as the substances listed above are known to have caused health damage and deaths on several occasions in the world and it is therefore necessary to limit the availability of these substances in the interests of public health.

The Regulation will have positive effects. The new substances to be added to the schedule of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances have no medical or other known legitimate use and are substances the behaviour, degree of effect, and safety profile in the human body are unknown. The restriction applied to the substances is in the interest of public health and will reduce the risks of the substances entering wider use.