EN
E-005253/2012
Answer given by Mr Dalli
on behalf of the Commission
(5.7.2012)

The Commission is aware of the study examining urinary concentrations of benzophenone (BP)-type UV filters in U.S. women and their association with endometriosis. The study concludes that small amounts of BP-type ingredients, contained in some sunscreens and other personal care products, can pass through the skin and be absorbed into the blood, where they mimic the effects of oestrogen.

Study results, while interesting, are preliminary. As this study was the first of its kind to examine BP levels and endometriosis, additional research is needed before specific guidelines about exposure level and human safety in general can be determined. The EU research Framework programmes, although having allocated significant amounts of funding to various effects of endocrine disrupting chemicals[1], have not funded research on this particular issue. The Commission's proposal for Horizon 2020 – The Framework Programme for Research and Innovation 2014-2020[2] - identifies "Health, demographic change and well-being" as one of the six societal challenges to be tackled. However, it is yet too premature to ascertain which could be the specific research issues addressed.

Only one of the tested BP-derivatives, 2-hydroxy-4-methoxybenzophenone (benzophenone-3), is authorised as an UV filter in the EU. No significant trend was observed for this substance.

The new Cosmetics Regulation[3], which will be applicable as from 11 July 2013, pays particular attention to the issue of substances with endocrine-disrupting properties. A review of the Cosmetics Regulation is planned with regard to endocrine-disruptors, when EU or internationally agreed criteria for their identification become available or at the latest, by 2015.

1 http://ec.europa.eu/research/endocrine/index_en.html
2 http://ec.europa.eu/research/horizon2020/index_en.cfm?pg=h2020-documents
3 http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2009:342:0059:0209:en:PDF