Question for oral answer O-000122/2018
to the Commission
Rule 128
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on behalf of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

Subject: Use of cannabis for medicinal purposes

A review of existing scientific literature on the subject of medical cannabis provides conclusive or substantial evidence that cannabis and cannabinoids have therapeutic effects: they treat chronic pain in adults, work as an antiemetic when treating chemotherapy-induced nausea and vomiting, and improve muscle spasticity symptoms in multiple sclerosis. Moreover, in December 2017, the WHO officially recommended that the cannabis compound cannabidiol (CBD) should not be internationally scheduled as a controlled substance. One cannabis-based medicine has been authorised through the mutual recognition procedure and marketed in 17 Member States, but no Member State has authorised the smoking of cannabis for medical purposes, given that smoking can pose health risks. The issue of medical cannabis use often gets lumped in with the use of cannabis as a recreational drug, which should be considered a separate issue. The regulatory landscape is changing fast both in the EU and worldwide. In light of the above:

- Which actions has the Commission taken to support quality research on cannabis-based medicines? Which actions does the Commission plan for future research and how much funding does it plan to allocate for such research under the next Framework Programme 9 (Horizon Europe)? Does the Commission consider that the regulatory environment across the EU is conducive to quality research on medical cannabis?

- Even in the Member States where medical cannabis is legal, conditions for access, prescription, purchase, pricing, refunding – in addition to the level of knowledge among healthcare professionals on the use of such medicines – differ widely and present a challenge for patients. Does the Commission consider that it should improve patient access to medical cannabis?

- Does the Commission intend to establish standards for non-pharmaceutical medical cannabis in order to ensure consumer safety? Has the Commission investigated what would be the appropriate limit of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) present in medical cannabis in order to protect consumers?

Tabled: 12.11.2018
Forwarded: 14.11.2018
Deadline for reply: 21.11.2018