

WRITTEN QUESTION E-3933/03

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to the Commission

Subject: Recognition of the ergonomic saddle chair in the EU's chair classifications

Salli Systems, the Finnish manufacturer of saddle chairs, has asked for help in securing recognition for its product. Salli Systems makes chairs which take account of ergonomics in connection with sedentary work. The problem is that, according to Salli Systems, standards for chairs do not at present recognise this new concept, and this is causing difficulties in the marketing of the chair. Salli Systems has requested help in obtaining recognition of its business idea.

Salli Systems' saddle chair is ergonomically designed so as to minimise medical problems caused by sedentary office work. The traditional sitting posture causes disorders because it is not physiologically appropriate to maintain an angle of approximately 90° between the pelvis and the thighs, and indeed such an angle is not in fact maintained: when the thighs are horizontal, the pelvis tilts backwards and the back bends. As a result, it is difficult to lean actively against a back rest in the orthodox manner and to concentrate on sedentary work. This is overwhelmingly the most common individual factor behind back pain. The cost of poor sitting postures is substantial in terms of worsening back pain, tiredness caused by sitting, and impairment of labour efficiency and productivity.

The requirements of good ergonomics are currently best met by sitting in a rider's posture, using a saddle chair. As a result, the thighs open up and are angled approximately 45° downwards, and the ischia support the weight of the body without imposing any extra pressure on muscles or ducts. This type of posture is significantly healthier, more comfortable and safer than the traditional one.

What can the Commission do to promote recognition of this business idea and how can the saddle chair be incorporated into existing chair classifications and standards?