

**Question for written answer E-002383/2014
to the Commission**
Rule 117
Gaston Franco (PPE)

Subject: Hydrangeas being used as drugs

Several years ago, it was discovered that hydrangeas were being used as a substitute for cannabis in the German region of Bavaria. The phenomenon soon spread across the country, and since late 2013 has also been prevalent in parts of northern France. For the time being, the French Health Monitoring Agency has opted not to take any action, but the increasing number of hydrangea thefts being reported in the regions in question is today revealing, in a rather unique way, just how widespread this new trend is becoming.

When used as a drug, hydrangeas are even more dangerous than cannabis, as hydrocyanic acid (cyanide) can be found in their chemical composition once they are ingested. Anyone smoking them could well suffer from gastrointestinal complaints, an accelerated heart rate and, if ingested in great quantities, death by suffocation.

1. Is the Commission aware of the practice described above, and does it have any figures to hand that demonstrate how widespread it is becoming in Europe?
2. Has the Commission taken any steps to make Member States and citizens more aware of the dangers associated with this practice?