

Impact assessment

The problem at hand and what is to be achieved

Gidazepam, in the form of tablets and powders, is sold in a large number of online stores, both Swedish- and English-speaking. After ingestion, gidazepam is converted in the body into the substance desalkylgidazepam, and both substances have psychoactive effects.

The Swedish National Board of Forensic Medicine reports that desalkylgidazepam has been detected in two cases of death by poisoning, one in which the individual died in 2022 and one in which the individual died in 2024. In both cases, desalkylgidazepam has been deemed to have contributed to the death, in conjunction with other drugs. The National Forensic Centre and the Swedish Customs Service have also dealt with cases involving gidazepam and desalkylgidazepam. Furthermore, gidazepam and desalkylgidazepam are available for sale in several online outlets for recreational users. Thus, there is misuse of those substances in Sweden.

The Swedish Medical Products Agency is now proposing that gidazepam and its active metabolite, desalkylgidazepam, be classified as narcotic drugs. By including the substances gidazepam and desalkylgidazepam in Annex 1 to the Narcotic Drugs Control Ordinance (1992:1554), illegal handling and access to the illegal market should be reduced.

Impact on the State

The classification of the substances as narcotic drugs gives the Swedish Customs and the Swedish Police Authority the power to seize these substances under the narcotic drugs legislation. The courts will be able to prosecute persons illegally handling gidazepam and desalkylgidazepam. The impact is otherwise considered to be limited.

Impact on companies

The main impact of the proposal, which is also the intended one, is that the lawful use of these substances is restricted to medical, scientific and, in particular, socially beneficial purposes. Any other handling will be prohibited.

Companies that handle gidazepam and/or desalkylgidazepam for the aforementioned purposes will be required to obtain a licence for the manufacture, possession, import, export and trade of these substances. The authorisation requirements entail application fees and administrative costs, but at a negligible level in this context.

Gidazepam is not contained in any medicinal product authorised for sale in Sweden or the EU; however, the substance is included in medicinal products authorised in Russia and Ukraine. The substances could be sold on the basis of a licence, but so far the Swedish Medical Products Agency has not granted any such licences. The handling of the substances for medical purposes in Sweden is thus very limited. The Swedish Medical Products Agency is not aware of these substances being handled for any other purpose in Sweden.

Impact on individuals

The classification of these substances as narcotic drugs imposes stricter restrictions on individuals concerning the quantities that may be carried for medical purposes when travelling to Sweden. As medicinal products containing gidazepam are only authorised in Russia and Ukraine, this will mainly concern travellers from these countries.

Any handling by individuals that is not done for medical purposes will be prohibited.