

(English version)

**Priority question for written answer P-002080/25
to the Commission
Assita Kanko (ECR)
(22 May 2025)**

Subject: Chemical submission leading to rape due to the inherent absence of consent

Chemical submission leading to rape due to the inherent absence of consent is a serious and cross-border issue, as highlighted during the joint hearing of Parliament's Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality and Committee on Public Health on 9 April 2025. This form of sexual violence involves the non-consensual administration of substances to render victims defenceless. Since 2021, reports of 'needle spiking' have emerged in Belgium and several other countries. This illustrates the evolving and transnational nature of the threat. The consequences for the victims are severe, ranging from memory loss to sexually transmitted infections. Many cases go unreported or unresolved.

1. How will the Commission support the development and deployment of preventive technologies — such as drink test kits, warning apps, and detection systems — and what specific measures is it taking to combat chemical submission, including needle spiking, given its cross-border nature and the loopholes in current legislation?
2. What steps are being taken to enhance forensic capabilities across Member States to detect substances used in drug-facilitated sexual assault?
3. How will the Commission guarantee prevention and comprehensive victim support, including medical, psychological and legal aid in all Member States — particularly in cases of rape, given the lack of a common definition of non-consensual sexual acts?

Submitted: 22.5.2025

**Answer given by Ms Lahbib on behalf of the European Commission
(7 July 2025)**

Combating and preventing violence against women and domestic violence remains a key priority for the European Union. In May 2024, the directive on combating violence against women and domestic violence ⁽¹⁾ was adopted.

In line with Article 26 thereof, Member States are required to provide, for rape cases or sexual violence, referral centres to ensure the clinical management of rape, including assisting in safekeeping and documentation of evidence. The centres shall provide referral to counselling for victims, where necessary.

Member States shall also ensure that victims have access to medical and forensic examinations, and that all officials likely to come into contact with victims receive training (Article 36 of the directive). Member States will need to transpose this directive by 14 June 2027.

The Commission is also supporting research on preventive technologies. Under the Horizon Europe programme ⁽²⁾, the Commission has funded projects aimed at developing advanced forensic tools to detect substances commonly used in chemical submission, such as gamma-hydroxybutyrate (GHB).

These projects focus on creating reliable, easy-to-use detection methods for these substances in beverages and biological samples, which are crucial for timely intervention and evidence collection in sexual assault cases ⁽³⁾.

In addition, the Commission Communication on a comprehensive approach to mental health ⁽⁴⁾, adopted in 2023, highlights the importance of early intervention and integrated care for individuals affected by trauma, including survivors of sexual violence.

It promotes access to appropriate mental health and psychosocial support services across Member States, recognising the long-term psychological impacts of such experiences.

⁽¹⁾ Directive (EU) 2024/1385 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 May 2024 on combating violence against women and domestic violence, OJ L, 2024/1385, 24.5.2024, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2024/1385/oj>.

⁽²⁾ https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/funding/funding-opportunities/funding-programmes-and-open-calls/horizon-europe_en.

⁽³⁾ <https://cordis.europa.eu/search?q=contenttype%3D%27project%27%20AND%20programme%2Fcode%3D%27HORIZON-CL3-2023-FCT-01-02%27&p=1&num=10&srt=/project/contentUpdateDate:decreasing>, <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101168195>, <https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101168416>.

⁽⁴⁾ https://health.ec.europa.eu/publications/comprehensive-approach-mental-health_en.