

Development of a method for the chemical characterisation of flavours and additives in tobacco products

BfR Opinion No. 026/2015 of 13 August 2015

The new Tobacco Product Directive 2014/40/EU must be implemented as national law by the EU member states by May 2016. For cigarettes and hand-rolling tobacco, the directive will, among other things, introduce a ban on characteristic aromas such as menthol, cloves, vanilla and various fruit flavours. However, adding scents and flavours generally remains permitted, as long as the smoker cannot detect a so-called “characteristic flavour”. The question whether added flavours merely modify the actual tobacco scent or whether they are perceived as a characteristic product feature poses new challenges for risk assessment and product monitoring. Using the example of strawberry flavour, the Federal Institute for Risk Assessment (BfR) has recently conducted a study to investigate to what extent chemical analytical procedures can be used to identify characteristic aromas, possibly as a supplement for sensory test methods.

The article “Toward the stereochemical identification of prohibited characterizing flavors in tobacco products: the case of strawberry flavour” was published online in the scientific journal Archives of Toxicology” on 3 July 2015. In the same issue, the guest editorial “European Tobacco Product Directive: How to address characterizing flavor as a matter of attractiveness” written by BfR scientists was published.