

Patient safety, prevention and control of healthcare associated infections

2009/0003(CNS) - 15/12/2008 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: proposal on general patient safety issues as well as on the prevention and control of healthcare associated infections.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Recommendation.

BACKGROUND: it is estimated that between 8% and 12% of patients admitted to hospitals in the EU suffer from adverse events whilst receiving healthcare. The Commission, through the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Development, supports research in health systems. The [White Paper](#) "Together for Health: A Strategic Approach for the EU 2008-2013" identifies patient safety as an area for action.

CONTENT: this proposal sets out recommendations for specific actions that Member States can take, either individually, collectively or with the Commission, to improve the safety of patients.

With regard to **general patient safety issues**, Member States should:

- support the development of national policies and programmes by : designating the competent authority responsible for patient safety; embedding patient safety as a priority issue in health policies; and supporting the development of safer systems, processes and tools;
- empower and inform citizens and patients by involving patient organisations in the development of policies on patient safety, and disseminating information to patients on risk, levels of safety and measures in place to reduce or prevent errors, and ensure informed consent to treatment;
- strengthen reporting and learning systems on adverse events that provide adequate information on the extent, types and causes of errors, adverse events and near misses, and encourage healthcare workers actively to report;
- promote education and training of healthcare workers on patient safety by encouraging multi-disciplinary patient safety education and training of all health professionals and ensuring that patient safety receives proper attention in the higher education curricula;
- adequately classify, codify and measure patient safety, by working with the European Commission to develop common definitions and terminology, and to share comparable data on patient safety outcomes;
- share knowledge, experience and best practice at European level.

With regard to the **prevention and control of healthcare associated infections**, Member States should implement a national strategy for the prevention and control of healthcare associated infections, pursuing certain specified objectives. These include: implementing prevention and control measures to support the containment of healthcare associated infections; enhancing infection prevention and control at the level of the healthcare institutions; and supporting research.

Lastly, the Recommendation states that Member States should consider the establishment of an inter-sectoral mechanism for the coordinated implementation of the national strategy as well as for the purposes of information exchange and coordination with the Commission, the ECDC and the other Member States.