Resolution on the Tuberculosis Vaccine Initiative (TBVI) - practical implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy with a view to meeting MDG 6 and eliminating tuberculosis by 2050

2010/3016(RSP) - 03/02/2011 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

Following the debate which took place during the sitting of 2 February 2011, the European Parliament adopted by 578 votes to 9 with 52 abstentions a resolution on the Tuberculosis Vaccine Initiative (TBVI) – practical implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy with a view to meeting MDG 6 and eliminating tuberculosis by 2050.

The resolution had been tabled by the EPP, ALDE, S&D, ECR and Greens/ALE groups.

It notes that with four years to go until the MDG deadline, the incidence of tuberculosis remains one of the main causes of death in the world, with nearly 2 million people dying as a result of the disease every year. Members underline the fact that only a vaccination programme involving a large-scale vaccination campaign could have a positive impact in terms of achieving MDG 6 after 2015, and in particular the eradication of tuberculosis by 2050. They consider vaccines to be an essential means of combating tuberculosis, together with better – reliable, low-cost and soundly based – testing, as well as more effective diagnosis and treatment, and this implies a major shift in the focus of research and an increase in sustainable funding. Tuberculosis vaccination ought to be carried out as a priority in dispensaries and clinics in developing countries. Members call, accordingly, for public health care services to be restored, taking the view that EU assistance should, first and foremost, support developing countries' internal efforts to build human, institutional and infrastructure capacity.

On the question of funding, Parliament notes that the objective is still to invest 3% of GDP in research and development in spite of budgetary constraints (COM(2010)2020 and COM(2010)0546), and it calls on the **Commission to explore innovative funding channels**, such as the establishment by the Member States and/or the Union of a financial guarantee to enable funding for the TBVI to be obtained from the European Investment Bank, with a view to securing finance for research in developing countries into neglected diseases and those involving little profit potential. Members point out that killer diseases such as tuberculosis ought to be the focus of a much greater pharmaceutical research effort, and insufficient research is currently being conducted into the most neglected diseases, which affect only people in developing countries. They call on the Commission and the Member States to stand by their funding commitments and do everything necessary to ensure that funds allocated to health care also reach the most impoverished people in developing countries, stressing the urgent need for public health services in the most remote areas.

Lastly, Parliament considers that the success of 'vertical' funds to tackle specific diseases such as Aids, malaria and tuberculosis must not mean a siphoning-off of resources from so-called 'horizontal' basic health care infrastructure. It stresses that an integrated approach, covering the various programmes targeted at specific diseases such as AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis together with a consolidation of basic health care systems, would enable the needs of people in developing countries to be addressed.