Public health: Programme of Community action 1999-2003 on pollution-related diseases

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A compromise on the respective demands of Council and EP was reached when the joint Parliament /Council Conciliation Committee gave the green light to the programme for Community action to combat pollution-related diseases. The programme to combat pollution-related diseases covers the three-year period 1999 to 2001. Parliament negotiated changes to the text to include reference to further European epidemiological cooperation and the continuation of Community research. Council was also persuaded to agree on the need to improve both the effectiveness of preventive actions and assessment knowledge of pollution-related diseases. In accordance with Parliament's wishes, the text now also highlights the need to provide information to the public and to groups and voluntary organizations which support those affected, directly or indirectly, by such diseases. Parliament also got Council to agree on promoting (initially via professionals) knowledge of behaviour patterns, ways of life and eating habits that could reduce pollution-induced health risks. The programme will have a budget of EUR 3.9 million. Parliament's rapporteur is Christian CABROL (UFE, F), a cardiovascular surgeon. Although Parliament's delegation would have liked more funding for the programme, it was decided to concentrate attention on the forthcoming Commission proposal for a new framework programme on public health. In a joint statement by EP, Council and Commission, the three institutions declare that, among the priorities to be addressed in this future programme, they will pay particular attention to pollution-related diseases and will give careful consideration to the budgetary consequences. The Commission also undertook to inform the EP annually on the decisions taken to implement the programme approved. The Conciliation Committee was chaired by Mrs Nicole FONTAINE, an EP vice-president, and, for the Public Health Council, Mr Erwin JORDAN, German State Secretary for Health. The parliamentary committee responsible is the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection chaired by Ken COLLINS (PES, UK).