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

1997/0153(COD) - 30/04/1998 - Council position

In its common position on the programme of action on pollution-related diseases, the Council substantially amended the Commission's proposal, limiting both the duration and the scope of the programme. It took the view that the current situation with regard to Community action in the field of public health and budgetary constraints made it necessary to proceed by stages in the field of pollution-related diseases, and therefore: -limited the programme to three years (1999-2001 rather than 2003), stating that the budget for it should be ECU 3.9 m for this period; -limited the general scope of the programme, confining the actions to be undertaken to efforts to improve public information and awareness concerning pollution-related diseases and the effectiveness of prevention in this field: the Commission's emphasis on training, information campaigns and assistance to autonomous groups active in the field of respiratory diseases and allergies vanished entirely from the programme. The Council inserted a reference to Article 228 of the TEU in connection with international cooperation under the programme - this Article implying the conclusion of international agreements rather than technical cooperation as called for by the Commission. The Council called for an evaluation report to be submitted at the end of the 3rd year - a point at which, according to the Council's own wish, the programme would barely have been completed. As regards the Council's treatment of Parliament's amendments, only 2 of the 4 which the Commission had included in its amended proposal survived: -one concerning improving knowledge of the long-term impact of certain pollutants, -one concerning the implementation of actions to improve work on public perception of health risks associated with pollution-related diseases and the impact of the policies adopted. Parliament's amendments concerning the definition of pollution-related diseases and seeking to extend the actions relating to the general public were rejected by the Council.