Public health: Community action programme 1997-2001 on health monitoring

1995/0238(COD) - 17/01/1996 - Committee of the Regions: opinion

The Committee of the Regions considered that this programme would be the launching point for a more intensive Community action in respect of public health and could also help introduce minimum health standards in all Member States. The CoR agreed with the political objectives outlined in the report, but pointed out that it was important to allow regions, large cities etc. to use the documents available, though broken down to a level that suited administrations of a smaller scale than the Member States. As far as the assessment of the programme was concerned, the CoR asked to be consulted or included in an assessment group and stressed that cooperation should not be based solely at Member State level but should also incorporate representatives of local and regional authorities, who had to be kept informed and included in the work at an early stage. The term ‘subsidiarity’ had to be applied in the widest sense of the word, that is to say ensuring that local and regional authorities were delegated their respective tasks in the area of public health. The CoR noted with satisfaction that the Commission recognized the need to ensure protection for the individual and for personal integrity, stressing that this was an important constituent of the programme. It took the view that the system being proposed should be allowed to develop gradually, while at the same time retaining a certain coherence that would enable it to assess the changes on a long-term basis. The debate on harmonisation could therefore be kept within limits. The CoR approved the publication of an annual report, though also wished to point out that good examples of this were also to be found in different local, regional and national reports, and that the latter could serve as an inspiration for the annual reports presented by the Commission. With regard to the comments concerning the proposal, the CoR stressed that cooperation should not only be based on the Member States but should also include representatives of local and regional authorities. It thought that the budget allocation of ECU 13.8 million could well prove to be inadequate, given the level of cooperation that was needed with other agencies, local and regional authorities, etc.