Public health: Community action programme 1999-2003 concerning rare diseases

1997/0146(COD) - 29/10/1997 - Economic and Social Committee: opinion, report

The Committee welcomes the action programme as a step towards a more systematic approach to the problem of rare diseases in the Community. It has however serious doubts about whether the objectives of the programme can be achieved with the envisaged budgetary resources. In addition, the Committee wishes to draw attention to the need of ensuring the programme's continuity beyond the year 2003 in an effort to optimizing the effectiveness of many of the proposed actions (e.g. the monitoring of long-term trends). Whilst the Committee agrees with the Commission that Community initiatives on rare diseases can bring important benefits, it would also stress the need for additional action and coordination at Member State level. The Committee broadly agrees with the three specific objectives of the program and the concrete actions proposed under each of them.