

Public health: Community action programme 2003-2008

2000/0119(COD) - 16/05/2000 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE : to present a proposal on a public health programme. **CONTENT** : the draft decision on public health programme is attached to a Communication regarding the health strategy of the European Community. The Communication sets out the Community's broad health strategy, a key element of which is a new public health framework which includes the draft decision. The document cites a number of factors which have prompted the new programme. These include: -the expectation of the public that the Community should act to ensure that its health is protected. -the strengthening of the EC's obligations in relation to public health in recent years, especially through successive changes in the Treaty. -the emergence of new health challenges and priorities, especially related to enlargement of the EU, increased demand on health services and demographic change. The proposal for the public health programme focuses on three main points: -improving health information and knowledge. A comprehensive health information system will be put into place, which will provide policy makers, health authorities and the public with the key health data and the information they need. To establish this system, full use will be made of the Internet, including links to national websites. -responding rapidly to health threats. An effective rapid response capability will deal with threats to public health, for example, arising from communicable diseases. Action will entail improving communication between the national authorities involved, linking with the various Community alert systems, putting in place the necessary arrangements for surveillance and transfer of information, and creating the means to mobilise the necessary resources and expertise to respond effectively to health threats as they arise. -addressing health determinants. The Programme will help improve the health status of the population and reduce premature deaths by tackling the underlying causes of ill health, through effective health promotion and disease prevention measures. this will be achieved by focusing on key lifestyle factors, such as smoking, alcohol, nutrition and exercise, as well as major socio-economic and environmental factors. The overall funding for the programme is EUR 300 million over 6 years. Apart from the programme, the new framework includes other legislative measures, such as the possibility of harmonisation in the veterinary and phytosanitary fields and in the area of standards of quality and safety of organs and substances of human origin and in relation to blood and other derivatives. A European Health Forum will also be set up. The new health strategy cuts across other policy areas, such as internal market and social affairs by improving co-ordination arrangements.