

Public health: network for epidemiological surveillance and control of communicable diseases in the European Community EWRS

1996/0052(COD) - 07/09/2000 - Follow-up document

The Community Network for the epidemiological surveillance and control of communicable diseases, established by the European Parliament and Council Decision 2119/98/EC, has completed its first year of operation. It has been shown to be an effective network for health protection in the Community. Its future development and sustainability, however, requires a substantial resource commitment from the Commission and Member States in order that the momentum is not lost. Several systems on communicable diseases surveillance (e.g. legionellosis, salmonellosis, tuberculosis) are already functioning in the Community. The progressive expansion of comparable systems to other priority communicable diseases is now underway. The Early Warning and Reponse System has been established and is now capable of addressing outbreaks from whatever source, although its relative immaturity means that its development requires nurturing. The Commission has also identified the need for a rapid response capacity at Community level to assist in outbreaks of disease within and without the frontiers of the European Community. The next period will see the Community Network's extension on the international stage through European Union cooperation with applicant countries, the Mediterranean partner countries, under the Northern Dimension, and through the European Union - third country co-operation arrangements (e.g. Canada, US). This communication outlines how the Commission has implemented this Decision in its first year and puts forward its proposals for future action in this area.