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

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Following the adoption of the programme of Community action on health monitoring by the European Parliament and the Council, the Commission presents an interim report concerning the implementation period 1997 to 1999. Projects were accepted in 1998 and 1999, most of them having a duration of 2 years. The external evaluation report was received only in November 2001, on the basis of which this report is drawn up. Due to the extension of the programme, the final evaluation will not be submitted before June 2004. In this report the Commission highlights the degree of consistency and complementarity reached between the present programme and other relevant Community policies, programmes and initiatives. To recall, Decision 1400/97/EC, based on the former Article 129 of the Treaty (currently Article 152 of the Treaty) covers a wide range of general and specific objectives. The general aim of the programme is the contribution towards the establishment of a Community health monitoring system. The general aim is specified in a number of objectives and activities in three pillars: establishment of Community health indicators; development of a Community- wide network for sharing health data and analysis and reporting. The report states that the programme is consistent with other Community initiatives, e.g. the framework programme for statistical information, projects in the field of telematic interchange of information between administrations (IDA) and the other public health programmes that have a component of health monitoring. The synergy with the framework programme for research, technological development and demonstration has to be improved. The external evaluation states that the objectives as described in the Decision 1400/97/EC are already covered to the level of 60% by the actions supported so far through the Programme. 15 of 19 projects supported during the reference period cover different aspects involved in establishing Community health indicators. The opinion of Member States was taken into account in the Programme Committee. Annual work plans and a list of the annually selected projects were transmitted to the European Parliament. Monitoring of the specific actions has been performed by the Commission Services. Some adjustments have been carried out during the implementation period to ensure the effectiveness of the programme. A discussion is needed about the definition, features and limits of a Community-wide health monitoring system.