Public health: Community action programme 1996-2000 on the prevention of drug dependence

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The Committee adopted the report of Mr. Giovanni BURTONE (It., PES) . This Commission proposal is directly related to the new public health responsibilities conferred by the Maastricht Treaty. The proposal takes the line that, rather than constituting 2 separate aspects of the action programme, prevention of drug dependence and health protection should instead be viewed as 2 substantially similar and interchangeable projects. The rapporteur stated that the problem of drug dependence does not lie solely within the province of health, therapy, rehabilitation and the law. It is also an educational and anthropological phenomenon related to personal development in which the individual's family, social and school environment all play a part. Said Mr. BURTONE: "It is therefore to be hoped that the Commission will make a clear commitment to Community family policies by promoting a policy which enhances the role of the family within society. The experience of work therapy in programmes to rehabilitate drug addicts has highlighted the important role of family relations in the process of growth and recovery". The European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction provides a unique opportunity to redress the failure to coordinate information which has been characteristic of action to combat drug dependence.A uniform method of obtaining and passing on the Monitoring Centre's information should therefore be introduced. The rapporteur saw his amendments adopted on tightening up the wording of the Commission's proposal. He also made specific recommendations for the mode of operation of the new European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drugs Addiction (ECMDDA) in Lisbon.