Public health: Programme of Community action 1999-2003 on pollution-related diseases

1997/0153(COD) - 25/02/1998

The report on pollution-related diseases was adopted by large majorities in the Committee. The report, all drafted by doctor MEPs, involves first reading, under the codecision procedure, of Commission proposals for Community action programmes for the five-year period 1999-2003. The report by Mr Christian CABROL (UFE, F) welcomes the programme to combat pollution-related diseases but takes the view that its scope is too restrictive. The Commission had singled out respiratory diseases and allergies, but the committee wants the programme to deal also with pollution from other sources, eg noise, food, water and waste. Members called for Community-wide coordinated epidemiological studies and want information directed at the public (rather than opinion-formers), particularly as regards ways of life and eating habits that could reduce the health risks caused by pollution. The committee adopted an amendment common to all three reports (CABROL and TRAKATELLIS (EPP,G) on injury prevention - COD97132 and VICECONTE (UFE,I) on rare diseasess - COD97146 concerning budgetary provisions. For each programme, the Commission had specified a budget (ECU 1.3 million) for the first year only (1999), but the committee followed the rapporteurs in seeking an indicative framework of ECU 14 million for the whole of each five-year programme. The contention is that money could be recouped, eg through lower medical costs, if the programmes' aims are achieved. The Commission representative said his institution could only accept the ECU 14 million figure in the case of the Trakatellis report and then only if it came within the ceiling of the Community's financial perspective and included the existing EHLASS data collection system.