Public health: Community action programme 1999-2003 on injury prevention, EHLASS incl.

1997/0132(COD) - 25/02/1998

The reports on injury and suicide prevention 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 Antonios TRAKATELLIS (EPP, Gr) seeks to amend a programme on injury prevention (excluding road accidents and occupational injuries, which are covered by other provisions). According to data published last year, accidents in the home and during leisure time result in 83 000 deaths and 22 million injuries each year in the Community. To this must be added 43 000 suicides. The committee recognized the huge economic and social repercussions of such a tally. Prevention measures, which should focus particularly on children, young adults, women and older people, should entail the development of networks using information technology to collect and exchange information on a comparable and consistent basis. Products found to be responsible for injuries should be redesigned. Members noted that the groups most likely to be injured as a result of violence were women and children and also that a great many injuries were caused by violence at sports events. The committee adopted an amendment common to all three reports (TRAKATELLIS and VICECONTE (UFE,I)on rare diseases - COD97146 and CABROL (UFE,F) on the fight against pollution related diseasess - COD97153 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.