Blood and plasma donors: suitability and screening. Recommendation

1997/0315(CNS) - 18/03/1998

A Commission proposal on blood donations was approved with amendments by the Committee.The proposal puts forward a Council Recommendation on the suitability of blood and plasma donors and the screening of donated blood. The aim is to ensure the safety of both donors and recipients throughout the Community. Among other things, this means setting criteria for the rejection of donations in certain circumstances, eg in the case of chronic alcoholics, prostitutes, male homosexuals, those affected by AIDS and people in whose family Creutzfeldt Jacob Disease (CJD) has occurred. Adopting a report by Mr Christian CABROL (UFE, F) amending the proposal, the committee wants prospective donors to indicate when and for how long they have travelled outside the European Union and, in particular, whether they have been sexually active in Africa. It also wants Member States to agree to the establishment of a single donor identification and registration system common to them all. This could be consulted rapidly by any donor centre and would make it easier for donors responsible for contaminated donations to be tracked down. Donations should be voluntary and unpaid as defined by the Council of Europe. The committee also varied the frequency of donations proposed by the Commission. A list of all the donor centres in each Member State should be communicated to a central Community body, the committee believes, not simply transmitted to the other Member States and the Commission as suggested by the Commission. Prospective donors should be identified by a unique code common to all Member States, which should also be communicated to that central body. As regards the screening of blood, the committee wants epidemiological data on viral markers to be regularly collected, analysed and verified. Moreover, in the wake of the BSE crisis, it insists that the Commission exclude any risks related to the new variant of CJD. The proposal follows a Commission communication on blood safety and self-sufficiency, a report on which - also by Mr Cabrol - was adopted by Parliament in April 1996.