Impact of transport on public health

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The committee adopted the own-initiative report by Caroline LUCAS (Greens(EFA, UK) on the impact of transport on health. Pointing out that the negative impact of transport included not only traffic accidents but also gaseous emissions, noise and lack of physical activity, the report said that Health Impact Assessments (HIAs), along the lines of the existing Environmental Impact Assessments, should be introduced for all major EU transport projects and policies. This would, moreover, go some way towards implementing the provision in the Treaty (Article 152) which stipulates that a high level of human health protection should be ensured in both the definition and implementation of all Community policies and activities. The committee recognised that health impact assessment was a relatively new field and called on the Commission to report on the experience of applying HIAs to the field of transport by the end of 2003, in order to review and develop appropriate methodologies. In the meantime, the Commission should also extend its research into this field. The report stressed the importance of promoting non-motorised transport such as walking and cycling and of developing indicators to measure achievements and trends in this area. The Commission was also urged to take greater account of the particular vulnerability of cyclists and pedestrians in Community transport policy to reduce traffic accidents. Lastly, the committee recommended that, when EU funding was provided for rail and road projects, Member States should be encouraged to identify the traffic flows likely to be diverted from urban areas as a result of those projects and ensure that the road space thus released in towns was used for public transport, cycling and walking.