Public health: integration of health protection requirements in Community policies. 2nd report 1995

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OBJECTIVE: This, the second report on the integration of health requirements in Community policies gives an overview of the activities of the Community and the Member States with repercussions on health in 1995 . In publishing this report, the Commission wishes to stimulate public debate on how best to integrate health requirements in drawing up all Community policies and to ensure that this dimension is better taken into account in achieving the objectives of the communities SUBSTANCE: The report builds on the first report on the integration of health protection requirements in Community policies (COM(95) 0196), published in 1995, and concentrates on a number of key policy areas in which the most important health-related developments have taken place: social policy; internal market; agriculture, fisheries and food; research and development; environment and energy; transport; and international cooperation. It also includes the work of relevant agencies and other outside bodies connected to the Community. The report shows that major progress has been made in raising awareness of the numerous links with and effects on health which the vast majority of Community policy areas have - and therefore of the importance of integrating health issues early on in the preparatory work for drafting policies and action programmes - both within the Community institutions and in the Member States. Furthermore, the fact that health issues also tend to generate considerable media attention and raise major concerns among the population is another reason why they need to be taken into account at an early stage of policy formulation. At the strictly Community level, the report makes clear that health is a consideration running through Community policy. For example, tobacco features in the preventive programme "Europe against cancer" and in agricultural policy which grants subsidies for planting less harmful tobacco varieties. Similarly, drugs are the subject of public health measures and of cooperation in internal and justice affairs and development cooperation. At the same time, the Commission point out that several important health-related issues are not directly administered by the Community but by independent agencies (European Agency for Safety and Health at Work, the European Medicines Evaluation Agency, the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction, etc.). Noting the separation between the action taken and the location of the decision-making, the Commission renews the emphasis it placed in its first report on the need for complementarity. It is important to incorporate the public-health dimension, particularly in areas where the legislative ground work has been prepared, and to study its possible impact. Overall, health protection requirements are gaining in importance both as a result of the consultation process installed inside the Commission and because of growing public awareness of the health implications of other policy areas. However, the Commission believes that this trend must be reinforced and hopes that publication of this report will provide an opportunity for debate with all the authorities concerned including those in the regions and the Member States.