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

1997/0132(COD) - 04/09/1998 - Document attached to the procedure

OBJECTIVE: presentation of the Commission report evaluating the EHLASS programme. CONTENT: the purpose of the EHLASS (Community system of information on home and leisure accidents) system is to collect data on home and leisure accidents. It is based on data collected in hospital casualty departments, with the exception of three Member States where data are collected from household surveys. EHLASS is the only source of information on this kind of accident. It was set up in 1986 as a pilot project and kept in operation by Decisions of 1990, 1993 and 1994. The last Decision came to an end on 31 December 1997. The Commission commissioned an external audit of the functioning of the system accompanied by proposals for amendment. Following this report, the Commission considered that the EHLASS philosophy was useful overall but that it was not being used satisfactorily at Community level. It was evident, in particular, that the system's potential and the Community's financial investment in data collection were clearly being under-used. One of the main reasons for this lay in the fact that the Member States did not forward any data on individual accidents to the Commission (only graphs and statistical tables). Surveys of specific accidents could therefore be conducted only by asking Member States for such information. The Commission proposed to resolve this problem by facilitating data access by setting up a database integrated into EUPHIN (European Union Public Health Information Network) thereby providing the technological support needed to make all the data available to the Commission, the Member States and all other parties. The Commission made the following proposals to rectify the shortcomings of EHLASS: - representativeness: the Member States should choose hospitals that were more representative in terms of geographical and demographic distribution and the division between urban and rural areas; - comparability: the drawing up of common definitions, classifications and coding rules was a prerequisite if comparable Community-wide data were to be obtained; - data quality: data quality needed to be improved by using a quality measurement method in cooperation with the Member States; - respect of deadlines: to prevent delays in the forwarding of Member States' results, it was suggested that the current system of national returns should be abandoned and that the data should be forwarded directly to the database; - coding: needed to be reviewed, in particular for new products and sports; - statistical assistance: statistical assistance for the collection and processing of EHLASS data would be needed to adapt the methods to take account of the existing Community-wide codes and models (the Community statistical programme 1998-2002 made provision for such assistance). In conclusion, the Commission announced that it would take the measures needed to improve its future programme. For 1999 and beyond, the Commission proposed to integrate EHLASS into the action programme on injury prevention.