Public health: Programme of Community action 1999-2003 on pollution-related diseases

1997/0153(COD) - 11/06/1998 - Commission communication on Council's position

In its opinion on the common position of the Council concerning the programme of action on pollution-related diseases, the Commission indicates that it can only partially endorse the Council's text, for the following reasons: 1) the limits on the duration and scope of the programme: the Commission regrets that the Council has deleted from the programme the entire section concerning prevention of respiratory diseases and allergies despite the fact that millions of people in Europe suffer from such respiratory complaints or pollution-related allergies. The Commission considers it important to launch without delay a Community action to prevent these diseases, in relation to which policies, measures and good practices already exist. It particularly deplores the limiting of the programme to improving information and awareness of these diseases; 2) international cooperation: in the Commission's opinion, the reference to Article 228 of the TEU is not legally appropriate, as this article is the basis solely for the conclusion of international agreements and not for technical cooperation in the context of an agreed programme; 3) monitoring and evaluation: in the Commission's view, it is not possible to submit an evaluation report during the third year of the programme, given that according to the wishes expressed by the Council this would be its final year. The Commission considers that most of the actions which will have a genuine effect will take more than a year to make their mark. A proper evaluation would therefore need to be performed well after the end of the programme. By way of conclusion, the Commission says that, while accepting the common position of the Council, it wishes a statement to be entered in the minutes of the Council concerning these various points and the fact that the programme is of an evolutive character. The Commission believes that the programme ought rather to comprise a first series of actions in the field of pollution-related diseases.