Future of public health policy

1998/2086(COS) - 10/03/1999 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The Parliament adopted its resolution on the Commission's communication which was drafted by Mr. Clive NEEDLE (PES, UK). It calls for a positive interpretation by Council and Commission of the provisions of the Treaty of Amsterdam pertaining to public health, particularly Art. 152, bearing in mind the status of health protection in the context of the EC Treaty and the principle of subsidiarity, which provides a good basis for sustainable development of the Community role as a partner in the protection and improvement of the health of EU citizens while recognising the responsibilities of Member States for the organisation and delivery of health services and medical care. It urges the Commission to publish detailed proposals as a matter of urgency once the Treaty is ratified, which set out a realistic number of measures achievable within the five year timescale of the framework within the three following strands: (a) improving information for the development of public health; (b) reacting rapidly to threats to health; (c) tackling health determinants through health promotion and disease prevention. It calls on the Commission to do further work on the impact of food on health, as this is one of the main factors affecting health in the EU, and to participate in efforts by Member States and others to improve public information policy in this area. It calls for the core of the EU's efforts in public health to be the integration of health across all other policy areas and the integration of health impact assessment into health-determining areas of EU policy, with particular priority given to research, agriculture and food, transport, and socio-economic policies. It also calls for a prime objective of Community action to be focused on fostering equality in health across the EU, to strengthen the regional approach regarding health, to seek greater coherence with socio-economic policies and programmes and urges the identification and introduction of targeted Health Priority Areas on evidence-based criteria in clear co-operation with Member States, regional authorities and NGOs and operating within the framework provisions. It calls for the Commission and Council to maximize freedom of information regarding best practice, epidemiology, services, networks, risks and opportunities, as well as to maximise public, professional and legislative awareness of the work and value-added of the Community role in health protection and improvement. It calls on the Commission to establish a framework for a dialogue between all stakeholders on how to manage jointly the fast pace of change. It calls for greater co-operation and communication between the EU institutions and international health-related organisations. Anticipating the publication of a Commission communication relating to health and enlargement, it expresses concern that the health status in most candidate countries is lower than EU Member States and that some threats to health are increasing.