Blood and plasma donors: suitability and screening. Recommendation

1997/0315(CNS) - 02/04/1998 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

In adopting the report by Mr Christian CABROL (UPE, F) on the suitability of blood and plasma donors, Parliament asked that the Member States bring forward binding legislation for the Union with respect to blood products, donated blood and plasma by the end of 1998 and no later than the end of 1999. It also called for the establishment of a centralized single donor identification and registration system common to all Member States. Parliament also stressed the voluntary and unpaid nature of the donation and called for inclusion of a reference to the Council of Europe recommendations on the non-remunerated nature of the donation and the safety of blood products. It also wanted measures to be taken to take account of the risk associated with the new variants of Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease, in particular by using imports of blood between Member States. Parliament also considered that there was a need to: - ensure that donors were identified by a single identification common to all countries and that this identification should be notified to a central body, - notify the list of donation centres to this central body and not to the Member States or the Commission, - ensure that epidemiological data on viral markers was regularly collected, analysed and verified, use being made of uniform definitions, and that the data was updated regularly, - ensure that the exclusion of blood donors was based on scientific evidence (where it existed) and where there was none that the precautionary principle should prevail. It also suggested that the same test should be carried out on blood and plasma samples. With regard to the questionnaire, Parliament called for the following questions to be included: - does the donor have a 'partner' (not 'spouse') who is HIV positive?; - has the donor travelled outside the European Union? (instead of outside 'Western Europe and North America'); if so when and what was the length of stay. However it rejected the amendment on whether the prospective donor had engaged in sexual activity in Africa (country, time involved and partner to be specified). The Commission text which refers to 'Sexual activity in Africa' in the list of questions remains. In the list of questions Parliament rejected the question on sexual activity in countries other than those in Africa. The question on 'Men who have unsafe sex' instead of 'Men who have sex with other men' remains in the questionnaire. Permanent deferral for blood donors applies to chronic alcoholics, intravenous drug users, prostitutes and those suffering from infectious diseases or immune-deficiency diseases (AIDS, hepatitis). Homosexuals are thus not automatically excluded from donating blood, as suggested by the report.