Resolution on World Aids Day

2004/2615(RSP) - 02/12/2004 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on the occasion of World Aids Day, stating that, to stem the progress of AIDS around the world requires more money, appropriate legislation and political will from governments. Parliament felt that the EU has a significant role to play for both its own citizens and those of third countries in the global fight against the disease.

If the trend towards ever higher numbers of HIV infections is not reversed, Parliament stated that there will be no chance of achieving the overarching Millennium Development Goal of eradicating extreme poverty and hunger by 2015 and reducing by half the proportion of people living on less than a dollar a day and suffering from hunger. Parliament urged the Commission and the Member States to provide the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria with a contribution of at least EUR 1 billion on a sustained basis. It recalled the commitment of the G8 and the rest of the international community to respect an overall annual expenditure target of between EUR 7 and 10 billion.

Member States and the EU must dramatically increase funding for the development of microbicides, given that conservative estimates suggest that the introduction of even a partially effective microbicide would result in 2.5 million averted cases of HIV over three years, and that an effective microbicide could be developed by the end of the decade with the necessary financial support. The European pharmaceutical industry must also dedicate a significant part of its resources to anti-infectious medicines and other essential drugs.

Parliament noted with great interest the recent finding that a relatively cheap antibiotic (cotrimoxazole)

has almost halved the rate of AIDS-related deaths in African children. Although the drug does not combat HIV, it is clearly instrumental in preventing secondary infections which kill many HIV-positive children with weakened immunity at an annual cost of just $7-12 per child compared to $300 for the cheapest antiretrovirals.

Parliament went on to insist that the EU must continue to prioritise sexual and reproductive health issues through funding programmes on family planning, and in particular to influence sexual behaviour through risk-reduction strategies, to educate young people, and especially girls and young women, about STIs and HIV, and to encourage condom usage in combination with other contraceptive methods and combat any misinformation spread on the effectiveness of condoms.

Parliament urged the Commission to oppose, both at the WTO level and in its bilateral relations, the inclusion by the United States in its bilateral agreements with developing countries of provisions that oblige those countries to renounce the right recognised in the Doha Declaration to use or import generic drugs necessary for the public health of their populations. It urges the EU itself to refrain from taking any step in the same direction.

Finally, Parliament called on the new Commission to ensure that funding continues to plug the 'decency gap' left by the US withdrawal of UNFPA funding, not only in the developing world but also in Eastern Europe and Central Asia.