Modernising social protection and developing good quality healthcare

2004/2189(INI) - 28/04/2005 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution based on the own-initiative report drafted by Milan CABRNOCH (EPP-ED, CZ) on social protection and good quality healthcare. (Please see the summary of 31/03/2005.) Parliament emphasised that each individual must have the right to a free choice of healthcare and long-term care without restriction anywhere in the EU. It called on the Member States and the Commission to ensure the approximation of data gathering and an improvement of the data situation as well as to enable citizens and service providers to access information on the healthcare and health policy of other Member States through the EU health portal which is currently under construction.

Parliament urged Member States to consider active steps to deal with the health needs of the poorest members of society and their access to health care. It pointed out that universal coverage must be based on solidarity and provide a safety net against poverty and social exclusion, benefiting in particular those on low incomes and those whose state of health requires intensive, long or expensive care, including palliative and end-of-life care.

Parliament regretted that the Commission (see COM/2004/0304) views the modernisation of social protection with regard to health care essentially in terms of the requirements of the Stability Pact. the Commission makes no reference in its text to the trends in spending on the various sectors of health care (treatment, hospital care etc.) or to the impact of prevention in the individual Member States.

Parliament remarked that the ‘big killers’ (e.g. cancer diseases, cardiovascular diseases) and the ‘big cripplers’ (e.g. musculo-skeletal disorders and other work-related chronic diseases, health problems resulting from unhealthy diets, drug abuse, environmental degradation and reduced physical activity) could be considerably reduced by general intersectoral policies and individual preventive policies and improved measures to address those factors in people's working and living environment which cause disease. It stressed the importance of developing occupational health care with a view to the prevention and early detection of diseases and health problems.