Health: Community action programme 2008-2013

2005/0042A(COD) - 31/01/2006

The committee adopted the report by Antonios TRAKATELLIS (EPP-ED, EL) amending the proposal under the 1st reading of the codecision procedure. The original proposal as submitted by the Commission consisted of a single action programme for health and consumer protection. However, on 30 June 2005 the EP Conference of Presidents decided that the proposal should be split into two parts (i.e. two separate programmes) and allocated to two different committees on the grounds that the two areas come under different legal bases (Articles 152 and 153 of the EC Treaty) in which the EU has different powers. The Environment Committee was therefore made responsible for drawing up a report on the health action programme, and the Internal Market Committee was given responsibility for a report on the action programme for consumer protection (see factfile COD/2005/0042B).

The committee amended the wording of the title to make it clear that this proposal would deal with health only and would be a continuation of the first integrated Community action programme in the field of public health (2003-2008). The other key amendments were as follows:

- MEPs clarified the aims and objectives of the programme, which should include "preventing human illness, diseases and injuries and improving public health", improving "information and knowledge for the development of public health" and contributing to "mainstreaming of health objectives";

- they added further objectives, such as "the promotion of a multi-faceted approach to health", tackling inequalities between and within Member States by guaranteeing access to healthcare for all according to comparable standards and without discrimination, facilitating patient mobility and improving transparency between national healthcare systems;

- the budget for the programme should be increased from EUR 1 203 million, as allocated by the Commission for the health protection aspects of its original proposal, to EUR 1 500 million for the seven-year period starting on 1 January 2007. MEPs argued that the extra funding was needed to cover the addition of new actions and measures;

- such new actions should include: monitoring the resistance of bacteria to antibiotics and the resistance of nosocomial infections, and developing strategies to prevent and treat them; developing measures to prevent disease and injury in socially isolated individuals and to "raise the awareness of immigrants in matters of health"; identifying injury-related health determinants; improving diagnosis and therapy for older people; identifying and addressing the causes of health inequalities; improving crossborder cooperation, in particular for the treatment of rare diseases, as well as exchanges of information on the services and treatments available and on reimbursements; and collecting and analysing data on disabilities, lifestyle-related factors and sub-fertility;

- the methods of implementing the programme and the terms of funding should be defined by the programme's management committee;

- the proportion of EU funding for NGOs which specialise in health promotion should be 75%, rather than 60% as proposed by the Commission;

- provision should be made for an external and independent evaluation of the results of the programme;

- coordination and cooperation must be ensured between the Commission and the Member States .