Resolution on World Health Day

2006/2552(RSP) - 06/04/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, topical subjects

The European Parliament has adopted the resolution on the World Health Day. In 2006, World Health Day (celebrated annually on 7 April), will be devoted to the health workforce crisis.

Firstly, the resolution criticises the contradiction between the Commission's stated commitment to improving healthcare in developing countries and achieving the MDGs and its track record on spending development funds in the healthcare sector.

Parliament views as deeply regrettable indications that the Commission intends to propose that only 6% of development funds within the new development cooperation instrument be allocated to human and social development, covering not only healthcare, HIV/AIDS and sexual and reproductive health, but all other social development, including children, education and gender programmes. It calls on the Commission to adhere to Parliament's longstanding demand that 35% of development funds be used for the social sector, with 20% of overall funds being used for basic healthcare and basic education.

The Parliament recognises the urgent need for improving harmonisation of donor assistance – within the EU as well as at global level - and agrees that budget support linked to sufficiently clear performance indicators can be an efficient way of improving harmonisation as well as of increasing predictability. Adequate funding for reproductive health projects is needed according to the Parliament. It condemns the 'global gag rule' (Mexico City Policy) which blocks US funding of such projects. It recognises that one major reason for this problematic situation in developing countries is the migration of health workers who are recruited by wealthier countries (especially EU countries and the USA) and calls for the EU to press for the introduction of a global Code of Conduct for Ethical Recruitment.

Moreover, Parliament stresses that the best way of combating the 'brain drain' in the health sector is to provide career incentives for key health workers to stay in their home country. The Commission, ember States and the governments of developing countries are called upon to invest in the training of key health workers.

The Member States are urged to make global health and medicines a strategic sector and to take determined action to emphasise priorities in research and development in order to address the needs of patients, especially those in resource-poor settings. The EU is equally urged to ensure that progress in basic science and biomedicine is translated into improved, safe and affordable healthcare, including access to essential medicines, for all patients, especially those living in poverty.

The Commission and Member States are asked to develop partnerships with hospitals in developing countries and to encourage cooperation via video conferencing, which can enable relatively small and remote hospitals to benefit from high-level expertise and guidance from other hospitals or countries and to support actively the development of primary health care. It takes the view that it is fundamental to guarantee access to high-quality and free health services for all. The need to develop an effective malaria vaccine is stressed, a process which can be accelerated through international partnerships between the private and the public sector.

Lastly, Parliament expresses its appreciation and support for the work of NGOs that render assistance and expertise in the area of health in developing countries and calls on the Commission actively to support these NGOs.