Public health: Community action programme 2003-2008

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PURPOSE: to present a report on the implementation of the Public Health Programme in 2005.

CONTENT: this report has been prepared in order to inform both the European Parliament and the Council on the implementation of the Public Health Programme in 2005. As regards the budget, of the programme's global budget for 2003-2008 of €354 million, the total appropriation of operational and administrative credits for 2005 amounted to €61.5 million. €50 million was allocated to financing projects under the 2005 call for proposals. A further €1.9 million was committed to calls for tender and €3.6 million to direct grant agreements.

The report, in summary, makes the following findings:

- **Health and Consumer Protection Strategy**: This strategy was adopted in April 2005 and established a joint programme for Health and Consumer protection.

- **Mid-term evaluation of the Public Health programme**: An external mid-term evaluation of the Public Health programme was launched covering the first three years of its implementation, - 2003-2005. The results of the evaluation will be used to provide feedback for future Commission initiatives.

- **Stakeholder consultations**: A second "Open Forum on Health challenges and future strategies" took place in 2005. The High Level Group on health services and medical care held four meetings.

- **Activities related to legislation**: Two Directives were adopted to implement Directive 2002/98/EC. These help guarantee a high level of human health protection regarding blood and blood components.

- **Co-operation with international organisations**: Direct grant agreements were negotiated for the first time with the World Health Organisation and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

- **Executive Agency for Public Health Programme**: In January 2005, the Commission created an Executive Agency for the Public Health Programme. The Agency aims to provide technical, scientific and administrative assistance to help implement the programme's objectives.

- **European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control**: The ECDC became operational in 2005. It provides a structured and systematic approach to the control of communicable diseases and other serious health threats affecting the EU.

- **Call for proposals**: A single call for proposal, covering the activities of the 2005 work plan, was launched in January. 242 proposals were submitted of which 55 were considered suitable for funding and 18 projects were placed on a reserve list. 169 projects were rejected.

- **Calls for tender**: Four contracts were signed with Eurobarometer for surveys on EU citizens' attitudes toward tobacco, medical errors, aids prevention and health/food. A further service contract signed in 2005 which sets up a quality assurance scheme for the diagnosis of very high pathogen threats. The purpose of the contract is to organise an outcome orientated external quality assurance exercise for four high threat bacterial pathogens.

- **Health information**: Work continued in 2005 on the establishment of a comprehensive European health and environment information system. Public health monitoring needs and public concerns on electromagnetic fields was also examined.

- **Health threats**: A new strategy was developed on "Generic preparedness Planning" and on an "Influenza pandemic preparedness". Two exercises were organised and tested to assess the reaction capacity of the EU and the Member States in cases of a bio-terrorist attach and an influenza pandemic.

- **Health determinants**: The main aims in 2005 were to promote and stimulate countries' efforts; and to provide input into the assessment and preparation of Community policies, strategies and measures. The work plan therefore prioritised actions linked to nutrition and alcohol, tobacco and drugs, AIDS; health inequalities and wider socio-economic determinants; as well as in areas not fully covered previously such as genetic determinants and physical activity. Approaches to integrate a number environmental and socio-economic considerations and to target specific groups, in particular young people, were also prioritised. Nutrition and physical activity actions included a European weight disorder initiative, a campaign for the improvement of lifestyle related workplace health promotion, support for a network on physical activity and ageing, and a European schools network addressing childhood obesity. Important new activities on alcohol were supported in view of the development of the forthcoming Commission Communication on alcohol and health. These included activities covering drink driving in young people focussing on the role of peer education and covering actions such as health warnings and labelling of alcoholic drinks and server training. A secretariat for the European Commission Mental Health Working Party has been established to assist work taking forward the Green paper on Mental Health. Community action programmes on depression, and child and adolescent mental health are also being set up. Several actions addressed drug prevention, harm reduction and access to drug treatment. European Partners in Action on AIDS aims to strengthen European non-governmental organisations and increase their capacities for concerted actions in the fight against HIV. Work on public health genetics is being taken forward through networking and information exchange.