Community statistics on public health and health and safety at work

2007/0020(COD) - 07/02/2007 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: to establish a common framework for the systematic production of Community statistics on public health and health and safety at work.

PROPOSED ACT: Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

CONTENT: this proposal on public health and health and safety at work statistics aims at establishing the framework for all current and foreseeable activities in the field of public health and health and safety at work statistics carried out by the European Statistical System. It will promote a global and coherent approach to responding to policy needs and will promote synergies as heath issues at work and

outside the workplace, and their different elements, are linked.

The Commission points out that, until now, statistical data collections were carried out on the basis of "gentlemen agreements" with the Member States in the framework of the five years Community Statistical Programmes (currently Decision 2367/2002/EC on the Community statistical programme 2003 to 2007) and its annual components. In the area of public health statistics, the developments and implementations in the three strands (causes of deaths, health care and health interview surveys, disability and morbidity) are steered and organised according to a partnership structure between Eurostat, together with leading countries (currently United Kingdom as general coordinator and respective domain leaders from Estonia, Luxembourg and Denmark), and Member States. In this framework, a lot of methodological work, including preparation of guidelines, has been already achieved and the implementation of data collections has started. However, the current situation is characterised by limitations, chief amongst which is the fact that gentlemen’s agreement procedures do not allow achieving sufficient comparability, coverage and timeliness.A clear legal framework is required. The domains covered by the proposal relate to ongoing activities and developments carried out together with the Member States in the relevant groups of Eurostat or, in the area of public health, of the Partnership on public health statistics. The main goal is to give a consolidated and firm basis for collections already implemented or which methodology is currently being developed or implementation prepared.

The proposal states that the statistics will include, in the form of a minimum data set, information required for Community action in the field of public health, for supporting national strategies for the development of high-quality, accessible and sustainable health care as well as for Community action in the field of health and safety at work. They will provide data for structural indicators, sustainable development indicators and European Community health indicators as well as for the other sets of indicators which it is necessary to develop for the purpose of monitoring Community actions in the fields of public health and health and safety at work.

Member States will be required to supply Eurostat with statistics on the following domains: health status and health determinants, health care, causes of death, accidents at work, and occupational diseases and other work-related health problems and illnesses. The five Annexes to the proposed legislation define these terms more closely. Whenever new data requirements or insufficient quality of data are identified in these domains, Eurostat will institute pilot studies to be completed on a voluntary basis by the Member States.

The elements on the statistical methodologies and data collection will be set up by the Commission implementing regulations and specified into details in manuals and guidelines.

The main financing of actions for statistics in the areas of public health and health and safety at work will be covered by the Community statistical programme 2003 to 2007 (Decision 2367/2002/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council) and the future Community statistical programme 2008-2012. Complementary financing shall be provided from operational resources made available by Directorates General Health and Consumer Protection and Employment and Social Affairs.

Lastly, the proposal states that the Community and national political actions and strategies in the areas of public health and health and safety at work constitute a substantial public interest and the provisions of the Council Regulations (EC) No 322/97 and (Euratom, EEC) No 1588/90 on the transmission of data subject to statistical confidentiality to Eurostat provide the appropriate safeguards for the protection of individuals in the case of the production of Community statistics on public health and health and safety at work.