Declaration on hepatitis C

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The European Parliament adopted a Declaration on hepatitis C, and pointed out that 12 million persons in Europe are infected with the hepatitis C virus (HCV). HCV is an urgent issue, being a disease which attacks the liver and leads to chronic hepatitis C causing cirrhosis, liver failure or liver cancer, thus increasing the need for transplantation. As a 'silent killer' and 'sniper' disease, HCV is often not detected so that many patients remain undiagnosed while the diagnosed patients frequently suffer from stigmatisation.

Under these Parliament called on the Commission and Council to:

- recognise hepatitis C as an urgent public health issue and identify priority actions in programmes of future Council presidencies;

- adopt a Council recommendation on hepatitis C screening, ensuring early diagnosis and wider access to treatment and care;

- respond to the recommendations of its resolution of 6 July 2006 on protecting European healthcare workers from blood-borne infections due to needlestick injuries;

- facilitate further research on treatment for hepatitis C patients co-infected with HIV and/or hepatitis B under the 7th Research Framework Programme.