



Recommendation 1153 (1991)¹

Concerted European policies for health

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Health is a prerequisite for quality of life as well as an integral component of the social, economic and cultural development of the individual. Health promotion is an ambitious aim to be pursued by the adoption of common action.
2. The right of all people to health protection is recognised in the Social Charter of the Council of Europe (Article 11) and many other of that treaty's provisions concern the health of the whole population, such as those on working conditions (Articles 2 and 3), social security benefits (Article 12), social and medical assistance (Article 13) or social protection of elderly persons (Article 4 of the Protocol to the Charter).
3. Much work has already been done by the Council of Europe on hygiene and health education, health care and meeting the challenges of epidemics, new technologies and living conditions, in accordance with its humanist and ethical principles.
4. The preamble to the World Health Organisation's Constitution states that "the enjoyment of the highest obtainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being" ; a great effort of co-ordination has been made between the Council of Europe and the WHO Regional Office for Europe in matters of common interest, and joint activities are undertaken.
5. Close contacts must be maintained, and harmonised co-operation continued, between the Council of Europe and the World Health Organisation to promote the "health for all" policy adopted at world level by WHO and, in particular, the "European strategy of health for all by the year 2000", adopted at European regional level.
6. Endorsing the ideas behind this strategy, the Assembly accordingly calls on the governments of Council of Europe member states to ensure that the principles and objectives of the above-mentioned strategy are borne in mind in the preparation and implementation of health policies and legislation. This effort should concentrate more especially on :
 - 6.1. development and improvement of measures, especially primary measures, for the prevention of illness, and substantial reduction of accidents, particularly accidents at work, at home and on the roads ;
 - 6.2. health promotion and education, not least by media awareness campaigns emphasising the impact of lifestyle and behaviour on health and fitness and developing an individual sense of responsibility for one's own health and that of others ;
 - 6.3. a multisectoral approach to health protection and promotion - for example in the field of nutrition ;
 - 6.4. quality and effectiveness of health care ;
 - 6.5. equal access to health care, including to new techniques, treatment and products ;
 - 6.6. development of research in the health field.

1. Assembly debate on 26 April 1991 (8th Sitting) (see [Doc. 6403](#), report of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee, Rapporteur : Mrs Helgadóttir). Text adopted by the Assembly on 26 April 1991 (8th Sitting).



7. The Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers draw on this strategy in the Council of Europe's work on concerted European health policies and focus the future activities on :

- 7.1. the close links between health and environment, and the duty of all societies to avoid all kinds of health risks related to the environment and to regulate their activities so that air, water, foodstuffs and workplaces do not endanger the individual's health ;
- 7.2. education for health, in schools and in the community as a whole ;
- 7.3. iii.
 - a. mental health, especially amongst young people ;
 - b. the need for research on special health problems of old age such as Alzheimer's disease ;
 - c. improvement of care for the dependent old and chronically ill, with a special concern for the severe lack of nursing staff ;
 - d. development of palliative medicine and appropriate care of the dying ;
 - e. active participation in joint efforts at European and international levels to combat Aids ;
- 7.4. giving health priority in various sectors of activity, so as to make possible co-ordination of efforts for health promotion ;
- 7.5. the issue of healthy housing according to income and family size, and the opportunity of including a right to decent housing among the social rights recognised in the Social Charter of the Council of Europe and its protocol ;
- 7.6. continuous efforts to combat effectively addiction to and dependence on drugs, alcohol and tobacco (bearing in mind that heavy tobacco smoking is on the increase amongst women, with accelerating lung cancer), in implementation of the various proposals already made by the Parliamentary Assembly on that subject ;
- 7.7. emphasising where necessary vaccinations for infants ;
- 7.8. formulating an adequate policy for prescribing medicines and preventing their excessive consumption or abuse ;
- 7.9. respecting the principles of the Declaration of Helsinki (revised) on clinical trials involving human subjects.

8. The Assembly recommends moreover that the Committee of Ministers emphasise the "health" dimension in co-operation with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. At a time when most of these countries are seeking to restructure their health services, it is urgently necessary to familiarise them with the policies adopted by the member states and with the Council of Europe's guidelines and work on such questions as emergency care, the training of health staff, the prevention of hospital infections, blood transfusion and organ transplants, and to associate them with these activities in a practical and immediate way by arranging courses, seminars and exchanges of experts for their benefit.