



Resolution 1367 (2004)¹

Bio-terrorism: a serious threat for citizens' health

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Since 11 September 2001 the threat of large-scale terrorism against the public is no longer in the realms of the unthinkable. Some believe that the risk of nuclear, biological or chemical attack by a terrorist organisation is imminent; for others the probability remains low. However, everyone agrees that such an eventuality would have disastrous consequences for the public and wonders about the ability of most states to cope with them.
2. In a globalised and economically interdependent world, the recent Sars (severe acute respiratory syndrome) epidemic originating from China gave a particularly clear illustration of the difficulties and challenges faced by states in the event of the spread of an infectious disease as well as the devastating economic impact this could have. The Sars threat helped to increase awareness of what a bioterrorist attack could mean for the public.
3. The Parliamentary Assembly stresses that bioterrorism could also cause environmental damage, which could be dangerous for people living in the area concerned.
4. The Assembly therefore believes that, given the possible consequences of the bioterrorist threat to the public, it would be unwise to underestimate it; states should thus prepare for the worst.
5. The Assembly reiterates that there can be no justification for terrorism. The international community, without exception, must rally to the common aim of combating this global scourge. International co-operation must be pursued unremittingly if political decision makers are not to stand accused of an irresponsible attitude towards the populations to whom they are accountable.
6. The nature of the potential risks and the need for effective public protection make it necessary to rise above national interests and call for strengthened co-operation, particularly at European level. The creation of a two-speed Europe in the area of public health and safety must be refused. However, public safety has a high cost which presupposes, at national and European level, budgetary priorities and financial solidarity between states.
7. The Assembly invites member states:
 - 7.1. to inform and educate the public about the inherent dangers of bioterrorism;
 - 7.2. to draw up an objective assessment of the potential sources of bioterrorist danger and an inventory of dangerous and sensitive sites with the aim of securing them and acquiring efficient and effective surveillance and warning systems;
 - 7.3. to devise emergency intervention and public-health relief plans in case of bioterrorist attacks and to test them on a regular basis;
 - 7.4. to provide the professionals required to work in intervention teams with training in the special characteristics of the bioterrorist threat, particularly health care staff;

1. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 2 March 2004 (see [Doc. 10067](#), report of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee, rapporteur: Mr Jacquat; and [Doc. 10095](#), opinion of the Committee on the Environment, Agriculture and Local and Regional Affairs, rapporteur: Mr Toshev).



- 7.5. to introduce or step up teaching concerning transmissible, infectious native and tropical diseases in medical studies;
 - 7.6. to frame a suitable public vaccination policy, compile adequate stocks of vaccines and consider the necessity of vaccinating animals;
 - 7.7. to introduce strict procedures for controlling the purchase and movement of dangerous substances;
 - 7.8. to establish strict control over activities based on the use of modern biotechnologies in order to avoid their misuse for bioterrorism.
8. The Assembly welcomes in particular the recent setting up by the European Union of the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control, which should be operational by 2005, and wishes for further measures to strengthen European solidarity.
9. Finally, it invites member states to accede to the existing international instruments aimed at combating terrorism, to reinforce them through appropriate supervision procedures and to establish binding instruments to protect against potential threats that are not well – or not at all – covered.
10. It also invites states to accede to and implement, in particular, two relevant conventions of the United Nations: the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and use of Chemical Weapons and their Destruction and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction.