

Letter dated:
29 January 2007

From:

Danish Parliament's Health Committee and European Affairs Committee
(*Folketingets Sundhedsudvalg og Europaudvalg*)

To:

Commissioner Markos Kyprianou
European Commission
B-1049 Brussels
Belgium

Subject: Opinion on the Commission's communication regarding Community action on health services

Ref. 05-001501-41

The Danish Parliament's Health Committee and European Affairs Committee have had the opportunity to examine the Commission's communication regarding Community action on health services. The Parliamentary Health Committee examined the communication in meetings on 10 and 17 January 2007, following which a draft opinion was submitted for written consideration. The opinion was subsequently approved by the European Affairs Committee at a meeting on 26 January 2007.

In this connection, the Health Committee and European Affairs Committee would like to comment as follows:

A majority of parties (V, S, DF, KF, RV and SF) consider it very important that the Commission takes the initiative to establish a clear legal framework for patient mobility, so that, for example, clear and easily understood guidelines are established as to when a patient can be treated in another Member State and his or her entitlements. In this context, the Committee recognises the importance of addressing issues such as redress, liability for damages, follow-up treatment, disclosure of information/professional secrecy and how treatment capacity can be ensured.

Furthermore, the majority considers it a positive indication that the Commission, in its communication, also takes the initiative to identify areas where Community action can support the health initiatives of the individual Member States.

The majority considers it relevant to explore possibilities for increasing cooperation between the health services of the Member States in areas such as:

Donation (including organs and bone marrow), rare disorders, immunodeficiencies, cross-border infectious diseases (pandemics and HIV/AIDS), prevention, particularly lifestyle-related diseases common to the Member States, common EU standards for health

personnel, and establishing a Community knowledge centre with a view to sharing knowledge to promote patient treatments, safety, research, etc.

The majority would like to emphasise, however, that in the overall assessment of relevant Community initiatives, consideration should naturally be given to the national powers of the Member States with regard to the organisation and delivery of health services and medical treatment, and the common basic principles of universality, equal access and solidarity for Member States' health systems.

A minority (EL) stresses that health services and medical treatment fall under the jurisdiction of the individual Member States. Consequently, the Commission should not play an independent role in these areas. EL is against the Commission attempting to establish a platform for EU action in this field. The Commission must limit itself to tackling health aspects in those areas in which it already has authority. EL does not see any reason for restricting international cooperation to the Member States. There should be increased cooperation with all countries where appropriate.

In conjunction with the examination of the communication, the Health Committee asked the Minister of the Interior and Health to remit the consultation responses from the Ministry's internal consultation process and a note setting out, *inter alia*, the Minister's comments to the consultation responses and the proposals/initiatives that the Minister would be able to endorse. The Committee has received the consultation responses but as the Government had not yet reached a position when the Committee examined the communication, the Government's position and recommendations on proposals and initiatives could not be included in the Committee's considerations when submitting its current opinion.

When the Health Committee is in receipt of this information, the Committee will probably re-examine the communication with a view to assessing whether it needs to make any additions.

Yours sincerely,

Birthe Skaarup

Chair of the Parliamentary Health Committee

Elisabeth Arnold

Chair of the Danish Parliament's
European Affairs Committee

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