



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

Brussels, 23.06.2006
COM(2006) 329 final

2006/0106 (CNS)

Proposal for a

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION

on the prevention of injury and the promotion of safety

(presented by the Commission)

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

The European Commission has adopted a Communication to the European Parliament and the Council on Actions for a Safer Europe on 23.06.2006¹.

This Communication focuses on the prevention of accidents and injuries in the Member States by public health actions. It provides a strategic framework in form of a Community action plan which will help the Member States prioritise their actions in reducing accidents and injuries. These actions shall be primarily undertaken in the framework of the Community Public Health Programme (2003-2008)² and successor programmes.

In the Communication, the Commission highlights the role of the health sector in injury prevention by quantifying the problems, reporting risk factors, advocating primary prevention, disseminating evidence-based strategies, increasing the professional capacities for advising people at risk, leading national action plans, and informing the public about hazards and safety precautions.

As one essential part of the Community action plan, the Commission will develop a Community information system on accidents and injuries which will provide all stakeholders with the best available information about the magnitude of the problem including high-risk population groups, major risk determinants and risks linked to certain consumer products and services. This information is a prerequisite for policy making, design of actions, and evaluation of outcomes.

Another part of the Community action plan foresees that the Commission will establish arrangements for a Community wide sharing of information on prevention measures that have been proven to be successful. The effective exchange of experiences will avoid duplication of work, facilitate maximum utilisation of available knowledge and secure greater benefits from limited resources.

Within this Community action plan the Commission determines key priority areas for prevention measures on injuries by taking account of the social impact of injuries in terms of the number, severity and consequences of the various categories of injury, evidence regarding the effectiveness of interventions, and feasibility of successful implementation of interventions within Member States. The priority areas are:

- Safety of children and adolescents;
- Safety of elderly citizens;
- Safety of vulnerable road users;
- Prevention of sports injuries;
- Prevention of injuries caused by products and services;

¹ OJ L [...], [...], p. [...]

² Decision No 1786/2002/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2002 adopting a programme of Community action in the field of public health (2003 – 2008), OJ L 271, 9.10.2002, p. 1.

- Prevention of self-harm;
- Prevention of interpersonal violence.

Furthermore, the Commission intends to develop Community wide campaigns in order to inform the public about the quantity of the accidents and injuries, to increase standards of primary prevention, disseminate good practice, and to provide health administrations of Member States with policy tools for national actions.

The draft Council Recommendation on the Prevention of Injury and the Promotion of Safety is a first step to combine the efforts of the Commission with those of the Member States for actions for a safer Europe, in order to reduce the costs that the health system has to undergo because of injuries. Through a joint approach of the Commission and the Member States in injury prevention, it is expected that the high toll of injuries will decrease and that the situation within the Member States related to accidents and injuries will improve significantly.

Proposal for a

COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION

on the prevention of injury and the promotion of safety

(Text with EEA relevance)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular the second subparagraph of Article 152 (4) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission³,

Having regard to the opinion of the European Parliament⁴,

Whereas

- (1) Every year, about 235.000 citizens of the Community die as a result of an accident or violence. Injuries are, after cardiovascular diseases, cancer and respiratory diseases, the fourth most common cause of death in the Member States.
- (2) In children, adolescents and young adults accidents and injuries are the leading cause of death.
- (3) Many survivors of severe injuries suffer life-long impairments. Accidents and injuries are a main cause of chronic disability among younger people leading to a heavy and largely avoidable loss of life years in good health.
- (4) On average, injuries account for about 6.8 million hospital admissions, which represent 11 % of all hospital admissions in the European Union.
- (5) Injuries represent a huge financial burden on health and welfare systems, causing about 20 % of sick leave and constituting a major factor for reduced productivity.
- (6) The risk of an injury is unequally distributed in Member States as well as in social groups. The risk of dying from an injury is five times greater in the Member State with the highest injury rate than in that with the lowest rate.

³ OJ L , , p. .

⁴ OJ L , , p. .

- (7) In contrast to many other causes of illness or premature death, injuries can be prevented by making our living environment, as well as products and services we use safer. There is ample evidence of proven effectiveness in accident measures that are still not widely applied throughout the Community.
- (8) Most of these measures have been proven cost-effective, because the benefits of prevention for health systems often exceed by a factor of several times the costs of intervention.
- (9) In spite of the fact that major advances have been made in a number of areas of safety concern like traffic or the workplace, there are other areas which are far less covered like home, leisure and sport, accidents, and prevention for children and elderly citizens.
- (10) It seems therefore necessary to develop a system of injury surveillance and reporting which could ensure a coordinated approach across Member States to develop and establish national policies on prevention of injuries, including exchange of best practice. Such a system will be developed under Decision No 1786/2002/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 September 2002 adopting a programme of Community action in the field of public health (2003-2008)⁵ and any successor programmes, and will be built on the basis of national injury surveillance and reporting systems to be developed in a coherent and harmonized manner.
- (11) In order to streamline the resources of the Community Public Health Programme⁶ and to tackle injury prevention most effectively seven priority areas have been identified: safety of children and adolescents, safety of elderly citizens, safety of vulnerable road users, prevention of sports injuries, prevention of injuries caused by products and services, prevention of self harm and prevention of violence. These priority areas have been determined by taking account of the social impact of injuries in terms of the number and severity, the evidence regarding the effectiveness of intervention actions and the feasibility of successful implementation in the Member States.

HEREBY RECOMMENDS:

With a view to providing for a high level of public health, Member States should:

- (1) Develop a national injury surveillance and reporting system, which provides comparable information, monitors the evolution of injury risks and the effects of prevention measures over time and assesses the needs for introducing additional initiatives on product and service safety;
- (2) Set up national plans for preventing accidents and injuries initiating interdepartmental co-operation and increasing funding opportunities for campaigning actions, promoting safety and implementing such national plans into practice, with a particular attention to children, elderly people and vulnerable road users, and with special regard to sports injuries, injuries caused by products and services, violence and self-harm.

⁵ OJ L 271, 9.10.2002, p. 1.

⁶ OJ L 271, 9.10.2002, p. 1.

- (3) Ensure that injury prevention and safety promotion is introduced in a systematic way in vocational training of health care professionals, so that these groups can serve as competent advisors to their patients, clients and to the public.

HEREBY INVITES THE COMMISSION TO:

- (1) Support and give priority, within the framework of the Community Public Health Programme⁷ and successor programmes, to establish a Community-wide injury surveillance system collecting injury data provided by the Member States on the basis of their national injury surveillance systems and make the information contained in the database easily accessible to all stakeholders;
- (2) Establish a Community-wide mechanism for the exchange of information on good practice and disseminate this information to relevant stakeholders;
- (3) Provide Member States with the necessary evidence for inclusion of injury prevention knowledge into the vocational training of health professionals;
- (4) Support the development of good practice and policy actions in relation to the seven identified priority areas using the resources provided for in the Community Public Health Programme and successor programmes the general framework for financing Community actions in support of consumer policy⁸ and the Framework Programme for Research⁹;
- (5) Carry out an evaluation report four years after the adoption of this Recommendation to determine whether the measures proposed are working effectively and to assess the need for further actions.

Done at Brussels,

*For the Council
The President*

⁷ OJ L 271, 9.10.2002, p. 1.

⁸ Decision N°20/2004/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 8 December 2003 establishing a general framework for financing Community actions in support of consumer policy for the years 2004 to 2007, OJ L 5, 9.1.2004, p.1.

⁹ Decision No1513/2002/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 June 2002 concerning the sixth framework programme of the European Community for research, technological development and demonstration activities, contributing to the creation of the European Research Area and to innovation (2002 – 2006), OJ L 232, 28.8.2002, p. 1.