

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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DOCUMENT 1-1150/83

REPORT

drawn up on behalf of the Committee on Energy,
Research and Technology

on an emergency Community programme of research
into and measures to combat AIDS disease

Rapporteur: Mr B. SÄLZER

At its sitting of 12 September 1983, the European Parliament referred the motion for a resolution tabled by Mr SCHMID and others (Doc. 1-583/83) to the Committee on Energy, Research and Technology as the committee responsible and to the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection for an opinion pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure.

At its meeting of 2 November 1983, the Committee on Energy, Research and Technology decided to draw up a report and appointed Mr SALZER rapporteur.

The committee considered the draft report at its meeting of 1 December 1983 and adopted the motion for a resolution as a whole by 13 votes, with 2 abstentions.

The following took part in the vote: Mrs WALZ (chairman); Mr GALLAGHER and Mr SELIGMAN, vice-chairmen; Mr SALZER, rapporteur; Mr BERNARD, Mr FUCHS, Mr GHERGO (deputizing for Mr PEDINI), Mr HERMAN (deputizing for Mr RINSCHÉ), Mr MARKOPOULOS, Mr MORELAND, Mr NORMANTON, Mr PURVIS, Sir Peter VANNECK, Mr VERONESI and Mr WÜRTZ.

The opinion of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection is attached.

The report was tabled on 5 December 1983.

C O N T E N T S

	<u>Page</u>
A. MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION	5
B. EXPLANATORY STATEMENT	6
OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON THE ENVIRONMENT, PUBLIC HEALTH AND CONSUMER PROTECTION	7
ANNEX: MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION Doc. 1-583/83	8

The Committee on Energy, Research and Technology hereby submits to the European Parliament the following motion for a resolution together with explanatory statement :

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

on an emergency Community programme of research into and measures to combat AIDS disease

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the motion for a resolution tabled by Mr SCHMID and others on an emergency Community programme of research into and measures to combat AIDS disease (Doc. 1-583/83),
 - whereas the number of cases of AIDS disease in Europe is rising,
 - having regard to the Commission's endeavours so far,
 - having regard to Recommendation R(83)8 of the Council of Europe on measures to prevent the spread of AIDS through blood products and blood plasma,
 - having regard to the report by the Committee on Energy, Research and Technology and the opinion of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection (Doc. 1-1150/83),
1. Calls on the Commission to submit an emergency programme of research into AIDS as part of existing EC research programmes;
 2. Calls on the Commission to examine ways of translating the Council of Europe's non-binding recommendations into binding Community law;
 3. Instructs its President to forward this motion for a resolution to the Council and the Commission of the European Communities.

EXPLANATORY STATEMENT

1. AIDS disease (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome) is already a problem in the USA today. More than 1,500 confirmed cases have been recorded and there are a further 12,000 suspected cases in the early stages. 22.2 million dollars are being allocated to the US Department of Health in the 1984 financial year for research into the disease. This shows how serious the situation is reckoned to be there.
2. Meanwhile, the infection has been introduced into Europe. Unless measures to combat it are taken in time, there is a risk of its also spreading rapidly here.
3. The disease is usually fatal, there being at present no cure. The causes and the precise method of transmission are as yet unknown. The disease is also occurring outside the special risk group of homosexuals which is particularly well-known through reports in the press. There is a suspicion that it can also be transmitted via blood products and blood plasma preparations.
4. It is as yet not possible to diagnose AIDS before the disease manifests itself. In the view of the experts, the incubation period (the period between infection and acute illness) lasts for years. During this period, an infected person may spread the disease unwittingly and without being detected. The normal measures to prevent the spread of epidemics are not, therefore, effective in the present conditions. This explains the way the disease has snowballed in the USA in the course of a few years.
5. Emergency action by the Community is therefore urgently needed if further damage is to be prevented. In some Member States research into the disease is already under way. It is the task of the common research policy to coordinate and focus such efforts in order to avoid duplication of work and improve the exchange of experience.

OPINION OF THE COMMITTEE ON ENVIRONMENT,
PUBLIC HEALTH AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Letter from the Chairman of the Committee to Mrs WALZ, Chairman of the Committee on Energy, Research and Technology

Subject: Motion for a resolution tabled by Mr Schmid, Mrs Seibel-Emmerling, Mrs Weber and Mr Gauthier pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure on an emergency Community programme of research into and measures to combat AIDS disease (Doc. 1-583/83)

Dear Madam Chairman,

At its meeting of 1 December 1983, the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection considered the above-mentioned motion for a resolution referred to it pursuant to Rule 47 (1) of the Rules of Procedure¹.

In view of the serious nature of this matter, the committee decided to recommend the Commission:

- (a) to coordinate research in the Member States into the causes of and measures to combat acquired immune deficiency syndrome as soon as possible at Community level and
- (b) to examine the ways in which the recommendations R(83) 8 of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe made to the Member States may be translated into Community policy guidelines.

The Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection reserves the right to reconsider this issue in due course in the light of the findings.

Please, consider this letter as the opinion of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Consumer Protection.

Yours sincerely,

Kenneth D. COLLINS (sgd)
Chairman

¹ The following took part in the vote: Mr COLLINS, Chairman; Miss HOOPER, Vice-chairman; Mr BOMBARD; Mr GHERGO; Mrs VAN HEMELDONCK; Mrs KROUWEL-VLAM; Mrs LENTZ-CORNETTE; Mrs LE ROUX; MRS MAIJ-WEGGEN (deputizing for Mr Del Duca); Mr MERTENS (deputizing for Mrs Schleicher); Mrs PANTAZI; Mr PROTOPAPADAKIS (deputizing for Mr Alber); Mr SHERLOCK; Mrs SQUARCIALUPI; Mr VANNECK (deputizing for Mr Johnson) and Mr WAWRZIK (deputizing for Mr Ryan).

Motion for a resolution (Document 1-583/83) tabled by Mr SCHMID, Mrs SEIBEL-EMMERLING, Mrs WEBER and Mr GAUTIER pursuant to Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure on an emergency Community programme of research into and measures to combat AIDS disease

The European Parliament,

- whereas:

- (a) 1556 proven cases of AIDS have been recorded at the US Center for Disease Control in Atlanta since 1979 and there are a further 12,000 suspected cases of the disease in the early stages,
 - (b) the causes of this new contagious disease are unknown, the disease is fatal and no cure has so far been found,
 - (c) the number of cases is steadily rising and the disease has now infiltrated into Europe from the USA,
 - (d) the disease is likely to spread rapidly unless measures are taken to combat it,
 - (e) the disease is now beginning to spread beyond the special risk group of homosexuals,
 - (f) the disease can be transmitted via blood products and blood plasma, which cannot be tested for AIDS,
 - (g) the incubation period lasts for years and AIDS is therefore a 'medical timebomb' on a still unknown scale,
- having regard to Recommendation R(83)8 of the Council of Europe on measures to prevent the spread of AIDS through blood products and blood plasma,

1. Calls on the Commission to submit an emergency programme of research into AIDS (causes, an AIDS-detection test, treatment and prevention) as part of the Community's health and safety research programme (budget line 7306);
2. Calls for the inclusion of the cloning of the blood clotting factor (Factor VIII) in the Communities' molecular biology research programme;
3. Calls on the Commission to examine the translation of the Council of Europe's Recommendations into Community law;
4. Expects the Council to decide in favour of the Commission's proposals on this matter forthwith.

