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Biological and chemical agent attacks (health security)

European Parliament recommendation to the Council on cooperation in the European Union on preparedness and response to biological and chemical agent attacks (health security) (2003/2187(INI))

The European Parliament,

- having regard to the proposal for a recommendation to the Council by Anna Terrón i Cusí and Gerhard Schmid on behalf of the PSE Group on dealing with the possible threat of biological and chemical weapon attacks (B5-0407/2003),
- having regard to Rule 49(3) of its Rules of Procedure,
- having regard to the report of the Committee on Citizens' Freedoms and Rights, Justice and Home Affairs (A5-0097/2004),
- A. whereas the threat of terrorist attacks against Member States involving chemical and biological weapons is being discussed,
- B. whereas, in addition to early-warning systems in Member States, information exchange and sharing of laboratory capacities, it has also been suggested that vaccines, antibiotics, etc. be stockpiled at European level,
- C. whereas early-warning systems in Member States, information exchange and the sharing of laboratory capacities, as well as the stockpiling of vaccines, antibiotics, etc., could have a considerable impact on the budgets of the EU and the Member States and require targeted legislative measures,
- D. whereas budgetary and legal steps could be justified only on the basis of a clear risk analysis demonstrating a genuine probability of terrorist attacks in the EU involving biological and chemical weapons,
- E. whereas the necessary analyses clearly exceed the capabilities of the Commission,
- 1. Addresses the following recommendations to the Council:
 - (a) that it commission a realistic analysis of the threat posed, making use of European cooperation between national police forces and involving Europol and bearing in mind the results of cooperation between intelligence services in the fight against terrorism, in order to form the basis of a serious EU response,
 - (b) that it communicate to Parliament in the appropriate form the general findings of this analysis that can, as such, be made public, so as to provide it with a rational basis for any relevant budgetary consultations,

- (c) that it initiate, in the light of the findings of the analysis, the necessary legislative steps to deal with biological and chemical weapons attacks;
2. Instructs its President to forward this recommendation to the Council and, for information, to the Commission.