

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

2004



2009

30.1.2008

0008/2008

WRITTEN DECLARATION

pursuant to Rule 116 of the Rules of Procedure

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on rheumatic diseases

Lapse date: 8.5.2008

Written declaration on rheumatic diseases

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Rule 116 of its Rules of Procedure,
 - A. whereas rheumatic diseases are chronic complaints which cause pain, suffering and disability,
 - B. whereas 30% to 40% of people have musculoskeletal symptoms, and whereas such symptoms affect over 100 million people in Europe,
 - C. whereas rheumatic diseases represent the main cause of disability and premature retirement among workers,
 - D. whereas it is estimated that people over 65 will account for up to one-quarter of the European population by 2030, and whereas a majority of people over 70 present chronic or recurrent rheumatic symptoms,
 - E. whereas the adoption of social and health policies based on an analysis of the needs of those with rheumatic diseases would reduce the economic and social costs associated with these diseases (1 to 1.5% of GNI in developed countries),
1. Calls on the Commission and the Council to:
 - attach more importance to rheumatic diseases in the new Community strategy on health, given their high social and economic costs;
 - encourage Member States to establish and promote the implementation of national plans to fight rheumatic diseases;
 - develop a Community strategy on rheumatic diseases and draw up a Council recommendation on the early diagnosis and treatment of rheumatic diseases;
 - develop a strategy to improve access to information and medical treatment;
 2. Instructs its President to forward this declaration, together with the names of the signatories, to the Council, the Commission and the parliaments of the Member States.