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WRITTEN DECLARATION

pursuant to Rule 116 of the Rules of Procedure

by Jolanta Dičkutė, John Bowis, Stephen Hughes, Frédérique Ries and Thomas Ulmer

on hepatitis C

Lapse date: 15.3.2007

Written declaration on hepatitis C

The European Parliament,

- having regard to Rule 116 of its Rules of Procedure,
- A. whereas 12 millions persons in Europe are infected with the hepatitis C virus (HCV),
- B. whereas HCV is an urgent issue, being a disease which attacks the liver and leads to chronic hepatitis C causing cirrhosis, liver failure or liver cancer, thus increasing the need for transplantation,
- C. whereas as a 'silent killer' and 'sniper' disease, HCV is often not detected so that many patients remain undiagnosed while the diagnosed patients frequently suffer from stigmatisation,
1. Calls on the Commission and Council to:
- recognise hepatitis C as an urgent public health issue and identify priority actions in programmes of future Council presidencies;
 - adopt a Council recommendation on hepatitis C screening, ensuring early diagnosis and wider access to treatment and care;
 - respond to the recommendations of its June 2006 report on protecting European healthcare workers from blood-borne infections due to needlestick injuries;
 - facilitate further research on treatment for hepatitis C patients co-infected with HIV and/or hepatitis B under the 7th Research Framework Programme;
2. Instructs its President to forward this declaration, together with the names of the signatories, to the Council and the Commission.