

ORAL QUESTION WITH DEBATE O-0101/06

pursuant to Rule 108 of the Rules of Procedure

by Karl-Heinz Florenz and Karin Jöns, on behalf of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety
to the Commission

Subject: Early detection and treatment of breast cancer in the enlarged European Union

Given that breast cancer is the leading cause of death in women aged between 35 and 59 in the EU, breast cancer mortality rates vary between Member States by over 50%, rates of mastectomy for early-stage breast cancer differ between Member States by up to 60%, only 10 of the 25 EU Member States have implemented organised, nationwide mammography screening programmes, and even fewer Member States have fully implemented the EU guidelines on breast cancer screening, the Commission is requested to provide the European Parliament with the following information:

1. Is the Commission willing to take all necessary steps to obtain current and accurate data on the incidence, early detection and treatment of breast cancer in women and men in all Member States of the enlarged European Union? When will this information be available?
2. How will the Commission take into account in the Seventh Framework Programme the increasing awareness that, in addition to genetic factors, environmental factors and lifestyle also promote development of breast cancer?
3. How will the need for research to improve standards and protocols for quality assurance in breast cancer screening, particularly technico-physical aspects and alternatives to conventional mammography, such as digital mammography, be taken into account in the Seventh Framework Programme?
4. How does the Commission intend to use benchmarking and 'best practice' principles to influence the Member States which have made little or no progress in implementing the Council Recommendation on Cancer Screening of 2 December 2003 and in following the EU guidelines on specialist breast units?
5. What steps has the Commission taken in drawing up the Seventh Framework Programme to provide research funding to develop a serum-based test for early breast cancer detection (biomarker test)?
6. Is the Commission convinced that in the current age of modern communication it is more practical for physicians and patient groups in all EU Member States to order printed versions of the EU guidelines rather than to have the document available on the Internet for reading and downloading?

Tabled: 21.09.2006

Forwarded: 25.09.2006

Deadline for reply: 02.10.2006