European Parliament Proposes Major Action Plan for Tackling HIV, Hep C and TB

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This week, the European Parliament published a new resolution urging European Union member states to address recent increases in HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and viral hepatitis across the region and to develop long-term programs to end the epidemics, according to a recent press release from the group's plenary session.

Adopted by a show of hands on Wednesday, the resolution primarily calls for the institution of a harmonized infection surveillance program for HIV and hepatitis C virus (HCV) and other infectious diseases across the region to help immediately detect outbreaks, assess trends in prevalence, provide disease burden estimates and effectively track in real time how diagnosis, treatment and care are managed.

In the report, members of the European Parliament pushed member states to make HIV tests available free of charge across Europe and to set up a standard screening protocol for hepatitis C in all member states. The European Parliament also recommended that the EU Commission launch a plan to standardize testing and treatment protocols to eradicate hepatitis C in the EU by 2030.

The resolution notes that the number of people affected by tuberculosis (TB) around the world increased in 2014 for the third year in a row, and urges international health officials to address the threat of growing antimicrobial resistance. The recommendation also calls on EU leaders to establish cross-border prevention measures and initiate joint action to tackle any outbreaks.

The resolution comes at a pivotal time in Europe's fight against infectious diseases. The report notes that in 2015, almost 30,000 new HIV infections were reported by the EU's 33 member countries, and that an estimated 120,000 Europeans developed multidrug-resistant TB. Meanwhile, viral hepatitis is considered to be one of the world's most serious health threats.

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