

Keynote lectures

1284

THE INFLUENCE OF EUROPEAN POLICY ON CANCER CARE

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* In the Maastricht Treaty 1993 the European Union was given legal competence in the field of Public Health. Soon after a framework for action was put in place to identify diseases affecting Europeans. Cancer was recognised as a priority for Community action.

* While the European Union within the framework of cancer prevention can play a part in research and coordination of programmes its main role is in catalysing and energising action in member states.

* The Europe Against Cancer programme which will run from 1995–2000 will concentrate on defining common objectives and working methods and facilitate coordination of efforts made and dissemination of results achieved across Europe.

* This cancer programme is a tremendous initiative, but will pose major healthcare challenges revolving not only research into prevention but also screening, diagnosis, and treatment of cancer.

* We welcomed this programme particularly because of the greater emphasis being placed on *care of cancer patients* and improvement of quality care and the training of health care workers. However the EU's role can only be one of recommended action and general management of research and action plans, it is still up to the member states who control their own health care systems to improve the standard of care.

1285

WAITING TO SPEAK: A LESSON IN PATIENCE

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If we think of the development of the European Community, now the European Union, from the disparate nations that existed before, we

should be struck by the significant development of distinctly European organisations, comprising members from the various separate nations. These various organisations have as their focus the European Commission, the European Parliament, the Council of Europe, and other groups and organisations which have some impact on the lives of Europeans. They have formed because it seems that making representation at a European level seems to be different. Indeed it is, and reflection on the sources of these differences can help ensure more effective representation.

I hope that this presentation will be an opportunity for many to think about how they operate in the larger European forum. At the same time, though, there is likely to be a tension between the draw to this larger forum, and the demands of the membership from the different nations to represent them, too.

The presentation will explore the formation of a distinctly European voice to represent transnational concerns. Health and social policy development, and labour and educational markets are in one way or other acquiring new characteristics, in particular ones not shared by the member states. I think it is important for people to acknowledge these differences and recognise that a distinctly European voice is desirable, and possible, but that it will necessarily differ from any one nation's approach—indeed, a new culture of representation is being formed even as we meet.

In this respect, patience is needed to grow the necessary capabilities to undertake effective representation of issues, and frame responses appropriately, to represent the issues properly. "Waiting to Speak" means that a thoughtful approach is needed to be effective, and this will challenge how membership organisations, for instance, represent issues.