

## NEWS FROM FECS

### Changes proposed to Article 129

Following recent events the European Commission will be preparing a submission to the Intergovernmental Conference proposing important changes to Article 129 of the Maastricht Treaty (see Table 1) that could have important consequences for the development of a European health policy.

The Federation of European Cancer Societies will be monitoring these developments closely in the coming months.

#### Proposed revision of Article 129

(The words in bold highlight the proposed amendments to the current Article 129)

- 1     **As part of its powers** the Community **shall ensure** a high level of human health protection. **It shall, in addition,** encourage cooperation between the Member States in the field by lending support, if necessary, to their action.

Community action shall be directed towards **any measure liable to prevent human illness or to obviate sources of danger to public health.** The action shall cover the fight against the major health scourges, including drug dependence, by promoting research into their causes and their transmission, as well as health information and education.

Health protection requirement **must be integrated into the definition and implementation of the Community's other politics.**

- 2     Member States shall, in liaison with the Commission, coordinate among themselves their policies and programmes in the areas referred to in paragraph 1. The Commission may, in close contact with the Member States, take any useful initiative to promote such coordination.

**The Council shall, on the basis of a report from the commission, undertake a comprehensive annual evaluation of the results of such coordination.**

- 3     The community and the member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organisations in the sphere of public health.

- 4     In order to contribute to the achievement of the objectives referred to in this Article, the Council;  
       - **acting in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 189b, shall adopt measures regarding the approximation of the Members States' laws, regulations and administrative actions designed to protect human health, especially in the veterinary and phytosanitary fields;**

- acting in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 189b, after consulting the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, shall adopt **any incentive measures capable of lending support to efforts made by Member States in the context of coordinating their policies;**

- acting by qualified majority on a proposal from the Commission, shall adopt recommendations.