

Foreword



European Commission
Vice-President Günter Verheugen



In the domain of public policy on pharmaceuticals, protecting public health requires a dual strategy: robust regulation on the one hand and stimulation of competitiveness and innovation on the other.

Regulation must be robust to ensure that only medicines meeting exacting standards of safety, quality and efficacy are authorised for human and animal use. Only then the citizens of Europe can have confidence in their medicines and in their pharmaceutical industry.

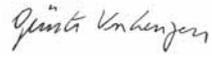
At the same time competitiveness and innovation must be stimulated. Without innovation in pharmaceuticals, the incurable diseases of today will remain incurable. Competitiveness drives innovation and innovation saves lives.

This dual strategy is also crucial in driving forward the Lisbon agenda. Increased competitiveness of the pharmaceutical sector will not only better protect public health, but will also create high quality jobs and create growth.

In this context the implementation of the G10 recommendations, particularly regarding the pricing and reimbursement of medicines by Member States, remains a considerable challenge. In order to make potentially life-saving pharmaceuticals available as soon as possible to patients and to enable industry to quickly recoup its investments and to reinvest into future R&D still existing delays in some Member States between marketing authorization and the selling of the medicine have to be minimized. The proposed paediatric regulation, currently under discussion in Council and Parliament, is another example where a better protection of (children's) health goes together with a stimulation of competitiveness and innovation in the European pharmaceutical industry.

This publication focuses on the recent review of the EU pharmaceutical legislation. The revised legislation is a key part of the above-mentioned dual strategy. I only mention the strengthening of the provision of scientific advice from the European Medicines Agency to industry, the new "fast-track" assessment procedures and the new "conditional" marketing authorizations.

The Commission is committed to uphold the highest standards of public health protection and to stimulate competitiveness and innovation in pharmaceuticals. These commitments are not only complementary. They are interlinked.



Günter Verheugen
Vice President of the Commission