



Press Release

EFPIA head heralds European Commission's strategic working agenda for the pharmaceutical industry

(2 July 2014 - Brussels): Richard Bergström, EFPIA's Director General, has today welcomed the publication of a new European Commission staff working document, which positions the pharmaceutical industry at the heart of Europe's economic growth prospects.

Pharmaceutical Industry: A Strategic Sector for the European Economy ([available here](#)) marks a significant turning point towards an integrated life sciences strategy for Europe. The working document takes stock of the sector's current situation, focusing on developments made over the last years as the first step in preparation for a new strategic agenda.

Speaking about the publication, Richard Bergström said: *"It is encouraging to see the European Commission's acknowledgement of the importance and value the pharmaceutical industry brings to not just the health and wellbeing of citizens but also the economic wellbeing of nations. This paper is a positive step towards establishing the industry's rightful position as a viable growth agent for Europe. The paper's recognition of the many significant hurdles and barriers we face, in particular around intellectual property protection, is a positive step towards finding solutions. Only through this recognition, and public policy support, will our industry be able to deliver fully on its promise in tackling unmet medical need, improving health outcomes, tackling health inequalities and generating jobs and growth."*

The paper highlights several points for strategic focus including:

- The presence of a viable pharmaceutical industry contributes to the health and the quality of life of our citizens by providing remedies to an increasing number of patients, through a more timely, widespread and equal access to pharmaceuticals.
- Intellectual property rights related to pharmaceuticals have gained prominence in debates about intellectual property rights policy. They have been at the forefront in discussions about the impact of intellectual property rights in terms of the access to medicines, particularly in developing countries. In the light of these divergent views, European companies are often faced with significantly lower levels of intellectual property protection in third countries, particularly in emerging economies. The challenges range from a lack of or non-enforcement of patents to the disclosure or reliance on data submitted by the original manufacturer for obtaining a marketing authorisation by regulatory authorities, thus depriving companies of the economic benefits of their investments.
- Assessing pharmaceutical expenditure also requires taking into account the effects on other health-related costs (like hospitalisation, sick leave, pensions, etc.) as well as the overall implications for industrial competitiveness and external trade.

The paper suggests a comprehensive approach to streamlining the policy formulation processes impacting the pharmaceutical industry at European and Member States



level. Against this backdrop, the European Commission will organise an event bringing together relevant EU and national public and private stakeholders: decision-makers from public bodies in charge of industrial competitiveness, health, pricing and reimbursement, research and innovation at Member States level, and their Commission counterparts, patients, healthcare professionals, trade unions and industry representatives.

Access to healthcare and health outcomes differ significantly across EU member states and even across the different regions of a single country. EFPIA believes tackling health inequalities through more flexible and innovative approaches to medicines pricing and value recognition will be essential elements to continue to improve health outcomes and ensure they reach all citizens, regardless of where they work or live, or personal wealth.

The strengthening of the competitiveness of the European pharmaceutical industry requires actual implementation of innovation policies at EU and Member States level in order to create incentives and rewards for a sustainable, competitive pharmaceutical sector that addresses public health needs.

Note to editors:

In June this year, EFPIA published a paper outlining steps towards an integrated strategy for the life sciences sector in Europe.

“Health & Growth – Working together for a healthy Europe” calls for a new generation of partnerships and collaborative solutions to address the EU’s growing health and competitiveness challenges. The paper lays out a strong case for placing the pharmaceutical industry at the heart of European economic reform and growth. It delivers concrete recommendations towards achieving healthier citizens and workforces, creating new jobs, and reaffirming Europe’s position as a global leader in research and development.

European healthcare systems have come under increasing strain due to economic recession and austerity policies. With Europe now emerging from the crisis, there is an opportunity to improve health prospects of citizens, while promoting economic growth. As new European leaders and policymakers across the political spectrum begin work to improve Europe’s future, EFPIA calls for greater political collaboration to agree a comprehensive strategy for life sciences, based on three separate but interdependent pillars:

1. Improvement of health outcomes and removal of inequalities to better patient benefits;
2. Support for sustainable and predictable healthcare systems to speed access to medicines;
3. The building of a thriving innovative life sciences sector to promote European competitiveness.



About EFPIA

EFPIA represents the pharmaceutical industry operating in Europe. Through its direct membership of 33 national associations and 40 leading pharmaceutical companies, EFPIA provides the voice of 1,900 companies committed to researching, developing and bringing new medicines to improve health and quality of life around the world. The pharmaceutical industry invests €30.6 billion on research and development per year in Europe and directly employs 690,000 people including 115,000 in R&D units in Europe.

EFPIA members are committed to delivering innovative medicines to address unmet needs of patients and reducing the burden of chronic diseases for Europe's ageing population. EFPIA believes in close cooperation with its stakeholders to help create sustainable healthcare systems and to develop prompt responses to health threats in Europe.

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