



Press Release

Pharmaceutical Industry Body EFPIA Welcomes European Commission Actions to Support Intellectual Property Rights

(2 July 2014 - Brussels): EFPIA is pleased to welcome the European Commission's actions towards better protecting and enforcing intellectual property rights in the EU. The Commission's adoptions of two communications this week – an Action Plan to address infringements on the enforcement of intellectual property rights in the EU, and a Strategy on “Trade, Growth and IP”, for the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights (IPR) in third countries – will help support EU innovation and economic competitiveness.

EFPIA believes that the EU's future growth and economic welfare relies on its ability to preserve a strong and innovative knowledge-based economy, with a healthy IP policy at its core. In today's globalised economy, [more than half of EU industries are considered IPR-intensive](#), providing for 35% of European jobs and 39% of total economic activity. It is crucial to ensure a strong and effective framework for IP protection and enforcement if we are to preserve the ability of EU industries to adequately grow and export. This also implies raising awareness as to the critical need for IP.

Richard Bergström, Director General EFPIA, stated: “Today we are operating in an environment where the scope of IP infringement has reached an unprecedented level and the mere principle of IP is frequently questioned. It is important to remember, however, that IP is the backbone of an innovation-friendly environment. I am pleased to see the Commission's acknowledgement of the importance of IP and to welcome these efforts to foster a healthy domestic and international IP strategy for the EU.

“The Commission is right in its comment that access to affordable medicines remains a challenge in many countries, but that intellectual property rights are only one part of a very complex issue. The pharmaceutical industry is open to explore new and sustainable access models around the world, including differential pricing within and between countries.”

Cooperation among various stakeholders and EU countries is increasingly needed if the role of IP in promoting innovation is to be preserved. EFPIA believes these two communications provide adequate tools towards that end:

- The **new EU Action Plan of DG MARKT** to address infringements of intellectual property rights in the EU strengthens the enforcement policy framework against, in particular, commercial scale IP infringements, by defining a set of 10 innovative actions and tools. This action plan notably embodies the “follow the money” approach, which deprives infringers of their revenues. EFPIA hopes that the recognition of the importance of using all available means to prevent the entry and diffusion of IP-infringing products on markets will be fully appreciated in the current negotiations on transit controls within the Trade Mark Package.



- The **revised Strategy of DG TRADE** for the protection and enforcement of IPRs in third countries rightly accounts for the current challenges which right-holders are faced with when trying to protect or enforce their intellectual property rights abroad. Addressing specifically the challenges of access to medicines worldwide, this new strategy recalls there are "many factors affecting access but mostly unrelated to IPRs". The Commission highlights the need to come up with a broad response to this complex and multifaceted problem, to ensure affordable access to medicines without undermining the incentives needed for continued pharmaceutical research, a challenge that EFPIA has committed to.

EFPIA would like to thank the European Commission for its ongoing efforts to address IP challenges, as demonstrated by [yesterday's communications](#), and looks forward to working with relevant stakeholders towards a healthy IP environment for the EU and its trade partners in the future.

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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