

Press Release about the visit of Jane Griffiths^(*) in Athens, Greece, in Financial Times Conference on “Shaping the future of healthcare in Greece”

() Jane Griffiths is the Group Company Chairman of Janssen EMEA (Europe, the Middle East and Africa), Chair of the Europe Committee of the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA) and co-chair of the joint Executive Committee of PhRMA and EFPIA (European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations)*

Jane Griffiths visited Athens, Greece a couple of weeks ago, to participate in a very important health Conference held by the Financial Times. Jane Griffiths was the keynote speaker at the FT health Conference entitled **“Shaping a Healthier Nation, Shaping a Healthier Europe”**, which was held in Athens, Greece, on 27th of March. Jane Griffiths also chaired the session on **“Access to innovation”**, addressing the topics of the contribution of pharmaceutical innovation to the improvement of healthcare, the challenges and caveats of Health Innovation and the access to innovation as the major issue for patients across EU. The main topic of the Conference was the financial crisis and its consequences to the health sector.

Breakfast Meeting with the Minister of Health

Just before the Conference, the National Pharmaceutical Association (SFEE) held a breakfast meeting with the Minister of Health, Mr. Adonis Georgiadis with the presence of Jane Griffiths under her role as Chair of the EFPIA Executive Committee. The President, Vice-Presidents and executives from SFEE along with members of the executive committee of the Greek Pharma innovation forum and other pharma executives, were also present in the breakfast meeting. The Minister signified the difficult negotiations that the Greek government is having with Troika in respect to the health care budget and informed Jane Griffiths about the coming introduction of new products in Greece. Jane Griffiths thanked the Minister and highlighted that we should be careful of the consequences of any austerity measure on the health of people.

Jane Griffiths as a key note speaker of the Conference

Jane Griffiths, as a key note speaker of the Conference, presented the importance of innovation, by highlighting that innovative pharmaceutical medicines is the road for health improvement, not only for the citizens of Greece but for the whole health system. Some key benefits of pharmaceutical innovation is the increase in life expectancy in the last 60 years by 14%-17%, in an era of pressing demographic challenges, that impact health and social spending.

She noted that Health consequences of austerity are hard to measure, but they are emerging, especially in those countries that implemented austerity measures, like Greece, Portugal and Spain. Some examples of health consequences, is the increase in the number of suicides, increase in the number of HIV and infectious diseases and increase in heart attacks

Jane Griffiths noted that the sustainability of health systems is under threat, due to demographic challenges, patient access issues, austerity environment and burden of chronic diseases, therefore, a key

question we should address, is about how we can ensure that sustainability. In addition, our joint challenge is to allow better healthcare drive growth in Europe that has significant outcomes in people's health and economic growth, rather than being restricted to a vicious circle of austerity, poor access to medicines and worse health outcomes. In light of those challenges, innovative medicines have the potential to help reduce expenditure and improve the wellbeing and productivity of Europeans.

Regarding the Greek situation, Jane Griffiths referred to the need for a revision of pharmaceutical spending goal for 2014, since the current goals are not sustainable, leading to a further health crisis in Greece. The consequences of this health crisis already in place, is the significant increase in HIV infections, tuberculosis and other infectious diseases, the significant cost shifting to patients, the barriers to healthcare services for the ever increasing uninsured/unemployed people and the serious effect to areas like mental health services, many deaths by suicide, child health problems.

Some other key actions that should be taken by the Greek government, is the recognition of innovation in pricing and reimbursement systems, to ensure patient access to new therapies, the establishment of processes to attract more clinical trials and R&D in Greece and finally, the consideration of health expenditure as an investment and not as a cost

Jane Griffiths finally directed the European and Greek governments to identify and address the significant consequences of the health crisis and suggested that pharmaceutical companies need to take advantage of the opportunities for partnership that come across during this crisis and collaborate more closely with the health providers, thus ensuring better health services through innovation and access for patients to new therapies.



Jane Griffiths as chairman of the session “Access to innovation”

During that session, a number of prominent speakers from industry (including SFEE President Mr. Konstantinos Frouzis), medical society and patients, presented the multiple benefits of unrestricted access to innovation from patients, industry and economy perspectives.

At the end of this important session, Jane Griffiths summarized the value of innovation to the different stakeholders –patients, industry and economies – and stressed again the need for a close collaboration between all stakeholders and a real partnership, to ensure unrestricted access to new innovative therapies.

