

Press Release

Breach of national and EU legislation on pharmaceutical prices

Friday, 9 May 2014 - Yesterday's meeting of the Pharmaceutical Pricing Committee of the Ministry of Health which was expected to issue a Corrective Price Bulletin took the representatives of the pharmaceutical industry by surprise, as once again the Ministry refused to act on the Committee's recommendation on a correction of all pricing errors. Although the existing errors have been recognised, they still remain uncorrected! The Ministry has repeatedly ignored the relevant recommendations and opinions of the Pricing Committee, thereby increasing the risk of supply shortages in the market at the expense of Greek patients.

In fact, only certain numerical errors were corrected, while about 600 objections are pending, relating to:

- 80 unique products which should have been priced at the average of the three lowest prices in the EU as required by the relevant legislation for cases where corresponding generics with the same active substance are not available on the market;
- about 20 products the patent of which was wrongly regarded as expired;
- several products that were absent from the previous Price Bulletin, intended mainly for export, but also products for which inconsistencies emerged in the prices of reference countries, either in terms of conversion across different packages or currency mismatches;
- cases of domestically manufactured products that have been priced in a manner contrary to applicable legislation;
- several generics for which reference prices and the rate of price reduction relative to corresponding patented products have been misapplied.

This generates more problems than it solves, because the State itself seems to create conditions of unfair competition in the market by applying selective criteria. By so doing, it leads to major market distortions, encourages re-exports of medicinal products and causes further supply shortages. Actually, given the seriousness and number of objections, the industry had called on the Ministry to issue a recommendation to the countries that use Greece as a country of reference to temporarily refrain from taking into account the prices included in the Greek Price Bulletin, so as to avoid further disturbances in international markets or even forced withdrawals from the Greek market.

We have had enough of this absurdity that is threatening to become the prevailing logic; we have had enough of a state that fails to implement its own legislation. It is now time we all agreed that this country cannot move on to a better future without a reliable, stable and predictable environment, which will at least deliver the essentials, first and foremost compliance with the law. The market and industry have had enough of this vicious circle of disregard for any sense of law and reason.