**PRESS RELEASE**

**Turning a new page on constructive cooperation between the MoH and SFEE**

**Regarding the announcements of the Minister of Health, Mr. Panagiotis Kouroumblis, at today’s press conference on pharmaceutical policy, the Hellenic Association of Pharmaceutical Companies (SFEE) notes the following:**

**Athens, 4 June 2015** - The member companies of SFEE have repeatedly pointed out that pharmaceutical expenditure, currently at €2 billion, fails to meet the needs of the population and overstretches the sustainability of the healthcare system and should therefore be raised to €2.2-2.3 billion. Currently, our country has the lowest public pharmaceutical expenditure per capita in the EU - €179 compared with an EU average of €320 - and the Greek government misses valuable revenue, since for every €100 million cut from pharmaceutical expenditure the country loses implies €47 million in public revenue and 350 high-skill jobs in the healthcare sector.

**The changes announced today by the Minister of Health include some positive steps in the right direction and provide clear and transparent rules, but are far from a solution to the core problems facing the pharmaceutical industry, which once again is called upon to shoulder a disproportionately heavy burden,** at a time when we have exhausted all our efforts to prevent the problem of public sector arrears (currently totalling €1,05 billion) from being felt by Greek patients. **Specifically, the introduction of a new volume-based scaled rebate in line with on the proportionality principle is a step in the right direction and eliminates the need for closed budgets; however, the Ministry must ensure that the sum of rebates and clawbacks to be paid by the pharmaceutical industry in 2015 will not exceed the levels of 2014, given that the overall budget has remained at the low level of €2 billion over the last two years. A matter of the utmost importance are also the actions and measures that the Ministry needs to take in order to control prescribing and reduce waste of public money.**

In these difficult times of recession, our industry has tangibly demonstrated its adherence to its moral commitment towards supporting the suffering society and stands on the side of the State in an effort to safeguard the social good of health. Evidence of this stance is, among other things, the fact that in 2014 when the government’s share in pharmaceutical expenditure came to €2 billion, **the industry, through the various rebates and clawbacks, had a share of €530 million, while at the same time facing the tragic devastating consequences of the PSI (€1 billion) and continuing to fulfill its tax obligations arising from unpaid invoices.**

**The leadership of the Ministry of Health should urgently respond to the pressing needs without ignoring the proposals of the industry,** prioritizing the safety of patients, unhindered and equal access to new treatments and support to medical staff, for a modern and sustainable healthcare system, which is our common goal and common ground for a mutual understanding.