



PGEU PRESS RELEASE

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European pharmacists welcome adoption of the Falsified Medicines Directive but questions remain to be answered

For Immediate Release

The Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union (PGEU) is the European association representing more than 400,000 community pharmacists.

PGEU's members are the national associations and professional bodies of pharmacists in 31 European countries, including EU Member States, EEA members and EU applicant countries.

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The Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union welcomes the adoption by the European Parliament of the Directive on Falsified Medicines. The Directive paves the way for the electronic verification of medicines in European pharmacies, and for the first time at European level partially regulates the sale of medicines through the internet, although prohibitions on the on-line sale of prescription medicines in most Member States will remain in place.

However, many of the details of electronic verification are left to be determined by the European Commission, including the type of unique identifier to be attached to medicines packs, the organisation of databases which will support the verification system, and even which medicines are to be covered by the verification process. PGEU is strongly committed to working with the Commission and other stakeholders to ensure that the verification system finally adopted is as comprehensive, efficient and effective as possible.

PGEU believes that the application of the risk assessment used to determine which medicines are verified by pharmacists should begin from a strong presumption that all prescription medicines are at risk of falsification.

PGEU welcomes the measures adopted to combat the illegal internet sale of medicines. However PGEU has serious reservations about the development of a common logo for internet pharmacies. Such logos are easily counterfeited, and may provide a false sense of security for patients unless they are technically very robust. The PGEU logo has itself twice been falsified, for the purpose of apparent 'approval' of an illegal internet pharmacy operating from Russia.

PGEU Secretary General John Chave said: *"This is in many ways a radical Directive which will have considerable impact on the European medicines supply chain. It seems certain that at some point in the coming years European pharmacists will verify the authenticity of a medicine before it is dispensed, in the same way as credit cards are verified in shops. Such systems have proved to be very effective where they have been tried. But many questions remain to be answered about how the system will be implemented on an EU wide scale. European pharmacists will be working closely with the Commission to ensure that the system adopted is best suited to our key objective – keeping patients safe."*

"The measures taken to combat the main source of counterfeit medicines in Europe, the internet, are for the most part measured and sensible, including allowing Member States to prohibit on-line sales of prescription medicines; but the provision of a common logo for internet pharmacies in Europe is something of a leap in the dark – time will tell whether such a logo will help or hinder the fight against the counterfeiters."



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Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union