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PGEU PRESS RELEASE: European Community Pharmacists state concerns about Direct to Pharmacy Distribution.

At its General Assembly in Brussels on 20th November PGEU adopted an official statement with the title: “Direct to Pharmacy Distribution”.

In the majority of EU Member States, the pharmaceutical distribution system operates under a manufacturer – wholesaler – retailer model.

Since March 2007, however, Direct to Pharmacy distribution (DTP) has been operated by the pharmaceutical manufacturer Pfizer in the United Kingdom, with Alliance Unichem acting as logistics provider. Other manufacturers have announced plans to adopt DTP in the UK. DTP is currently being scrutinised by the British competition authorities. If it is approved by the competition authorities, then it is highly likely that DTP will be adopted in other European countries.

DTP cuts out the traditional wholesaler intermediary in the supply chain. The pharmaceutical manufacturer sells and distributes its own medicines directly to the pharmacist. The medicines are delivered by a logistics service provider.

The PGEU Statement stresses the importance of maintaining the service levels available under the full line wholesaler distribution system. In particular, the Statement highlights that the full range of medicines needed by patients must be available to the pharmacist as soon as required.

As the PGEU Secretary General Mr John Chave commented, *“pharmacists, and more importantly patients, need to be reassured that changes in distribution practices will not lead to declining service levels and unavailability of medicines. It is extremely important that all the medicines patients need – irrespective of the manufacturer - are available to pharmacists where and when they need them. If not, patients will suffer”.*

The Statement also points out that that alternative approaches to combating counterfeit medicines – such as serialization combined with point of dispensing authentication systems – are likely to be highly effective, but without entailing any of the potentially negative consequences of DTP.

The full statement is available in English and In French on the PGEU website: www.pgeu.eu

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Information for Editors

The Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union (PGEU) is the European association representing community pharmacists. PGEU's members are the national associations and professional bodies of pharmacists in 30 European countries, including EU Member States, EEA members and EU applicant countries.