Press release
14 May 2019

CSA survey for France Assos Santé: the French want a stronger and more protective Europe in the health field

Drugs shortages, lack of price transparency, compensation for victims of medication-related accidents: the French call on Europe to ensure greater transparency, regulation and controls on the pharmaceutical industry.

Now that the campaign for European elections has been officially launched, today, we announce the publication of the exclusive results of a survey carried out for France Assos Santé by the CSA Institute. The bottom line is that the French definitely do not want less Europe. They want a Europe that is stronger in the health field and more protective of patients' rights. A Europe that plays a stronger regulatory role with respect to questionable practices of the pharmaceutical industry, and which provides more room for prevention policies. These expectations are fully in line with those of France Assos Santé, as outlined in our Manifesto for the European elections.

Drugs prices: 91% of the French favour introducing a requirement for transparency regarding price negotiations between Member States and the pharmaceutical industry. In the guise of protecting business confidentiality, drug price negotiations with each Member State take place in a totally opaque manner. There is a conspiracy of silence which runs counter to patients' and health users' interests: this contributes to maintaining excessively high prices, poses a threat to healthcare systems based on solidarity and undermines equality among European citizens in terms of their access to innovative medicines. **►France Assos Santé calls for genuine European cooperation on drugs prices and for the transparency of real prices.**

Drugs shortages: in France, 90% believe that Europe must play a greater regulatory role with regard to the pharmaceutical industry. Drugs shortages are a growing phenomenon throughout Europe. In France, in 2018 alone, it concerned 500 major drugs[1]. This is ten times more than ten years ago. The reasons for this include questionable industrial strategies, the concentration of production sites and insufficient regulation by both national and European authorities. **►France Assos Santé calls for the EU's role in regulating pharmaceutical companies to be strengthened to more effectively prevent drugs shortages.**

Research: 91% of the French want public funding granted to the pharmaceutical industry to be counterbalanced by favourable conditions in terms of prices and access to innovative medicines. Some drugs are developed in part by means of public research funding, such as the *Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI)*, which has a budget of **€3.3 billion over 10 years**. However, there is no requirement on the industry to facilitate access to publicly funded medicines, which are sometimes priced at unsustainable levels[2]. **►France Assos Santé calls for public research funding to be made conditional on a fair price for the health technologies that may result from it.**

Compensation in the event of medication-related accidents: 90% of the French call for a revision of the European legislation. Medication-related accidents claim tens of thousands of victims every year, and health scandals are on the increase (Mediator, Dépakine, Androcur, Implant Files...). Yet, victim compensation remains very complicated. The European product liability directive is so restrictive and so favourable to industry that it almost never results in compensation. **►France Assos Santé calls for this directive to be revised to ensure more effective patient compensation in the event of injury resulting from health products.**

Prevention: 88% of the French call on Europe to take measures to encourage Member States to invest more in prevention. On average, only 3% of Member States' health budgets are devoted to prevention. The French have understood that investing in prevention prevents the development of serious diseases, thus generating significant savings for health systems. **►France Assos Santé supports this view and calls for practical measures to encourage Member States to invest more in prevention and in health promotion.**

Press contact:
Antoine Henry – Tel: (+33) 1 40 56 94 42 / (+33) 6 18 13 66 95 – ahenry@france-assos-sante.org

[1] At the time of writing, the ANSM (the French National Agency for the Safety of Medicines and Health Products) had just issued an alert on a possible shortage of corticosteroid treatments.

[2] This problem also arises in the case of drugs financed by national public funds. In the Netherlands, an anti-cancer treatment developed by a team of researchers at a public medical centre in Rotterdam, saw its price rise from €4,000 to €23,000 per dose, after its patent was transferred to Novartis. The direct consequence is that some private insurance companies now refuse to cover this cost.