September 2, 2019

RE: Proposal of public hearing and own initiative report on medicines shortages in the EU

Dear MEP Pascal Canfin,

Recent studies, such as the 2018 Medicines Shortages Survey of the European Association of Hospital Pharmacists (EAHP)[1] and an investigation by France Assos Santé into the recurring difficulties of access to vaccines and medicines by French citizens[2] have shown that medicines shortages have increased dramatically all across the European Union. In France, the number of reported shortages increased 20-fold between 2008 and 2018[3] and it is predicted to reach 1200 medicines and vaccines in 2019[4]. In Belgium, 497 drugs - 5 % of the medicines marketed in the country - are not available[5]. More and more patients are suffering deterioration in their health status as they cannot receive their prescribed medicines in a timely manner, creating a serious public health threat in Europe.

Concerns were raised by over 30 organisations representing patients, consumers, healthcare professionals and public health advocates in a letter addressed to the European Commission in May, in which the organisations asked for an investigation into the factors leading to shortages. Recently, other organisations also highlighted the problems caused by medicines shortages and called the EU for action, including the European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO)[6] and the Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union (PGEU)[7].

[1] http://www.eahp.eu/sites/default/files/report_medicines_shortages2018.pdf
[2] https://www.france-assos-sante.org/communique_presse/enquete-csa-pour-fas-les-francais-veulent-une-europe-plus-forte-et-plus-protectrice-en-matiere-de-sante/
[3] https://solidarites-sante.gouv.fr/actualites/presse/communiques-de-presse/article/lutter-contre-les-penuries-et-ameliorer-la-disponibilite-des-medicaments-en
[4] https://www.france-assos-sante.org/communique_presse/penuries-de-medicaments-la-situation-saggrave/
[5] https://plus.lesoir.be/236531/article/2019-07-15/la-penurie-de-medicaments-atteint-des-sommet
[6] https://www.esmo.org/content/download/197306/3552860/file/ESMO-Shortages-of-Inexpensive-Essential-Medicines-Call-to-Action.pdf
[7] https://www.pgeu.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/190514E-PGEU-Position-Paper-on-Medicine-Shortages.pdf

Given that medicines shortages are impacting patient care in all Member States, a strong EU commitment is very much needed, as outlined by European Commission itself in its contribution to the informal EU27 leaders' meeting in Sibiu (Romania) on 9th May 2019[8]. The European Parliament could play a crucial role in underlining the urgency of the problem and making it a political priority of the European Union's 2019-2024 legislature. Consequently, we propose to the ENVI Committee **to organise a public hearing and to submit an own initiative report on shortages in the EU.**

We, the undersigned associations, solicit a meeting at your earliest convenience to further discuss this request.

Yours sincerely,

Signatory organisations (in alphabetical order)

- AFH – Association française des hémophiles
- AFSA – Association Française du syndrome d'Angelman
- AFTOC – Association Française de Personnes Souffrant de Troubles Obsessionnels et Compulsifs
- AGE Platform Europe
- AIDES
- AIM – International Association of Mutual Benefit Societies
- Altroconsumo
- APAA - Autoimmune Diseases Patient Association Romania
- ARAS – Asociatia Romana Anti-Sida
- ASPLA - Asociatia Prietenii lui Adrian
- BEUC – The European Consumer Organisation
- CLVC – Association nationale de défense des consommateurs et usagers
- DECO PROTESTE
- EAHP – European Association of Hospital Pharmacists
- EAP – European Academy of Paediatrics
- EATG – European AIDS Treatment Group
- ECCO – European CanCer Organisation
- ECL Access to Medicines Task Force
- EFAPPE – Fédération des Associations de personnes handicapées par des épilepsies sévères
- EFCCA – European Federation of Crohn's & Ulcerative Colitis Association
- EHC – European Haemophilia Consortium
- EPHA – European Public Health Alliance
- Épilepsie-France
- France Assos Santé
- France Lymphome Espoir
- France Parkinson
- Give Life Foundation
- HAI – Health Action International
- La Ligue contre le cancer
- La LUSS
- Le Lien
- OCU - Organización de Consumidores y Usuarios
- ORS – Romanian Health Observatory
- Prescrire
- Renaloo
- SOS-Hépatites
- Test Achats | Test Ankoop
- TRT-5 | CHV – Collectif Hépatites Virales
- UFC-Que Choisir
- UNAPECLE – Union des Associations de Parents d'Enfants atteints de Cancer ou Leucémie
- Vlaams Patiëntenplatform

Contact information :
Charlotte Roffiaen (France Assos Santé): europe@france-assos-sante.org
Stephanie Kohl (European Association of Hospital Pharmacists): stephanie.kohl@eahp.eu

[8] Europe in May 2019: Preparing for a more united, stronger and more democratic Union in an increasingly uncertain world (p.33).