

# What is the added value of the proposal for a Directive on information to the general public on prescription medicines?

The European Consumers' Organization perspective

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European Parliament

Brussels

2 December 2009

BEUC welcomes President Barroso  
decision to move  
medicines and medical devices to  
the portfolio of the Commissioner  
for health and consumers



We need a comprehensive health information strategy that:

- ❖ Puts health interests first;
- ❖ Relies on and promotes good and independent sources of information;
- ❖ Enables consumers to choose and compare different medicines and treatments options;
- ❖ Truly addresses inequalities in the access of health information



## Policy options (I)

1. Improve package leaflet content and relevance as information tool;
2. Foster the role of the EMA as a central and impartial source of information about medicines ( e.g. EU medicines database Eudrapharm);
3. Ensure transparency of medicine regulatory agencies to guarantee access to medicines evaluation and pharmacovigilance data;
4. Strengthen the existing rules of drug promotion;



## Policy options (II)

5. Develop and reinforce good sources of health information at EU, national and local level;
6. Optimise the communication between patients and health professionals;
7. Implement health education programmes to empower patients;
8. Develop networks of libraries for health;
9. Give financial support to initiatives that consider social and cultural aspects.





The proposal on information to the general public on prescription medicines is far from meeting consumers' needs and expectations (I)

1. It doesn't set out an information strategy but just provides the pharmaceutical industries greater flexibility to communicate directly to the public about their products;
2. It is based on an unworkable distinction between information and advertising;
3. It will allow the industry to choose on which particular disease and specific medicine the "information" will be provided and how much money to spend on it;
4. It opens the door to disease mongering, allowing companies to make public campaigns on "*any issue in the interest of public health*" (art.88);



The proposal on information to the general public on prescription medicines is far from meeting consumers' needs and expectations (II)

5. It is not based on a comprehensive assessment of consumers information needs and on a thorough analysis of the benefits and risks of a change in the legislation;
6. It will increase inequalities in terms of access to information between Member States;
7. The proposed monitoring system is weak, costly and inefficient;
8. It will not will not solve the problems consumers face in accessing high quality health information and it will not help them to make informed choices;
9. It will not lead to better health outcomes.



Put information on medicines into  
a wider and coherent policy of  
promoting better health  
information for all.



Thank you!

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