

Medicines for Europe statement on COVID-19 ('coronavirus')

Brussels, 13 March 2020

Medicines for Europe members supply 67% of prescription medicines in Europe. Our companies are the largest suppliers of critical medicines needed to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. Our members have 300 production sites across Europe working at full capacity manufacturing finished products and Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API).

To date, our members are responding to the challenges posed by the COVID-19 outbreak in Europe. As the situation evolves, our members must be in a position to continue supplying essential medicines to help healthcare systems and patients fight the virus. The following statement will outline the necessary steps for us to be able to continue to do so.

We need and urge political and institutional leadership and support. This crisis cannot hinge on national protectionism which could block the circulation of essential medicines.

We call for maximum, pan-European collaboration and coordination to succeed and limit the pandemic. European institutional leadership is fundamental, so Member States are clear on the need for the supply of medicines across Europe. EU leadership will enable our industry to manage this crisis to ensure our factories can maintain or expand supply for the patients that we serve.

We have 3 key requests

1) Immediate & urgent actions to be implemented EU wide to ensure supply of medicines in Europe

1. **Keep all available pharmaceutical manufacturing in Europe open and running** at all times, without exception. If a region is struck by an outbreak, we must keep medicine factories open with additional hygiene/control measures. Any stoppage creates a risk in the supply chain and heightens the risk of medicines shortages. We also need access to essential equipment like protective clothing or filters. We need solutions for employees to keep working if schools close or if there are restrictions on the movement of people.
2. **Avoid export restrictions on manufacturers of medicines** or active ingredients. In addition, where there are local stockpiling obligations (linked to export restrictions), these must be reasonable and clear (how much exactly, who holds the stock, do they have the space to hold the stock, etc.). There must be solidarity toward countries hardest hit by the outbreak. Hoarding of supplies should be strongly discouraged.
3. **Create transport green lanes** for the flow of medicines and their ingredients across national borders as soon as possible. The same is relevant for air transport between EU-US.

2) We need to be ready for continued stress on global supply chains by adopting clear regulatory guidance

1. Production and logistics problems continue to stress the global supply chain and recent challenges in Europe are added to the challenges.
2. Medicines for Europe has outlined the measures that could be taken to deal with any specific constraints and to keep manufacturing going at full speed.

3) Scenario planning

Our members are analysing the scenarios of the possible future spread of the virus to plan for possible future surges in demand. We will work to continue supplying chronic disease medicines while also planning for additional emergency medicines production or importation.

European coordination is key to ensure patients have access to the medicines they need. The situation is evolving quickly and we need to keep the channel of communication open.

Medicines for Europe welcomes the European Commission decision to establish a collaborative platform to be set up to review on a weekly basis the development of the epidemic and address together the roadblocks ahead.

Our commitment

In a public health pandemic, all health care actors need to act prudently and rationally. Applying logic is fundamental. We cannot overcome this outbreak without pragmatic solutions and pan-European cooperation to ensure people in need can access medicines.

We will continue to update this statement as the situation evolves.