

Medicines for Europe urgent requests to Interior & Transport ministries regarding medicines production and supply

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Our industry supplies 67% of prescription medicines and most of the critical medicines needed to treat infected patients. Our 300 factories across Europe are operating at 100% capacity to maintain medicines supplies – both emergency and chronic – to all Europeans. At this time, there are no shortages of medicines in our sector and our situation rooms are continuously monitoring stock levels and adapting production according to health needs.

We need close alignment with all EU member states and the Commission (and with non-EU countries like the UK, Switzerland, EEA, etc) to ensure supplies wherever they are needed across Europe. Therefore, we must now start to learn and apply the lessons from the outbreak in Italy to avoid future errors across Europe. Solidarity and alignment will be the key to maintain access to needed medicines.

Governments must understand that medicines supply in this crisis is not about static stock levels. The keys are to keep medicine production levels at maximum capacity and to move supplies for that production and medicines to wherever they are needed. We cannot manufacture and supply medicines if our logistics are blocked at borders.

We therefore ask Interior ministries and transport ministries to immediately address these blockages.

1. We ask the European Commission to declare medicines manufacturing as critical to the European interest for the duration of this Covid-19 crisis to ensure that our industry can operate without unreasonable restrictions and to supply all Europe patients. We accept that governments take measures to limit speculation but they must not stop our trucks from leaving the factories with needed medicines or supplies.
2. As in Italy, countries dealing with the viral outbreak must declare that medicines production (and all related aspects chemical/API manufacturing, packaging, etc.) is critical and essential. Our industry is applying all measures possible to protect their employees and production must continue no matter the situation.
3. We ask Interior Ministries and Transport Ministries across Europe to align internally and to align with the European Commission to allow our trucks carrying supplies for medicines production and finished medicines urgently and without unreasonable restrictions across borders. The current blockages at the border with Austria and with Switzerland (trucks leaving Italy) is a major disruption to critical supply chains that, if unsolved, puts all of Europe at risk. These blockages are caused by different rules being applied by Interior Ministries and Transport ministries in the same country!
4. We ask the Commission, Interior and transport ministries to create green lanes to enable the transport of supplies needed for medicines production and the transport of medicines. Ireland has already announced this measure at its customs points. We need a simple, easy to apply and aligned framework

to place on our trucks. Medicines for Europe has already sent to authorities a poster that we can place on our vehicles for such green lanes which may be dedicated border crossings or fast lanes for countries with few border crossings (ie mountainous regions). We would welcome dedicated road routes to accelerate the movement of our logistics at this challenging time.

We are in regular dialogue with the Health department of the European Commission since yesterday and now with the Transport Department. We are prepared to engage the dialogue with Interior and Transport ministers to solve these challenges which are critical to the interests of all Europeans.