

Press Release

European Health Union – first step to greater EU solidarity in health crisis situations

Proposals must integrate crucial lessons learned from COVID-19

For Immediate Release

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The outbreak of COVID-19 in Europe has been dramatic with tremendous loss of life. The EU's critical role in healthcare was underlined during the crisis – but we can and must do better in future.

Medicines for Europe was engaged from the outset of the crisis to maintain the supply of critical medicines to patients. Our members worked closely with the EU institutions, including the agencies EMA and ECDC to deliver medicines in the most difficult circumstances and thousand-fold spikes in demand for ICU medicines.

Now the unexpected pressures of COVID-19 have passed, it is crucial that the EU integrates key learnings from the experience in building a stronger health union.

The European Health Union should build on the positive role the EU can play to improve healthcare delivery by member states or regions of member states. As the Commission took a leadership role in ensuring EU solidarity during the crisis (helping to maintain EU medicines factories open, to deliver medicines to patients with green lanes and other logistics support and to support solidarity by opposing hoarding), the European Health Union should give the Commission's executive agencies the technical resources and capabilities to improve on necessary EU coordination. For the EMA, this should include embracing digitalisation of the medicine's agency network, which vastly improve action on drug shortages among other benefits. This kind of regulatory optimisation makes sense in times of a pandemic and beyond. The ECDC can play a stronger role in collating and sharing disease progression forecasting, enabling countries and industry to prepare for future waves and ultimately stabilise their health systems. The ECDC should be empowered to work more closely with industry and other relevant stakeholders for advanced scenario planning.

Medicines for Europe Director General Adrian van den Hoven commented *"Our industry was engaged heavily in cooperation with the Commission and the agencies to avoid shortages of critical medicines during the pandemic. The European Health Union should be a targeted reform to apply the lessons learned from COVID-19. The EMA and ECDC should be given the technical capacities to support the Commission's policy of EU solidarity in health."*

The full **Medicines for Europe** recommendations on 'Lessons Learned from COVID-19' can be accessed [here](#).

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Medicines for Europe

Medicines for Europe represents the generic, biosimilar and value-added medicines industries across Europe. Its vision is to provide sustainable access to high quality medicines, based on 5 important pillars: patients, quality, value, sustainability and partnership. Its members directly employ 190,000 people at over 400 manufacturing and 126 R&D sites in Europe and invest up to 17% of their turnover in R&D investment. Medicines for Europe member companies across Europe are both increasing access to medicines and driving improved health outcomes. They play a key role in creating sustainable European healthcare systems by continuing to provide high quality, effective generic medicines, whilst also innovating to create new biosimilar medicines and bringing to market value added medicines, which deliver better health outcomes, greater efficiency and/or improved safety in the hospital setting for patients. For more information please follow us at www.medicinesforeurope.com and on Twitter @medicinesforEU.