

Press Release

Central & Eastern European patients have inequitable access to medicines for life-threatening conditions

For Immediate Release

Brussels, 25 April 2022

Inequitable access to medicines is a particular challenge in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE); where patients often report having late and inconsistent access to essential medicines that are needed for the management of their diseases.

The root cause of these challenges is the policy framework in this region, with underinvestment in healthcare along with inefficiencies in the way available resources are allocated. Off patent medicines account for almost 70% of those dispensed in Europe, but their full potential is not being reached in CEE countries. This restricts patient access to medicines, undermining public health in the region.

Governments in the CEE region can improve patient access to medicines by investing in the off-patent sector and encouraging competition from off-patent, essential medicines. These policies should focus on:

- Ensuring predictable market policies and avoiding extreme price pressure
- Encouraging the use of off patent medicines with compelling incentives for all stakeholders
- Avoiding restrictive prescription guidelines that delay patient access to essential treatments

Commenting on the potential for policy improvements in the CEE region, Medicines for Europe President, Elisabeth Stampa (Medichem) said *“It is unacceptable that, within the EU, there are such differences in patient access to medicines. Where countries have embraced off-patent medicines, they have been able to extend access to more people without impacting healthcare budgets. The Central and Eastern European region is of particular concern to us as patients there are not benefitting from access to relevant off-patent drugs. Our call to the governments of these countries is to implement your policies to off-patent medicines and close the access gap for your patients.”*

Resource hub

The full Medicines for Europe report, titled *“Removing access barriers in Central and Eastern Europe: How can we ensure equitable access to medicines for all European patients?”* is available at

<https://www.medicinesforeurope.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Removing-access-barriers-in-Central-and-Eastern-Europe-April-2022.pdf>

A dedicated podcast on access issues in the CEE region is now available [here](#)

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.