

# Press Release

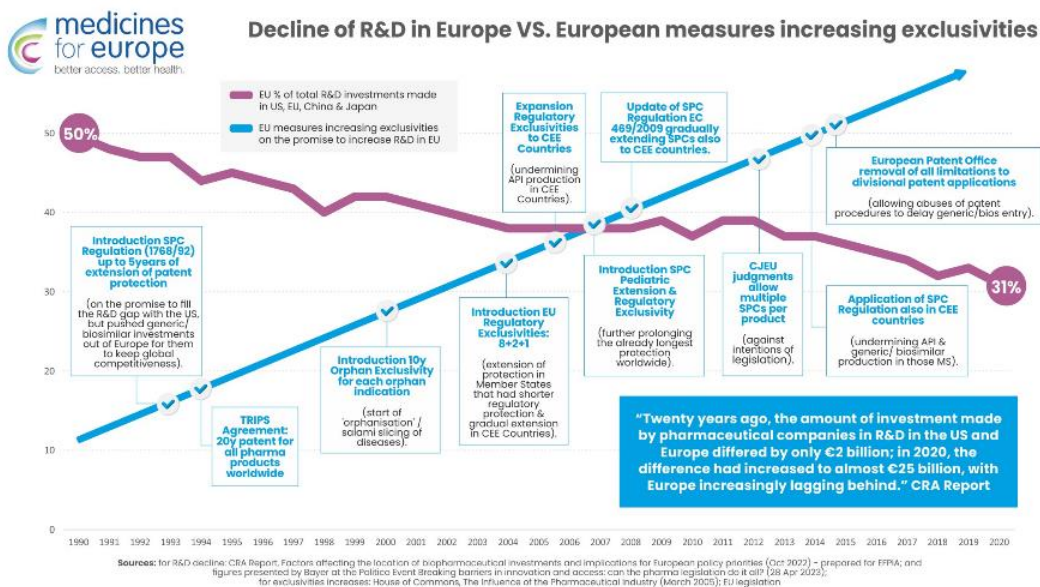
## Prioritising access and EU solidarity should drive Health Ministers' agenda in next EU talks

Brussels, 19 June 2024

Ministers of Health will meet in Brussels on Friday 21<sup>st</sup> June to discuss EU coordination on health. Ahead of this meeting, Medicines for Europe calls on Member States, including small Member States and Central Eastern Europe Countries, to prioritise **equitable access for all patients**.

This can be achieved by:

- Breaking down all artificial barriers to faster and timely access to generic and biosimilar medicines through a fully harmonised Bolar clause. On average, EU off-patent medicines entry into the market is delayed by 5 months after IP expiry.
- Supporting the **Commission proposal for modulation of incentives**, while:
  - capping the **total regulatory protection (data and market) to 11 years** to avoid further extending monopolies for expensive medicinal products.
  - modulating market protection rather than data protection to ensure that the off-patent alternative can be approved in time to supply markets not served by the originator manufacturer.



The EU incentive system is one of the most generous in the world, so it is important to question the claimed link between regulatory and intellectual property incentives and R&D investments in the EU. The claimed loss of EU competitiveness compared to China and the US occurred when the EU significantly extended these incentives for the pharmaceutical sector (figure 1).

## Maintaining effective EU solidarity across Member States

In line with the [Commission Communication on addressing medicine shortages](#), we call for EU solidarity rather than national stockpiling obligations. The latter will lead to oversupply in large countries while exacerbating the risk of shortages elsewhere. According to IQVIA, six months of antibiotic stockpiling in Germany will consume the needs of 10 other EU Member States in a segment where manufacturers are already producing at full capacity. A better option could be a European Strategic Reserve that is:

- **Targeted** for the most critical medicines at EU level
- **Proportionate and cost efficient**, co-funded by the EU and Member States and based on rolling stocks to reduce wasteful write-offs and lower costs for taxpayers.
- **Transparent**, to efficiently reallocate stocks from one country to another to tackle a shortage. Transparency can be achieved with a greater use of the real time data on demand and supply found in the European Medicines Verification System.

## 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](http://www.medicinesforeurope.com) and on Twitter [@medicinesforEU](https://twitter.com/medicinesforEU).