



The European Consumers' Organisation

COMMUNIQUE DE PRESSE
PRESS RELEASE

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Safer medicines for EU consumers

BEUC, the European Consumers' Organisation, welcomes the result of the European Parliament's vote today in Strasbourg on pharmacovigilance.

While medicines save lives, they can also have serious adverse effects: it is estimated that 197,000 Europeans each year die of adverse reactions and these are the 5th most common cause of hospital deaths. This is why, in order to protect public health, the pharmacovigilance system which monitors the safety and manages the risks of medicines must be strong, transparent and proactive.

With this important vote, European Parliament established means to:

- Give all consumers across Europe the possibility to speak up and be heard if they are harmed by a treatment, allowing them to report side effects directly to the health authorities;
- Improve consumer information on medicines (e.g. the EU web portal, special warnings on package leaflets);
- Increase the transparency and accountability of health regulators (e.g. public hearings to gather evidence of side effects).

Monique Goyens, Director General of BEUC, the European Consumers' Organisation, said:

"Direct reporting of adverse reactions is an essential tool to empower patients. With direct reporting problems can be detected earlier and more side effects are reported".

"Today's vote on pharmacovigilance will bring benefits to consumers and we hope during next week vote on information to patients, MEPs will stick to the same principle: 'to put peoples' health first'. We urge them to make a clear distinction between unbiased information, and commercial communication designed to promote the sale of products".

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