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Victims of breast implants scandal fight for compensation – Need for EU to better protect with Collective Redress

Criminal fraud proceedings begin today in France following last year's breast implants scandal which affected 400,000 victims globally and 100,000 in Europe.

The defective implants made by Poly Implant Prothèses (PIP) allegedly used cheap, industrial silicone not intended for medical use. Many were prone to rupture, causing dangerous leakages of this silicone, inflammation, recurrent pain and often requiring early removal with the serious health risks and expense of major surgery.

Over 5,000 women are seeking compensation for this serious harm dependent on the findings of the criminal trial of PIP's founder and 4 senior Executives. BEUC member and Austrian Association for Consumer Information (VKI) is intervening for 73 Austrian victims in an attempt to help as many of those affected as possible. Our French member UFC-Que Choisir also participates as a private party representing the French consumer interest.

This highlights the continuing absence of a European collective judicial redress tool for victims to jointly claim damages in their resident jurisdiction. Consequently, VKI had to bring the compensation claims to France, despite the inherent costs and burdens.

Monique Goyens, Director General of BEUC commented:

"This is a blatant case of consumers not only incurring serious physical harm, but also being denied the means to claim compensation for harm and costs for medical treatment and surgery. The need to better protect all Europeans from cases like this has been clear for a long time. These products are sold across Europe and the victims come from across Europe, yet only very few have a chance of accessing redress.

"The European Commission remains undecided on whether to introduce Collective Redress for consumers and the victims of such EU market malpractice. It's efficient justice for victims and streamlined administration for our courts. Continued hesitation by the Commission while such scandals continue to occur is difficult to justify.

"The EU is currently updating its laws on medical devices, including market surveillance measures. This revision must focus on increasing consumer protection, reduce risk and avoid costly recalls as happened in the PIP case. Better legislation is essential to ensure only safe products reach the European market."

Click for: ['Collective Redress: Where and How it Works in Europe'](#)

View our [video testimonies from victims of defective medical devices](#).

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