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### **New EU health crisis authority must deliver for consumers**

Today the European Commission created a new authority (HERA - European Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Authority) to avoid some of the frailties that the COVID pandemic cruelly exposed in early 2020, when supply chains were severely disrupted and there were shortages of medicines in intensive care units and protective equipment such as masks.

The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) welcomes the new authority's creation, which must contribute to present and resolve these problems and ensure better coordination at EU level in times of crisis. The pandemic has shown the absolute necessity of this new authority being public interest-driven from the early stages of research and development of medicines and equipment to their production and procurement. In addition, the new authority must ensure that medicines developed with public funding are affordable for public health systems and consumers.

Monique Goyens, Director General of the European Consumer Organisation (BEUC), said: "The launch of this new authority is an important step to better protect patients and consumers against future health crises. HERA must contribute to improve collaboration between EU countries, a stronger crisis preparedness and response in the future, and more equipment and medicines available for patients and consumers.

"What is absolutely crucial is that this new authority works towards delivering a good return on investment when public money is used to develop vaccines, therapies and medical equipment. HERA must ensure that medicines developed with public funding are affordable and available in sufficient quantities in times of crisis. Part of the way to achieve that is for this new authority to work closely with consumer groups to identify where there are problems and what the solutions to them might be."

ENDS

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