

Contact: Johannes Kleis: +32 (0)2 789 24 01
Date: 15/05/2017

Access to medicines: Commission investigation into Aspen Pharma

The European Commission opened a formal investigation into Aspen Pharma's pricing practices for cancer medicines. BEUC had requested the European Commission in 2016 to investigate the company's significant price increases for some of its anticancer medicines.

Monique Goyens, Director General of The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC), commented:

"We are very glad that the Commission has opened an investigation in the practices of Aspen Pharma. The company had already been fined by the Italian competition authority and it is encouraging that this case has also been taken up at European level.

"Consumers rely on drug companies to recover from illnesses and in many cases save their lives. Big pharma players should not abuse this dependence which is exactly what such price policies seem to do".

On 14 October 2016, the Italian Antitrust Authority fined Aspen Pharma 5 million euros for abusing its dominant position and fixing unfair prices for life-saving and irreplaceable drugs used in the treatment of some forms of cancer, especially among children and elderly people. BEUC Italian member Altroconsumo played a key role by denouncing the shortage of the medicines in 2014 and the unjustified price increase when they were reintroduced on the market.

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See our [letter](#) to the European Commission asking for an investigation
More information on access to medicines in our [position paper](#) and [factsheet](#)