



The European Consumers' Organisation

COMMUNIQUE DE PRESSE
PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Ophélie Spanneut - +32 (0)2 789 24 01
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ENVI vote on Information to Patients: A relief for European Consumers

The Environment, Public Health and Food Safety committee of the European Parliament today voted for new EU legislation concerning information given to the general public on prescription medicines. BEUC, the European Consumers' Organisation, welcomes the efforts of the Members of the European Parliament to improve the Commission's proposed legislation.

BEUC robustly criticised the initial proposal which would have opened the door to advertising of prescription medicines. Fortunately, the European Parliament substantially amended this ill-conceived proposal which was originally designed in the interests of the pharmaceutical companies. However, MEPs voted to shift the perspective from the industry's right to communicate about its products, to the consumers' right to information. They insisted that information provided by the industry will first have to be approved by authorities. Furthermore, they deleted printed media as a means of communication.

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

"We appreciate the work done by the European Parliament today as this more adequately reflects consumers' needs. While the pharmaceutical industry can still decide on which particular medicines and on which diseases they communicate, the European Parliament obliges public authorities to provide for more and better information on health, diseases and medicines.

We urge the legislators to continue their work so as to avoid introducing a bias in favour of 'blockbuster' medicines and against non-drug therapies. European patients should have the right to receive non-promotional and user-friendly information on prescription medicines from independent sources."

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BEUC, the European Consumers' Organisation
+32 2 789 24 01 - press@beuc.eu

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 **[EC register for interest representatives: identification number 9505781573-45](#)** 