

Press Release

EU Semester Country Specific Recommendations: Improve patient access to medicine and ensure healthcare sustainability

For Immediate Release

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- The 2018 European Semester Country Specific Recommendations highlight the inefficiencies in several European healthcare systems particularly regarding access to medicines for patients.
- Generic and biosimilar medicines provide an outstanding opportunity to improve access to safe and effective medicines through efficient medicines policies.
- [Medicines for Europe country recommendations](#) promote sustainable medicines policies to improve patient access to gold standard treatment.

The [European Semester Country Specific Recommendations](#) show that healthcare systems need to improve their efficiency. Access to healthcare is challenged by growing demand for service and the limited financial capacity of governments to cover that demand. Generic and biosimilar medicines provide the greatest opportunity to improve access to safe and effective medicines but require efficient medicines policies to fully realise this potential. The EU Semester report indicates that healthcare reform is very challenging for many governments. However, more efficient generic and biosimilar medicines uptake policies are the low hanging fruit of healthcare reform that can be harvested quickly in all EU member states with an immediate improvement for patient access and for budget sustainability.

To fully realise the potential of generic and biosimilar medicines, European governments should encourage competition from generic and biosimilar medicines based on three overarching recommendations as well as specific measures for each country:

- Ensure a predictable market environment for a stable supply of medicines.
- Implement clear incentives to stimulate the use of generic and biosimilar medicines.
- Increase regulatory efficiency to promote high standards while reducing red tape.

More details on the Medicines for Europe recommendations can be found [here](#).

Adrian van den Hoven, Director General at **Medicines for Europe** commented that *“The publication of the European Commission Country Specific Recommendations is an eye-opener as to the challenges many countries face in ensuring their health systems are robust and sustainable. EU institutions have repeatedly highlighted the importance of timely availability of generic and biosimilar medicines to facilitate patient access to the therapies they need to manage their condition and to improve the sustainability of national health systems”^{i,ii,iii,iv}. It is the duty of stakeholders including payers, regulators and the companies who supply medicines to jointly look for effective policies that promoting patient access, sustainable uptake and use of generic and biosimilar medicines. To show our commitment to this endeavour, Medicines for Europe has developed a set of [Country Recommendations](#) for seven countries to help the EU and member states develop effective policies that support access to medicines for patients”.*

About Medicines for Europe

Medicines for Europe represents the generic, biosimilar and value added medicines industries across Europe. Its vision is to provide sustainable access to high quality medicines, based on 5 important pillars: patients, quality, value, sustainability and partnership. Its members employ 160,000 people at over 350 manufacturing and R&D sites in Europe, and invest up to 17% of their turnover in medical innovation. **Medicines for Europe** member companies across Europe are both increasing access to medicines and driving improved health outcomes. They play a key role in creating sustainable European healthcare systems by continuing to provide high quality, effective generic medicines, whilst also innovating to create new biosimilar medicines and bringing to market value added medicines, which deliver better health outcomes, greater efficiency and/or improved safety in the hospital setting for patients. For more information please follow us at www.medicinesforeurope.com and on Twitter [@medicinesforEU](https://twitter.com/medicinesforEU).

ⁱ OECD, Fiscal Sustainability of Health Systems: Bridging Health and Finance Perspectives, 2015 - <https://www.oecd.org/gov/budgeting/Fiscal-Sustainability-of-Health-Systems-Policy-Brief-ENG.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Investing in Health, 2013, DG SANCO, European Commission, http://ec.europa.eu/health/strategy/docs/swd_investing_in_health.pdf

ⁱⁱⁱ DG ECFIN and Economic Policy Committee (Ageing Working Group), Joint Report on Health Care and Long-Term Care Systems & Fiscal Sustainability, 2016, http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/publications/eeip/ip037_en.htm

^{iv} Council conclusions on strengthening the balance in the pharmaceutical systems in the EU and its Member States - <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2016/06/17-epsco-conclusions-balance-pharmaceutical-system/>