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EU News

EU Criticised Over Online Medicines

European politicians are criticising the EU's decision not to legislate against online pharmacies claiming that is a huge omission in the plans to combat counterfeit medicines. German MEP Jorgo Chatzimarkakis, said that the online trade in fake medicines is a growing illegal business that needs to be addressed.

The EU 'pharma package' of legislation unveiled in December 2008 in Brussels focussed on three priority areas including protecting the European market from counterfeit medicines, improving pharmacovigilance to reduce the adverse effects of medicine and improving information for patients on prescription medicines.

The World Health Organisation say that 80% of counterfeit medicines come from the Internet but the directive failed to mention how to combat the sale of counterfeit drugs online.

For more information, please visit: www.ec.europa.eu/enterprise/pharmaceuticals

Commission Tackles Health Inequalities in the EU

The European Commission has announced a series of actions to help Member States and other actors tackle the gaps in health which exist between and within countries in the EU. Despite increased prosperity and overall improvements in health in the EU, health differences between and within countries persist and in some cases are increasing. Difference in life expectancy at birth between Member States reach up to 8 years for women and 14 years for men.

The Commission initiative identifies action for improving knowledge on this issue, better monitoring and data collection, more assessment of how EU policies can tackle health inequalities and work with countries, regions and stakeholders. The EU will support Member States and stakeholders to identify what works best and how to put this into practice. It will produce regular statistics and report on the size of inequalities in the EU and on successful strategies to reduce them. It will help countries to use EU funds to improve health of the worst off and narrow health gaps between regions – such as primary care facilities, water and sanitation and housing renewal. A first report on progress will be produced in 2012.

For more information, please visit: www.ec.europa.eu/social

Commission Launches Youth Health Initiative - "Be Healthy, Be Yourself"

The initiative, launched by European Commissioner for Health Androulla Vassiliou, encourages more young people to become actively involved in developing EU health policies. It was kickstarted with a conference on Youth Health in Brussels in July allowing over 200 young people to meet with policymakers and health organisations and debate key health issues with them. Topics included alcohol, tobacco, drugs, mental health and physical activity and the financial crisis, inequalities in health, education and the role of the media.

Androulla Vassiliou, EU Health Commissioner said: "Even though the health of young people in Europe is better than it has ever been, there are worrying signs that far too many young people adopt behaviours which, in the long term, will reduce their ability to lead healthy and productive lives, thus endangering their future. My aim is to motivate the youth of today to care about their health, engage with policymakers and speak out on health matters."

The aims of the Youth Health Initiative are to involve young people more closely in EU health policies, strengthen youth partnership in the decision making process, involve other sectors across EU policy areas and at national level on the implementation of prevention programmes targeted at young people and support Member States' activities on the health of young people.

For more information, please visit: www.health.europa.eu/youth

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