



EUROPEAN UNION OF GENERAL PRACTITIONERS

Alment Praktiserende Lægers Europæiske Organisation – UEMO
European Union of General Practitioners – UEMO
Europäische Vereinigung der Allgemeinärzte – UEMO
Union Européenne des Médecins Omnipraticiens – UEMO
Unione Europea dei Medici di Medicina Generale – UEMO
Europese Huisartsen Vereniging - UEMO
Unión Europea de Médicos Generalistas – UEMO
Uniao Europeia de Clinicos Gerais – UEMO
Euroopan Yleislääkärijärjestö – UEMO
Europeiska Allmänläkarorganisationen – UEMO



UEMO 2002/006

Stockholm, 5 March 2002

Mme Françoise Grossetête MEP
EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
Rue Wiertz
B-1047 Brussels

Dear Mme Grossetête,

Review of EU pharmaceutical legislation and direct to consumer advertising

I am writing on behalf of the European Union of General Practitioners (UEMO), the European level body representing family doctors, to express our views concerning the review of EU pharmaceutical legislation.

As family doctors we are in daily contact with patients around the European Union. For most patients we are the first point of contact with the healthcare system. Family doctors also write the vast majority of prescriptions. We appreciate a well-informed patient and wish to support the strengthening of patients' rights in health care. We know, however, from the direct experience of our members that patients receiving poor quality, misleading or even fraudulent health information is a growing problem.

The UEMO remains opposed to the advertising of prescription medicines. However, in light of the increasing interest citizens of Europe take in health matters, we cannot be against increased information to the patients within those therapeutic fields as proposed by the Commission. Our approval is, however, conditioned. We believe that the distinction

UEMO – PRESIDENCY

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between information and advertising must be clear prior to the entering into force of Article 88. The borderline area is currently not clear and we are convinced that the information given must be limited to the information given in the product information supplied with the medicine. We also ask for specific Community guidelines laying down rules for permitted information.

To the UEMO it is necessary to put the patient in focus, both regarding health and safety. With that in mind it is important to create a legislative framework that allows for a trustful relationship between doctor and patient. Direct to consumer information which is not limited in its scope may eliminate this relationship, a relationship that European family doctors have built up for years.

In brief the UEMO wishes to propose the following with regard to the new wording of Article 88 in the Commission proposal:

Direct to consumer information of medicines shall be allowed for a period of five years within those restricted therapeutic areas laid down in the Commission proposal, provided that the information is limited to the product information supplied with the medicine. Community Guidelines for direct to consumer information of medicines within the permitted therapeutic areas must be developed before Article 88 enters into force.

I am enclosing a copy of the UEMO policy statement on prescribing drugs in general practice, which may provide you with more information on the position of our organisation on this, and other related issues.

We shall be working closely with the Standing Committee of European Doctors (CPME) on this issue, and will be happy to provide you with any additional information which you may require. We would also welcome the opportunity of meeting you to discuss our concerns with you in more detail.

Yours sincerely



Dr Christina Fabian
President