



José Manuel Barroso
President of the
European Commission
1049 Brussels, Belgium

Brussels, 25 September 2009

Subject: Pharmaceutical Policy in the European Commission

Dear President Barroso,

I write to you on behalf of PGEU (Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union), the European organisation representing Community Pharmacists. We represent approximately 400,000 pharmacists in 30 European countries.

We wish to express our support for a realignment of responsibilities within the Commission with regard to pharmaceuticals. In particular, we believe that pharmaceutical policy should substantially be dealt with by DG Sanco.

We accept that pharmaceuticals are a key industrial sector in Europe, and as such, benefits from an EU level industrial policy. This of course must continue. However, we believe that the primary focus of policy must always be on the key role medicines play in public health.

EU citizens naturally associate medicines with disease prevention and therapy, and assume and expect that policy affecting medicines is part of a coherent approach to health system management on the part of their governments. For this reason, as you are no doubt aware, at national level pharmaceutical policy is administered within health and social security departments.

Regrettably, we believe that in recent years the appropriate balance between industrial and health policy with regard to medicines has been lost at Commission level. The recent Commission initiative on Information to Patients serves as a good example - an issue with wideranging implications for health policy and systems appears to be overly influenced by industrial policy concerns, a view that has been echoed in the European Council.

Transferring responsibility for medicines to the Directorate General dealing with responsibility for EU health policy would help redress that imbalance. It would allow medicines policy to develop with the benefit of an overall public health perspective. The consequence would be, in our view, both a more coherent medicines policy, but also a policy more closely aligned with the needs and expectations of Europe's citizens.

Yours sincerely

John Chave
Secretary General
Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union