

European Public Health Alliance Press Release

11 December 2008

The **European Public Health Alliance (EPHA)** represents around 100 non-governmental and other not-for-profit organisations working in support of health in Europe. 35 EPHA members are pan-European or international networks.. EPHA aims to promote and protect the health interests of all people living in Europe and to strengthen the dialog between the EU institutions, citizens and NGOs in support of healthy public policies.



Pharmaceutical Package: Better but far from perfect

Following long delays and much anticipation from industry and health campaigners alike, the European Commission finally adopted the Pharmaceutical Package on 10 December 2008. Although this draft is an improvement on previous versions, health campaigners warn that this is the first step towards flooding the public with promotional information on pharmaceutical products.

The European Public Health Alliance (EPHA) welcomes the initiatives to protect patients from the excessive marketing of pharmaceuticals although calls from health and consumer groups have been sidelined and ignored throughout this process.

"The package adopted yesterday was better than many expected and we are delighted that some steps, although tentative, have been taken to address health needs in the proposal" says Monika Kosinska, Secretary General of the European Public Health Alliance. "However there are still a number of outstanding concerns in the proposed Package. We are all looking to the European Parliament and Council now to ensure that the commercial interests of the pharmaceutical industry do not outweigh the health needs of patients and citizens."

The amended Directive on 'Information to Patients' proposes providing information where information is not necessary. Patients are already flooded with information and it is the quality of information that should be the focus of regulators and not the quantity. Patients also need different information at different stages in their care journey: this proposal does nothing to tackle genuine patient needs.

It is difficult to see how citizens with real health needs will benefit from this proposal.

european public health alliance a.i.s.b.l.

49-51 rue de Trèves – Box 6 1040 Brussels, Belgium - Tel +32 2 230 3056 Fax +32 2 233 3880
E-mail : epha@epha.org Web-site : www.epha.org