



**HELLENIC REPUBLIC
MINISTRY OF HEALTH
NATIONAL ORGANISATION FOR MEDICINES
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PRESIDENT'S OFFICE**

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PRESS RELEASE

In response to concerns about supply shortages and withdrawals of medicinal products from the domestic market, the National Organisation for Medicines (EOF) would like to reassure the public that there is no risk to public health and that it has taken action to ensure the continued availability of unsubstitutable medicinal products and prevent unwarranted breaks in treatments.

In particular, **regarding supply shortages:**

EOF, in order to address the reported supply shortages, has taken action and measures within its field of responsibility, summarised as follows:

- Prohibition of parallel exports where these would jeopardise adequate supply of pharmaceutical products on the domestic market; 71 products have so far been subject to this measure.
- Sanctions on pharmaceutical companies which cut back on their supply of products: recent recommendation by EOF to the Ministry of Health to impose sanctions on 8 pharmaceutical companies.
- Controls to detect any illicit export activity by retailers: the involvement of 275 pharmacies is being investigated.

It should be noted that the key underlying cause of these shortages is the economic crisis, as the associated liquidity constraints and credit squeeze have severely impaired transactions between manufacturers/importers-wholesalers-retailers, which is an issue beyond EOF's scope of responsibility.

Regarding the withdrawal of products from the domestic market, there is a visible upward trend in 2012: 203 products, up from 99 in 2011 (in a total of 12,500 licenced products), of which 25 are unique (mostly eye drops and antiviral medicines); among the latter, only 3 are unsubstitutable products (an oestrogen, a specific immunoglobulin and an injectable antibiotic). EOF has already initiated emergency import procedures, as it has also done in the case of certain unsubstitutable orphan drugs.

Finally, it should be noted that these withdrawals are primarily due to the current low prices of pharmaceutical products in our country. However, the price reductions were necessary to rationalise public pharmaceutical expenditure, thereby ensuring the sustainability of the Social Security System.