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PRESS RELEASE

Falsified (Counterfeit) Medicines

Greece is “armored” - Europe is faced with a big problem

In recent years, in the European Union, for the sake of a purely competitive doctrine, repackaging has not only been permitted but reinforced in the cross-border movement of medicines, something unthinkable for other consumer products. This fact in conjunction with the lack of a security stripe led to the phenomenon of entry into the market of millions of falsified (counterfeit) medicines as mentioned by the Commissioner Günter Verheugen in his interview in the “Die Welt” newspaper.

In contrast to what happens in other European countries, the Greek system has some characteristics that render it one of the safest and most efficient systems in the world as far as protection against falsified (counterfeit) medicines or medicines of dubious quality is concerned. The characteristics “armoring” the Greek system are:

1. The prescription of branded original or essentially similar medicines under the sole responsibility of the treating physician.
2. The packaging of medicines that reaches integral and in absolute safety from the production plant the final recipient.
3. The application of the safety stripe system with the double bar code and the unique serial number on each package.

The Greek citizen was never more protected against falsified (counterfeit) medicines.

SFEE addresses once again an appeal to protect the inviolability of the outer package of medicines that must be opened either by the hospital or by the patient and the physician. By the prohibition of repackaging every branded medicine will move from the plant to the patient preserving 100% of the quality and efficacy guarantees that each branded medicine offers. SFEE considers it necessary not to permit in the European Union repackaging of medicines and, moreover, to establish at Community level the

implementation of a safety system with the bar code and the unique serial number on each package.

What is important is to be aware of the fact that our country “breaks ground” and assures better than any other the quality of medicines. The system applied in our country sets an example for other countries and prevents introduction of falsified (counterfeit) medicines in the legal distribution chain. Greek citizens must have confidence in the legal chain for the distribution of medicines. On the contrary they should not trust “electronic drugstores” which, in their vast majority distribute falsified (counterfeit) medicines dangerous for public health.

It is obvious that any change in this successful and tested system entails serious risk for public health. Therefore, the State must maintain and protect like “its eyesight” those measures and, mainly, defend the branded prescription of original or essentially similar medicines.