

Press Release

The state must guarantee the minimum requirements for a sustainable pharmaceutical care

Athens, 4 April 2014 - At a time when our country appears ready to turn over a new leaf and reverse the climate of recession, the General Assembly of SFEE met today and unanimously concluded the following: A number of government decisions taken in the last few years have undermined citizens' hard-won rights such as early access to medications. Now that it has secured financing from our partners and assurances that no further measures will be necessary, the state must prove that it can guarantee the minimum requirements for the proper provision of pharmaceutical care to our fellow citizens. To this end, it must pursue policies that will help to restore a stable and viable business environment, while at the same time safeguarding patient access to existing and new, innovative treatments.

The industry calls for policies that will ensure transparency and avoid the repetition of past failures. The government is happily allocating €500 million and is rightly doing so. However, it also needs to correct **both its pharmaceutical expenditure and its hospital expenditure for 2014, preventing them from falling below €2.3 billion and €700 million, respectively. This is the threshold below which the unimpeded access of insured persons and patients to medicines would be jeopardised.** Moreover, for a country that is hopefully embarking on a path of growth, the key challenge is now to invest in transparency and fairness that will enhance credibility, which in turn is a necessary condition for a stable and predictable economic and business environment. In this respect, it is crucial to promote structural reforms in the entire healthcare system, aimed to ensure the proper and efficient use of resources, and abandon practices of across-the board measures (e.g. claw-back), which undermine the credibility of the system and the government.

Despite its repeated "no surprises" pledges and its promise of a stable environment that will enable pharmaceutical companies to operate to the benefit of Greek patients and our national economy, the state has taken pharmaceutical companies by surprise, with both its pricing and reimbursement policies, causing problems to patient access to treatments. The industry **urgently calls for a corrective Price Bulletin**, one that will take account all the objections raised by companies, and **for a positive reimbursement list containing the new medicinal products with all the approved indications.**

We ask from the leadership of the Ministry to enforce the law, which wisely protects citizens' right of access to treatments and medications.

It is time that the government, in its effort towards a proper management of resources, looked beyond pharmaceuticals and across the spectrum of cost centers in the healthcare system, whether EOPYY- or hospital-related, so that patients can enjoy a good service level.

Pharmaceutical companies are not just another dynamic sector of the economy. Their total direct and indirect contribution to economic activity is huge, estimated at €7.55 billion per year, while 133,000 jobs are directly or indirectly related to our industry.

Therefore, if 2014 is considered a landmark year in which Greece can turn over a leaf, then a leaf should be turned over for the healthcare sector too. This should be done promptly, with great care and with a sense of responsibility, guided by the need to ensure the viability of the healthcare system and the well-being of the citizens of our country.