

New pharmaceutical strategy must guarantee EU citizens equal access to medicines

On Thursday, access to safe and affordable medicines and supporting EU pharmaceutical innovation were debated with Commissioner Kyriakides.

Commissioner for Health and Food Safety Stella Kyriakides presented the [new Pharmaceutical Strategy](#), adopted yesterday, as an important component of the new [EU Health Union](#). A new strategy was already expected before COVID-19, but in the light of the pandemic, a more ambitious proposal is essential.

Most MEPs welcomed the new strategy, which puts into effect Parliament's requests to [step up efforts to tackle medicine shortages](#) – a problem exacerbated by COVID-19 – and to [move towards a more sensible use and disposal of pharmaceuticals](#) in order to prevent risks to the environment and public health.

Several MEPs highlighted the need for all EU citizens to have equal access to high-quality medicines. They emphasised the need to decrease the EU's dependence on imports of active pharmaceutical ingredients from non-EU countries, namely by increasing their production in Europe and supporting innovation in the EU pharmaceutical industry.

A number of other important issues to be addressed were raised by MEPs, including the development of medicines for the many rare diseases currently without a cure, combatting cancer, antimicrobial resistance, transparency in the supply chains of medicines, joint EU procurement, public-private partnerships, and finalising the health technology assessment legislation.

A video recording of the debate is available [here](#).

Background

The Pharmaceutical Strategy for Europe covers the whole domain of pharmaceuticals, but also some aspects of medical devices. It creates synergies with the Green Deal and the EU Strategic Approach to Pharmaceuticals in the Environment. It is also linked to the [action plan on Intellectual Property](#). The strategy marks the beginning of a process involving several legislative and non-legislative actions, which will be launched and agreed upon by Parliament over the coming years.

Earlier this month, Parliament adopted its position on the [EU4Health Programme](#) after having secured a tripling of the budget to 5.1 billion EUR in the [compromise on the EU's long-term budget](#).

Further information

[Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety](#)
[Procedure file](#)

[EP press release: "MEPs welcome proposals for a European Health Union" \(17.11.2020\)](#)

[EP press release: "EU4Health: MEPs pave the way for an effective EU health programme" \(13.11.2020\)](#)

[EP press release: "COVID-19: EU must step up efforts to tackle medicine shortages" \(17.09.2020\)](#)

[EP press release: "Parliament wants the EU to tackle pharmaceutical pollution" \(17.09.2020\)](#)

[EP Research: "A pharmaceutical strategy for Europe: First steps"](#)

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