

**Medicine policy:
The Leem denounces a reform diverted from its objectives, that threatens
patient access to therapeutic innovation, as well as jobs in France**

The Leem acknowledges the proposals for the reform of the medicine policy presented today to the Council of Ministers by the Minister for Work, Employment and Health. The drug company members of the LEEM wholeheartedly support the measures relative to health security and patient protection, as well as the transparency of common interests.

On the other hand, they are astonished to see this draft law include provisions that are out of step with the initial challenge of increasing the safety of the medicine chain.

In particular, the Leem denounces the implementation of procedures intended to slow patient access to new medicines, as well as the ban on individual visits by medical sales reps to hospitals, a move that will directly threaten the jobs of thousands of people.

Barriers to innovation, harmful to patients

Totally disconnected from any consideration of health security and patient protection, certain of the draft law's provisions to reform the medicine policy will bring about a radical hardening of the market access rules for new medicines and of the provisions for their coverage.

Behind a worthy intention - ensuring that the benefit of the doubt goes to the patient - the public authorities are now trying to impose a plan to control healthcare expenditures without daring to say the words. While responding to short-term concerns regarding public finances, this plan runs the risk of seriously compromising the access to new medicines for patients who truly need them.

For example, the restrictions regarding ATU (French acronym for Temporary usage authorisations) will prevent many patients suffering from major pathologies from accessing medicines that are undergoing development and that are likely to provide an efficient therapeutic response when all other solutions have failed, notably in cancer treatment.

For patients, such impediments to the emergence of innovative medicines will result in "lost chances" at a time when the access of the French to innovation - within the framework of the maximum efficiency of our healthcare system - must remain a priority.

Serious job threats

The approach taken by the public authorities is incomprehensible for the heads of international laboratories and foreign observers. International and biotechnology companies involved in extremely promising research fields create many jobs within the country.

In this same vein, the drug company members of the LEEM deplore the fact that despite their constructive proposals regarding medical sales visits, this activity will once again be subject to stigmatizing measures. The State's mistrust is even less justified considering that, in recent years, the profession has been making voluntary efforts to improve its practices. France is the only country in the world to have brought the public authorities and industry together around a charter for medical sales calls. It is also the only country in which medical sales visits require certification from the authorities. In the throes of an in-depth change in this heavily supervised profession's practices, the last five years have seen a 24% decrease of its headcount.

Further hindering the conditions for exercising this profession by prohibiting the principle of an individual interview with a physician will confirm the suspicions weighing on physicians and the pharmaceutical industry, and further weaken the job prospects.

A heavy blow to French appeal and competitiveness

The Leem is committed to developing conditions that will ensure patient confidence in the healthcare system and medicines, while recalling that no economic consideration should be allowed to undermine patient safety.

However, it is alarmed by a policy that is systematically burdening the medicine industry with additional constraints, while overturning the legal framework of its activity. The statements regarding the taxation of drug companies in order to finance the continuing training of physicians are a clear sign of this trend, which will be harmful to France's appeal on the international stage. In a context of intense competition between countries, measures of this type are a real risk: namely of causing delocalisation movements or diverting investments to other regions of the world.

In terms of research dynamism, of access to therapeutic innovation and of employment, such taxation measures are a signal that can be considered even more negative given the fact that they deviate from the letter and spirit of the strong conventional commitments made in recent years between the State and the drug company members of the LEEM.

Devoted to progress, health security, research and the country's social dynamism, drug companies are also economic actors that require, in order to invest in France, a clear legislative and regulatory framework that is consistent with international circles. This is an indispensable condition if there is a true desire for France to continue as one of the major companies for life sciences.

About the drug company members of the Leem

The Leem is the professional organisation of drug companies operating in France. Their mission is to discover, produce and provide patients with medicines and vaccines for human usage.

The fourth leading contributor to the French balance of trade - with a positive balance of more than 7 billion euros - the medicine industry has more than 100,000 direct employees in France. It is one of the economic sectors with the most significant research efforts: 12.4% of the turnover of these companies is devoted to research, i.e. nearly 5 billion euros invested annually throughout the country, 99% with their own funds.

Chaired by Christian Lajoux, the Leem includes 270 companies that generate nearly 94% of the total turnover from medicines in France.

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