

The pharmaceutical industry is asking to be included as one of the electricity and gas supply priority sectors to ensure the ongoing production of the medicines French patients need

Pharmaceutical companies are warning of the potential consequences of electricity and gas cuts this winter: it is essential that the 271 pharmaceutical product manufacturing facilities in France are included on the list of priority energy users to ensure the continuity of supply and enable patients to access their medications.

The ongoing unprecedented global energy crisis is having new impacts on industrial production, and demands an exceptional level of effort to use energy efficiently throughout France. Our pharmaceutical companies are 100% committed to playing their part in addressing this challenge.

However, Leem is very concerned about the announced rolling blackout plan, which could be activated by central government at times of peak demand this winter. We also understand that certain facilities may be exempted from this plan by prefectural order. Nevertheless, many pharmaceutical laboratories are currently receiving notification from prefectures that they do not qualify for priority supplies of electricity or gas.

The fact is that any rationing or cessation of electricity or gas supply will effectively suspend manufacture with serious consequences for the production and supply of medicines. An unexpected power cut of 15 minutes or longer can have the effect of suspending manufacture, following which hours, or even days, will be required to restart the manufacturing process. Biomanufacturing facilities could take several weeks to recommence production, added to which those medicines in production at the time of the stoppage would have to be destroyed.

For reasons of cost and the safety issues around fuel storage, very few pharmaceutical manufacturing facilities have the kind of backup generators that would enable at least a partial continuity of production. Natural gas is not only a fuel; it is also a non-substitutable raw material essential for the chemical synthesis of a large number of essential medicines.

Faced with this imminent danger, Leem is asking for a clear position to be adopted by the authorities at national level to protect all pharmaceutical industry stakeholders against energy shortages.

“Since French people’s access to treatment is a public health issue, it is essential that facilities manufacturing medicines are explicitly exempted from electricity cuts and gas rationing”, stresses Leem Chairman Thierry Hulot.

Press contacts:

Stéphanie Bou - +33 (0)6 60 46 23 08 - sbou@leem.org

Virginie Pautre - +33 (0)6 31 86 82 70 - vpautre@leem.org

Alice Roznowiez - +33 (0)6 08 97 50 49 - aroznwicz@leem.org