

Call for a “National Forum on Medicines”: time to make choices for French patients

Thierry HULOT, President of Leem, sounds the alarm: **our country’s healthcare system is caught in a downward spiral**, against a backdrop of international upheaval. With patients deprived of treatment, industry suffocating and sovereignty under threat, **the time has come to make choices**.

Unjustified obstacles at the expense of patients

In 2025, only two early access schemes before marketing authorisation had been granted since the beginning of the year, and French patients have to wait 523 days to access an innovation, compared with just 50 days in Germany. How can we accept that our country deprives its citizens of treatments available elsewhere in Europe?

The inconsistencies are piling up: treatments for Alzheimer’s – which affects nearly one million French people – and for rare diseases such as motor neurone disease (Lou Gehrig’s Disease) are being refused, while at the same time recognised by the European Medicines Agency. Anti-migraine drugs are available in Europe but not in France. These blockages do not only penalise hundreds of thousands of patients: **they also weigh heavily on public finances**, which cover sick leave, hospitalisations and disabilities instead of granting access to effective treatments.

Medicines policy: a continuous deterioration

At the same time, **the administration, lacking a political vision for medicines, is seeking to increase an already record level of taxation** that is undermining companies. In 2023, 60% of pharmaceutical companies’ operating profits were absorbed. The proposals for 2026, as presented to us, would introduce a new tax on turnover while maintaining the safeguard clause, together with yet another record price cut. And yet, **medicines account for only 9% of health insurance expenditure, while already contributing half of the savings required of the health insurance branch – €3 billion in savings in 2025**.

A political awakening is needed, or the 2026 Social Security Financing Bill, in its current form, will accelerate the decline of the medicines sector. Instead, it must mark a turning point: let us move beyond a punitive approach, restore the value of medicines and therapeutic progress, and build a sustainable and predictable regulatory framework.

Our plan to guarantee access, innovation and sovereignty

We wish to meet the Prime Minister at the earliest opportunity to place health at the heart of the agenda and to revive dialogue with all stakeholders. We are aware of the constraints on France’s budget; we thus call for a collective effort to identify efficiency measures, as we did last year.

No policy without consultation can exist, just as no steering without vision. Hence we are calling for:

- A freeze on current legislation, that lack genuine political consultation.
- Restoring the value of medicines, be they everyday medicines or therapeutic advances,
- Defining a sustainable and predictable spending trajectory that truly meets the needs of the French people and enables investment, innovation and production in France,
- Ensuring patient access to treatments aligned with European standards,

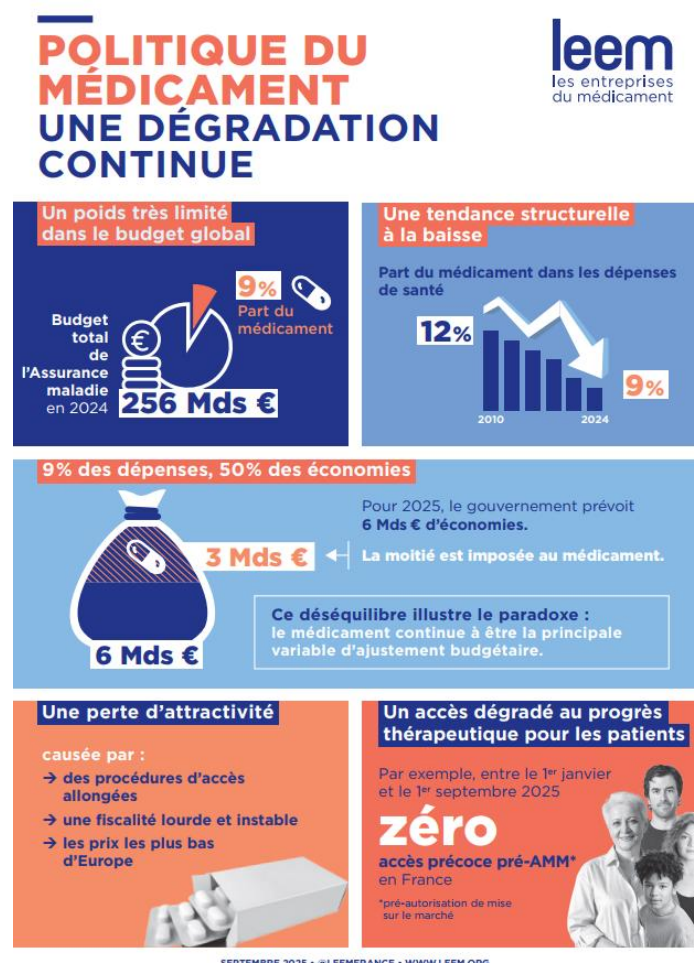
- Health to be made a lever for national and European sovereignty, on a par with energy, agri-food, digital technology and defence.

Solemn appeal to a National Forum on Medicines

In the aftermath of Covid, the strategic importance of the pharmaceutical sector was recognised; since then, nothing has been done to support investment and innovation. **Pharmaceutical companies are therefore calling for the launch of a National Forum on Medicines.**

*“This Forum must not be a disguised consultation with no follow-up, **but a genuine moment of truth and responsibility**, bringing together all stakeholders: patients, healthcare professionals, industry, distributors and public authorities.”* — Thierry Hulot, President of Leem

Our goal: to overhaul our entire system, rethink patients’ access to medicines, and finally establish health **as a strategic pillar of our economy and national cohesion.**



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