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Protecting patients and public health against undue influence of the pharmaceutical industry

Motion for a resolution

tabled by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

Interactions between the pharmaceutical industry and both public and private health-care providers are raising a growing number of questions because of their potentially adverse consequences. Practices such as sponsoring of health professionals by the industry, to attend conferences, workshops and other events, or recourse by public health institutions to the knowledge of highly specialised researchers on the pay-rolls of the industry are undergoing strong scrutiny.

Such interactions are in fact potentially increasing conflicts of interest which can lead to biased decisions by both health professionals and regulatory authorities. These may include undue marketing license for a given drug, inappropriate prescription and/or over-prescription of medicines without due respect of relevant guidelines.

Combined with the increasing “medicalisation” of society, the belief that every problem requires medical treatment, such unsafe use of medicines can cause serious health problems, including severe adverse reactions in large numbers of people, and lead to excessive expenditure for medical treatment which ultimately threatens the viability of public health systems.

In view of the right to the protection of health laid down in Article 11 of the European Social Charter (revised), the Parliamentary Assembly calls on member States to protect patients and public health, by reacting against undue influence of the pharmaceutical industry, guaranteeing greater independence and transparency in relation with the latter at both national and international level.

