Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
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Securing safe medical supply chains

Motion for a resolution
tabled by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

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

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The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the need to address the vulnerabilities of global medical supply chains. Market conditions for supplies were impacted in an unprecedent way, particularly for personal protective equipment (PPE). Stockpiling, restrictions on exports, closed borders and lockdowns led to shortages of essential medicines in many member States. Evidently, being overly reliant on one country or one region makes supply chains vulnerable to disruptions. As the supply was outstripped by demand, concerns were raised over falsification of medicines and medical products, and existing corruption pressures on procurement were amplified.

The Parliamentary Assembly should thus look into how to strengthen the medical supply chains to ensure an uninterrupted supply of essential medicines, medical devices and other health products that are safe and meet standards for efficacy or performance. Moreover, member States must step up action to prevent falsified medical products from entering the supply chain and ratify the MEDICRIME Convention as soon as possible.

The Assembly should co-operate with expert bodies such as the European Directorate for the Quality of Medicines and Health Care, the Committee of the Parties of the MEDICRIME Convention and the European Medicines Agency, as well as exchange views with pharmaceutical companies, to develop guidance on concrete actions that can be taken at national, international and supranational level to make the supply chain sustainable and resilient to future crises. This may include widening the geographic location of production sites and extended supervisory oversight of the supply chain, especially for active substance manufacturing.

No single country is able to manage supply chain challenges by themselves. More than ever, international co-operation is needed to secure safe medical supply chains. This must be a public health priority. Member States must ensure that the right to health is always guaranteed, as provided notably by the European Social Charter.