



## **[Open Letter] To President-elect Jean-Claude Juncker on move of medicinal products and health technologies to the portfolio of the Commissioner for internal market and industry**

*Brussels, 16 September 2014* - We are writing to express our astonishment and concern regarding your decision to move the competence for medicinal products and health technologies from the Commissioner in charge of Health to the Commissioner in charge of internal market and industry within the new Commission.

Dear Mr Jean-Claude Juncker, President-elect of the European Commission,

The economic crisis, the ageing of the population, technological advances, and new health threats, including environmental pollution, are all challenging the sustainability of European health systems, and health inequalities between and within European Union (EU) Member States are increasing. The European Commission, as the guardian of the Treaty, plays an important role in "ensur[ing] a high level of human health protection". This necessitates an unwavering vision for public health, along with consistent and coherent policymaking to support it.

People living in Europe have the right to high quality, safe, affordable and effective treatments. Pharmaceuticals and medical devices are not - and should not - be considered as any other internal market product because they safeguard people's health.

The main driver of EU policies concerning pharmaceuticals and health technologies should be promoting and protecting health and patient safety. The Commissioner for Industry and Internal market, however, is mandated to promote the competitiveness of the industry and the European economy. This distinction is an important one to make with delicate issues, such as information to patients and medicine pricing, where the needs of patients can be in conflict with the interests of industry. The shift you are proposing sends the wrong signal to European citizens and patients – namely that economic interests come before their health. This is not the sort of signal the EU wants to send.

In 2009, responsibility for medicines and medical devices were moved into the hands of the health Commissioner to harmonize pharmaceutical governance within Member States and facilitate emergency preparedness. Returning them to the Commissioner for Enterprise and Industry is unjustified and represents a major step back.

Please reconsider this decision – we believe that medicinal products and health technology belong under the responsibility of the Commissioner for health.

We urge you to show bold leadership and to put health interests first.

Yours Sincerely,

