



Press Release

Brussels, October 30th 2003

Hearing in the European Parliament

Focus on the precarious Future of Homeopathic and Anthroposophic Medicinal Products for 110 Million European Patients

In the European Parliament in Brussels a Hearing on the Review of the Pharmaceutical Legislation took place on October 14th. It was held under the auspices of MEP Dagmar Roth-Behrendt in cooperation with ECHAMP. The objective was to elaborate possible solutions in order to solve the total lack of harmonisation of the market of homeopathic and anthroposophic medicinal products and to unify all parties involved in the process.

ECHAMP, the European Coalition on Homeopathic and Anthroposophic Medicinal Products, in cooperation with MEP Dagmar Roth-Behrendt had invited doctors and patients organisations concerned by the future of homeopathic and anthroposophic medicinal products. The parties met in the morning to an Umbrella-Meeting where current activities and main problems in the field of Homeopathic Medicine were discussed. The Hearing in the afternoon gave the unique opportunity to exchange views towards the European Commission, the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers.

After an introduction of MEP Dagmar Roth-Behrendt the first part of the Hearing started with statements of Homeopathic and Anthroposophic Practitioners and Patients Organisations: Enid Segall has recently been elected President of the first European organisation of patients organisations EFHPA – European Federation of Homeopathic Patients Organisations. She underlined her goal to fight for the free availability of medicinal products for patients and practitioners throughout Europe. She pointed out that for patients the free choice of therapy and of practitioners is essential but not daily reality. Colette Pradelle, President of the European Patients organisation EFPAM, stressed the fact that 110 Million European patients use homeopathic or anthroposophic medicinal products mainly because they are very effective, have no side effects and correspond to a more conscious and liberated approach to health and well being.

Members of the Practitioners Associations focused in their speeches on the large number of homeopathic medicinal products who could soon disappear from the market because of an inappropriate pharmaceutical legislation. Stephen Gordon, President of the European Council for Classical Homeopathy ECCH, pointed out that the pharmaceutical Legislation differs in each of the 15 EU-countries. Fact is that each Member State can interpret EU-legislation on homeopathic medicinal products differently.



Dr. Giancarlo Buccheri, President of the International Association of Anthroposophic Doctors IVAA, pointed out that 120.000 medical practitioners who prescribe anthroposophic medicines on a regular basis in thirteen EU Member States are being "discriminated on the highest level" because mention of anthroposophic medicinal products only appears in the preamble of the EU pharmaceutical legislation. The President of the European Committee for Homeopathy ECH, Dr. Ton Nicolai, focussed on the high dossier costs of registration and market authorisation of homeopathic medicinal products compared to their low turnover. This is in his view the reason why many products will disappear from the market and will no longer be available in his practice. The President of the European Council of Doctors for Plurality in Medicine ECPM, Dr. Robert Kempenich, stressed on the point that there should be free access for every remedy the doctor wants to prescribe to its patient.

The second part of the Hearing focused on the decision making process in the EU. A delegate from the Italian Health Ministry, Maria Grazia Leone, underlined the fact that Homeopathy is known in all Member States of the EU. She added that a big part of the European patients are actively asking for homeopathy and that most of the EU Member States have long experience with the market authorisation process of homeopathic medicinal products. Dr. Birka Lehmann, representative of the European Commission, DG Enterprise, welcomed the approach ECHAMP has chosen with this hearing. One possible solution might be to install a working group for homeopathic products at the EMEA in London in order to assess legal and scientific questions concerning homeopathic medicinal products.

MEP Dagmar Roth-Behrendt drew her scenario of a solid regulation for homeopathic and anthroposophic medicinal products: "Step by step – this is the strategy which we should follow together! First we need an appropriate legislation where finally the Council should accept the amendments of the European Parliament. And following this step a Homeopathic Expert Group at the EMEA should be established." She confirmed the high interest of the European Parliament and the role of the Environmental Committee as "lawyer" of patients' interests.

Nand De Herdt, ECHAMP, concluded the Hearing. He thanked the speakers and the participants and promised that the respective partners will follow with great interest the "step-by-step-approach" and that practitioners, patients and manufacturers will continue to propose feasible solutions for the urgent problems that exist nowadays. Lucas W. von Hebel, President, remembered the political level, that it is now time to fill the gap, in order to open Internal Market for homeopathic and anthroposophic medicinal products. 11 years after the first legislative approach, an appropriate legislation should finally be achieved. The event was crowned by an original 'Brussels evening get-together' where all participants had the possibility to exchange their impressions of the Hearing.

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