



Press Release

Brussels, 26th March 2003

Complementary medicine is booming: Three Europeans out of four know about Homeopathy

Complementary medicine has benefited from growing demand of doctors and the public in the majority of European countries over the past few years. A report of the European Commission demonstrated that 29% of the EU-population, 110 million European citizens, are familiar with homeopathy or its medicines.

More and more people turn to alternative medicine as an essential result of reduced faith in conventional treatment and the growth in ease of use of alternative remedies. Most of them do not abandon conventional medicines but use homeopathy and conventional medicine as a combination - leading to the use of the term complementary medicine. The comparative low cost and almost no side effects are two of the major characteristics of complementary medicine.

The public demand for homeopathic products is strong and growing in many EU member states. Several consumer surveys around Europe prove the shift in attitude: Three Europeans out of four know about homeopathy and approximately one third uses it for their health care. Every second Belgian citizen turns to homeopathic medicine while in France, Netherlands and Denmark every third patient uses homeopathic treatment at least once in a while.

Following recent research conducted by the BBC in 2003 the number of people using complementary and alternative medicine in the United Kingdom has doubled over the last six years. Today one in five Britons is using these medicines or therapies. In the European Union there are about 12 000 homeopathic doctors, which is comparable to the number of doctors specialised in e.g. neurology. Approximately 25-40% of the 250 000 general practitioners in Europe prescribe homeopathic medicine from time to time, 6-8% on a more regular basis.

The German founder of Homeopathy, medical doctor Samuel Hahnemann, developed over 200 years ago the approach that Homeopathy treats patients in a holistic manner by empowerment of the self-healing properties in the human body. Homeopathic medicinal products originate from plants, animals, organic and inorganic substances from which a "mother tincture" is made: a concentrated form of the substance in alcohol.

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Rudolf Steiner and Ita Wegman developed the anthroposophic approach to medicine 80 years ago as a holistic therapeutic system. Anthroposophic medicinal products consist largely of natural substances from the mineral, plant and animal kingdoms.

Currently the national authorities from EU member states are responsible for the legal framework of high-quality and safe products in order to ensure the availability for complementary and alternative medicines throughout Europe. However the attitudes and degree of implementation of the Homeopathic Directive varies greatly between the different Member States. As a result the access of patients to these medicines also varies widely.

In order to achieve an internal market for homeopathic medicinal products a centralised marketing authorisation and harmonisation for homeopathic medicinal products throughout the EU member states is urgently needed.

The European Coalition on Homeopathic and Anthroposophic Medicinal Products ECHAMP endorses the right of the patient and consumer for homeopathic and anthroposophic medicinal products, which meet the true standards of quality, safety and effectiveness being appropriate for this category of medicines. ECHAMP, as a European Economic Interest Grouping (E.E.I.G.), is striving for a harmonised position of homeopathic and anthroposophic medicinal products in the European Union and the integration of the relevant therapies in the national healthcare systems.

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ECHAMP Basic Background Information

ECHAMP is a European Coalition on **Homeopathic** and **Anthroposophic Medicinal Products**, which represents the majority of Europe's homeopathic manufacturers. The non-profit organisation endorses the right of the patient and consumer for homeopathic and anthroposophic medicinal products, which meet the true standards of quality, safety and effectiveness being appropriate for this category of medicines. ECHAMP's intention is to create a platform to interact for the benefit of over 100 million European patients and consumers of homeopathic and anthroposophic medicinal products.

ECHAMP represents:

- European Companies active in the production and distribution of homeopathic and anthroposophic medicinal products as members
- A number of organisations with parallel interest representing national manufacturer's organisations as well as associations of health professionals, patients and consumers as associated or corresponding members

Founding 1999

Legal status

The legal form of ECHAMP is an EEIG (= European Economic Interest Grouping). The Membership Assembly is the highest body, meeting at least once per year. A Board of Management is in charge of policy setting and managing the Interest Grouping. The scientific work and policy development is effected in Working parties.

Corporate governance

Up to 9-member Management Board,
President: Lucas W. von Hebel

The Board of Management

Members of the Board are being appointed by the Membership Assembly. Each Member of the Board of Management has a deputy. An independent General Secretary, an independent Liaison Officer, a Press Officer and an office in Brussels support the Board.

Members

Over 50 companies from twelve European states active in the production and distribution of homeopathic and anthroposophic medicinal products.



ECHAMP's current activities

- ECHAMP pursues a range of necessary amendments in European legislation
- Its experts develop and submit drafts for monographs to be incorporated in the European Pharmacopoeia
- Comparative studies and Position Papers are being made in order to create understanding for these specific categories within homeopathic and anthroposophic medicine
- Symposia, round tables and workshops are being organized to make the position of Industry known and to work actively together on concrete problems and positions
- Active Working Parties work on practical and thoroughly elaborated suggestions for the harmonisation of specific regulatory and legal issues

HISTORY:

Ten years work on an appropriate legislation for homeopathic medicinal products

1992 : Directive 92/73/EEC : major problems and several inconsistencies appeared by the implementation in the Member States causing various and severe problems

1997 : Commission Report : the Commission identified clearly the problems in the five conclusions

1998 : Parliament Resolution : almost all the members of the European Parliament vote for substantial improvement

1998 : Council of the European Union : decided to postpone legal changes only because of no priority being attached to the resolution of the homeopathic issues.

2002 : Revision in Parliament and Council : a chance for clarification and more adequate solutions for homeopathic and anthroposophic medicinal products

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