



European Commission's investigation of Aspen: The company must reduce the prices of six life-saving cancer drugs

PRESS RELEASE

ECPC welcomes the [decision](#) of the European Commission's Directorate General for Competition to make commitments by the pharmaceutical company Aspen to reduce prices for six off-patent cancer medicines by 73% on average in Europe for the next 10 years legally binding. The decision is the result of the Commission's investigation opened in May 2017 into Aspen's anti-competitive behaviour imposing unfair prices.

At ECPC, we believe in a Europe where all patients have timely and affordable access to the best treatment and care available. We consider that cancer patients are the most important factors in the fight against cancer and against all the cancer-related issues affecting our society. Therefore, the priority both at the EU level and at national level is to improve the health-related quality of life of these patients, whose numbers increase every year, by providing cost-effective and evidence-based treatment and care. Whereas, when the pricing practices of a pharmaceutical company hamper the achievement of this goal, putting at risk patients' lives, this becomes a legal case that calls for the attention of the European Commission.

"ECPC applauds the endeavor of the European Commission to investigate Aspen's anti-competitive behaviour and to make this company commit to reduce the prices of the life-saving cancer medicinal products that are essential to treat certain serious forms of blood cancer, including myeloma and leukaemia while ensuring their availability in the European Union/European Economic Area (EU/EEA)," said Ken Mastris, ECPC President.

This activity is in line with the ambition of the [Pharmaceutical Strategy](#) to enforce sound competition policies by pharma companies. At the same time, Aspen has to retroactively reimburse Member States of the amounts paid in excess from the date the company approached the Commission, namely 1st October 2019, until the new reduced net prices are implemented in each Member State (so-called transitory rebate).

ECPC will play the role of the residual fall-back recipient in the Aspen case. The company won't be able to retain any revenues attributable to or resulting from the application of a price level that exceeds the reduced net prices agreed in the commitments. To this aim, any remaining amount of the transitory rebate will be paid to the residual fall-back recipient, ECPC. "This money will be used by ECPC to support the work of members at the national level that lack financial resources. We welcome this decision of the European Commission as almost all cancer patient organisations bear the brunt of the COVID-19 pandemic," added Antonella Cardone, ECPC Director.

Through enforcement action and proposing a feasible solution to the competition concerns in the Aspen case, the Commission gives an example of how patients' rights and needs should come before any vested industrial interest and creates a precedent for those who disrespect the EU values and laws that will have to deal with the consequences.





European Cancer
Patient Coalition

About the European Cancer Patient Coalition

European Cancer Patient Coalition (ECPC) is the voice of cancer patients in Europe. With over 450 members, ECPC is Europe's largest umbrella cancer patients' association, covering all 27 EU member states and many other European and non-European countries. ECPC represents patients affected by all types of cancers, from the rarest to the most common.

Notes to editors:

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