

Örebro, Sweden 2020-10-02

PHARMACEUTICAL COMMITTEE
EUROPEAN COMMISSION
HEALTH AND FOOD SAFETY DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
Health systems, medical products and innovation
Medicines: policy, authorisation and monitoring

Dear members of the committee,

As President of Mag- och tarmförbundet (the Swedish Stomach and Bowel Association, www.magotarm.se) I join members representing the European Society of Neurogastroenterology and Motility (ESNM) in highlighting the inequality of access to medicines in Europe for patients suffering from irritable bowel syndrome. This disease, which combines abdominal pain and transit disorders, affects 10-15% of the European population, more frequently women. Although it is not a fatal disease, there may be a deterioration in the quality of life, particularly in patients with a severe IBS, for whom conventional medicines are often ineffective.

As acknowledged by your committee (March 12th, 2020), “the market launch of centrally authorised products and the issue of unequal availability of medicines across the European Union is of recurrent debate”. The application for approval for medicinal products is made at European level to the EMA and it is then to the choice of pharmaceutical companies that have an approval to submit it or not to at national level to health authorities. There are many causes of discrepancy between countries: commercial strategies from the pharmaceutical industry (no development in many countries), presence or absence of reimbursement, different pricing when the product is available... This forces to some kind of medical tourism, to travel to another EU country, to get prescription and treatment, being accessible only to the most fortunate patients leads to inequality access to treatment options for the patient.

We are aware of the difficulties related to the current legal framework but strongly support all initiatives and efforts to increase the availability of centrally authorised medicinal products in the field of GI disorders and therefore fully support the European Society of Neurogastroenterology and Motility (ESNM) in raising awareness on a European level and aiming for equal treatment possibilities for patients across entire Europe.

Yours sincerely



Margareta Röstlund
President of the Board

The Swedish Stomach and Bowel Association is an NGO formed with the intent of improving quality of life for people living with diseases and dysfunctions in the digestive system, and to secure their access to the common resources of Society regarding Healthcare, Medicine, Education, Employment, Social security and Welfare.