

Sanofi-aventis calls for an effective policy against drug counterfeiting

Paris, May 15, 2007 - The first European parliamentary symposium on drug counterfeiting took place yesterday in Brussels, under the joint chairmanship of French and British members of the European Parliament, Françoise GROSSETETE and John BOWIS, members of the European Parliament Commission on Environment, Public Health and Food Safety.

Jean-François DEHECQ, Chairman of sanofi-aventis, opened the discussion. Günter VERHEUGEN, European Commissioner responsible for Enterprise and Industry policy, brought the proceedings to a close.

The themes for discussion were the following:

- European and international measures against drug counterfeiting
- latest initiatives taken by the industry to prevent counterfeiting by securing supply chain of pharmaceuticals
- and new technological systems.

Jean-François DEHECQ made on the following points:

- Drug counterfeiting is a **public health menace**, proliferating at vast speed with dozens of new instances appearing every day in all parts of the globe
- **All pharmaceutical companies** are concerned, producers of innovative drugs or generics alike
- Drug counterfeiters must be prosecuted as such since their products can have **dramatic consequences** on patients lives
- In Europe, **parallel trade circuits** are among the **major vectors** used by counterfeiters to sell their fake products
- The problem has to be solved on a **global** level, but **Europe has an essential leading role to play** since it can, and must, be the driver of any action.

"For too long, we have underestimated the drug counterfeiting situation. It used to be marginal, it is now totally industrialized", said Jean-François DEHECQ.

"Medicines are not an ordinary product. Before they are marketed, drugs must be granted official approval, (MA - Marketing Authorization). The MA is a guarantee of safety, quality and efficacy of products. "Fake medicines" do not respect these requirements and are therefore a health hazard", he added.

Speaking on Europe's role in this effort, Jean-François DEHECQ listed the three lines of action for an effective strategy in the fight against counterfeiters.

1) First, counterfeit medicines have to be prevented from entering European markets and supply chains:

- by reassessing the problem of parallel trade channels and establishing better control of distribution channels
- by considering the «solution» of a ban on medicines re-packaging, unless the rules imposed upon the manufacturer of the original drug are strictly complied with.

2) Furthermore, an entire legal armamentarium has to be set up against counterfeiters.

3) And finally, there has to be a wholehearted commitment to implement international health diplomacy.

"Although counterfeiting is a global problem which must be fought worldwide, there is an essential need for Europe to play a driving role in the fight against drug counterfeiting", Jean-François DEHECQ concluded.

About sanofi-aventis

Sanofi-aventis is one of the world leaders in the pharmaceutical industry, ranking number one in Europe. Backed by a world-class R&D organisation, sanofi-aventis is developing leading positions in seven major therapeutic areas: cardiovascular, thrombosis, oncology, metabolic diseases, central nervous system, internal medicine and vaccines. Sanofi-aventis is listed in Paris (EURONEXT: SAN) and in New York (NYSE: SNY).