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Press release | 24.11.2010

Public health

EP votes to put patients first in EU rules on prescription medication information

The European Parliament voted on new EU legislation dealing with information on prescription medicines. The Greens welcomed the vote, which transformed the original legislative proposal into one oriented towards the needs of patients, rather than the interests of the pharmaceutical industry. After the vote, Swedish Green MEP **Carl Schlyter** said:

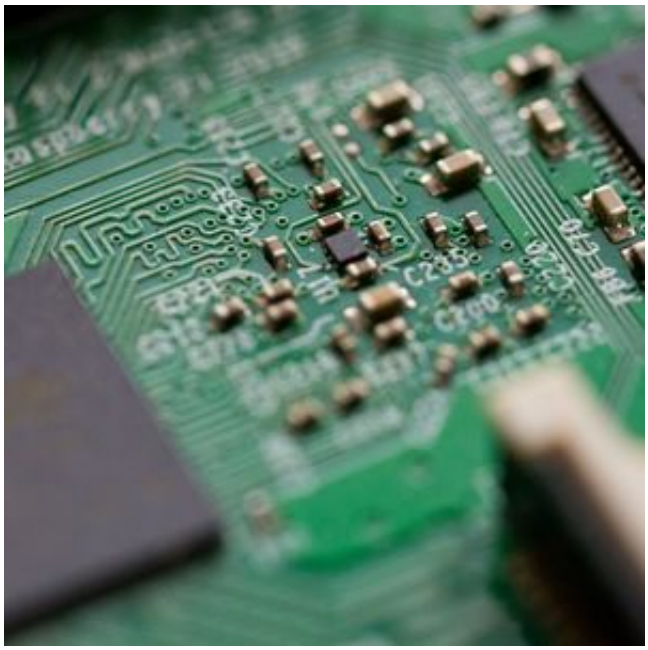
"MEPs today voted to put the needs and interests of patients and consumers first when it comes to information on prescription medication. The Parliament has completely transformed the original proposal by the Commission, which was solely driven by the interests of the media and the pharmaceutical industries. Parliament said a clear NO to allowing industry to advertise about prescription medication in print media or to push any information onto patients.

"As a result of today's vote, pharmaceutical firms would have to provide official documents (e.g. summary of product characteristics, package leaflet, assessment report) on their websites, or in printed form upon request, and could only provide other information based on quality criteria and subject to approval by the competent authorities or the European Medicines Agency. So the information will be 'pulled' according to needs, rather than 'pushed' based on what the industry wants to make available.

"Parliament has also voted to oblige member states to make available information on prescription drugs. Public authorities should be the point of reference for every citizen that wants more information about prescription medicines, not industry. While we would have preferred to only have an information system run by public authorities, we can accept a system in which companies are obliged to make available official documents, and certain other clearly defined information based on quality criteria and only after approval by competent authorities."

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