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Misleading and false information from ABDA on pharmacies in Norway

We have been informed that ABDA has sent a letter to several members of the German parliament, giving misleading and false information on the development of pharmacies and pharmaceuticals in Norway. Whereas we fully respect ABDA's absolute right to promote the existing pharmacy system in Germany, we can not accept that ABDA promotes it's view by giving false information on the situation in Norway.

In the letter, which as far as we have understood is sent to a number of German MPs from several ABDA spokesmen, you claim that prices of pharmaceuticals have risen "fundamentally within the last years", that they are higher than in the Scandinavian neighbouring countries, and that the development in Norway is not desirable, "neither for patients nor for the State or for health insurance funds". These claims are all false. We can prove that they are wrong.

Prices of pharmaceuticals in Norway have not risen during the last years. On the contrary, prices have decreased. The cost of the Norwegian National Health Insurance for pharmaceuticals has decreased. Several international studies with price comparisons prove that Norwegian pharmaceuticals prices are among the very lowest in Europe. A recent IMS Health study (June, 2007) states that Norwegian pharmaceuticals prices are by far lowest when compared to nine other European countries, i.e. Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Austria, UK, Ireland, Netherlands and Belgium. The IMS Health study states for example that pharmaceuticals prices in Germany are 22 per cent higher than in Norway.

We have also been informed that you have attached a copy of "apotheke ad hoc" to your letter to the German MPs. In the attachment, more false and misleading information about Norway is given.

We will draw your attention to the fact that the Norwegian Ministry of Health and Social Care services has concluded that all the main objectives of the liberalisation of the pharmacy sector have been achieved. According to several Norwegian surveys, the pharmacies' customers are more satisfied with their pharmacies and they experience better service. There is absolutely no evidence that the quality of medicines dispensing in Norway is lower after the liberalisation – on the contrary, many see significant quality improvements. The pharmacy trade in Norway and the

Norwegian Pharmacy Association is working hard on developing new healthcare services in pharmacies to patients. In Norway, the liberalisation of the pharmacy sector is generally seen as a success. Further more, it is a fact that the availability of pharmacies in Norway has raised by more than 50 per cent the last few years. Many of the new pharmacies are settled in small cities and rural arias, which is very much appreciated in a scarcely populated country.

The Norwegian Pharmacy Association is very surprised and disappointed that our colleagues in Germany try to give an extremely negative, false and misleading image of the Norwegian pharmacy system. We do hope that the cooperation and dialogue between our countries' pharmacy associations will improve in the future.

Yours sincerely,
Norwegian Pharmacy Association



Kai Finsnes
CEO