

PRESS RELEASE

Repeated criticism of self-medication drug prices is unjustified

*Retail pharmacists can be relied upon
to develop responsible self-medication*

Paris, 11 September 2014 – *Retail pharmacies currently face a negative environment, characterised by too frequent attacks on the price of self-medication drugs. In that context, and following continued allegations in the Report of the French Inspectorate General of Finances – the conclusions of which do not correspond to the findings of Afipa’s own studies – Afipa is keen to reiterate a number objective and verifiable facts.*

- THE LEVEL OF SELF-MEDICATION DRUG PRICES IN FRANCE IS LARGELY BELOW THE EUROPEAN AVERAGE

First and foremost, the 2nd European Observatory on Self-Medication carried out by Celtipharm¹ shows that **average prices for self-medication drugs in France (€4.50) are clearly below the European average (€6.20).**

Compared to a sample of 8 countries (Germany, Belgium, Spain, France, Italy, Netherlands, Sweden, UK), France has the lowest average prices after the UK. In Germany, where the average spend on self-medication (€58.00) is almost double that of France (€32.40), the average price of self-medication medicines is €8.00, which is almost **double the French average (€4.50).**

Similarly, the comparison – with each country – of prices for the same packet type and dosage bought at retail pharmacies shows that **France is either the least expensive or the second least expensive country in Europe.**

Finally, in light of recent government announcements with respect to a possible end to the monopoly enjoyed by retail pharmacies, it is crucial to point out that – **for those European countries in which self-medication products are available outside the retail pharmacy network – prices for these products still remain higher than those found in French retail pharmacies.** That is the case for example in Italy where, despite allowing drugstores and supermarkets to sell self-medication products, the average supermarket price in 2013 was €5.90 (compared to €4.50 in French pharmacies).

- FRANCE HAS SEEN BOTH A CONSTANT DROP IN PRICES FOR SELF-MEDICATION PRODUCTS AND A REDUCTION IN PRICE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN PHARMACIES

Contrary to statements made by the authorities, **the price of self-medication products has steadily declined in constant euros for the past 6 years.** While the consumer price index increased by 8.6 points during the period (compared to a base of 100 in 2008), the price index for non-reimbursable medicines rose by only 6 points, equivalent to a reduction of 2.6 points.² Furthermore, the VAT rate on

¹ Consult the study on www.afipa.org

² See Slide 23 of the 12th AFIPA Barometer 2013 on selfcare products (available at www.afipa.org)

non-reimbursable medicines rose from 5.5% to 7% and then to 10% (on 1 January 2014), which had a significant impact on retail prices.

At the same time, **the differences in prices charged by retail pharmacies are declining** as regularly shown in studies released by Afipa³. These findings prove that competition between pharma companies and retail pharmacies is fully playing its role in the responsible self-medication sector.

- **“A RAPID SHIFT IN AWARENESS BY THE AUTHORITIES IS A PRIORITY FOR PUBLIC HEALTH, PATIENT SAFETY AND THE FUTURE OF RETAIL PHARMACIES.”**

For Pascal Brossard, Chairman of Afipa: *“Recent statements and erroneous data jeopardise the development of a market that is already quite fragile. As for many other modern countries, responsible self-medication as the first step in a healthcare process must form part of a genuine public health strategy; it should be seen as an essential healthcare solution. As such, the development of self-medication cannot be envisaged without the support of retail pharmacists and their teams who play a crucial role in terms of advice, monitoring and traceability. Afipa therefore regrets that the authorities – under the guise of purely political considerations – are threatening the very organisation of our healthcare system and the development of a market that represents a safe and credible option in our current economic climate”.*

Afipa, a public health actor, is the professional body that represents the industry that manufactures and markets healthcare products available over the counter in pharmacies (medicines, medical appliances, and food supplements available for self-medication).

ABBOTT, ALMIRALL, BAYER HEALTHCARE SAS FRANCE, BOEHRINGER INGELHEIM FRANCE, BOIRON, BOUCHARA RECORDATI, BRISTOL-MYERS SQUIBB – DIVISION UPSA, DERMOPHIL INDIEN / HEPATOUM, DIEPHARMEX, EXPANSCIENCE, GALDERMA, GENEVRIER, GIFRER BARBEZAT, GSK SGP, HRA PHARMA, JOHNSON&JOHNSON SANTE BEAUTE FRANCE, LABCATAL, LEHNING, MAYOLI SPINDLER, MERCK MEDICATION FAMILIALE, NEGMA LERADS, NOVARTIS SANTE FAMILIALE, NUTRITION ET SANTE, OMEGA PHARMA, PFIZER SANTE FAMILIALE, PIERRE FABRE SANTE, PROCTER & GAMBLE PHARMACEUTICALS FR, RECKITT BENCKISER, ROTTAPHARM MADAUS, SANOFI-AVENTIS FRANCE, SEMES S.A, TONIPHARM, LABORATOIRES URGO, WELEDA, ZAMBON FRANCE.

**Follow Afipa on www.afipa.org
Twitter: @afipa**

Self-medication: Medicinal products for self-medication are defined as those which do not require a medical prescription and which are produced, distributed and sold primarily with the intention that they will be used by consumers on their own initiative and responsibility, when they consider such a use appropriate (WHO 2000 definition).

PRESS SERVICE

**Ariane Prêtre
Tel: 09 81 71 11 02 / Mob: 06 81 37 72 48
ariane.pretre@wanadoo.fr**

³ See, for example, Slide 24 of the 12th AFIPA Barometer 2013 on selfcare products (available at www.afipa.org)