

Press Release

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Council of Europe adopts Resolution on good practices for distributing medicines via mail order

Strasbourg, 06.09.2007 – The Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe has adopted a Resolution on good practices for distributing medicines via mail order. This Resolution is a major breakthrough to protect patient safety and the quality of the delivered medicine, as no specific quality and safety standards for the mail-order trade in medicines currently exist.

An increasing number of Council of Europe member states are authorising the sale of medicines through mail order, which means that medicines offered for sale or advertised over the Internet may be purchased by the customer through mail order.

Customers and patients want easy and convenient access to the medicines they need and should be able to have trust in the quality of medicines.

Healthcare authorities and members of the pharmaceutical distribution chain are responsible for ensuring patient safety and the quality of the delivered medicine.

Widespread and harmonised implementation of good practices in the legal mail-order trade by all stakeholders of the pharmaceutical distribution chain are a pre-requisite in order to avoid risks for patient safety and for the quality of the delivered medicines, for instance, by illegal and substandard medicines.

[Resolution ResAP\(2007\)2 on good practices for distributing medicines via mail order](#) which protect patient safety and the quality of the delivered medicine comprises *inter alia* standards for:

- the responsibilities for, and ways of, delivery;
- appropriate counselling of, and information, for patients;
- mandatory notification of adverse effects, interactions, warnings, recalls and quality defects of mail-order traded medicines by the patient and to the patient;
- exclusion of unsuitable medicines from the mail order-trade;
- marketing and advertising of mail order services;
- handling of prescriptions for mail order trading in prescription-only medicines;
- facilitation of international co-operation.

With a view to the global nature of the mail-order trade and of implications for consumers and patients, the above standards are referred to in the [Council of Europe's submission to the Internet Governance Forum](#), which takes place from 12 to 15 November in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil).

Above all, an informed and conscientious consumer or patient is the key to avoiding risks for his or her health: the Council of Europe has developed a practical tool (available also in German, Russian and Spanish) for the consumer to avoid medicines from illegal or not-controllable distribution channels.

Link to more [information](#) (see in particular [Core message of user-oriented guidance](#)).

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