

**Question for written answer E-000114/2023
to the Commission**
Rule 138
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Subject: Shortage of medicines in Greece and the EU

A significant and ongoing shortage of over 150 pharmaceutical products has been recorded in Greece. The problem is affecting the entire EU, which has recorded a 20-fold increase in shortages between 2000-2018.

As early as 2020 – in the midst of a pandemic – the EU was acknowledging the enormous shortfall in supply, attributing it to shortages of raw materials compounded by increased demand.

Most of the medicines affected are intended for patients whose lives would be placed at enormous risk should their treatment be interrupted (those on antihypertensives, antidepressants, antipyretics, antineoplastics, etc.).

The root cause of the problem is the capitalist strategy of turning medicines into a highly expensive commodity, thereby generating massive profits for those manufacturing and trading in pharmaceuticals.

As a result, patents (regarded as necessary to maintain corporate profit margins) are being extended at the cost of a steady deterioration of public health systems.

In view of this:

What view does the Commission take of EU and government strategies that treat medicine a commodity, fuelling competition between corporations and leaving patients caught between shortages of medicines on the one hand and price increases on the other? shortages or price increases of medicines?

What is its position regarding calls for an end to parallel exports of medicines and price increases for the ostensible purpose of ensuring sufficient supply and for the provision of medicines free of charge to those who need them?

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