WRITTEN QUESTION P-3704/09
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to the Commission

Subject: Counterfeit medicines

Counterfeit medicines are a major threat to public health and safety. The EU is facing the problem that counterfeiting methods are becoming more sophisticated. The risk of counterfeit medicines entering the EU through illegal distribution channels increases every year. The European Commission is aware of this problem and came up with an amendment of Directive 2001/83/EC[1] of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 November 2001 on the Community code relating to medicinal products for human use. The actual proposal was announced in autumn 2008 and was sent to the European Parliament in December 2008 (COM(2008)668). The aim of this proposal is to address in particular the risk of counterfeit medicines entering the legal supply chain of medicines in the EU.

As the main portal for counterfeit medicines entering the legal supply chain of medicines in the EU is primarily (80%, as a recent study by the German Federal Criminal Police Office shows) the internet, is the European Commission doing enough to protect the consumer from that source of danger?

Is the European Commission aware that listing internet pharmacies and certifying internet websites would hinder illegal internet trade and be an efficient tool against the main source of counterfeit medicine in the EU? And if so, what is the action plan for implementing such an instrument?

[1] OJ L 311, 28.11.2001, p. 67.