Medicines for Children: Everything to do!

- **Experts demand comprehensive research, especially longitudinal studies**
- **International coordination of research activities must be improved**

An international panel of experts at the 9th European Health Forum Gastein (EHFG) in Bad Hofgastein assessed the new EU Regulation on Paediatric Medicines extremely positively. However, the panel also stressed that much more needs to be done to achieve the overall goal of making standards of safety and effectiveness equivalent to those for adult medications.

To summarize, Peter Stephens of IMS Health, a leading provider of business intelligence and strategic support for the pharmaceutical and healthcare industries, said that "the regulation is a significant development in children's medicines but it is simply a starting point. We need to ensure that the incentives to manufacturers actually work in practice, we need to develop effective tools for paediatric drug safety and it is essential that there is collaboration between all parties if medicines are to be prescribed, dispensed and administered without error."

According to the experts at the EHFG, the EU's largest congress on health policy, the main challenges for improvement of paediatric medicines are:

- The areas of the Paediatric Use Marketing Authorisation (PUMA) need to be clarified if the financial opportunities are to outweigh the risks;
- Further work on the coordination of research is essential if the potential of cross country studies is to be realised;
- Longitudinal studies are particularly essential to the safe use of drugs and this in turn means greater use of computerisation in health care systems;
- Consistency in interpretation of the Data Protection Directive across member states is essential if sufficient information is to be gathered on adverse drug reactions;
- A practical approach needs to be found to ensure that there is a common understanding between patients, researchers, policy makers and health care professionals concerning the vital need for research and the appropriate management of disease;
- This information needs to be tailored in particular to the needs of the patient and should harness the power of the media to develop trust and thus effective treatment and clinical trial recruitment;
- Health care professionals should work together collaboratively in multidisciplinary clinical teams and this in turn requires a more structured approach to training and practice.

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Further press information on the EHFG and pictures can also be found at www.ehfg.org

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Notes to Editors

IMS HEALTH: IMS Health is the world's leading provider of business intelligence and strategic support for the pharmaceutical and healthcare industries including government agencies. With a presence in more than 100 countries and nearly 50 years of experience, IMS applies leading-edge technologies which consultants utilise to transform billions of healthcare transactions collected from thousands of sources into strategic insights. Interpreted and analysed by IMS experts, these insights are an unmatched source of facts, figures, trends and perspectives about the pharmaceuticals marketplace

The Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union (PGEU): PGEU is the European association representing community pharmacists. PGEU's members are the national associations and professional bodies of community pharmacists in 29 European countries including EU Member States, EU candidate countries and EFTA members. Through its members, PGEU represents around 400,000 community pharmacists contributing to the health of over 500 million people throughout Europe. PGEU's objective is to promote the role of the pharmacists as key players in healthcare systems throughout Europe and to ensure that the views of the pharmacy profession are taken into account in the EU decision making process.

Task-force European Drug Development for the Young (TEDDY): TEDDY is a European Network of Excellence funded by the European Commission under the Sixth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (FP6). The project started in June 2005, and is expected to run until 2010. It involves 17 partners from 9 EU countries, Romania and Israel. The overall aim of TEDDY is to promote the availability of safe and effective medicines for children in Europe by integrating existing expertise and good practices, as well as encouraging further developments.