

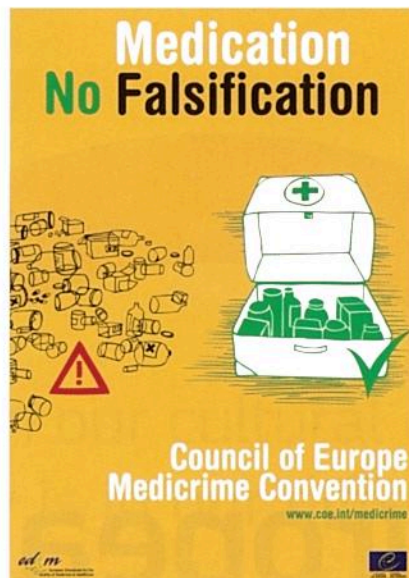
COUNTERFEIT MEDICINES AND THE MEDICRIME CONVENTION

Counterfeit medicines and medical devices pose a public health hazard. Patients can experience a wide variety of problems from the use of counterfeit products. Either they harm consumers because they do not contain the active ingredients to resolve a health issue, or they can contain harmful ingredients - such as bacteria or toxins - with serious consequences. The prevalence of counterfeit medicines is increasing, especially with the expansion of the internet and has become a worldwide problem.

The European Healthcare Fraud and Corruption Network (EHFCN) wants to increase public awareness and improve international cooperation to confront counterfeiting medicines and counter this scourge.

The MEDICRIME Convention is an important step in the right direction. EHFCN strongly supports this initiative of the Council of Europe and encourages all countries to sign and ratify the MEDICRIME Convention.

Given its lucrative character, the counterfeiting/falsification of medical products and similar crimes is an emerging global threat facing the international community. The control by criminal networks of both the production and trade of counterfeit goods facilitates the infiltration of these counterfeit medical products



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into the legal supply chain and their sale as authentic products. The opacity of these networks makes it difficult to combat these new crimes.

Aimed at protecting public health, the Council of Europe Convention on the counterfeiting of medical products and similar crimes involving threats to public health (MEDICRIME Convention) is the first international criminal law instrument in the field and criminalises a number of behaviours, such as:

- the manufacturing of counterfeit medical products;
- supplying, offering to supply and trafficking in counterfeit medical products;

- falsification of documents;
- the unauthorised manufacturing or supplying of medicinal products and the marketing of medical devices that do not comply with conformity requirements.

The MEDICRIME convention's main goals are to criminalise certain acts, protect the rights of victims, and promote national and international co-operation. It will enter into force on 1 January 2016, following its ratification by 5 States (Hungary, Moldova, Spain, Ukraine and Guinea).

By establishing a legal framework for both national and international co-operation between the competent justice, health and law-enforcement authorities, the MEDICRIME Convention opens the way to a co-ordinated global fight against a traffic which appears to be considerably more lucrative than trafficking in drugs or in arms.

Counterfeited medical products are creating a worldwide pandemic and the MEDICRIME Convention, is, to date, the only effective cure to this. Its entry into force is a significant step forward since this imposes its execution on the Parties, but it is more than ever necessary that other States sign and ratify this text so that the Group of Parties, which will monitor its enforcement, can be set up.



The Council of Europe has 47 member states, covering virtually the entire continent of Europe. It seeks to develop common democratic and legal principles based on the European Convention on Human Rights and other reference texts on the protection of individuals. Ever since it was founded in 1949, in the aftermath of the Second World War, the Council of Europe has symbolised reconciliation.

The European Healthcare Fraud & Corruption Network, a not for profit international association founded in 2005 and counting 16 members, aims at improving European healthcare systems by reducing losses to fraud, waste and corruption. Its objective is to help members to be more efficient and effective in their work of prevention, detection, investigation, sanctioning and redress of healthcare fraud, waste and corruption.



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