

Press Release

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International Conference on counterfeit medical products paves the way to landmark convention aimed at protecting public health

Basel (Switzerland), 16.04.2010 - More than 140 participants, senior officials from health, law enforcement and judicial authorities from around 40 states, international organisations and institutions from around the world came together on 15 and 16 April 2010 in Basel to discuss the practical implementation of the future Council of Europe MEDICRIME Convention.

The event was organised under the aegis of the Swiss Chairmanship of the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers by Swissmedic, Swiss Agency for Therapeutic Products, and the Council of Europe.

The Council of Europe has for a long time been involved in finding appropriate answers to the serious problems posed by counterfeiting of medical products and other threats to public health.

The MEDICRIME Convention is the first international instrument providing for the criminalisation of counterfeiting of medical products and similar crimes in order to protect public health and establishing a framework for international co-operation on criminal law matters between Parties in this regard.

The convention will also be open for accession to states not members of the Council of Europe.

Medical products in the context of the convention include medicinal products, medical devices as well as active ingredients and excipients used in the manufacture of these products.

The substantive criminal law provisions included in the MEDICRIME Convention cover not only the counterfeiting of medical products but also the supplying and trafficking thereof as well as the falsification of documents linked to medical products. In addition, they cover the manufacturing and supplying of medical products without authorisation.

The convention also foresees preventive measures including the introduction of quality and safety requirements for medical products and measures ensuring their safe distribution. The latter could comprise adequate traceability systems of a medical product to its source and risk management and prevention strategies like multisectorial training. Preventive measures also comprise awareness-raising campaigns, supervision of the distribution chain, agreements with Internet service providers and domain registrars. The convention invite Parties to take measures to protect the rights of victims, including their rights to compensation from their perpetrators.

The importance of international cooperation to successfully combat counterfeited medical products was underlined in the presentations and discussions.

More information is available at www.coe.int/medicrime

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