



16 March 2011, Strasbourg, France

Note for the Editors: Further information is available on the internet site: www.edqm.eu

50TH MEETING OF THE COMMITTEE OF EXPERTS ON THE CLASSIFICATION OF MEDICINES AS REGARDS THEIR SUPPLY (STRASBOURG, 15-16 MARCH 2011)

The classification whether medicines require a medical prescription or can be sold over the counter is the responsibility of the national health authorities in Europe. Across the continent, authorities use different approaches for this classification.

The EDQM's Committee of Experts on the classification of medicines as regards their supply held its 50th meeting on March 15, 2011. A pioneer in this field, the Council of Europe has been involved in the classification of medicines since 1961 and has inspired relevant EU legislation. In the work programme, the issue of annual recommendations to health authorities for the classification of medicines and establishment of good classification practices are given high priority. The recommendations are for authorities to be considered in national legislation and a reference for industry. Scientific and public health based approaches, taking account of the classification by individual authorities, are used to establish recommendations for about 2400 medicines. These recommendations are published on: www.edqm.eu/melclass. Authorities and industry are encouraged to send specific comments and information to the EDQM at: melclass@edqm.eu.

The Committee of Experts¹ in charge of this programme is composed of members from several countries in Europe including non-EU members. Its work contributes to promote patient safety and, where appropriate, harmonises access to medicines without a prescription across Europe, which helps foster public health and manage healthcare resources responsibly.

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Note for the Editor: The EDQM is a leading organisation that protects public health by enabling development, supporting implementation, and monitoring the application of quality standards for safe medicines and their safe use. Our standards are recognised as a scientific benchmark world-wide. The European Pharmacopoeia² is legally-binding in European Member States. Similarly, the EDQM develops guidance and standards in the areas of blood transfusion, organ transplantation and consumer health issues.

A political organisation set up in 1949, the Council of Europe works to promote democracy and human rights continent-wide. It also develops common responses to social, cultural and legal challenges in its 47 member states.

¹ Committee of Ministers Resolution ResAP(2007)1. [More information.](#)

²There are currently thirty-seven members of the European Pharmacopoeia Commission: Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Kingdom and the European Union and twenty-three observers: The World Health Organization (WHO); 6 member states of the Council of Europe: Albania, Armenia, Georgia, Moldova, Russian Federation and Ukraine; 16 other countries in the world: Algeria, Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China, Israel, Madagascar, Malaysia, Morocco, Republic of Belarus, Republic of Kazakhstan, Senegal, Syria, Tunisia, United States of America.