



Strasbourg, 20/01/2010

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

**EDQM AND INFARMED JOIN EFFORTS TO TRAIN OFFICIALS IN WAYS TO FIGHT COUNTERFEIT MEDICINES AND PROTECT PUBLIC HEALTH
21-22 JANUARY 2010, LISBON, PORTUGAL**

The European Directorate for the Quality of Medicines & HealthCare (EDQM, Council of Europe) is organising a regional training on 'Best practices to combat counterfeit medicines and to protect public health'. The training will be hosted and co-organised with the Portuguese National Authority of Medicines and Health Products (Autoridade Nacional do Medicamento e Produtos de Saúde, INFARMED) on 21 and 22 January 2010. This is the first time this training concept will be delivered at a regional level involving participants not only from Europe but beyond, for example from the Portuguese speaking countries in Africa (Angola, Cap Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe) and countries in South America (Brazil, Chile, Mexico and Peru).

The training aims at increasing awareness of counterfeit medicines among representatives from drug regulatory authorities, police and customs authorities, suggesting best practices, discussing areas and ways of improving co-operation, and offering a forum for interactive discussions and sharing of experiences. During the two days, the participants will discuss case studies based on real situations and will be encouraged to use multisectorial networking through single points of contact (SPOCs).

Counterfeiting of medicines endangers public health and this training concept is a key part of the EDQM's efforts to protect and promote public health and tackle the threats to public health posed by counterfeit medicines and similar crimes. With the support of national authorities, the EDQM regularly organises such trainings to help countries to more effectively fight counterfeit medicines. Several training courses have already been organised for Council of Europe member states since 2007 and more than 100 officials from 40 member states have completed the training to date.

On a more general level, the Council of Europe is preparing an international legally binding treaty, a convention against counterfeiting of medical products and related crimes involving threats to public health, which will also be open to participation by non-member states beyond Europe. It is expected to be opened for signature in 2010.

Contact EDQM: Caroline Larsen Le-Tarnec,
Public Relations Division
Tel.: +33 (0) 3 88 41 28 15
E-mail: caroline.letarnec@edqm.eu
<http://www.edqm.eu>

Contact INFARMED: Pedro Faleiro
Information and Communication Department
Tel.: + (351) 21 798 71 33
E-mail: pedro.faleiro@infarmed.pt
<http://www.infarmed.pt>

Note for the Editors

The work of the EDQM effectively contributes to combating the counterfeiting of medicines and similar crimes by establishing coordination at various levels between European states:

- the elaboration of common, mandatory quality standards for all medicines (European Pharmacopoeia, covering over 2000 medicinal substances) and reference materials;
- the establishment of a cooperation system between Official Medicines Control Laboratories, OMCL in Europe (approximately 80 laboratories in 35 countries);
- the carrying out of a programme of activities to assist member states in the prevention and management of public health risks posed by counterfeit medicines and similar crimes by the Committee of experts on minimising public health risks posed by counterfeiting of medicines and related crimes. The current working priorities are coherent and comprise the fostering of cooperation, through multidisciplinary networking between concerned health and law enforcement authorities, facilitating communication between authorities, stakeholders of the pharmaceutical manufacturing and distribution chain and building up intelligence and knowledge helping authorities to ensure public health protection from the above crimes.

Through its activities to combat counterfeit medicines and similar crimes involving threats to public health, the Council of Europe is making an active contribution to the implementation of a high-level requirement for the protection of public health and the promotion of human rights and human dignity.

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.