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Note for the Editors

Further information will be available on the website: www.edqm.eu

EDQM AND WHO ANNOUNCE NEW COLLABORATION

The European Directorate for the Quality of Medicines & HealthCare (EDQM), Council of Europe and the World Health Organization (WHO) are pleased to announce that EDQM is now responsible for the distribution of WHO's International Chemical Reference Substances (ICRS).

“WHO values the technical expertise and experience of EDQM in establishing primary reference standards. Our new collaboration will enhance science, and, most important of all, benefit patients worldwide” says Dr Carissa Etienne, Assistant Director-General, WHO.

The EDQM takes over responsibility for the establishment, preparation, storage and distribution of WHO ICRS from Apoteket AB, previously the WHO Collaborating Centre for ICRS. Reference material that was held and distributed by Apoteket AB will now be distributed by the EDQM.

“This new arrangement illustrates the close ties, cooperative spirit and mutual trust that exist between the two organisations” says Dr Susanne Keitel, Director, EDQM.

ICRS are adopted by the WHO Expert Committee on Specifications for Pharmaceutical Preparations. They are supplied primarily for use in physical and chemical tests and assays described in the specifications for quality control of drugs published in *The International Pharmacopoeia* or proposed in draft monographs.

The EDQM will also organise international collaborative studies to establish new standards, when required with WHO's assistance.

For more information on the availability of standards, please consult the ICRS webpage at: www.edqm.eu. An online catalogue of ICRS including information on storage conditions, dispatch conditions, price and availability and Safety Data Sheets (SDS) will be available end of April 2010 for users.

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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.