

# Greek Drugs Stuck at an 18% Share in the Market

The financial crisis in our country counts 5 years already, having left its permanent mark on Greek society and inflicted severe consequences in the sensitive sector of pharmaceutical care.

In these new conditions it is imperative to seek out solutions that will reverse the current stark reality, to apply measures that will break the deadlocks in the pharmaceuticals policy and will establish Greek drugs as a lever for growth. The Greek pharmaceutical industry has the potential to be one of the mainstays of development planning for 2020.

Over the last 10 years the deficit in the trade balance of drugs has reached €2.5 billion, an amount which is unquestionably not in keeping with a country deeply in debt and with a significant, long-year know-how in drug production as well. Greek drugs are stuck at an 18% share in the market; as a result, pharmaceutical treatments are monopolized by expensive imported drugs. This has had multiple negative consequences both on society and on national economy. This is why it is imperative to reverse it. The Pan-Hellenic Union of Pharmaceutical Industries (PEF) deems that the current disincentives of the pharmaceuticals policy should be lifted immediately and that development regulations should be put in place to boost branded, innovative, quality Greek drugs.



## Imports

It makes no sense to import products that we can produce, nor does it benefit our country. Stifling fiscal targets impose the proper allocation of funds to the avail of sufferers and national economy as well. In this direction, PEF is ready and determined to sign a Social Business Contract that would bind it to take concrete social, financial and development action. Acknowledging its role as a social partner and with cost-accounted proposals to the Greek government, it commits to helping normalize the pharmaceutical market and to take active part in the pursuit of a dynamic re-boot to the advantage of society and economy.

In a context of dynamic partnerships between state, businesses, the scientific world and human resources in the pursuit of development, the Greek pharmaceutical industry primarily commits:

- To cover adequately 70% of primary healthcare pharmaceutical needs and 50% of hospital care needs with quality drugs at low prices, which will also entail lower contributions by sufferers.
- To carry out new investments.
- To boost employment.
- To implement research and innovation programs utilizing the country's academic and scientific potential.
- To enhance the orientation of the Greek pharmaceutical industry on exports.

Counting €800 million in investment operations in the last decade, generating €2.8 billion of GDP per year, and accounting for 55,000 jobs directly or indirectly, the Greek pharmaceutical industry can fulfill the role of national leader in the endeavor to exit the crisis. Having acquired valuable know-how in the production of innovative drugs, the 27 production plants of the Greek pharmaceutical industry enjoy a particularly competitive status in the international market; as a result the sector ranks #2 in exports in our economy, exporting to 85 countries worldwide.

### **Greek enterprises**

The Greek pharmaceutical industry is a sector primarily comprised of family enterprises. It is proud to manufacture branded, reliable, innovative, reasonably priced and internationally acclaimed drugs. It is proud to have retained its staff and to be sustaining employment through the economic crisis. Proud to carry on investing. Proud, during this period, to develop and support many research projects where hundreds of Greek scientists take part, and to service innovation. Proud to be a leader in exports.

Having said that, Greek drugs are still in an extremely adverse position in the Greek market. And this is on account of a wrong pharmaceuticals policy implemented across time in our country. The overwhelming price cuts, ongoing rebates and clawbacks, combined with direct taxation and levies create a total burden on the Greek pharmaceutical industry in excess of 55%. Meanwhile, the drug supply system from hospitals creates a monopoly of imported drugs, and there are immense delays in licensing Greek drugs, no dynamic policy to raise awareness about the use of generics, and prescriptions are implemented on the basis of the active ingredient, all of which lead domestic production to deadlock.

We believe it is time to reverse the current situation and to establish Greek drugs as the definitive solution for Health, society and development. We are ready to contribute to this.

With a plan materialized in a mere 6 months and without incurring any extra cost for the Greek state, conversely, offering multiple benefits, the Greek pharmaceutical industry wants to confirm in practice that it can be a lever for development.

In this context, it is necessary to treat Greek drugs as investing in the future, not just as spending. The next measures to be taken need to be geared to create a strong, competitive exporting domestic pharmaceutical industry. It is in the power of the Greek state to set the foundations for Greece 2020. With lucid political decisions that will allow a boost ahead. In this direction, the Greek pharmaceutical industry will help materialize those policies that provide solutions to the Greece of tomorrow.



**ARTICLE BY THEODORE TRYFON**

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