

Dutch Government Not Living up to Promises to Make New Medicines Affordable

Netherlands leads EU on commitments to improving transparency and affordability of medicines, but meaningful action still lacking

AMSTERDAM—[New research](#) by Health Action International (HAI) has found that the Dutch government is failing to live up to its commitments to tackle the astronomical prices of new medicines and address the lack of transparency in the medicine pricing system.

The Netherlands has led the European field in calling for action to make patented medicines affordable and to improve transparency of costs of research and development (R&D) and pricing decisions. But strong words have rarely led to genuine action. Meanwhile, patients, hospitals and insurers still face exorbitant prices for life-saving medicines or uncertainty regarding reimbursement.

[New and Affordable Medicines in the Netherlands: Tracing the Dutch Government's Policy Commitments and Actions](#), part of HAI's *Our Medicines, Our Right* campaign, recognises positive aspects of the Dutch approach, including commitment to Beneluxai—an initiative between five European Union Member States working together to lower medicine procurement prices. The first steps have also been taken to tackle anti-competitive behaviour among pharmaceutical companies, however, more needs to be done in order for patients and payers to feel more tangible benefits.

“The Netherlands has taken positive strides in its approach to expensive medicines. But what is needed now is more than just rhetoric, we need action,” said HAI Executive Director, Dr Tim Reed. “Ministers and lawmakers, across the political divide, clearly recognise that we face a major public health and finance challenge that affects everyone. This report will help hold them accountable for delivering on their promises, and offers clear recommendations on how to do that.”

Among the recommendations for improving affordability of new medicines are supporting new models of innovation, tackling anti-competitive behaviour, ensuring increased transparency of the cost of R&D and pricing decisions, and remaining at the forefront of the European and global debate on access to medicines.

The *Our Medicines, Our Right* campaign was launched in 2017 to raise awareness and call for action to tackle the high price of new medicines. The campaign is endorsed by over a dozen Dutch organisations active in the field of public health. A public petition calling for specific actions from the government has so far been signed by over two thousand people.

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