

How the Netherlands and other EU Governments Respond to the Challenge of Sustainable Access to Medicines

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In 2018, Health Action International (HAI) issued a [report](#) tracing the fulfillment of Dutch government promises and commitments on access to medicines, looking at how they had fared on a number of relevant issues. Following this, in 2019, HAI issued a [policy paper](#) focusing on a few key areas and assessing whether any further progress had been made by the Netherlands in fulfilling its goals.

The 2019 paper estimated that while there had been some important advancements in competition policy, results were more mixed in intellectual property (IP) and improvements were needed to support alternative innovation mechanisms and pricing policy to reduce the cost of expensive medicine prices to the public.

The Netherlands is not alone in attempting to address the impact of excessively high prices of medicines by enacting measures to achieve greater transparency or by taking action to ensure competition in pharmaceutical markets. Elsewhere in the European Union (EU), national authorities are responding to the demands of civil society and public opinion to seek a balance between private profits and public interests.

Developments at the global level, such as the adoption of a resolution on transparency of pharmaceutical markets at the [World Health Organization](#) and discussions, initiatives and actions by EU institutions complete a framework for action in which EU regulations play a major role.

[Read more about high prices of expensive medicine prices and the challenge of sustainable access to medicines](#)