Transparency and Medicines Policy in the EU

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Transparency is crucial at every step along the research and development (R&D) continuum: whether we are talking about public investment in research clinical trials data, regulatory practices, or the content of procurement negotiations. However, transparency is a means, not an end: a means to bring about change for more sustainable, patient-centred healthcare systems that ensure affordable access to safe, effective, quality-assured medicines for everyone, everywhere. This paper gives an overview of the progress that has been made towards that goal over the last two years.

Specifically, we look at the challenges faced since 2019, including for transparency of clinical trial data and for procurement of health technologies, in particular vaccines against COVID-19. We also examine the opportunities that have a risen, not least in the form of the landmark Transparency Resolution, passed at the 72nd World Health Assembly.

We close by looking at what comes next, and what we expect of the European Commission, Member States and Civil Society to ensure the promises made for the promotion of transparency are kept.

Transparency is a critical tenet of a just health care system, and a means to improve public health by enabling access to medicines for everyone, everywhere. The role of civil society and all those stakeholders, both in the Commission and among Member States, who agree with the importance of transparency, is to ensure that the positive steps—made in spite of the extraordinary circumstances of the last two years—are built upon.

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