

An insightful day at the EURIPID stakeholder meeting in Budapest

In September, stakeholders representing **National authorities**, Patients' Organisations, **NGOs**, **Pharmaceutical Industry Associations**, **Third Party Payers**, Associations of Distributors and Doctor's Associations came together in Budapest to discuss the way forward for **EURIPID**– a database in **which European countries** can voluntarily upload **national pricing data of medicinal products**. The meeting was joined by a representative of the World Health Organization (WHO) who presented their work to implement the **WHO Transparency Resolution**, which includes facilitating discussions on the **definition of a 'fair price'**, hosting of the Fair Pricing Forum (the latest edition of which was **held in South Africa earlier this year**) and establishing working groups on issues affecting access to medicines. Stakeholders together explored how the EURIPID database could **be instrumental for countries** when moving towards improved **price transparency**. At the moment, the EURIPID database contains **official prices of medicinal products**, which differ from the **actual prices**, since many countries negotiate with companies to get rebates and discounts. The EURIPID team wants to take a **step-by-step** approach towards **more transparency**. From some corners of the room, voices questioned the effectiveness of transparency, warning of the **'unintended consequences'** for access to medicines. **Meanwhile others, including HAI, pressed for more** transparency and the inclusion of real price data in the database. As things currently stand, authorities are not aware of the prices paid by other countries, putting them at risk of **paying excessive prices**. Knowing the real prices could strengthen **the negotiating position** of countries, which will lead to fairer prices benefitting the sustainability of health systems and, therefore, patients. Governments hold increasingly favourable attitudes towards price transparency, not least as seen through **the adoption of the WHO transparency resolution** at this year's **World Health Assembly**, mentioned above. In the current system, however, they are bound by **confidentiality agreements** as a lure to get the 'best price', effectively disabling the inclusion of 'real prices' in the database.

We believe strongly that transparency isn't an end in itself, but an effective means to improve access to life-saving medicines that risk remaining out of reach of far too many.