

Trump's call for essential drugs to be made in US threatens innovation, says trade group

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Rapid response by Lucas van der Hoeven.

Dear Editor,

the warning by Stephen Ubl, president of PhRMA (the drug industry organisation) is false on the following misconceptions.

1. Roughly 80% of all pharmaceutical prescriptions in the US and Europe are generics
2. Most of the funding pharmaceutical research is still done at NIH and the universities in US and Europe. So the basic pharmaceutical knowledge for NCE's is still very much present in the OECD-countries.
3. The quality controls of the bulk pharmaceutical products from India and China are leaking. Even FDA and EMA are not capable to control e.g. the more than 40.000 pharmaceutical companies in China (K. Eban, "Bottle of Lies" ; R. Gibson, J. Prasad Singh "China Rx").
4. Now about 90% of all pharmaceuticals in OECD are imported from China and India. So in times of crisis – like Covid-19 – brings the extreme dependence to the lime light. What to do if China or India stops the export of basic pharmaceuticals in times of international political upheaval?
5. In the long run the know-how in the west will be vanished away, if the present situation is being continued. Also our young scientists are not practically trained in the processing of these pharmaceuticals made in China and India. Valuable knowledge will be lost and could only be repaired at great cost.
6. Even production facilities in OECD-countries will in some time to come, not being in use or even existing anymore. So the OECD have no means to act at a short notice in case of crisis.
7. So it is a sound policy to keep on producing strategically important and necessary goods – at least for a large portion – in our OECD-countries.

Lucas van der Hoeven; freelance journalist.

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News

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The trade group for the US pharmaceutical industry has warned that President Donald Trump's latest executive order calling for essential drugs to be manufactured in the US will stifle innovation.

The executive order, issued on 6 August,¹ followed four other executive orders designed to reduce drug prices, which all seem to be part of Trump's appeal to voters in the November

election. All require further action by government agencies and may be challenged in the courts so are unlikely to take effect any time soon.

Stephen Ubl, president of PhRMA, the drug industry organisation, said that Trump's "buy American" executive order "creates even more barriers to ongoing biopharmaceutical manufacturing and innovation." He said, "Companies are working around the clock to ...