

Northern Ireland Affairs Committee

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By email only

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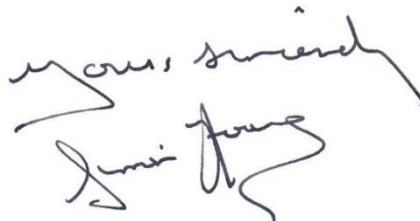
Dear Sirs,

Last week the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee took evidence from the Association of the British Pharmaceutical Industry (ABPI) regarding the supply of medicines to Northern Ireland under the Protocol on Ireland/Northern Ireland.

The Committee noted the recent agreement in the Specialised Committee on the Protocol of a phased approach for implementing medicines regulation in Northern Ireland until the end of 2021, and discussed this development with industry representatives. The Committee was pleased to hear that, based on the industry's understanding of what has been agreed, this approach will allow patients in Northern Ireland the same access to medicines as they currently enjoy until the end of next year.

This is welcome news, and we commend the Specialised Committee for reaching this agreement. Given the importance of this issue to patients and suppliers, and in the interests of clarity and scrutiny, it would be helpful for further details of this agreement to be made available as soon as possible. The Committee would be grateful if the Specialised Committee could indicate when a draft legal text for this agreement will be published, and if this text could be shared with industry stakeholders at the first opportunity.

At our meeting the Committee also heard calls from the industry for the EU and UK to reach an agreement on mutual recognition of assessments of pharmaceutical products. We share the sector's view that this would prevent unnecessary duplication of inspections, which could otherwise create a technical barrier to the marketing of medicines in Northern Ireland. We hope that the needs of patients in Northern Ireland will be taken into considering during negotiations on the future relationship. We also note that a mutual recognition agreement would allow the continued access to approved medicines of more than 3 million EU citizens currently living in the United Kingdom, and that there are therefore clear benefits to negotiating such an agreement for both the UK and the EU.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Simon Hoare', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Simon Hoare MP
Chairman, Northern Ireland Affairs Committee