

Summer 2009

Newsletter



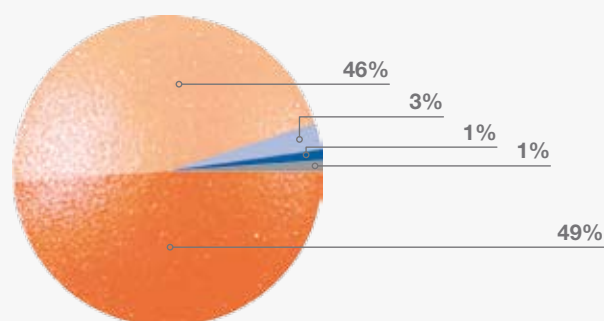
Jim Thomson, EAASM Chair – in the media European politicians show support for action on fake medicines

‘In an unprecedented display of unanimity, current and prospective MEPs have spoken, pledging their support for action to protect patients’ *Jim Thomson, Chair, EAASM*

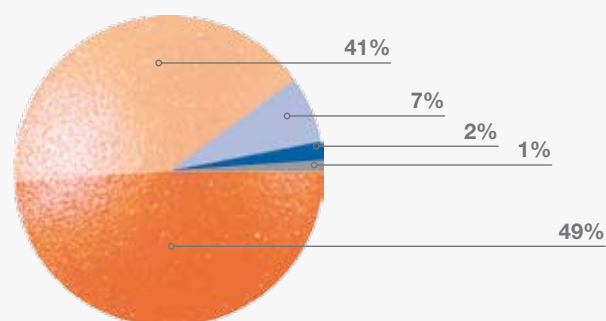
The European Alliance for Access to Safe Medicines recently commissioned ComRes to undertake a survey of 140 incumbent MEPs and candidates standing for election in the recent June ballots. The aim was to better understand the appetite among MEPs in the coming parliamentary 2009–2014 session for legislation to combat the availability and risks of counterfeit and repackaged pharmaceuticals.

The message received from these MEPs was clear:

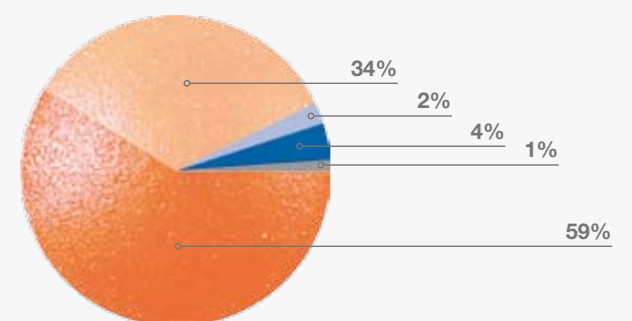
★ 95% either agree or agree strongly that counterfeit medicines ‘pose a serious threat to citizens



★ 90% support action to stop their trade inside the EU’s borders



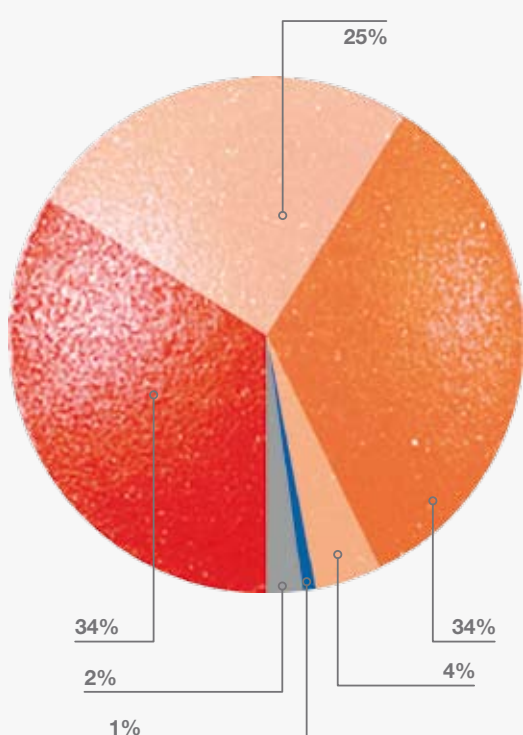
★ 85% believe legislative steps should be taken to counter the trade in counterfeit medicines



● Agree strongly ● Agree ● Disagree ● Disagree strongly ● Not stated

How do our MEPs perceive tackling counterfeit pharmaceuticals alongside the EU’s commitment to the free movement of goods?

It could be difficult to stop the trade in illegal counterfeit medicines because of the EU’s commitment to the free movement of goods. Yet three in five candidates place a greater importance upon patient safety than on the unfettered operation of the single market, which suggests an appetite for increased regulation in this field.

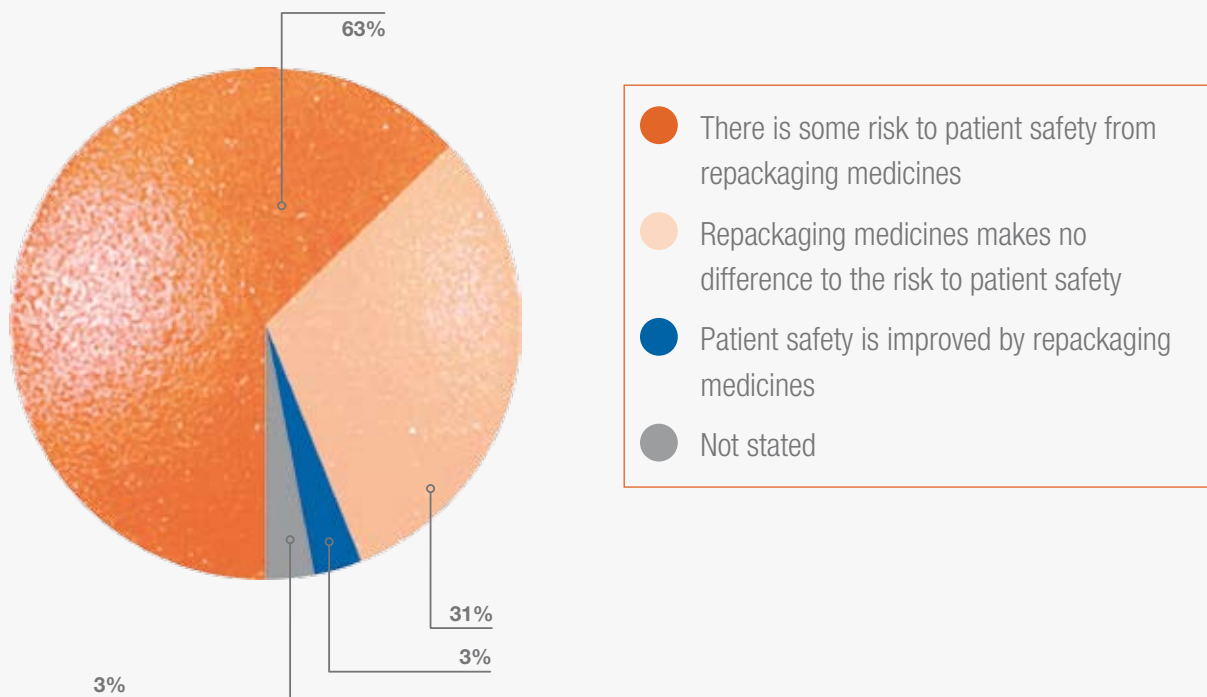


● Patient safety is always more important than the free movement of goods in the EU
 ● Patient safety is more important than the free movement of goods in most cases
 ● Patient safety and the free movement of goods are equally important
 ● The free movement of goods is more important than patient safety in most cases
 ● The free movement of goods is always more important than patient safety
 ● Not stated

Revisiting pharmaceutical repackaging

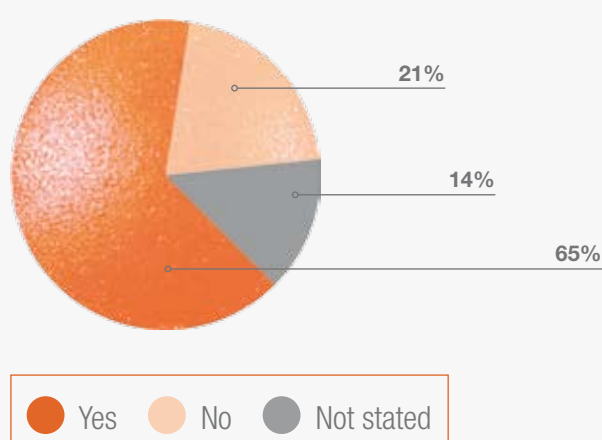
We have written about the removal of the ban on repackaging a few times in this newsletter. The ban is at odds with the information we have available on counterfeiting, and now it appears to be at odds with the views of the majority of MEPs interviewed for this survey:

- ★ Nearly two-thirds (63%) believe there is a risk to patient safety from the repackaging of medicines by organisations other than the original manufacturer

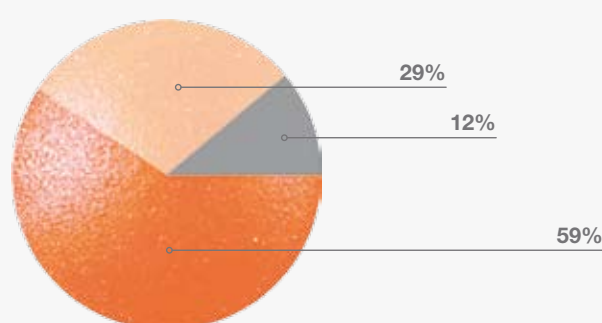


Further regulation of this field is again favoured by a significant number of MEPs interviewed:

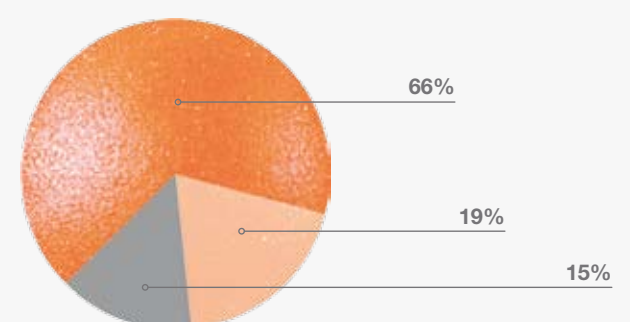
- ★ 79% support increased inspection standards for repackaged pharmaceuticals



- ★ 59% support the introduction of tamper-proof seals as a minimum safety standard



- ★ 66% believe that greater security measures should be introduced for all branded and generic prescription medicines, such as tamper-proof seals, holograms and unique package identification codes. This figure rises to 71% when concerned with medicines commonly counterfeited



With such support from public representatives, who for the next five years have responsibility for helping shape the direction of the EU's involvement in the regulation of medical standards, it is important that this opportunity is taken to deliver protection from the sustained threat to patient safety.



'It is important that their support for action to protect European patients from the dangers associated with these illegal, substandard fakes is translated into meaningful action after the June election' *Jim Thomson*

Recent visits to the EAASM's website

It has been gratifying to see some of the visitors to our website (www.eaasm.eu) finding and leveraging common ground in efforts to tackle the threat from counterfeit medicines.

The EAASM was recently contacted by a representative of the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), a specialised agency of the United Nations dedicated to developing a balanced and accessible international intellectual property system. Developing their own information leaflet on counterfeit medicines, WIPO will incorporate key elements from the EAASM patient leaflet.

In addition, the German Police Crime Prevention Programme – a joint initiative of all German States and the Federation, is currently developing awareness-raising measures with regards to the prevention of counterfeit and substandard medicine trade. They have created a link between their website and the EAASM patient leaflet.