



## Reinforcing communication with patients and healthcare professionals

23 June 2014, Belgrade, Serbia



### PRESS RELEASE

A conference organized by European Medicines Agency (EMA) and Medicines and Medical Devices Agency of Serbia (ALIMS) entitled: **“Reinforcing Communication to Patients and Healthcare Professionals”** was held in Belgrade, on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2014 as part of the project in the scope of Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) of the European Union.

The aim of this conference was to bring together in one place representatives of regulatory authorities in Serbia and region, but above all, patients organizations and associations of health care professionals. Almost 150 delegates from over 50 different organizations participated, and there were also eminent speakers and guests from over 20 EU member states and countries in pre-accession status.

The conference dealt with EMA and EU member states activities of particular importance for Serbia such as clinical trials, system relating to adverse drug reactions (pharmacovigilance), risk assessment, developing meaningful collaboration with healthcare professionals and patient associations, shortages of medicines and providing information to the public by regulatory authorities. Through lectures of distinguished experts from the EMA and other agencies for medicines and associations from EU Member States, as well as through discussion and dialogue, patients and health care professionals were able to learn about best practices and cooperation between government sector and these target groups in the EU. This event was a major step in establishing such a system in Serbia, and another form of rapprochement with the EU standards and practices in the area of medicines regulation.

In his welcome address, Deputy Executive Director of EMA, Mr. Andreas Pott stated that this event will complete the activities performed under the first phase of the IPA program, which will be followed by a second phase IPA II, ensuring continuation of pre-accession activities measures. Also, building on the success of a previous event organized in Belgrade, this conference served to highlight the work achieved by Serbia, thereby helping to complete its integration into the European regulatory network. ALIMS Managing Director, Dr. Saša Jačović, pointed out that in terms of harmonization with the European Union in its domain ALIMS achieved very much, and that thanks to its highly trained experts ALIMS can solve all the challenges that new regulations set before it and provide quality, efficacious and safe medicines to people in Serbia. He expressed belief that there are many points of contact in which the exchange of information, support and collaboration between ALIMS and patients and healthcare professionals can be of mutual benefit.

Minister of Health of Republic of Serbia Dr. Zlatibor Lončar said that on the Serbian market there are almost six thousand registered medicines, and nearly 28,000 different medical devices, and an increase in number of clinical trials and that we are constantly working to introduce new products and equipment in clinical practice, in order for patients in Serbia to have the best possible chance of healing and as diagnostics. As he said, the Ministry finances, organizes and supports projects, programs, initiatives and activities related to patients, especially those with serious and chronic illnesses and welcomes their organizations and also develops diversified cooperation with



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professional organizations of physicians, pharmacists, dentists, nurses and medical technicians that takes place on many levels.

Final address was done by Dr. Maja Vučković-Krčmar, Programming and Coordination Manager – Operations, at the Delegation of the European Union to the Republic of Serbia. The opinion of the Delegation is that National Medicines Agency of Serbia sets the right example in country's EU integration process, especially since Serbia entered the new phase of relationship with EU and launched accession negotiations and that investment into the establishment of ALIMS in line with current EU practices scores highly on the list of such efforts in Serbia.