

Promotional and informational Materials for Prescription Medication within the EU

As in any field, branding and advertisement are effective ways to promote the sales of your product. However, when it comes to pharmaceuticals, governments and the industry have a responsibility to safeguard patients against the unwanted influence of the industry.

The European Union established advertisement rules in the industry to ensure that collaboration between the industry and healthcare benefitted the general public's safety. These advertisement rules were set out in the European Directive (2001/83/EC), national legislations and the EFPIA code of conduct, set up by the European biopharmaceutical industry. Based upon the EFPIA code and the national and EU legislations, European countries have established their national codes of conduct, which will overlap in many areas. However, these national codes differ from country to country, making it necessary to check promotional materials against the national code of conduct that applies to the intended distribution area.

Evaluating material starts with determining if the material falls under the local code. This is generally the case when a direct or indirect reference to a prescription medication is made. When this is determined, a distinction must be made between who will receive the material and whether the material falls under 'promotional' or 'informational'. Advertisement is allowed towards HCPs but is prohibited towards the public. However, information about a disease or medication to the public can be nationally allowed when specific rules are obliged. Balancing these local codes of conduct can sometimes be challenging for the creator and assessor. It can sometimes be a fine line between what is acceptable and what should be adapted.

Like for any promotional and informational material, compliance with industry and national codes is also required for compiling abbreviated product information and preparing for international medical events. With respects to events the content, banners and appearance of a stand need to match with the composition of the event's audience. When the audience is mixed in HCPs and the public, it can be challenging to reach out to both audiences appropriately according to the codes.

Zwiers as part of the ProductLife Group can offer the appropriate advice and assessments for any type of material or event. Our local and regional expertise allows checking against the national codes of conduct of the industry, the Netherlands and other EU countries (like France, Italy, Germany, Spain and many more).