NOTIFICATION OF A REFERRAL UNDER ARTICLE 31 OF DIRECTIVE 2001/83/EC
FAX NUMBER –44 20 75237051

This notification is an official referral under Article 31 of Directive 2001/83/EC to the PRAC made by France -ANSM:

Active substance	Almitrine tablets via oral route (Vectarion® 50 mg tablets and related trade names)
Marketing Authorisation Holders in the referring Member State	Les laboratoires Servier

The above mentioned Member State considers that it is in the interest of the Union to refer the above mentioned range of medicinal products to the PRAC.

Almitrine, as single component and via oral route, (Vectarion® 50mg tablets) has been nationally approved in France in 1982 in the treatment of chronic respiratory failure with hypoxemia related to chronic obstructive bronchitis.
The French Health Products Agency (ANSM) has concerns regarding the benefit/risk ratio of almitrine tablets via oral route (Vectarion® 50 mg tablets).

On safety grounds, due to the risk of occurrence of peripheral neuropathy (leading to temporary invalidity with long term recovery) and weight loss (potentially severe), this product is under close monitoring in France since 1985 Despite, risk minimization measures like specific warnings and recommendations for sequential administration and maximal doses, peripheral neuropathy and/or weight loss remain major safety concerns in clinical practice.

Since the granting of the national marketing authorisations of almitrine tablets, the acquisition of knowledge has given rise to enhancement of the therapeutic armamentarium including medicinal products with different mechanisms of action, which have contributed to the improvement in COPD management and life expectancy increase.
On efficacy grounds, the existing efficacy data do not support evidence of the benefit of long-term oral treatment with almitrine in the current context.
According to French and international guidelines, long-term use of oral treatment with almitrine has no more place in the management of chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases.

Accordingly, the French Agency considers that the risk/benefit balance of almitrine tablets via oral route has become unfavorable in the treatment of chronic respiratory diseases.

Based on above, France considers that it is the interest of the Union to refer the matter to the PRAC and recommends that almitrine tablets products indicated in the treatment of chronic respiratory disease should be subject to a referral under article 31 of Directive 2001/83/EC, as amended.

Signed: Date: November 27th 2012

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Dominique Maraninchi