

Factsheet – Code Committee

The Pharma Code is proving its merit!

Based on international standards, the code of conduct of the pharmaceutical industry in Switzerland (Pharma Code) has been in existence since 2003. It sets out rules of conduct in connection with professional advertising, the organisation of events and sponsorship by pharmaceutical companies. A glance at the trend in the number of cases¹ shows that self-regulation is proving successful:

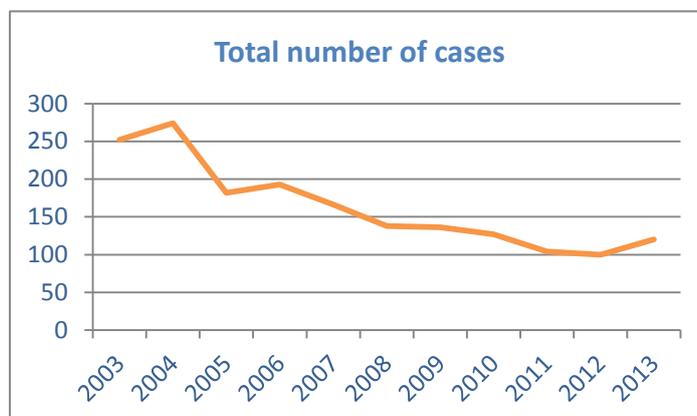
- **Case numbers have been falling sharply throughout the period**
- **In 2013 there were again no serious breaches**
- **Cases are being dealt with efficiently, quickly and at reasonable cost**
- **The self-regulating system is accepted by Swissmedic**
- **Complex cases before State bodies with an impact on the public can be largely avoided**

This must be regarded as a welcome success. However, it would be wrong to be merely satisfied with the existing achievements. Last year the number of cases rose again.

Admittedly, some of the cases and complaints are attributable to differences of opinion in the interpretation of the Code; that is only natural with regulatory provisions and cannot be avoided altogether. However, persons in positions of responsibility in the companies should be aware that **66 complaints were still dealt with in 2013 because of the failure of professional advertising to comply with quality requirements** and could have been avoided if due diligence had been applied. Two kinds of breaches of the rules are particularly noteworthy:

- Unsupported statements in professional advertising (16 cases)
- Wrongly quoted references in professional advertising (17 cases)

The Code Committee of the Association of the Pharmaceutical Industry in Switzerland recognises the efforts made by the companies and the responsible persons in this matter. At the same time it calls upon them to take further action to ensure compliance with the rules of conduct set out in the Pharma Code. **Efforts made in the service of fair conduct on the market pay dividends in the long term with a view to public perception and political reaction – especially for the companies themselves.**



¹ A detailed summary of case numbers for the year 2013 can be requested from the Code Secretariat at scienceindustries.