

EU to slap big fine on French drugmaker Servier: sources

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The EU is expected to inflict a heavy fine in the coming days on French drugs giant Servier for colluding to delay a cheaper version of a popular blood-pressure treatment, sources close to the matter told AFP on Tuesday.

The European Commission will decide on the fine before the end of the month, the sources said. Israeli generic giant Teva and three other companies are also involved in the case.

Servier is suspected of trying to delay the [generic version](#) of perindopril, a cardio-vascular medicine. The allegation is the result of a broad EU probe into the pharmaceutical industry launched in 2008.

Generic products are far cheaper than brand medicines—on average generics cost 40 percent less two years after they enter the market—and are a huge savings to patients and [health care providers](#) while remaining just as effective.

In so-called pay-for-delay deals, drug makers pay generic rivals to thwart the introduction of cheaper versions of blockbuster drugs for an agreed time.

If Servier is found guilty in the collusion it faces heavy fines of up to 10 percent of the group's total annual sales.

A year ago, Danish drugmaker Lundbeck was fined 93.8 million euros

by the Commission for striking a 2002 agreement to delay the generic version of its popular anti-depressant, citalopram.

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