



PGEU PRESS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

PGEU welcomes Health at a Glance: Europe 2016

The Pharmaceutical Group of the European Union (PGEU) is the European association representing more than 400,000 community pharmacists.

PGEU's members are the national associations and professional bodies of pharmacists in 33 European countries, including EU Member States, EEA/EFTA members and EU applicant countries.

For more information, please visit the PGEU website www.pgeu.eu or contact j.svarcaite@pgeu.eu



Brussels, November 23, 2016: PGEU welcomes the OECD and European Commission report "Health at a Glance: Europe 2016", which was released today. PGEU strongly supports the call to strengthen EU primary care systems and expand the role of community pharmacists.

According to the report, earlier diagnosis and better treatments have substantially increased the share of people surviving chronic diseases. Europeans live longer, but not necessarily healthier. According to the most recent figures, the burden of ill-health on social benefit expenditures exceeds that which is spent on unemployment benefits. Even so, EU member states spend on average only 3% of their health budgets on public health and prevention. The global financial crisis has hit the most vulnerable citizens hardest. In several EU countries, the less advantaged members of society have lower life expectancies and difficulties in accessing healthcare, predominantly resulting from lack of financial resources.

PGEU Secretary General Jūratė Švarcaitė said:

"Pharmacies have a crucial role to reduce inequalities in access and quality of healthcare, as well as the number of avoidable emergency department visits and hospitalisations across EU countries. The network of 160.000 community pharmacies in Europe provides a unique opportunity to improve access to disease prevention programmes, health screening and early interventions for all citizens, including those with the least means.

We are particularly pleased that the OECD/EC Report recognises that expanding the role of community pharmacists is an important policy lever that European countries could pursue to provide both wider preventive healthcare and better management of long-term conditions. A strong body of evidence shows that enhancing the role of community pharmacists in primary care systems brings significant improvements in disease prevention and quality of services. For example, in an increasing number of European countries community pharmacists already provide patient-focused pharmacy services such as medication use reviews, health checks, chronic disease management programmes, vaccination etc."